

Tolstoy did not give precise definition to the faith he found, other than the divine call to 'love one another in unity', but I suspect it was something like this. The meaning of life is the realisation that you are held in the arms of a vast presence; that you are not abandoned; that you are here because you were meant to be. It is the sense that life is something you have been given, so that you live with a feeling of gratitude and you seek to give back, to 'pay it forward', to be a blessing to others. This presence in which you live knows you better than you know yourself, so it is no use pretending to be what you are not, or denying your shortcomings, or justifying your mistakes, or engaging in self-pity, or blaming others. It is a loving, forgiving but challenging presence, demanding much but never more than you can do. It asks you to give your best, not for the sake of reward, but because that is what you are here on earth to do.

This is not a testable proposition. There is no scientific experiment that would establish it to be true or false. It is more and other than a belief, a creed. It is an attitude to life, what Wittgenstein called 'a trusting'.<sup>6</sup> It is the opposite of the mood that runs through ancient myth and contemporary atheism, that of a universe at best uncaring, at worst hostile, to our existence: 'As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport.'<sup>7</sup> Instead, in the love of the Infinite for us we find eternity in the here and now.

Though lovers be lost, love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.<sup>8</sup>