

Reading at BlogUp tonight! “Learning to try”

I'll be reading this post tonight at the small theatre in Anaheim Hills for BlogUP. There's still room if you want to come to the show.



About fifteen minutes before this breathtaking sunset, I stood next to three people at the bottom of a small hill in Laguna Beach. It was an older couple—same age as my parents, about sixty-five—and their adult daughter. The daughter was explaining to them how far the walk would be to get to the beach. “Just up this little hill and to the right,” she urged them. “There are benches up there where you can relax and watch the sunset,” she suggested as she polished the lens of her camera with her sweatshirt.

The older woman clutched her cardigan sweater at the neck and looked toward the beach through squinting eyes. She was thinking about the walk—weighing the effort made to the reward. The man didn't look up at all and he quickly said, “I think we should go wait in the car.” The older woman looked down at the ground and nodded in agreement.

“Just up this small hill. It's not even a hill really,” said the daughter, pointing toward it again in an attempt to get her dad to look at it.

“No, just give us the keys and we'll wait in the car—you go,” he said, as he helped his wife put her arms through the sleeves of her sweater.

The daughter, who seemed accustomed to this decision, dug around in her purse and handed him her car keys. She didn't say anything to them after that, just turned quickly toward

the darkening horizon and started up the hill with a gait full of reproach.

I watched the couple walk slowly toward the parking lot. It was an effort for them to walk, even at a slow pace. Yes, it was an effort.

As they walked they didn't say a word to each other. He opened up the door to the mini van and helped his wife in the back seat. Then he settled into the passenger side and there they sat until the sky was completely dark and their daughter returned.

I told my husband the story later in the car home.

I wondered how many times in their life they decided not to try—not even make an attempt up the small hill. Is that why they were so frail at such a young age? I don't know them, maybe some medical tragedy has come on them both. But, I got the feeling as I stood there observing the scene—their unwillingness to even consider walking, their daughter's quick surrender, their solemn cloud—that theirs was a lifetime of deciding to sit in the car.

While my husband and I talked about the couple in the car on the way home, he broke away and said to the kids in the back seat who weren't paying a lick of attention to our conversation, "You know how Mommy and Daddy are always making you guys try something new? That's really important."

Our daughter nodded while she continued coloring and our son stopped playing with the shells in his hands, looked up and said, "Are we going to do something new right now?"

All also be reading my re-vamped "50 Random Things About Me."