



Walk in Love Paradox



The phrase “Walk in love” is borrowed from a letter Paul wrote to Ephesians in which he discusses the Christian understanding of love: to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Indeed, walking in love is integral to the Christian tradition; at the same time, essential and secularly connected to each of our hearts. As a young adult, wishing to honestly engage in a reflection of love, my mind projects past the static, screened portrayals that streamed romcoms and pop lyrics are soaked with into something deeper: love as paradox. Paradox as recognizing the relationship between two highly differing experiences which do not negate each other like contradiction does. Instead, when paired together, vastness opens up so wide, we can hold each separate concept in our hands and feel the infiniteness of life swirl within us. Paradox is a flipped coin, currency; a battery, energy. Love must be a paradox.

In my encounters with paradox, there is a side which is conventionally received within the culture of our society; the other side faces a struggle to accept. I wonder what lies within love – the shadow-side that together completes a whole. Forgiveness blossoms on my lips.

In the spring of 2020, a friend sent me Pádraig Ó Tuama’s reading of Dilruba Ahmed’s poem, “Phase One.” Forgiveness flowers across stanzas, coating a hurt heart like liniment: “... Ointment reserved/ for healers and prophets. I forgive you./ I forgive you.” (Ahmed, 39-41). As the tears fell across my cheeks, a realization was released: to forgive is to love. And so, as I would forgive, or love, another, I must forgive, and love, myself.

As a child, I translated our commandment of love to “Love your neighbor as your [honest] self.” In other words, come as you are to the world; with all your ugliness or beauty, love nonetheless. Now, I see it another way: “Love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.” Society says, “Love begets love,” but this is not always true. Forgiveness begets love. So here, as ourselves and towards our neighbors, we must return to love. | tens.org

Questions for Reflection:

When is the last time you forgave yourself?
How does forgiveness transform love?



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