

Advice for Living the Quotidian

by Carl Leggo

for sixty-five years I wish I had known
how short life is, too short, impossibly brief
how to live each moment as momentous,
alive in each moment with hope for possibility
light and shadow dance a tango, everything
in flow, everything likely or unlikely
this poem reminds me to listen carefully,
to remember with the body's story
everything is heightened, everything is dull,
cancer refracts light in unknown ways
a poet begins with sitting, perhaps
on a bench or a rock, under a tree
our first poem is the heart's beat, breathing
is the ancient language we must always hear
each day requires sensual attending
and taken-for-granted assumptions
I now seek to maintain a balance
between intensity and relaxation
if you want people to smile, smile at them
if you want a hug, offer a hug
above all, be sure to untangle the knot
of fear that threatens to strangle you
a poem is a response to silence,
the quiet resonance that lingers
poets are not scared to know the sacred, each
day brings blessings like disguised challenges
learn to lean on uncertainty,
know the journey is a mystery
be open to surprises, the stuff
of creation, new beginnings
hold the whole of life,
holes and all, heart-wide
always move with rhythm
like a carpenter's sure swing
if you want to know how to live
then live with love's tenderness
waiting with autumn patience for
the fullness after emptiness
this is all the wisdom I have to offer,
a broken body knows a life time
the mortal dances with the immortal,
heaven and earth in a kingdom of joy