



Acts of Kindness

The Boy in the Window

Every day I set out on my walk around the block. I love to walk but I am also conscious these days that I *need* to walk. My fitness, for the life I lead, and my sense of wellbeing rely upon me keeping moving.

My daughters gifted me a fitbit last Christmas, and my modest goal is at least 10,000 steps each day. Sometimes I am adventurous and walk and discover new things to look at in my neighbourhood. (I have this quaint idea of myself as an urban Rambler). More usually, I have a few set ways between which I alternate. This enables me to free my mind to dream, knowing I will make it back home in due course - rather like the horse that drew my Grandfather's cart finding its way back home after his jaunt to the pub!

On one walk I pass a house that faces the street, its windows hung with sheer lace curtains. At one particular window the curtain is hitched up which allows me a clear view of a boy sitting ensconced behind his iPad. I have seen this boy, when we are out of lockdown, being pushed by his carer in a wheelchair. I usually greet them - him first actually, because his face as he sits in the wheelchair comes into my sight first - and then his carer as my eyes rise. I am not sure if he recognises me or is verbal at all because he doesn't respond, except for a widening of his eyes. Some days he happens to look up from the iPad when I pass. I wave to him and smile (with my mask down for him to see me better). He doesn't react.

I have trained myself to give without expectations as a principle in my life, to avoid the blurring of my gift with the obligation of reciprocation. I remind myself that contributing, being of benefit, is part of my personal code.

Today, as I passed, we went through our routine: he was looking at his iPad, he glanced up, I waved - he waved back! I stopped completely still. I felt struck by the generosity of his gift. Freely given, it was like the sun had illuminated my day.