

Like an Angel

Here's a story from Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul 2. by Naomi Follis.

Returning to work as a nurse after an illness of six months was an ordeal in itself, but now the bitter cold and intense winds added to my stress. The employee entrance to the hospital was on the west side of the old brick building. The parking lot was on the east side across the street, so I'd have to cross the vast expanse to reach the entrance, with the unrelenting wind pushing me along.

My recent bout with pneumonia and the subsequent asthma attacks made me doubt if I could survive the walk on this subzero morning. After parking my car, I crossed the street and carefully battled the elements as I started for the entrance. Within seconds, I realized it was hopeless. My weakened condition and the penetrating cold took my breath away. The icy winds blowing off Lake Michigan pierced my lungs like shards of crystal. My chest tightened. I realized I would soon be in distress and unable to make the distance. I looked back at the warm car and contemplated whether to return to it or risk going ahead. The early morning darkness seemed to close in on me, and wafts of icy snow blew around my legs. At that moment a shaft of light opened in the shadows on the side of the building, spilling light from a small doorway onto the pavement ahead of me. A tall, lean figure in a long, threadbare woolen coat and knit cap stood silhouetted against the amber light from the doorway. He stood holding the door against the frigid air and waved for me to come in.

I could see the boiler room inside, an area prohibited to nursing personnel. I didn't want to be in trouble for being in a restricted area, but it was predawn, dark and cold, and I could barely breathe. My mind raced. The elderly black man raised his arm and motioned me toward him for the second time. I thanked him for getting me out of the cold and followed him past the steaming pipes of the boiler room. I had a sense of deep calm and peace as he spoke in soft tones and led me through the maze of pipes. As if he were trying to reassure me, he talked about the cold, the old pipes and cautioned me to watch my step. He opened a doorway and I was directly in front of my time clock.

I quickly punched my time card, then turned to thank him and to tell him that he had probably saved my life, but he was gone. As mysteriously as he came, he'd left. In the weeks that followed, I looked for him, but no one knew who he was. I had many questions for him: How did he know I was out there in the dark, since there were no windows on the door or on that side of the building? Why did he risk his job by giving me access to a restricted area? How did he know which was my time clock since various departments used different clocks? And why did no one know him?

The memory of that figure silhouetted against the light, motioning for me to follow, reminds me that angels come in many forms.

If you look around for the "good doers" in your life, "An Angel" will show you that..

You are loved,

Deacon Dan