in order to do political work? Should I neglect them in order to practise my art? The love which brings the right answer is an exercise of justice and realism and really looking. The difficulty is to keep the attention fixed upon the real situation and to prevent it from returning surreptitiously to the self with consolations of self-pity, resentment, fantasy and despair. The refusal to attend may even induce a fictitious sense of freedom: I may as well toss a coin. Of course virtue is good habit and dutiful action. But the background condition of such habit and such action, in human beings, is a just mode of vision and a good quality of consciousness. It is a task to come to see the world as it is.

REFERENCES

Prayer - for Joan

What do you think J? We’ve done pretty well, I suppose; we’ve managed this far pretty easily, when you consider....

Sarah T.
with her secret abortion
out of town

& Mo with her illness
which everyone refuses to call
a nervous breakdown

& Marsha whose Mother’s
about to die (the Big C, I think
but no one will say)

& Jane, whose man
just up and went
away

& and Andrea? Allison?
-something like that-
your friend who’s now
a whore

& Astrid
onto her second child
with a man she doesn’t know
anymore

Our own little troubles—Cystitis, the body’s revenge
Moralistic Old Bitch that she is—are really quite small retribution (for being women).

But worry not, these murmurings,
these tiny beads of discontent,
these small hard pellets of rose petals—crushed
then rolled through anxious finger,
strung together, knotted in between—
these countless, counting, counters; sacred sores,
these shibboleths
(‘Ye will know them by their grievances’)
are but
the beads
of one lone
woman’s
rosary

and many more
with follow these,
through the Decades,
each ensconced between
the Paternosters

and the
Glorias...

Kate Campbell
England