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THERE IS THIS SAYING, THIS QUOTE I HAPPENED ACROSS THREE MONTHS AGO THAT HAS CAPTIVATED MY ATTENTION AND FOCUS. A WOMEN NAMED DIANE ACKERMAN IS ITS AUTHOR... I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE IS EITHER PERSONALLY OR WHY HER WORDS HAVE BEEN IMMORTALIZED IN THIS BOOK "1001 GREAT QUOTES", BUT THE DEPTH AND PROFUNDITY OF HER INSIGHT, WHATEVER ITS CAUSE, IS SOMETHING THAT SHALL NEVER ESCAPE ME:

" I DON'T WANT TO GET TO THE END OF MY LIFE AND FIND I HAVE LIVED JUST THE LENGTH OF IT. I WANT TO HAVE LIVED THE WIDTH OF IT AS WELL."

OFTEN, WHEN I LOOK AT THE WIDTH OF MY LIFE NOW, PRISON MAKES MY LIFE, ALL OF MY EXISTENCE, SEEM SO NARROW AND CONFINED. AS I SEE MY LIFE IN ITS LENGTH - SHORT IN YEARS BUT SO VERY LONG, IN EXPERIENCES - I FIND MYSELF SUFFOCATED BY WALLS WITH NO WINDOWS AND LEAVES ME WITH A SENSE OF CLOSTERPHOBIA I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY PERSON WOULD WANT THEIR LIFE GOVERNED BY.

I BELIEVE IN THE BREATH OF LIFE AND ITS INCALCULABLE POTENTIAL, AND I FEEL THIS URGENCY TO BROADEN EVERY EDGE OF THE HORIZONS BEFORE ME SO THAT I CAN MAKE ROOM FOR AND FILL THE REST OF MY LIFE WITH ALL THAT IS BEAUTIFUL IN CREATION... AND SO THAT I CAN ENJOY AND APPRECIATE THE BOUNDLESSNESS OF FRIENDSHIPS AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE ONCE AGAIN.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT PAIN OR TRAGEDY GAVE RISE TO MS. ACKERMAN'S MUSING, OR PERHAPS WHAT PAINLESS EPIPHANY AND SET OF CREATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES INSPIRED IT... BUT ITS SEEMING, SIMPLICITY IS ONE OF THE MOST DECEPTIVELY INSIGHTFUL TRUTHS I'VE COME TO KNOW IN MY LIFETIME. IT SPEAKS OF SIMPLICITY YET SPANS THE ENTIRE PANORAMA OF LIFE'S EXPERIENCES.

PERHAPS MY ABILITY TO IDENTIFY WITH IT IS IN LARGE PART DUE TO MY INCARCERATION, PERCEIVING IT FROM EYES THAT HAVE SEEN TRAGEDY AND A SPIRIT REELING FROM THE PAINS INCARCERATION IMPOSES... YET, I DON'T IMAGINE MY EXPERIENCE OR ABILITY TO RELATE TO HER WORDS IS LIMITED TO JUST PRISON; AFTER ALL, MS. ACKERMAN HERSELF

KNOWS THIS AS HER TRUTH FROM AN EXPERIENCE I EXPECT DID NOT INVOLVE PRISON...

IT HAS SOBERED ME TO THE REALITY THAT ALTHOUGH PRISON HAS THAT ISOLATING EFFECT, THERE ARE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS THAT BRIDGE PHYSICAL INCARCERATION AND MENTAL/EMOTIONAL INCARCERATION. ANY ONE OF US, NO MATTER OUR SOCIAL STATUS, CAN EASILY MEASURE THE LENGTH AND WIDTH OF OUR LIVES BASED UPON A SET MEASURE, ATTUNED TO OUR PARTICULAR EXPERIENCES OF LIFE, AND NEVER BE ANY WISER AS TO THE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES — ALTHOUGH DIFFERENT — THAT OTHERS JUST AS READILY EXPERIENCE.

IN THE TURBULENCE OF A PERSONS LIFE, IT IS EASY TO TRAVEL TO WORK ON THAT NORTH/SOUTH OR EAST-WEST HIGHWAY... NEVER BEING COGNIZANT OF THE SHORTCUTS, THE RIVERS, THE PLAINS, THE VALLEYS OR THE MOUNTAINS THAT EXIST TO OUR LEFT AND RIGHT AS WE DRIVE AHEAD TO MEET THE DAYS LABORS.

JUST THE SAME, AS I WALK MY UPHILL ROAD TOWARDS MY RELEASE DATE AND AWAY FROM MY CONVICTION, IN MY HURRY TO GET OUT OF THIS PLACE BETWEEN NOWHERES, I AM MISSING THOSE EQUALLY BEAUTIFUL AND FULFILLING THINGS.

THANK YOU MRS. ACKERMAN FOR OPENING MY EYES TO THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING AND INSPIRATION OUTSIDE OF MYSELF.