***Transitions Reading (BCT)***

**Before I became a Unitarian Universalist minister, I taught 4th grade. At the end of every school year, I had my fourth graders write notes to the incoming class about what to expect for the upcoming year.**

**One year, Tasha composed this letter:**

**Dear New 4th grader,**

 **Welcome to this room. In Mr. Kron's class you will learn a lot about geography, do some cool science experiments, and you will get to read a lot of books.. Mr. Kron will read to you every day. He will even read you Winnie-the-Pooh. You will really like Mr. Kron. You will really hate Winnie-the-Pooh.**

 **Love, Tasha**

**If only all of life's changes and new beginnings came with such thorough warnings.**

**But change happens, and often it is unexpected. We find ourselves in new situations, facing new challenges.**

**Almost nine years ago, I began as the new Transitions Director for our Unitarian Universalist Association after nearly 15 years as the UUA's Director of its Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns.**

**It was an exciting challenge and one I looked forward to undertaking. It did mean, however, that I would have to relocate from my beloved geography and culture of the Pacifc Northwest and move to New England.**

**That meant this: Humidity. Aggressive driving. A sense of urgency. A more reserved people who believe politeness is to leave you alone, often whether you wanted to or not. Not being talked to in coffee hour (though that's a practice I've seen in every part of the country.) A whole new set of customs, traditions, and expectations to learn.**

**Some of these changes I had warning for. Some would be new.**

**Upon pulling into the parking of lot of my new home in Providence, a woman with four children on a cell phone ran into my car. Fortunately the damage was only to one door. She cried, called her husband who yelled at her while she tried to deal with crying, scared children-all of whom were under 7.**

**To a person, including the police officer who took the report, said, "Welcome to Rhode Island."**

**I considered myself lucky. I had insurance. The car was repaired. I didn't have a husband who yelled at me. The car still runs completely fine. Life will go on and soon it would all become nothing more than a story to tell. But the police officer did ask why I was so calm about it. I told him it was an occupational hazard, that being a minister meant looking at life from the bigger picture and that change and the unexpected are part of life.**

**We all have to face transitions and change. Often it happens when we weren't looking for it. It catches us off guard and we deal with it as best we can-some moments with grace and some moments where we know others have seen us at our worst-and often our reactions are somewhere in between these two edges.**

**What will allow you to deal with changes, expected or not, in a way that allows you to look back later and know that you handled it with more grace than anxiety and distress? What allows to look at these changes through a bigger picture, a bigger lens?**

**I deeply miss the Northwest and the way my life was. But new challenges, new adventures have helped. I try and meet these with a sense of grace and openness. And Tasha would be about 35 now. And I hope, if or when she's a parent, or even not, she takes some time to reread Winnie-the-Pooh.**