

The Rose

Rev. Tom VandeStadt
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Congregational Church of Austin, UCC



Two days ago, this little rose was a tightly-packed bud. This morning, it's a blooming rose. I planted this little rose bush the week before the Covid-19 shelter-in-place restrictions took effect. It replaced a bush that last summer's heat killed. Once again, death and new life.

Seeing the rose as I stepped out my door to walk my dog this morning brought me a quick rush of joy. So did the cardinal, red like the rose, eating at the birdfeeder. So did my dog as he wagged his tail and sniffed the air, excited to be outside in the cool air. These joys, coming soon after getting my morning dose of the Statesman, Times, Post, Politico, and Guardian, lifted my spirits.

Maira Kalman writes, "We hope. We despair. We hope. We despair. That is what governs us. We have a bipolar system." That's a fair description of my system lately, as I swing from hope to despair and back again, countless times throughout each day. As I experience joy and ruminate over concerns, countless times throughout each day.

I'll leave you with this gem:

How did the rose ever open its heart and give to this world all its beauty?

It felt the encouragement of light against its being.

Otherwise we all remain too afraid.

—Hafez

If you're feeling afraid today, I pray someone will shine the light of encouragement upon you. If you have a bit of light to shine today, may it touch someone who's afraid.