**Contemplative Service for Wednesday,**

**March 1, 2023**



**First reading:** from Psalm 30

Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken."

Hear and be merciful to me; O Loving One, be my help."

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O, my own God, I will give you thanks forever.

**Music**: “Minha Galera” by Manu Chao, performed by Franco Piccinno

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6ewAkk8v9Q>

**Second reading**: “Opera Singer” by Ross Gay

Today my heart is so goddamned fat with grief

that I’ve begun hauling it in a wheelbarrow. No. It’s an anvil

dragging from my neck as I swim

through choppy waters swollen with the putrid corpses of hippos,

which means lurking, somewhere below, is the hungry

snout of a croc waiting to spin me into an oblivion

worse than this run-on simile, which means only to say:

I’m sad. And everyone knows what that means.

And in my sadness I’ll walk to a café,

and not see light in the trees, nor finger the bills in my pocket

as I pass the boarded houses on the block. No,

I will be slogging through the obscure country of my sadness

in all its monotone flourish, and so imagine my surprise

when my self-absorption gets usurped

by the sound of opera streaming from an open window,

and the sun peeks ever-so-slightly from behind his shawl,

and this singing is getting closer, so that I can hear the

delicately rolled r’s like a hummingbird fluttering the tongue

which means a language more beautiful than my own,

and I don’t recognize the song

though I’m jogging toward it and can hear the woman’s

breathing through the record’s imperfections and above me

two bluebirds dive and dart and a rogue mulberry branch

leaning over an abandoned lot drags itself across my face,

staining it purple and looking, now, like a mad warrior of glee

and relief I run down the street, and I forgot to mention

the fifty or so kids running behind me, some in diapers,

some barefoot, all of them winged and waving their pacifiers

and training wheels and nearly trampling me

when in a doorway I see a woman in slippers and a floral housedress

blowing in the warm breeze who is maybe seventy painting the doorway

and friends, it is not too much to say

it was heaven sailing from her mouth and all the fish in the sea

and giraffe saunter and sugar in my tea and the forgotten angles

of love and every name of the unborn and dead

from this abuelita only glancing at me

before turning back to her earnest work of brushstroke and lullaby

and because we all know the tongue’s clumsy thudding

makes of miracles anecdotes let me stop here

and tell you I said thank you.

**Music**: “Julia” by John Lennon, performed by Franco Piccinno

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5CLgQIXHVI>

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*Blessed are you, loving Creator.  
How sweet are your words to the taste,  
sweeter than honey in our mouths.  
How precious is your faith and leading in our lives,  
like a fabric finely woven in our hands.  
How marvellous is your imagination for the world,  
and your love for every living being is endless.  
Our voices shall sing of your promises  
and our lips will part to offer witness and thanks.  
Blessed be you. Blessed be God for ever.*

*adapted from the Anglican “Prayer of Thanksgiving”*

**Communal Blessing**

When the pot breaks, we peel back its shards and find a hidden world filled with roots. And, God, it is beautiful. The bare roots beg for a new home, a place to stretch out into richness. The plant’s leafy crest has wilted from its captivity in the pot. So we plant it in moist dark soil. It needed its vessel to be broken so that it could grow. It needed an ending so that it could claim the beginning of fullness. And so we thank you, Holy One, for breaking us open, for showing us the way to a new being, a new home. Amen.

**Music:** “Blackbird” by Paul McCartney, performed by Franco Piccinno

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_Rm5t9oFpU>

*Be refreshed. Grow anew. May you find Divine peace through all circumstances.*