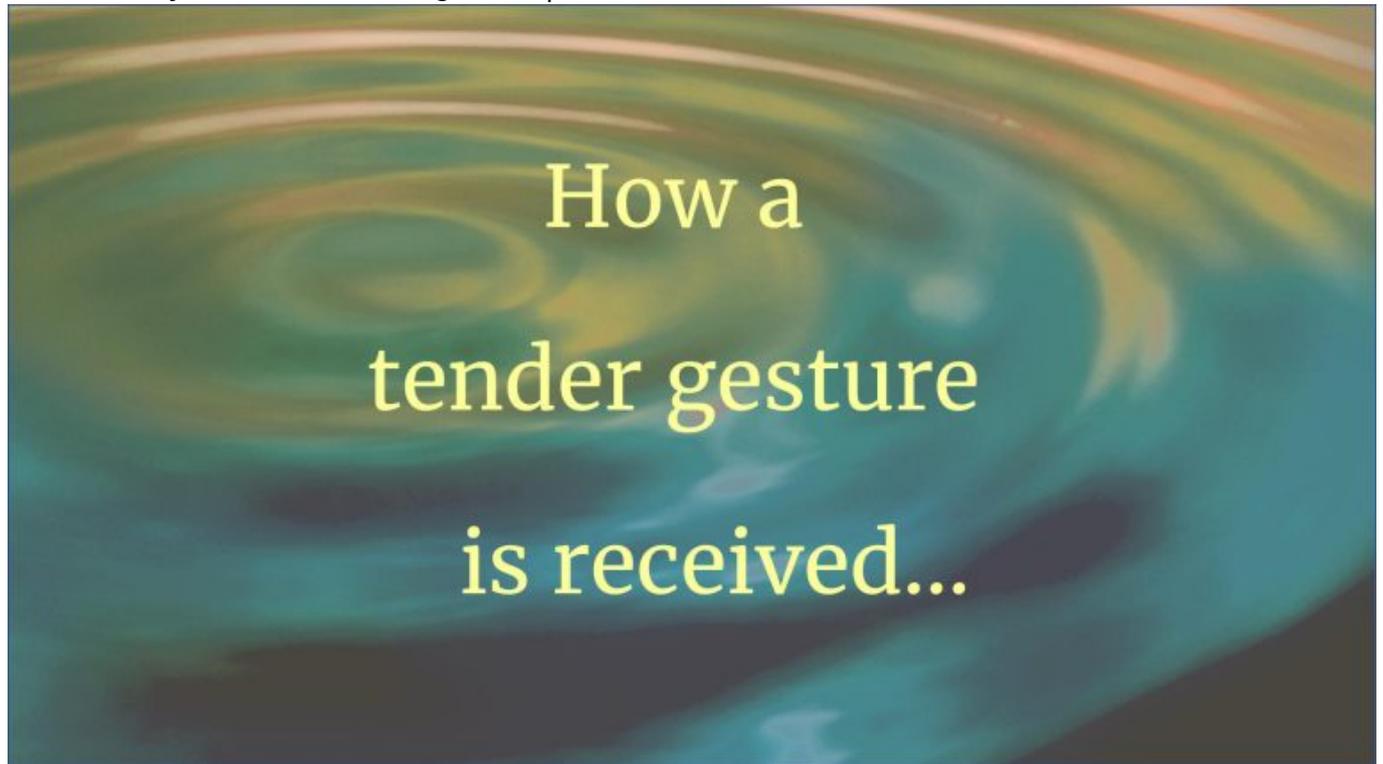


Gratitude

Category: Poems

written by Laura Cini English | November 12, 2021



When was the last time I combed my hair?
Before the ambulance, even longer

when the plate shattered
and he cleaned it up without speaking.

The woman with dark eyes
who watches over me

considers my matted hair, dripping
from the shower, and how I stare

at the hospital-issue comb,
its infinite teeth, sharp and fine.

She closes the folder of notes. I wait
for her to say, Doing things for yourself

is how you get well. But she angles
the comb's flimsy plastic through knots,

one millimeter of progress after another,
the way light filters through clotted leaves.

Her hands move like a breeze.
Outside the tinted window,

the setting November sun would speak.
That it can't hold up any longer.

The stillness of the grass agrees.
That it doesn't have to shine forever.

A row of naked trees, their assurance.
It's nobody's fault the earth rolls off-kilter.

I wonder if the woman is a mother
of young girls all with long hair,

if she combs before the hissing
brakes of the school bus interrupt.

If she's tended wild horses,
voiceless, panic in their eyes.