

Irish poet Brendan Kennelly contemplates the nature of life's constant beginnings and endings. We are always moving from beginnings to endings, transitioning from one stage to another in different areas of our lives. With every beginning, something must end, and after every ending, something new begins.

Kennelly explores the idea that something inside us always drives us ahead, and wants us to keep moving onwards.

As we begin a new school year, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on this opportunity for a clean slate, a new beginning.

Begin

Begin again to the summoning birds
to the sight of the light at the window,
begin to the roar of morning traffic
all along Pembroke Road.

Every beginning is a promise
born in light and dying in dark
determination and exaltation of springtime
flowering the way to work.

Begin to the pageant of queuing girls
the arrogant loneliness of swans in the canal
bridges linking the past and future
old friends passing though with us still.

Begin to the loneliness that cannot end
since it perhaps is what makes us begin,
begin to wonder at unknown faces
at crying birds in the sudden rain
at branches stark in the willing sunlight
at seagulls foraging for bread
at couples sharing a sunny secret
alone together while making good.

Though we live in a world that dreams of ending
that always seems about to give in
something that will not acknowledge conclusion
insists that we forever begin.

Brendan Kennelly