

Thanksgiving Ruminations ...

*I*t's Thanksgiving Day, and I'm awake early, gazing east across the deck over the railing to the forest preserve beyond. The sky is a dull pewter. The oaks, bare-branched, black and intricate, every twig distinct in relief, will be this way 'til late April. Beside me on Bob's side of the bed is a wooden tray with a tall green mug which holds my first cup of morning coffee. It sits as a friendly reminder of all the days he brought me that first cup, just the right amount of cream, just the right amount of sugar, heated in the microwave at 40 seconds so that it would be piping hot. And then, delivering it to me with a flourish, with a dramatic last gesture, he would turn the handle to a perfect angle. I see him now, as I write—full of fun, eyes dancing, body poised in a frame of abject servitude, playing it up. How he made me laugh! What a pleasure it was to live with someone who was inherently funny, ironic, and as Barrett wrote in his eulogy, “kitschy.”

So this Thanksgiving morning I COULD major on the emptiness of this house, the lack of laughter, the fact that I have to get my own perfect cup of coffee (heaven forbid!), and the fact that in the grocery store, buying cans of creamed corn for the corn soufflé, I'm holding back tears because Bob will not be around for the prep, absent at Thanksgiving dinner, and I run into a kind friend who says “I'm so sorry,” and the tears spill unbidden.

That is what I could do. But what I will do is make a list of thanksgivings. It is hardly exhaustive.

I am thankful that just two minutes ago, Dawn sent me photos of our great grandchildren who reside in Arizona, Lilah in her pilgrim hat and Jackson in his shades. That I have already received several texts and phone calls wishing me "Happy Thanksgiving." That all the leaves have been blown back into the woods by my faithful yardman, Natalio, and that Dennis from next door and friend Adrian took care of the piles of leaves on my deck while I was in Nashville last weekend, "just because." That the two wild turkeys who perched on the deck railing (those babies are HUGE) finally flew off after I screamed at them repeatedly. That Yale beat Harvard after losing 9 consecutive years and that Hayden dedicated the game to Papa (wearing tape on his wrist with JRC and Papa inscribed upon it). That I have friends who are real, open, and with whom I can share my sorrows. That Kristian has found his calling in Iraq serving displaced persons near Mosul. Pray for him! That all of our children, their spouses, and the eleven grands are genuine, loving, and keep track of me, each in their own way. For all the years with Bobby C. For the fact that we were able, by God's grace to grow together, starting out as children, really, and that we loved each other more on the day he died than in all the years before. And finally (but hardly completely for I could go on and on), I am thankful that I have a place to go for Thanksgiving. That at Barrett and Erica's there will be abundant food, football, fellowship and comfort that will wrap around me like the warmest and fuzziest of blankets. So today, Thanksgiving 2016, I honor the psalmist's directive:

*Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
his love endures forever.* Psalm 118:1.

