

From a little book titled
Just Words:
meditations by Edward T. Atkinson

If you knew
 how I felt
 inside
You would not
 act that way
 outside.

But then most likely

If I knew
 how you feel
 inside
I would not
 mind so much
 the way you act
 outside.

Why don't we try
 turning ourselves
 inside out?

Two persons
sitting
side by side
talking
a great deal
about many things
but understanding
nothing
because they really can't hear each other
and they really don't want to hear each other
because that would involve
giving up something of themselves
pet theories about what is real
preconceived notions about the world
prejudices toward their neighbor
pride of self

Two persons
sitting
side by side
in silence
hearing a great deal
and understanding much
because they have been
willing to expose their feelings
and look deeply
into another's inner being
because they are willing to
risk much
admit doubt
allow for differences
accept others
accept themselves

When I was just
 Two or three
People kept asking
 What will he be?
 What will he be?
A doctor?
 A lawyer?
 A statesman perhaps?
I know I said
 A fireman I'll be,
 And drive a big red truck!
But, they only laughed
 And asked again
 What will he be?

When I was near
 twenty tow or three
All were still asking
 (now including me)
 What will he be?
 What will he be?
But soon thereafter
 the answer became clear
 What will I be?
 What will I be?
 I'll just be me.

Windows in sunlight
are black
They hide
what lies within.
Windows at night
are clear
They reveal
so long as shades
are not pulled down.

Now I am no
peeping Tom
But it does seem
that if one seeks to
know another
Truly
The bright light
and glare
of public eye
Illumine not
but turn opaque
one's real self.
It is the light within
that reveals
especially
in darkened hours
And so long as
shades are
not pulled down.

Take a small child
in your arms.
Look into its eyes
and receive a revelation.
A smile that tells you
of that child's developing sense
of love and hope.
A smile untarnished
by any desire to deceive.
Not a pitchman's smile
that seeks your wealth.
Not a smile of flattery
that seeks to weaken you.
Just a smile in response
to your being there.
A smile in recognition of
the fact of your common humanity.
Place your finger
in that small child's hand.
Feel it reach out
to take hold of you
And find mutual security
in that grasp.
Within such experiences as these
lies a revelation
as true as any Bible scroll
as powerful as any preacher's word.

God is dead!
Some say,
And perhaps they are right;
No burning bush of late,
No voice from above,
No towering throne.
Chilly March winds give little help,
And man has not been particularly
 kind to man
Across the sea,
Or to the south,
Or even more locally.
Yet forsake not this blessed thought
That just beneath the surface
At times like these
There is a restlessness,
A power whose roots are deep,
Love, creativity, wholeness.
God is dead!
Some say,
And perhaps they are right,
But only maybe.

In March
bare trees
and cold winds
van be most depressing.
and one wonders
will it ever end?
Faith says yes!
Days grow longer.
Icy formations begin to give way.

In these troubled times
of war
and cities in crisis
one also wonders
Will it ever end?
Faith says yes!
The human spirit
has depths
that will prevail.

Spring will come!
Spring must come!
But when,
dear God of love,
When?