

Reflection for Dec. 27, 2015
Jay Roller for Live Oak UU Fellowship

In these chilly, sometimes rainy December days, waking up on a day when I don't have anything planned can be a bit of a dilemma. I am used to being busy, even over committed, running from pillar to post. So what am I supposed to do with free time? I glance around and see a pile of unfinished projects, but they don't seem like much fun. I could always make a stop by the refrigerator and see what's looking good in there – no wait, maybe not the best idea. I probably need a balance of fun and obligation to help me feel centered.

How much of my day should be about me and how much about something larger than my daily concerns? I'm an avid fan of National Public Radio and I think of myself keeping up with what's going on the places around the globe. When I allow myself some reflection, I sometimes think about Mary Oliver's well known line: *"What are you going to do with your one wild and precious life?"*

Earlier in that poem she says:

*"I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass,
how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed,
(this is Mary Oliver, not me)
"how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?"*

Then she asks her haunting question. *"What are you going to do with your one wild and precious life?"*

Hmmm, does that mean the time I spend doing very little is worthy of praise? When I'm being lazy, bored or self-indulgent is that enough? Or is it only if I am paying attention to the larger world, either natural or human, in some fashion?

This past year I have felt a bit like an aging soccer mom, doing much more driving than I care to admit. I've been taking newly arrived refugees to appointments in Martinez, Fremont and Danville, sometimes at the height of rush hour. It's necessary that someone take them, but it doesn't feel like lying in the grass watching nature.

It's more like watching human nature erupt into road rage with some drivers hell-bent to get to their destination before anyone else.

One interviewee on NPR radio (a famous woman whose name you would recognize -- if I could remember it) said, "Always make every meal a good one. Who wants to die and it turns out your last meal was a peanut butter sandwich?"

So, there is that.

Musing about my day and what to do... am I keeping myself busy primarily to avoid feeling lonely? Are the times I spend with friends always governed by the clock, the parking meter and the ever lengthening hours of rush hour traffic which I try to avoid?

This past week was wasn't particularly busy for me, maybe it's the weather, but I felt tired. Did I take time to read a book or muse quietly? Did I even take a walk that wasn't rushed? When a free day cycles around again what do I make of it? I'm not a person who likes to walk by myself. I like to do things with other people. Mary Oliver notwithstanding, I have to find my own way to figure out this "one wild and precious life" business. It won't be lying in the grass watching clouds pass by. What will I do when the new day dawns, what will you do when the morning breaks?