

BEGINNING ...

well or beginning poorly, what is important is simply to begin, but the ability to make a good beginning is also an art form, beginning well involves a clearing away of the crass, the irrelevant and the complicated to find the beautiful, often hidden lineaments of the essential and the necessary.

Beginning is difficult, and our procrastination is a fine, ever-present measure of our reluctance to take that first close-in, courageous step in reclaiming our happiness.

Perhaps, because taking a new step always leads to a kind of radical internal simplification, where, suddenly, very large parts of us, parts of us we have kept gainfully employed for years, parts of us still rehearsing the old complicated story, are suddenly out of a job.

There occurs in effect, a form of internal corporate downsizing, where the parts of us too afraid to participate or having nothing now to offer, are let go, with all of the accompanying death-like trauma, and where the very last fight occurs, a rear guard disbelief that this new, less complicated self, and this very simple step, is all that is needed for the new possibilities ahead.

It is always hard to believe that the courageous step is so close to us, that it is closer than we ever could imagine, that in fact, we already know what it is, and that the step is simpler, more radical than we had thought: which is why we so often prefer the story to be more elaborate, our identities clouded by fear, the horizon safely in the distance, the essay longer than it needs to be and the answer safely in the realm of impossibility...

'BEGINNING' From the upcoming book of essays *CONSOLATIONS: The Solace, Nourishment and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words*.

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Available the first week in December 2014

Music. Panel:

Sir George James Frampton

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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Meaning

Beginning is difficult, a powerful act like no other as it begets possibility, and fear of the unknown. Our procrastination is a fine, ever-present measure of our reluctance to take that first close-in, courageous step in reclaiming our happiness.