

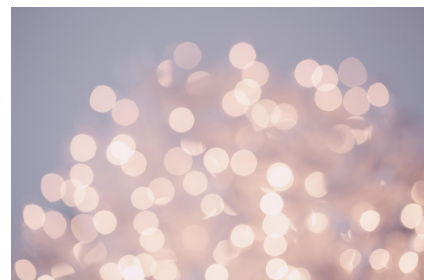


F.H.PERRY  
BUILDER

## Paper Napkins.



I lost my words somewhere around the middle of March. I think I may have left them scattered about the local grocery store, the last time I remember holding any distinct tether to what used to be.



She was middle aged, another woman at the store with me that day. Maybe in her fifties. Glasses. A multi-colored, puffy parka. Corduroys. Brown hair cut short, no nonsense. A mother. Someone I would trust. Someone who would know. She exhaled her discomfort; an uncertain laugh as she (re)attempted to secure the cart handlebar beneath her hands with two, brown paper, Dunkin'

Donuts napkins I imagine she kept in her glove box for emergency spills. Crumpled and worn already in the first aisle of the store, she stuffed them inside one palm and then the other as she used her free hand to take a pepper or a cucumber from the display. Then unfolded the napkins again as if they were a barrier enough against a deeper fear and an endlessly unimaginable state of being. Not enough. But what she opted for. She looked at me and shrugged. It was too early for masks and death counts and stay at home orders. It was too early for either of us to know. I shrugged back.

This woman has stayed a constant companion these past few months. Because I didn't get to acknowledge her. The details of her features have withered along with the biting drizzle of a short March day equally distant in the glory of full-on summer, but the gnawing unknown remains.

I wanted to be her witness to doing what she could with what she had! I wanted her to know I wouldn't have asked for anything more. I wanted to honor how perplexing it must have felt to pull into a parking space as a perfectly sensible person, completely unprepared to be ravaged by a sudden and confounding idea that walking into the grocery store could attack your well-being. I wanted to thank her for considering what she had at her disposal and pitting her reasonableness against her uncertainty in the form of two Dunkin' Donuts napkins.

But I didn't know what to say then.

And these days, what is enough? Too much? What should we expect of ourselves and of each other? Are we supposed to know what to do? Are we meant to agree? Is there someone I can ask? The magnification of individuality at a time when we need at least a sense of togetherness is so profound. Yet we have each had to become the expert of ourselves.

That's ok. It sure keeps it interesting. In the community of FH Perry Builder, we are choosing to stand with you at that edge of what you know. Because we, as individuals, don't really know either. But as a collective we have decided it best to be a constant companion. A witness to whatever it is you need to choose. Honoring the way in which you match your uncertainty with your reasonableness. If we can build something for you, we will. If we

can engage in a conversation about design or detail to sate curiosity, we'll talk. If we need to slow down or start over let's do it. We offer support, energy, enthusiasm, and optimism. We offer a place to give that new voice a try. Come as you are. Shrug if it gets too weird; we'll shrug back.

Tumbling change, extraordinary unrest, human catastrophe, rabid love, frenzied empathy, zealous desire for connection. I still don't quite have the words but it seems acknowledgment is a place to start.

All my very best to all of you,

Allison



*Taking care of all that matters.  
Thanks for your continued support.*

Please call or write to any of us anytime. We'd love to hear from you!

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