



## “ORDINARINESS?”

A poem by Brad Aaron Modlin

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### “What You Missed That Day You Were Absent from 4<sup>th</sup> Grade”

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen  
to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas,

how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took  
questions on how not to feel lost in the dark

After lunch she distributed worksheets  
that covered ways to remember your grandfather’s

voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep  
without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—

something important—and how to believe  
the house you wake in is your home. This prompted

Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing  
how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks,

and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts  
are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that I am  
is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation  
look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions,

and feeling cold, and all those nights spent looking  
for whatever it was you lost, and one person

add up to something.

**What do I miss when I fail to pay attention &  
be present to what’s going on within & around me  
in the course of an ordinary day?**

**“By living the  
Incarnation,  
most often in  
the ordinariness of  
everyday life  
and ministry,  
we become one body  
with one heart and spirit  
— cor unum —  
united in these  
core values that  
identify us  
so deeply.”**

GC22 Enactments

**How do I experience  
“the ordinariness  
of everyday life”  
as a part of living  
“fully human lives?”**

