



REFLECTIONS

January 22, 2023

**I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;**

Psalm 139:14

The Invisible Ordinary

They are always there, those ordinary things, but drawing little status because of it. Sometimes, if you are like me, we feel ordinary ourselves, as common as the ground or as the people constitute a crowd. And I'm drawn back to the *Reflections* from May 5, 2013, where the subject was *A Solitary Leaf*.

When something so ordinary feathered gracefully from an overhanging tree onto the stillness of a lonely pond, its ripples broadcast no sound. Then it drifted around for a while before sinking beneath the pond's surface as quietly as it came. Its presence in this world seemed to have no lasting effect at all. Or was there?

Like that solitary leaf, the man with the bush of curly red hair seemed ordinary too until he poured out his suffering from believing himself to be an object of God's wrath. His feelings weren't ordinary, nor in my eyes was he any longer. Without knowing more, I sensed guilt and shame buried within him, his self-image shaped into unworthiness at best, but perhaps even hopelessness. Then, not only did his self-image shape his perspective of life, but knowledge of his suffering also reshaped mine.

But what if he hadn't shared his pain with us? Would his story remain blended into the invisible ordinary? Or might we do well to single out each of those ordinary things around us in search of a story within them? Then as we do, relate the story sensed in your mind to the influence *you* might have on those around you and on the many others you may never see. Bora, the immigrant tailor, once said of his work, "I make people feel good about themselves." Might we look with more intentionality upon the work we do or the presence we have.

From ordinary things we learn without trying. And from our ordinary selves, we teach without intention.

By sharing his pain, the man with the curly red hair became a fixture in my own life experience. And I don't even know his name. Then, neither does he know mine.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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