**My Mustard Fairy**

The first installment of kindness was a dress and it was just so completely perfect I didn't know what to think other than someone had paid attention not only to my favorite color (down to the exact shade), but also my love for all things vintage. My initial reaction can best be summarized by the quote I posted on Instagram, "Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change. Kindness that catches us by surprise brings out the best in our natures."  I was taken by surprise by her kindness and I will never forget how truly amazing it feels to be appreciated and validated as a teacher.

As a teacher you work every day to try to catch the attention and reach your students on a level they will never forget. It could be as simple as a quote added to an assignment that causes a student to think differently or a comic that makes them laugh and buy into that journal or that project. It is the countless hours spent planning relentlessly to simultaneously make class interesting, entertaining, as well as attempting to make the course work manageable and challenging for each student to prepare them for not only their academic career, but also for life.  It seems more than often your efforts go unnoticed or vaguely recognized with a smirk, a stifled laugh from the back of the room or a few words of affirmation. But she noticed and took the time out of her life to show me that I mattered. In my teaching career this will mark my climax, my moment of highest achievement.  No award or certificate can measure up to this week of kindness.  I know that I have accomplished my share of feats, but the difference is in the noticing.

My Mustard Fairy will always be on my shoulder when I am at my lowest, reminding me that the time away from my children and my life I take to create this assignment, project or to grade a pile of essays is worth it because someone noticed, she noticed.

The day I found out who she was I told her (and we should all take this into consideration) "How you make others feel about themselves, says a lot about you." We could all benefit from being a little more like My Mustard Fairy and make a point to make someone who is feeling transparent or underappreciated like they matter and what they do is noticed.

 “Everyone must leave something behind when he dies. A child or a book or a painting or a house or a wall built or a pair of shoes made. Or a garden planted. Something your hand touched some way so your soul has somewhere to go when you die, and when people look at that tree or that flower you planted, you’re there. It doesn’t matter what you do so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that’s like you after you take your hands away. The difference between the man who just cuts lawns and a real gardener is in the touching. The lawn cutter might just as well not have been there at all; the gardener will be there a lifetime” (Bradbury 156). When we read *Fahrenheit 451*, I always try to emphasize this passage hoping that my students will take it to heart and make a point to leave a mark on the world that represents who they are and what they stand for. My Mustard Fairy has left a literaltrail of mustard that represents both my soul’s impact on the world and the beginning of hers.