

Poems for Difficult Times and Emotions

Grandma once gave me a tip:

During difficult times,
you move forward in small steps.
Do what you have to do, but little by little.
Don't think about the future,
not even what might happen tomorrow.
Wash the dishes.
Take off the dust.
Write a letter.
Make some soup.
Do you see?
You are moving forward step by step.
Take a step and stop.
Get some rest.
Compliment yourself.
Take another step.
Then another one.
You won't notice, but your steps will grow
bigger and bigger.
And time will come
when you can think about the future
without crying.

– Elena Mikhalkova, from *Room of Ancient Keys*

The Guest House

by Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.