

Semester's End Benediction:

I believe music to be the thing that actually holds all the universe together.

***“Music doesn't lie. If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen with MUSIC.”***

–Jimi Hendrix

Seriously though, one of the weirdest but greatest compliments ever been said about me was calling me “like a dive bar juke box.”

One of the scariest things I've ever read, is also one of the scariest verses in the bible, happens in the book of revelation. And no has nothing to do with any of the weird left behind trilogy, or raptures or tribulation. I've got enough scars and wounds on me (no joke) to not be like those silly stupid evangelicals that fear pain.

No no. It comes from 8:1 and says “there was silence in heaven for half an hour.” Silence in heaven. *Ouranos*. In the Greek Where we get the planet (and deity) Uranus. And yes, when I was younger and learning about original Greek, “silence in Uranus” followed by trumpets blowing DID make me laugh. As it should you as well.

But my point is this, I think the point of the entire universe, for YOU personally, is for you to not only get to a place where you HEAR your song, hear the lyrics, hear the melody. But BELIEVE it. And ultimately, sing it back. I've known some that often connect it to a painting, or something artistic that way. They're not wrong. But you're not taking them, you're taking me. And for ME, the entirety of it is art. Beautiful art.

I just happen to associate that with music and melody and harmony specifically. And so to me the whole universe is a song. And each of you has a song. And the point is to go out and find it. And accept it with open hands and open arms. And then sing it back.

And MAYBE, come to discover that your song perfectly blends with all the...SACRED OTHERS that chance your path and you end up with overlapping stories. Overlapping songs. And discover it's all one story. All one song.

Maybe that's all life and love is: being the universe's DJ and just...sharing good music. OR good art. Or good stories. It's sharing **MEANING**.

Ultimately though, I think it's to continue to become. And not only become real, but make others real. How you do that, well...I have a pretty good idea personally, but I'm not giving that away. That answer has to come from within you.

BUT...I CAN hint at it. It's... “the insignificant with the sacred unique.”

(PLAY Sleeping At Last video: <https://youtu.be/asobS45OFJY>)

The brokenness that comes from the love and pursuit of wisdom...LOVE.

You ARE enough. And you ARE GOOD...Good enough even.

You ARE worthy. Worthy of love. Worthy of all. You ARE worthy...

I like you just the way you are. Even if there's a few of you I wanna just...aggressively hug the stupid out of you.

I always get to the end of the semester and am invariably left with the same feeling and thought that Jean Val Jean had at the end of Les Mis, as he lay dying.

# ***"Only Love and Death will change ALL things."***

- Khalil Gibran

So what does the *YOU* that is *you* look like, that embraces death? What does the *YOU* that is *you* look like that embraces love?

What's it look like for you to be the *you* that does both?

And change ALL things.

A revolution that starts with *you*.

Or maybe a revolution that starts with your death. And your love.

Continue to become. And not only become real, but make others real. How you do that, well...I have a pretty good idea personally, but I'm not giving that away. That answer has to come from within you.

**BUT...I CAN hint at it:**

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when all the toys were lying side by side each other near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are *made*," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that *happens to you*. When you find that you are-and have been-loved for a long, long time, not just played with or enjoyed; when someone REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it **hurt**?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "...**When you are Real, you don't mind being hurt.**"

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," continued the Rabbit, "or bit by bit?"

"It *doesn't* happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You **BECOME**. You become real. It takes a long time. And that's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept, or who carry their pride as if afraid of breaking it, or those who isolate themselves by only caring about their own comfort, and surrounding themselves with things that make them comfortable.

Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby.

But those things don't matter at all,

**because *once you are Real, you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.***"

**Once you are Real, you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.**

Generally, I give this...***benediction*** (from the holy book, "*The Velveteen Rabbit*") as a closure to my classes on the final day we meet in person. But since we're finding ourselves in such nuanced and unprecedented times, you'll have to settle for one final announcement.

You find yourself now faced not simply with a ***choice***, but an ***opportunity***. An opportunity to not only go out and allow *yourself* to **BECOME** more **REAL (through others)**, but in turn, **to go out and make others more Real, to make the world more Real.**

Each of you have something absolutely magnificent and beautiful to bring to the world.

**Go happen to the world.**

**And let it happen to you.**

**Go be Real. Go make others Real.**

**Go make the world Real.**

***"But you've heard enough. Now it's time for you to go LISTEN. Go and Find your songs."***

- Contus Fraggie

AMEN – HOZIER'S Take Me To Church (HAVE IT CUED UP: 3:06)