

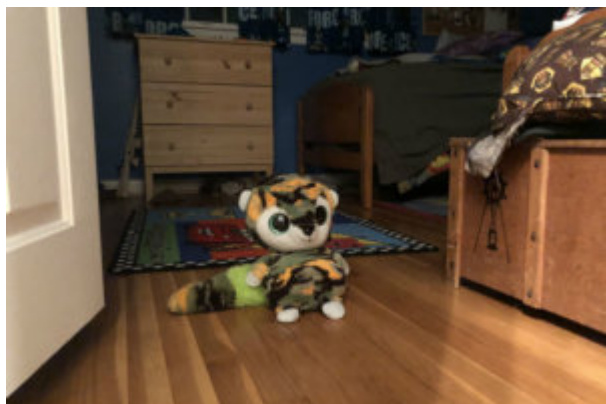
Ice and snow, last-minute Valentine's Day cards, pickle opinions, and a poem for you (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

One morning I went out to start the car and realized it was encased in ice. I tried to open the door to turn on the engine and start defrosting the windows, but I couldn't get it open. I pulled on every door, but none of them would budge.

Just my luck. The doors must be frozen shut. I headed back inside. Just as I stepped into the house, though, I had a thought. Had I unlocked the car?

I pushed the button on my keychain and...no, no, I hadn't. The doors weren't frozen shut at all.



~2~

Every night now when I go to check on the boys before I go to bed, I find a stuffed friend standing guard in the doorway.

It's a different stuffie every night.

I'm not sure when the stuffies decided they needed to protect the children while

they were sleeping, but it always makes me smile.

~3~

The afternoon before Valentine's Day I realized our younger son's third grade class was having a card exchange at school the next day. We went to the store to look for cards, but they only had one box of not enough cards—and they were superhero cards, which was not acceptable.



So we went home and cut out colored hearts to put inside red envelopes left over from Chinese New Year.

Crisis averted.

~4~



My husband and I got engaged on Valentine's Day 16 years ago, but we didn't have a plan to celebrate ahead of time. This year he suggested we go out to dinner the night before to avoid crowds, so we took our boys and headed to a restaurant. John and I sat on one side of the table, and our sons sat across from us and played cards until their soup and noodles arrived. It's amazing to me how our

lives are a little different every Valentine's Day. (The photo is from a past non-Valentine's Day.)

Sixteen years ago, I wouldn't have imagined all that we would have experienced together. When you think of "for better and for worse," you don't really know what you're signing up for—and some of the "for worse" is harder than you expected. But a dinner outing with our two card-playing children who are soup enthusiasts is definitely "for better."

And we are so very blessed.

~5~

Why do delis assume you want a pickle with your sandwich? I am not a pickle person, so the pickle is wasted on me—unless I have our 11-year-old or my husband with me and can pass it along to them. Do most people love pickles?

~6~

I took our children with me to the dentist, and they found a patch of ice in the parking lot. They could have played there all day.



It made me think, as I often do, of how children don't need exceptional experiences to have a wonderful time and make memories. I just wrote about finding extraordinary in the ordinary for *The Catholic Review* [here](#).

Meanwhile, one of our 9-year-old's favorite activities is throwing his socks into the hamper with his eyes closed. Don't knock it until you try it yourself.

~7~



Ice it is slippery,

The ocean is blue.

If you've read this far

Then I owe you fondue!

Happy belated Valentine's Day to you. I'm so grateful for you and everyone who visits this space.

Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!