

Reflections for Tuesday, June 23 by Pastor Kate Bottorff

*“By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down
and there we wept when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there we hung our harps.
For there our captors asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’
How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?”*

Psalm 137:1-4

Psalm 137 is a poem written when the people of Judah had been carried off to Babylon. They had been exiled from all that was precious. This past week brought more news to disturb and upset. There was yet more unveiling of long-hidden injustices, an increase in the spread of Covid 19, continuing demonstrations, random shootings, cancellation of traditional events. Bad news seems sometimes to go on and on, even when the push is to reopen and return to normal. These past few months have felt like we are inhabiting a foreign land, a strange new landscape not of our own making. We long to return to that which is familiar and fulfilling. How can we sing? How can we find hope and joy in such a time?

Last Saturday was the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year. Every Summer Solstice I read aloud a poem by e e cummings. It’s words always make me smile and sigh.

*“I thank you God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes.*

*(i who have died am alive today,
and this is the sun’s birth
day of life and of love and wings; and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth.”*

How can we sing? Our faith invites us to sing in even in those times when it seems dark and we feel lost and alone and like we have been dropped into a foreign land. But sing we must even as we embrace our sadness and longing.

e e cummings’s poem has more lines, and it has been written into song. The link to listen is below. Just tap on it (and please ignore the ad!). The words to the poem are printed as it is sung. May it bring grace to troubled minds, joy to your souls, and make your hearts dance with delight. May it be your prayer and your song for this day.

<https://youtu.be/DdZbA-HoHYA>

