

Opening the Doors of Mercy

Week 3 – Doors of Welcome

*“An open door says, “Come in.”
A shut door says, “Who are you?”*
Carl Sandburg

Red Brocade

The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking who he is,
where he's come from,
where he's headed.

That way, he'll have strength
enough to answer.

Or, by then you'll be
such good friends
you don't care.

Let's go back to that.

Rice? Pine nuts?

Here, take the red brocade pillow.

My child will serve water
to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!

I was not preparing to be busy.

That's the armour everyone put on
to pretend they had a purpose
in the world.

I refuse to be claimed.

Your plate is waiting.

We will snip fresh mint
into your tea.

© 2002 by Naomi Shihab Nye

**How do the words of this
poem resonate with how you
understand “mercy”
hospitality?**

**How do they speak to you
today in your life, ministry?**

