

Minister: Our next reading is _____
and will be read by _____.

Sonnet XVII by Pablo Neruda

You have become mine forever.

I do not love you as if you were salt-rose,
or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off.

I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret,
between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that never blooms
but carries in itself the light of hidden flowers;
thanks to your love a certain solid fragrance,
risen from the earth, lives darkly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when or from where.

I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride;
so I love you because I know no other way than this:

Where 'I' does not exist, nor 'You,'
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.