

My Trusty Boat

By Glenn Currier

I answer the door
and there stand two women
smiling in dresses, Bibles in hand
just the barest of niceties before asking me:
“Sir, are you happy?”

This is a question I approach with caution
even within my most intimate relationship.
A question fraught with others:
Happy about what?
Happy with whom?
Happy when?
How happy?
Why do you ask?
Are *you* not happy?
What have I done to make you unhappy?

From this seemingly benign pair
this feels like a home invasion
but here I stand
on the horns of the dilemma:
Am I nice or am I curt?

As I ponder the meaning of their not-so-innocent question
the elder launches into her well-practiced script
from her personal tower of truth,
and soon I realize she was hoping
I would be as dumfounded as I was -
so in the silent beat of that pregnant pause
she could begin her quest to convert
one more misguided heathen.

What they wanted was someone unpracticed
in questions of faith
a blank slate upon which they could write their gospel
and enter their kingdom of heaven
having saved another soul.
Can't hold *that* against them.
Who doesn't want to go frolic in paradise
for eternity
with all the other saved souls?

No surprise with that next question, however:
“Have you been saved, sir?”
But no pause this time.
I am ready for this one.
I reply with a smile “I've been saved and often
And I know you must know ‘*The kingdom of God is at hand,*’
right here in this moment, in this place, what a deal - living now in his kingdom.” My clever response pauses *them*

and in that pause I politely excuse myself,
the younger evangelist with a wan smile upon her face
perhaps thinking about what I had said.
Hmmm. Have I made a convert?

But after I close the door,
momentarily self-satisfied with my conquest of the invaders,
I consider these two stolid women.
They are living their faith
walking it
out on the streets.
I ask myself a question that nags me
like the tap tap tap of a woodpecker:

How do I experience faith?

Finally I sit down
take a deep breath
and relax into the foggy region within
beneath the buzzing of the ceiling fan.
I search for some certainty -
like the oozing certainty of those two women -
but it eludes me.

I wonder: Is faith the ability *not* to know with certainty?

I see myself in a boat
But strangely, I trust my boat
I trust these billowy waters.
But my trust is wordless
a knowing that dwells in the whole body of my life.
I feel it in the sigh of peace I make
when I encounter truth and love together -
two companions on the road.
Truth walks softly, strong legs, straight back, and solid build.
Love is a maiden in flowing white robes
who wishes to hold hands with truth
but is content just to be at his side
connected with a shiny, silent, silvery strand.
Ah! The sigh of meeting truth and love.
Maybe you know this kind of sigh and its release.

And so here I float
in the safety of my trusty boat
certainty - still as slippery as grease
but here I am in the ever moving waters

of trust and peace.