

PLANT FLOWERS

By Joan Nedeau, Tenant

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Aren't you terrified at what 2022 could bring?

"I think it will bring flowers."

"Yes? Why?"

"Because I'm planting flowers."

(Joyce Kilmer)



It is Tuesday, the day of the big storm. I'm sitting watching the heavy snowfall blowing by my window at the same time listening to our local weather person predict five more inches by early evening. I asked myself, "Why?" Why in the midst of our biggest blast of winter, am I led to reflect on flowers? I'm transfixed on a blizzard growing in intensity outside my window. The scene is bolstered by the voice on the TV warning us to 'stay home if we can, the worst was yet to come'. A quick glance at photos of cars in ditches, whiteouts playing havoc on freeways, and, in the midst of all of this, I'm distracted by a quote laying among some scribbled notes on my desk. Yes, that's it. I am smitten with the author Kilmer's planning for Spring, confident and undaunted by circumstances.

Some may call it "optimism". Others speak of faith. My elder priest would remind me to "believe in the sun even when it isn't shining". He told me "faith is like a muscle. The more we use it, the stronger it becomes".

Is anyone of us able to admit freely that we have faced our aging, our physical changes, the Covid, climate change, demonstrations, the political turmoil, and recent threats of war, without fear? The young poet who read at President Biden's Inauguration writes wisely *about fear*

She writes: *"Fear can be Love trying its best in the dark. So, do not fear your fear. Own it. Free it. This is not a liberation I or anyone can give you. It's a Power you must look for in yourself, to learn, love, lead and locate for yourself."* She adds, *"Hope is not a promise we give, It is a promise we live"*. (Amanda Gorman)

Corrie ten boom, who lived through the Nazi occupation of her country, adds her wisdom in sharing about the worry that accompanies fear. *"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it only empties today of its strength"*



I began this letter *on* Tuesday, never imagining how appropriate its content would become by today, Thursday. Not just any Thursday. Today Russia invaded Ukraine. I listened as an Ukrainian mother with two small children was interviewed in the subway being used as a bomb shelter. TV brought her “close and personal” so that I immediately connected to the plight of those hundreds of people jammed in together, their fate left to unfold with each desperate hour.

I began this letter with “Aren’t you terrified at what 2022 can bring?” Now, two days later, this question introduces a fresh perspective from which to respond. I can’t say, living safely and comfortably away from invasion, that I am terrified. But my senses have been jarred and my perspective broadened. And from this vantage point of freedom and comfort I renew my belief in flowers. And, so, I ask myself “What can I do to “accentuate the Positive and eliminate the Negative”?”

Starting this morning I will eliminate the word, “Aging” from my vocabulary and replace it with the word “Gratitude” which I will repeat every morning in my prayers. I will learn just two of those recipes I’ve been hoarding and make plans for inviting the family over for “pot luck” this Spring, I’ll make a list of friends I’m going to call and my favorite restaurants for all those “make up lunches” we are going to enjoy. I will start walking every day as I used to before lethargy set in. I will pray for the vision to never take anything for granted and to cherish life as it is, not as I think it should be.

Another quote, (author unknown), who may encourage us out of the bleak and cold to find focus and renewed energy for reimagining life in 2022:

“IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO FIND THE JOY IN SNOW, YOU WILL HAVE LESS JOY, BUT THE SAME AMOUNT OF SNOW!”