

## Reading: "It Is Marvellous To Wake Up Together" by Elizabeth Bishop

It is marvellous to wake up together  
At the same minute; marvellous to hear  
The rain begin suddenly all over the roof,  
To feel the air clear  
As if electricity had passed through it  
From a black mesh of wires in the sky.  
All over the roof the rain hisses,  
And below, the light falling of kisses.

An electrical storm is coming or moving away;  
It is the prickling air that wakes us up.  
If lightning struck the house now, it would run  
From the four blue china balls on top  
Down the roof and down the rods all around us,  
And we imagine dreamily  
How the whole house caught in a bird-cage of lightning  
Would be quite delightful rather than frightening;

And from the same simplified point of view  
Of night and lying flat on one's back  
All things might change equally easily,  
Since always to warn us there must be these black  
Electrical wires dangling. Without surprise  
The world might change to something quite different,  
As the air changes or the lightning comes without our blinking,  
Change as our kisses are changing without our thinking.

Sermon "Marriage Equality" – Rev. Vail Weller

In the poem Susan shared a moment ago, Elizabeth Bishop wrote, "All things might change equally easily." The beauty of poetry is that in it, one can imagine any world one might like to see. In life, changes to legal attitudes relating to the institution of marriage have been very slow in coming. This morning, I could offer you a timeline of the institution of marriage, but to me, marriage equality is a religious issue, and I wish to ask you to consider it in this light. And perhaps, just perhaps, we can be part of bringing about change that really matters.

Rumi wrote: "The creed of love is apart from all religions; The religion and creed of lovers is simply God." Rumi was indeed a poet, but also a deeply religious man. "The creed of love is apart from all religions; The religion and creed of lovers is simply God."

When two people love each other and together wish to commit their lives to the living of a shared covenant, a set of promises, that is a sacred decision. god lives in that space where such love moves. How do I know? Love brings us deeper joy and more searing pain than we could possibly know without it. Because love is freeing. Love brings growth. Through authentic relationships, we become more ourselves. "god", that word for the ineffable, the divine, the source of evolution, the energy within all life, the love that holds us all... the god of my understanding is a god of love rather than a god of punishment, judgement, or barrier. god stands on the side of love.

We hosted a phone bank gathering this past Thursday night in opposition to Proposition 8. While we had one person here from UUSM, a whole bunch of people drove up from Redwood City and Palo Alto UU congregations in order to participate. ***We need to mobilize!*** Let me share with you in starkest terms 6 reasons why it is important for you to do something and do it now.

- ❖ In this Presidential election season, it is easy to feel anxious. The "No on 8" is a local issue, and will make a huge, historic difference right here in California. You can feel good about that.
- ❖ The California Supreme Court has done the right thing. They have carefully examined the issue (with the help of a "Friend of the Court" brief signed by our congregation, incidentally) and they have determined that couples of the same sex who wish to marry cannot be discriminated against. Now we have to help the voters, often motivated by fear, rather than love, to also do the right thing.
- ❖ We are uniquely positioned as people of faith to help. This is something that affects us, personally, institutionally, and religiously! The Unitarian Universalist Association, its member congregations, and individual Unitarian Universalists, have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to justice, equality, compassion and civil marriage for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. (A sidenote: heterosexual people are especially needed to stand up and voice support and encouragement for those who are unsure. Why heterosexual people? Because it is not up to one same-gender couple in our congregation to work on behalf of marriage equality. Because it helps to underscore that this is everyone's concern. Because we may be uniquely positioned to dialogue. Because we can make a difference, and it is the right thing to do!)
- ❖ For Unitarian Universalists, this is not a quote "issue" and it is not in the abstract. When two people want to be married, they have come to a deeply personal decision that carries ramifications far beyond their own

vows. We know and love lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queer and questioning people as our friends, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our selves.

- ❖ Unitarian Universalists know that we are our most faith-filled, we are our best selves, when we are pursuing acceptance, inclusion, diversity, evolution, justice, fairness...when we are standing on the side of love. We are at our best when we are acting for justice.
- ❖ We need to show our children the difference between right and wrong. We need to take them with us to stand at a demonstration this next Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup> (watch your enouncements for details.) We need to show them that this is what religious people do. I want to remind you that our children understand, intuitively, inherently, and completely, what love is. And we help to teach them this. We say to them: "How could anyone ever tell you, you were anything less than beautiful? How could anyone ever tell you, you were less than whole? How could anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle? How deeply you're connected to my soul."<sup>1</sup> Because our souls are connected, our action is needed at this time.
- ❖ Lastly, friends: on September 22, our interfaith brothers and sisters, the Mormons, have an organized plan to put out one million lawn signs in support of Proposition 8. One million lawn signs! I wish we could mobilize to that degree. But for now, I would be satisfied with one hundred. So it is my challenge, my hope, my expectation, and my prayer, that this week one hundred of us will participate! You can choose to do any or all of these things:
  - Phone banking – which is the most helpful right now (see [www.noonprop8.com/events?id=0017](http://www.noonprop8.com/events?id=0017)).
  - Show up for a demonstration next Saturday (most likely at Hillsdale Mall)
  - You can write a personal letter like you're about to hear from Cordelia, which she then sent it to all of her California friends and relatives.
  - Vow to Vote No on Proposition 8 at [www.noonprop8.com](http://www.noonprop8.com).

#### Reflection by Cordelia Leoncio

I know where we as a denomination stand, but I don't know where each of us stands as individuals on marriage equality or gay marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> Words by Libby Roderick. *Singing the Journey* (UUA: Boston, 2005) 1053,

I for one am ALL FOR IT.

I am all FOR ending discrimination in marriage and promoting fairness for all families, including same-sex couples and children raised by gay parents.

I believe it is WRONG to deny gay people (*people!*) the legal and equal freedom to marry the person they love and care for.

Proposition 8, which initiates a constitutional amendment to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry, would leave a legacy of discrimination. This is NOT what I want for our children.

If there is any question in your mind or heart that offering same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities of all married couples isn't the right thing to do, please consider that:

- It was once considered "against the definition of marriage" and "against God's will" to regard wives as legally equal to their husbands.
- It was once considered "against the definition of marriage" and "against God's will" to allow married people to decide whether to use contraception or raise children.
- It was once considered "against the definition of marriage" and "against God's will" to end failed or abusive marriages through divorce.
- It was once considered "against the definition of marriage" and "against God's will" to allow people of different races to marry.

Imagine, in the era of anti-miscegenation laws, Pilar would have been considered an abomination. As the product of interbreeding within a mixed-race marriage, she was somebody's worst nightmare. My lovely, beloved daughter - considered an affront to God's will.

I may have lost some of you here. Yes, these are imperfect comparisons to same-sex marriage. Really, what I'm saying is that marriage is an institution that has grown more inclusive, more fair, and more about love (LOVE!) over time. This is what makes this issue so important to me.

If any two adults want to make a lifelong commitment to one another, I want our government to provide them with the all of the rights necessary to live up to that commitment. I want our government to hold them to the responsibilities of their marriage, to the love they share, and to the families they nurture.

Please (and, believe me, I am willing to beg on this one) vote NO on Proposition 8.

Say YES to Love.