

The following quotes are from the preface and introduction to Valerie Kaur's *See No Stranger*

This book is for anyone who feels breathless. Maybe moving through this world, in your body, is enough to make you feel constriction in your chest. Maybe you're holding someone close to you who is struggling and suffering. Maybe you are reeling from the last mass shooting, or the refugee crisis at the border, or the looming threat of climate change, or the blistering pace of a global pandemic. Maybe, like me, you are breathless from all of the above. I thought my breathlessness was a sign of my weakness, until a wise friend told me what I wish to tell you: *'Your breathlessness is a sign of your bravery. It means you are awake to what's happening right now: The world is in transition.'*

If you cringe when people say that love is the answer, I do, too. The problem is not with love but with the way we talk about it. . . .

Here is my offering:

'Love' is more than a feeling. Love is a form of *sweet labor*: fierce, bloody, imperfect, and life-giving—a choice we make over and over again. If love is sweet labor, love can be taught, modeled, and practiced. This labor engages *all* our emotions. Joy is the gift of love. Grief is the price of one. Anger protects that which is loved. And when we think we have reached our limit, wonder is the act that returns us to love.

Queries:

How have you felt breathless? How does it feel to consider breathlessness as a sign of bravery?

How would you engage, or embrace, that kind of love that is more than a feeling?

How does any part of these quotes speak to you?