

The Gates of Hope by Victoria Safford

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope—

Not the prudent gates of Optimism,

Which are somewhat narrower.

Not the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;

Nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,

Which creak on shrill and angry hinges

(People cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through)

Nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of

“Everything is gonna’ be all right.”

But a different, sometimes lonely place,

The place of truth-telling,

About your own soul first of all and its condition.

The place of resistance and defiance,

The piece of ground from which you see the world

Both as it is and as it could be

As it will be;

The place from which you glimpse not only struggle,

But the joy of the struggle.

And we stand there, beckoning and calling,

Telling people what we are seeing

Asking people what they see.