

Hope is the thing with feathers that
perches in the soul, and sings without
words, and never stops, and kept so
many warm.

-Emily Dickinson



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Hope: The Thing With Feathers



“Remember. Hope is a good thing. Maybe even the best of things, and good things never die,” Stephen King reminds us. We all have so much to worry over, so many things we are afraid of. How do we handle “living in the now” if in “the now” isn’t exactly where we feel nice? The answer is hope, but what an allusive word. Hope is synonymous with courage. It is the ability to make decisions even in hardship and uncertainty. It is a step into the unknown, knowing full well that the universe owes us nothing. Truth, the later part is true, the universe does owe us nothing, but don’t be so certain that if you were to step out on the water that the universe would not unravel magic you were previously unaware of.

History has revealed many people in seemingly insurmountable situations who were able to find a way through them, or a hidden mystery would unfold before their very eyes. Let me speak to some magic that I have learned. There is a principle in magic called like attracts like. Let’s play in the dark for a bit. Like attracts like is a double-edged

sword. It can be the most beautiful experience you have ever gone through and from your heart a desire to live will arise, or it could be the most terrible experience of your life. Here is the magic. If you wish to change the circumstances of your life, change the desire within you and watch what newness descends, just try, and it will be trying. Magic dispassionately asks, “What do you long for?”

There is only one real virtue required to play in this territory of darkness; that is a firm resolve to change and a violent patience as time works out the details of attracting new life. If your will is strong and your patience is quiet within, I assure you that your eyes will be reborn. You see, hope is the thing with feathers. Trying is flying. Put it on a t-shirt if you want, but believe. The great magician once said, “Faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.” Love proceeds from the unknown, the dark, and that’s what we are afraid of, yet that dark must be trusted and I assure you the wind will arrive on time.

Literacy is learning. Not math, not language, not science, just learning to “love thyself.” Wisdom granted to us from every darkness, from every tension, from every stone heart, from every violence, from every fear, from every tear, from every patience. So, where do we begin? Slow steps, hope, to begin the next chapter of our lives. You see, because hope is that thing with feathers, and it isn’t the wings that give us flight, it’s the tension between them and the wind. Life is a universe of stories and I have a sneaking suspicion that the essence of life is magic, so just long for... and wait.



A Universe of Stories



“As above, so below,” the Thrice Great Hermes Trismegistus teaches us. “A circle within a circle,” a magic boy echoes from a space within the library. The Queen of Swords reminds us... so, we ask ourselves, “My story?” We contemplate the idea of Mother Earth and the woman who is said to be clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars in John of Patmos vision. We hear that the empowered woman is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description. So, where exactly am I going with this? We all have a story being read to us that we try to hear amidst the sorrow, amidst our mind. “Life is infinitely stranger than anything the mind of man can invent,” Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Fyodor Dostoevsky answers, “And truth is stranger than fiction.” We hear perception is king, although this is a trick of the imagination. Life isn’t perception. Perception equals paranoia, distrust. You see, the key is prostration not perception, but that mystery must be found on one’s own.

I once heard a story that I wish to re-tell, because life is about telling stories. That is one thing a father can teach you. I heard the story of a boy who learned the whereabouts of a magic wishing well somewhere in Ireland or Scotland. Upon the rim it read, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” He had learned to prostrate before anything he didn’t understand. It was his habit. He then heard a woman’s voice, as the sound of many waters, ascending, “Be gentle and listen, my boy.” He knew from his studies that meekness was spoken of a wild horse, broken. They were said to be meeked. It came to him that the language of the wishing well was listening, so the boy decided to simply whisper into the well, “Read me a story.” Within a short while he found a home in the woods but no one was there, so he again whispered, “Read me a story.” Later, while wandering, under an old willow tree he found a book written in an obscure language, titled *Anam Cara*; he couldn’t read it. He whispered once more, the third time, “Please, read our story.” In the distance approaching he saw a unicorn. The unicorn knelt before him and brought him back to the home he had found. Inside, he could hear the music he had heard ascending from the well, so he knocked. A woman answered and invited him in. She asked for the book and read it to them and they listened to their story, in awe, awaiting each new chapter.

