

Jukebox

by Dianne McKnight-Warren

Ninety-nine percent of the world's lovers are not with their first choice. That's what makes the jukebox sing.

—Willie Nelson

Once a psychologist told me a story about two strangers who met on a sidewalk in Manhattan and fell in love on the spot. They were married to other people but they left together.

Maybe love is all destiny. Miracles are everywhere. Not a second of our lives passes without one, so maybe it's not rare for two people meant for each other to meet. Maybe it happens all the time but most of us don't recognize it, or even worse, don't act.

Years ago I fell in love once but I never told her. We worked in the same building and said hello to each other a dozen times. She'd smile when she saw me.

I never knew anything about her. Not her birthday or her favorite color or season. I didn't know whether she liked rainy days or sunny ones or where she lived or her favorite music or books or food or the last time she'd been kissed or the last time she'd cried or the reason.

Once on a spring morning I almost asked her to go for a walk. I nearly stopped her in the hall to ask. I'd rehearsed for weeks but I couldn't get the first word out, that first word, that pivot.

But if we had taken a walk I'd have remembered every detail: the green igniting all around us, the clouds crossing deliberately above us, the breeze quickening the trees and the birds singing, their lives depending on their songs.

