

Thanksgiving/
Christmas 1982

"Lord
help me
to remember
that nothing is going
to happen to me
today
that you and I together
can't handle."

For me, this short prayer speaks of friendship - the need we all have for others. I'm privileged to know you. I wish to you and yours the very best in the coming months and years.

I am struck, this sunny Sunday morning (November 21), at the riches I have added to my own life this past year. Not in money (since I'm at this moment unemployed) but rather in new experiences, new opportunities, new risks, new friends. I am truly excited about the future.

My "thanksgiving" this year is spoken below. I give thanks for opportunities to learn, to grow, to change. I'd like to share my thanks with you.

I am thankful for the opportunity just one week ago today to be with many others at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. It was a place to reflect on my own attitudes about war and peace and caring for others. A sombre yet wonderful experience. My company that day was primarily Vietnam survivors or friends and families of casualties. I cried there. My hope is that we as a country can work very hard for peace. So that another Vietnam never happens. I give thanks that we live in a country where we can speak out without fear.

I'm thankful also to have heard Dr. Helen Caldicott speak on "The Madness of Nuclear War" on November 6. Thankful too for being able to see a film on the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even more thankful to be able to find and talk with persons who survived the horror of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, including some sailors who were on the USS Arizona - my Uncle Franks' tomb - that fateful day. Thankful to be able to tell you about my feelings. Hoping that our tomorrows will be filled with peace.

I'm thankful finally for the courage to take risks. This year has been a time of risk taking for me. Scary, but terrific. The below litany, from Riverside Methodist Church in Park Rapids, MN, on Oct. 17, 1982, says well how I feel:

"To laugh is to risk appearing the fool
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.
To place your ideas, your dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To live is to risk dying. To hope is to risk despair.
To try is to risk failure.
To serve God is to risk danger and martyrdom.

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing. They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live. Chained by their certitudes they are a slave, they have forfeited their freedom.

Only a person who risks is free."
In hope for freedom,

W. J. ...