

Personal Reflection – May 6, 2023

Poetry

*It is difficult to get news from poems.
Yet men die miserably
Every day
For lack of what is found there.*

--William Carlos Williams (1955)

In my nineties, I am coming back to poetry. All afternoon I sip on lines like those of WCW. I remember a book I read many years ago entitled *How Does a Poem Mean*. Can't recall what it said, but the title speaks to me. The images of the Psalms, for example, knock me out: that Psalm poet knows how to be angry! And how to show when he is in love.

Denise Levitov, a New York City kid, has a hefty volume of sipping images:

*Hope – like a clump of irises, which will cease to flower
unless you distribute
the clustered roots, unlikely sources-
clumsy and earth-covered-of grace.*

The lyrics of good songs give us a melodic way to poetry, like Leonard Cohen's:

*Everything is cracked
That's the way the light gets in.*

This short verse, which I wrote 55 years ago, is a constant joy for a lady in a rocking chair:

From the Yellow Kayak

*More's the miracle for me
Not to walk on water
But to sit on it.*

What is the poem you recall, the one you learned by heart? The one you say in quiet moments? Sip on it, if you will, and celebrate your joy.

--Jane Vella