

Monica Corish

Meeting Sisters in Cafés

after *Loaves and Fishes* by David Whyte

I have two sisters, Mary and Breda. Mary lives half an hour away from me in Sligo, Breda lives in London. For a variety of reasons we are all continuing to cocoon as the world around us unlocks. I dedicate this poem to Mary Foley and Breda Corish, and to all my women friends.

This is not the age
of meeting sisters in cafés.
Forget the bustle and bubbling
of voices, baristas,
the hiss of the coffee machine.
This is not the age of sister-hugs.

Forget the scent of her hair,
like your grandmother's geraniums.
The smell that says *mother, grandmother,*
the countless generations,
back to Eve, back to the beginning
of human-animal-warm-blooded time.

This is the age of narrow circles, of gratitude
for the gift of love in the house, zoom-screens,
the morning sight of a collared dove
air-wrestling with a magpie,
light through feathers,
curved wings grappling air.

People are listening for a future
that smells and looks and sounds
like the past. I am yearning,
despite myself, for the age of airports,
the drive to Knock, my second sister,
younger sister, London sister, striding through arrivals.

Her red scarf a flag of fire,
the warmth of her arms, my arms,
the scent of her hair.

Monica Corish spent many years working in Africa. She now lives in North Leitrim where she writes and leads writing workshops.

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