

## Book Review: Tuesdays with Morrie By Wincy Ng

This is a lesson without books.  
This is a course with no grades.  
This is not a class where you receive looks  
From your professor's merciless face.

Yet death is encountered, and life is enlightened.  
The dying speaks, the living listens.  
The teaching goes on, and love strengthens,  
While spirit lasts and courage glistens.

Twelve weeks they have met as "Tuesday people",  
Optimism is revealed, tears are shed,  
Times get rough, yet what remains is a heart of gold  
And a tranquil, altruistic life is led.

One could hardly haul oneself out from the book,  
The lessons taught, the concepts shared.  
These are the ones that hook  
And leave a mark in my heart, those that truly shimmer and flare.

"Love is the only rational act"  
Many misinterpret love as acquiring, obtaining, earning,  
No, my friends, love is about giving and sacrificing, as a fact,  
And this is the one thing that is worth learning.  
Some may not think they deserve love,  
They simply hide and sulk.  
But life is all about letting it in and giving it out,  
Accept love, my buddies, without a doubt.

Laughter remains, melancholy lingers;  
Merriment lasts, despondency persists;  
"Life is a series of pulls back and forth, a tension of opposites",  
Moments of joy, memories of despair;  
Surges of love, fractions of fear;  
Twinkling of hope, segments of horror;

Emotion is something you cannot dare.  
Don't ever try to escape from your emotion,  
This only tightens its grip on you.  
Recognize it, feel it, the notion  
Is to let it go after experiencing it completely.  
Let the beam go on hanging on your face,  
Let tears flow and loneliness embrace.  
Then, detach.  
Just that. Just detach.  
It's just that easy. Serenity.  
Control your emotions and regain your sanity.

Don't make yourself servants to riches,  
Never linger in the shadows of fame,  
Prohibit self-wallowing in popularity.  
"Fame is a vapour,  
Popularity an accident,  
Riches take wings.  
Only one thing endures—  
Character"  
Never ever attempt to substitute money for tenderness.  
Do not mistake fame as comradeship.  
Popularity is never a synonym for love.  
Take what you *need*,  
Give up what you *want*,  
And find your wit to differentiate the two.  
"I can't afford to waste my time making money," said Agassiz.  
If you have a thirst for love,  
Offer love to others;  
A hunger for tenderness,  
Offer tenderness to those who need it.  
Result?  
Satisfaction,  
And a strong sense of self-worth.

Death, a familiar word,  
Yet sounds so distant and unrelated.  
It is an invulnerable sword,

Shocking and unexpected.  
Death, too scary a phenomenon to be known;  
Too sensitive a topic to be discussed;  
Yet, it is clearly shown  
That any one of us could be ruled out  
In this circle of life.  
Inevitable, death is,  
Yet why do we still indulge in the ignorance and avoidance  
Of the fated crisis?  
Morrie, instead, craved in the abundance  
Of optimism.  
An imaginary little bird would stand on his shoulders  
And every day he asks the bird,  
Is it the day that I surrender  
To nature and vanish from the world  
As if no one as such existed?  
We hide from death  
And possibly resist  
The oncoming moment.  
Yet few could emerge from vanity  
To face reality  
And to prepare for death  
With peace and serenity.

What I can say is that in and after reading  
Smiles are fundamental  
And tears are essential.  
Love underlies,  
And optimism scarcely dies.  
There is never enough time for us to learn to say good bye;  
It's not every moment we can enjoy the gift to cry.  
Things may not come as you wish,  
But alas! Not everyone has the privilege to live on  
And the unfortunate could be banished  
From the wonderful world we once grumbled upon.

Selflessness, indeed, is a gracious quality.  
I secretly conceal my woeful tears,

And instead express my admiration for the identity  
Of the old professor as an expert in ridding sadness and fears.

“You can’t control the length of your life,  
But you can control the width and the depth.”  
Morrie’s life does not only contribute to a part of the world.  
He is an inspiration, a courageous mentor.  
Life, after all, is nothing more than a turbulent swirl  
With a certain meaning at the centre.

~The End~