



*I met a man whose philosophy of life
Didn't seem to offer much:
At sixty-two, my high-level executive days are over.
After thirty-seven years, my wife and I are unhappy.
My children are failures.
I think I am, too.
When it's time, I'm going to end it like Hemingway.
What made me happy, he wondered.
My faith.
My marriage.
My family.
My career.
He scoffed at the concept of faith:
I came from crap;
I'm going back to crap.
If I die like Hemingway, at least I decide when.
He laughed when I said
I didn't come from crap;
I'm not going back to crap.
There's no reason to blow off your head like Hemingway.
His response was that
The only point of life
Is just to live it
Before we disappear into oblivion.
I asked him about
The point of living -
If just living life
Merely gets us to oblivion.
He said
It doesn't matter.
He was satisfied with his lack of faith
In anything but the here and now.
I said
It does matter.
Faith in nothing but the here and now
Is no faith.
He pondered my question:
If you really have faith in nothing,
Which has brought you only sorrow,
How is your lack of faith better than my faith,
Which has brought me only joy?
Intrigued, he smiled but said nothing.
We became friends, though.
Maybe that was his answer.
I still wonder
Why he told me about his inner turmoil,
Why he told me about his pain,
Why he told me about his despair.
Did he think it would bring a measure of peace?
Did he think it would ease his pain?
Did he think I could somehow help lessen his despair?
I know
Another person's understanding does offer some peace,
Kindness does ease pain,
Candid talk does help lessen despair
When someone openly questions
The meaning of existence.
Maybe my friend saw in me
The power of personal faith.
Maybe that recognition made him question
The strength of his doubt.
I often wonder
Whether our talks mattered as much to him
As they mattered to me.*

Credits:

From a book of poetry, entitled *Life is a Non-Stop Event*, by Carole Bos.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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The Concept of Faith

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