

Chances for Change

Do you long for more comfort? Friendship? Ease?
A sense of community? Whispering trees
as you loosen your stiffness walking with friends
in the belly of nature? Good food in your belly?
The knowledge of goodness? A freedom from stigma?
To be all you *can* be?

If your life is static,
or even worse, shrinking: the faces unfriendly,
the food all in packets, and no-one it seems
even cares what you're thinking: come here. Join hands.

*We're human. All human. All bold possibility.
Soften your knees. You can dance if you're eighty.*

Perhaps you're afraid to speak up? We'll speak for you
until you've the confidence; now, take the phone,
take the trowel, take the whisk in your hand. You can do it.
You do; and your spirit begins to move through it,
this motion, this action, this being a part
of the great human animal, opening heart
and mind and beyond all, what matters: the chance
to be something different. To sing, to dance.

*We're human. All human. All bold possibility.
Soften your knees. You can still dance at eighty.*

So let's learn stability, then fall prevention,
then picking up those who have fallen. Tension
eased, renewing your energy. Families
eating together and finally talking,
working out differences. Differences working.

From all at sea to days away,
from suffering to just being able to say,
from sameness or illness to making new choices,
from TV, to teens clearing ponds in galoshes
and art without boundaries: art in the kitchen,
the garden, the landscape. And how can you harden
your heart when the friend lists her likes and you've seen
the other girl asking: "And me? chasing me?"

*We're human. All human. All bold possibility.
Soften your knees. You can still dance at eighty.*

Discover that dancing is powerfully moving
when you take part. That you have an instrument
built in your throat; that yes, you can sing
and the note, joined with others, rings loud in your heart.
That a bicycle pedals depression away
more cleanly than pills. That fresh-grown well-cooked food,
shared amongst friends, and a good conversation
will cure most ills. That taking time
is a present you give to yourself. That art
and creation is part of your nature. That health
is rooted in self-esteem. That you deserve it.
That your value's innate and there's no need to earn it.

*We're human. All human. All bold possibility.
Soften your knees. You can dance when you're eighty.*

Let's link arms and gather up those left behind.
We've wonderful bodies. We've powerful minds.
We just need reminding, from birth to old age:
we're making our future. Let's celebrate change.

Ros Barber

9th June 2011

A commission for the Chances4Change Celebration at Epsom Downs