



At this time of year, when I find that I am just one of a group clipping beans for freezing or packing pears for the food pantry, I do occasionally have the embarrassing realization that I am never going to be a famous person.

I am almost 83 and if it hasn't happened yet it's not going to! Ushers do not make a fuss over me. Reporters do not call up and ask for my reactions to events of the day. My obituary will not be featured in the New York Times. No school will be named after me.

Now, if you are over 50 and have not had similar thoughts I would be very surprised. But be of good cheer, famous or not, we have all been needed.

Where I live the dragonflies are beginning to show up. The black ones seem to come first. They cut through the air like travelers from some distant place and suddenly hover right before your face attempting to comprehend in a few seconds you and your story. Then they are off again but it seems as if they have packed away something of the essence of each of us.

Issa is correct. As I was cutting the 358<sup>th</sup> bean I looked into a dragonfly's giant jeweled eyes and I really did see reflected "far distant mountains" and I knew I had walked in those places. And so have you. We have each lived out stories that are unique and yet they weave beautifully into the pattern of universal life. Once as I was standing in line, waiting for a theater to open, a young woman came up to me and said, "I wanted to thank you. You kept me from killing myself." Then she walked away. I have no idea who she was or what she was talking about. Experiences like that could be occurring to each of us. Perhaps it is someone we knew only for a few very important moments. A smile on a train platform. The hand when it was needed. Maybe it had to do with when we were there for someone we had known for a very long time. And we have each also been the recipient of that indescribable reassurance that, despite everything, we are still part of a community washed with love.

Recently in the clumsiness of my wheelchair I found myself temporarily alone in a restaurant as everything I was holding fell to

the floor. Immediately a young woman was at my side picking things up and handing them to me. It could have been the same young woman, or a daughter. Certainly it was a relative because the point is we are all related to each other. We may not know each other but we are indispensable to each other.

“Nobodies” are very valuable to the story of life. Or at least, that is how poets like Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) see it:

*“I’m Nobody! Who are you? ... How dreary – to be – Somebody!”*

Goodbye dragonfly. Thank you for letting me see myself in your eyes. Now on to bean #359 ...

***Brother Toby***