

Letter to Paige

Sometimes there's nothing
to do but keep on going.

That's all the medicine there is to it.

Rise in the morning,
get out of bed,
wash your face,
clean your teeth,

say to the day,

'Hello day, shall we be friends?'

No one wants to mow the
lawns for God's sake.

But we do.

We watch them pout on
our way to the letterbox.

The sun and the rain
are against us for sure.

So we go to the shed,
we pull the cord,

we put one foot in
front of the other

and we go round in circles.

It is the same with
our clothes,
collapsed to the floor,

how they pile,

sedimentary.

We lift them up,
smooth along their seams,
stop them turning into stone.

It is much the same
with loving ourselves.

Hatred is a pile of dirty dishes,

stacked like a city,
all angle and filth,

grubby-towered
and demanding.

At some point we run the water,
squirt the soap,
pick up a cloth, and begin.

We take our hands,
and soak them,
count the bones,

feel them warm.

We take our ribs,
twelve at least,

run a finger along
each groove.

At some point, quick as a flash,
our skin is off
among the shoals.

And here, where our
memories have been
burnt black into the pot,
we know enough
from cobbled fingers
to simply let them soak.

Surviving is enough for now.

It is not much to say,
'I care. Well met.'

'I see you there
beneath the load.'

But it is all I have.

I will leave the
words anyway,

wrapped in paper,
like fish and chips,

just in case.

Think of it as an inoculation,

placed under your skin.

Perhaps it might rise
when the hating comes.

I would be happy if it said,
'NO, this man, simple
as a stone, and good,
loves me, says I am to go on.'

One day you might even
say it to yourself.

Slowly, in time, the mountain
will come down to size,

stare you in the eye.

We grow into ourselves.

There is something
in us made to heal,

the way the tree
is made to grow
and the bird to fly.

In the meantime breathe,

take in water, and wait
for the wind to find you.

Don't underestimate
the strength
it takes to stand still,

appear in your day, each day.

In the time it has
taken for you
to read this you
have travelled
ten thousand miles.

One day you will
arrive in yourself,

like a stranger from
a distant land

and feel at home
without ever
knowing
you'd left.

Love will stumble
across you,

the sun reach into
the darkest
corner and warm.

Sometimes we work
the far paddock,

leave this one
to sky and earth.

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