

Surprised by Astonishment

By Glenn Currier

Can I still be astonished
or have I become so inured to the darkness
and fallibility in others
that I expect nothing more?

It does not surprise me if
 the wealthy ignore the poor
 fundamentalists hate nonbelievers
 I eat too much
 men abuse women
 I forget to stroke my wife's hair
 political fervor stifles compassion
 I reject needed correction.

But I am astonished by
 nurses and doctors who care for people who abuse them
 the tenderness of a mother who loves her malformed baby
 when I'm forgiven by someone I've hurt bad
 childbirth
 politicians who compromise for the greater good
 a firefighter who runs into a burning building
 when my apology is gracefully accepted by a victim of my folly.

Astonishment can
 give me hope
 lift me from depression
 bring a smile in the midst of my sadness
 prove my humanity.

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