

Dear Southern Nevada

Aram Kabodian

I noticed your walls first.
So many walls along the highway
and between neighborhoods
 sometimes with gates
and walls between neighbors

"Welcome to Las Vegas & Henderson,
Good luck meeting people"
signs should say as you drive
into town.

I noticed the rocks next.
Instead of grass,
I found more shapes, sizes,
and colors of rocks than I've
ever seen. Everywhere.
I am not a rock lover.

But I feel led here,
still feel I am in the right place.

So I turned to my new partner's friends,
 one step forward
Began a job tutoring kids,
 another step forward
Found an over 50 pick-up soccer community,
 another step forward
Began attending the Unitarian Universalist church,
 two giant steps forward ---
 felt welcomed and valued
 by fellow journeyers
 (met a fellow poet...hi Stella!)
 appreciated the pastor's
 enthusiastic, joyful,
 truth-telling ways.

And I began to see that even
in this arid, isolating city

where people thirst secretly for community
where water is more sacred than church
I can
find ways to continue being
my active, service-minded, silly,
creative self
and
start to feel at home
Again.

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