



**Faculty and Staff Convocation address by  
Faculty Assembly President Jane Grovijahn  
Presented Aug. 19, 2019**

May the peace that surpasses all understanding be with you all.

For this day, I wanted to write a poem for all the burdened brown bodies seeking a sacred reprieve amongst us.

I had hoped to hold up a mirror to your beauty, your enduring dignity and defiance in the face of our revolting romance with violence. I wanted you to know what a privilege it has been & continues to be for me to work with you as we lure our mostly-Latinx community of learners into a deeper dance of delight with our world.

Yet I know all those beautiful brown bodies were marked in some way by that lone gunman's bullet in El Paso.

I stand with you in this place of sorrow and hope.

Still, as the reality of heartbreak and haunting hope continue to unfold along our border, I sit in my own legacy of loss:

- one year ago today our community lost the beloved Sr. Maria Eva Flores, CDP and professor extraordinaire of history and Mexican American studies
- not so many months ago in January our beloved Mr. Steven Wise, Librarian and Faculty Assembly President, was escorted into death far too soon
- And just last month, our colleague and beloved friend, Dr. Cary Guffey, Professor of Biology and life itself, also crossed over into death's embrace.

All of us, I think, are a little bit broken by these losses.

SO now is the time to be **FABULOUS!**...

...to be irreverently in love with life through our fears, anger and grief

...to rise up in exquisite, reckless tenderness knowing we have been entrusted with one another

NOW is the time for **extravagant gestures** of kindness and curious compassion, playful and passionate.

Now is the time to **weep for our broken humanity** without giving up on one another.

And so with humility, I offer you my childlike plan for the year: Dr. G's **3 G network**: (old school I know)

Live with GRATITUDE for the endless drops of life all around us /  
Celebrate well our GIFTS by enlarging what is possible so that others can feel safe sharing their gifts /  
And wrap all of who you are with a radiant skin of GENEROSITY being wildly wonderful  
as your best self; ever confident in the infinite possibilities of repair  
reaching out into unknown places of redemption now illumined by your/our hands, your/our heart, your/our hope.

Allow me to close with the luminous journey from one of our recent graduates in Theology and Spiritual Action: Ms. Cheyenne Raine Cisneros.

An excerpt from: *'a poem on being tired of saltwater'*

*No one.  
should have to feel this. Carry this.  
no one should have to know this.*

*Yet, we do.  
we know it and live it,  
and we are lucky if we are survivors.  
e are lucky if we can rebuild.  
although...is it really luck?  
today I wept because it was too much,  
it was too much of remembering  
and no steps forward.*

*But I washed the saltwater against my skin  
and wore it for the day. If anything,  
I can at least wear my story.*

And so I invite you to wear your stories with pride, respect and irreverent joy as together we build a community where all our stories can be told.