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Things That Renew Hope

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I recently read Andrew Greeley's *Religion as Poetry*. In that book he describes religion as 1) hope renewing experiences, and 2) the ways we have of preserving such experiences in stories, symbols, rituals, images, etc. Reading that triggered in me the following reflection on the question: "Where do I experience hope?" I decided to start a list. What I generated, I discovered, can be read as a list or as a poem. Someone once complained about Walt Whitman, "His poems are just lists." The companion aptly replied, "Yes, but *what lists!*"

Things That Renew Hope

Lovers kissing in the street.

The first snowfall of each year.

Compost, spring sprouts, Jewish humor.

Kids summer mischief.

A mother nursing her baby on the bus.

Small jazz ensembles.

Two old men. One says to the other. "I never liked you, but now I can't remember why."

An unscheduled gift.

People who sing with their whole breath.

Times we can't help but laugh at ourselves.

A teen alienated from her peers.

The blues; "three chords and the truth."

A child taking me by the hand.

Courage - the discovery that there's a death more fearful than the one everybody fears.

Wonder, awe, mystery, parsnips.

The gray-haired man in a dark blue suit I saw crossing a downtown bridge at mid-day who threw his cellular phone in the river.

Bread, wine, goat cheese, a bowl of beans; all life given and shared life received.

Folks who know they have a lot to learn.

Sig Rauspern/1999