

Singing
to Mourn and Praise,
to Hope, and to Bless

In the Spirit of Olive Emma Pitkin Tamm
1923-2025

*Grief is akin to praise; it is how the soul recounts the depth
to which someone or something has touched our lives.*

Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*

1 our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
 2 suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
 3 from ev - er - last - ing thou art God, to end - less years the same.
 4 short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.
 5 they fly, for - got - ten, as a dream dies at the o - pening day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
 our hope for years to come,

be thou our guide while life shall last,
 and our eternal home.

Opening Prayer

Lover of Souls, from whom we come and unto whom we go, and from whom neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth can separate us: Thou art our dwelling place in all generations. We thank Thee for all enriching memories and uplifting hopes, for the sacred and tender ties that bind us to the unseen world, for the dear and holy dead who encompass us like a cloud of witnesses and make the distant heaven the home of our hearts. Grant us during our earthly pilgrimage to abide in their fellowship, and in thy heavenly country to become partakers of thy joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon (excerpts from chapter 7)

I also am mortal, like everyone else, a descendant of the first-formed child of earth; and in the womb of a mother I was moulded into flesh. And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth; my first sound was a cry, as is true of all. There is for all one entrance into life, and one way out.

Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to sceptres and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases.

It is Wisdom who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times, the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons, the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals, the powers of spirits and the thoughts of human beings, the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots.

There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle.

For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty. Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.

Singing

Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

Words: Ruth Duck. Music: David Hurd. #60 in *Voices Found* hymnal.

1 Come and seek the ways of Wis - dom, she who
 2 Lis - ten to the voice of Wis - dom, cry - ing
 3 Sis - ter Wis - dom, come, as - sist us; nur - ture

danced when earth was new. Fol - low close - ly what she
 in the mark - et - place. Hear the Word made flesh a -
 all who seek re - birth. Spi - rit - guide and close com -

teach - es, for her words are right and true. Wis - dom
 mong us, full of glo - ry, truth, and grace. When the
 pan - ion, bring to light our sa - cred worth. Free us

clears the path of jus - tice, show - ing us what love must do.
 word takes root and rip - ens, peace and right - eous - ness em - brace.
 to be - come your peo - ple, ho - ly friends of God and earth.

Reading from *There and Then* by Olive

And our yard had another distinction, in being the passageway to the Secret Tree. This was a monstrous great oak, standing on the edge of a clearing in the woods in back of our house, five or six minutes' walk away. It must have been at least sixty or seventy years old in my day, and presumably had been found and kept a secret, in its Victorian youth, by the first boys to come across it and recognize its quality; by my time, it was well known to the entire neighborhood, parents and children alike. It was a Tree of definite character and distinction; its large long horizontal limbs, the lowest ones only a few feet off the ground, offered both challenge and shelter and were about as good a child habitat as can be imagined. We repaired there as a group, by twos and threes, and even alone (at least I did) when things got too prickly at home. The Secret Tree was in fact our clubhouse. But as far as I recall we didn't do any systematic improvement or exploitation such as would certainly occur to a child of today. We didn't bring pillows or blankets, or hang swings from the branches, or build platforms in the crotches, or have meals there; nor were there initials or hearts carved in its bark. I think it had too much of an adult persona, or maybe just too much magic, for those kinds of desecration; it was an accepting, supporting Tree but not one to be trifled with.

Singing

Follow, Follow

Words and Music: English traditional.

Fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low fol - low me.

Whith-er shall I fol - low, fol - low thee? With-er shall I fol - low, fol - low Thee?

Through the green - wood, through the green - wood, through the green-wood fol - low me!

Psalm 121: O Maker of the Heavens and the Earth

Slowly, in the shade

Refrain

Psalm Paraphrase and Music: Ellen Oak

O Ma - ker of the earth, you are my help.

O Ma - ker of the hea-vens and the earth, you are my help.

Verse tone (to be sung in four parts)

I look up at all the mountains and **I** ask:
Where will **help** come from?
My help comes from **the** God
Who made heaven **and** earth.

Refrain

She does not let your **foot** slip.
She stays awake to keep watch **o**ver you.
Yes, the **Holy** One
Neither slumbers **nor** sleeps.

Refrain

She gives you shade in her great **green** branches.
She is near to you, close **by** your side.
The sun will not hurt you **by** day,
Nor the moon **at** night.

Refrain

She protects you from **all** evil.
She **keeps** you safe.
She will guard you as you come and go, rise **and** fall,
Today **and** always.

Refrain

Reading from *There and Then* by Olive

But as you achieved the porch and paused to get your breath and your bearings, turning away toward the east you were taken by the throat and flung into another sphere of existence. Ten miles away across the valley, crowning and dominating the long skyline of the Green Mountain Range, there rose like a divine word the asymmetrical profile of the mountain known as Camel's Hump. This mountain—only a little over four thousand feet high, but at that the third highest in the state—is one of those presences with a natural authority over the human spirit. People up there, rough farmers all, speak of it in a special tone of voice, as if it might hear; they glance up at it quickly in the midst of their chores, to call it to witness or to ground themselves in its strength (or of course, sometimes—being farmers—just to see what the weather is up to). I saw it, from the first, as belonging to my family, and myself as belonging to it, forever.

Singing *The Mountains, the Mountains* Words and Music: Washington Gladden

The musical score for "The Mountains, the Mountains" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "The moun-tains! The moun-tains! We greet them with a song, Whose ech-oes re-bound-ing their wood-land heights a-long, Shall min-gle with an-thems that winds and foun-tans sing, Till hill and val-ley ga-ly gai-ly ring." The score includes measure numbers 1, 3, and 6.

Yes, You Drew Me From the Womb Words: Psalm 22: 9-10. Music: Ellen Oak

The musical score for "Yes, You Drew Me From the Womb" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line. The lyrics are: "Yes, you drew me from the womb. You kept me safe at my mo-ther's breast. I be-longed to You e-ven from my birth. You are my God from my mo-ther's womb." The score includes measure numbers 1 and 5.

A Poem by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Singing

Exsultate Justi

Words: Psalm 33:1-3. Music: Ludovico da Viadana (1560-1627)

Exsultate justi in Domino, rectos collaudatio. Confitemini Domino in cithara, in psalterio decem chordarum. Psallite illi, cantate ei canticum novum, bene psallite ei in vociferatione.

Sing joyfully to the Holy One, you just ones; it is fitting for the upright to praise God.
Let us praise the Holy One with the harp; make music to God on the ten-stringed lyre.
Sing to the Holy One a new song; play skillfully for God, and shout for joy.

Reflection and Offering

We begin with a bit of silence to let the singing and readings sink in, and our awareness to distill. Perhaps memories of Olive rise to the surface; what she taught us; how she inspired us. And more broadly, what matters most for us in this moment, whether we knew Olive or not? What do we notice? What stands out for us? What moves us?

Then, while we listen to the Kyrie by Eric Tamm, we create small flags to be strung together and flown outdoors as laments, hopes, blessings: as the energy we want to release into the cosmos. We can cut the flags to shape them; and paint, and draw and write on them. They will fly outside until they dissolve in light and dark, heat and cold, water and wind; until they give over their current form, and are incorporated into new forms, in communion with the ongoing becoming of all that is.

Prayers

O God, who bindest us to life by holy and tender ties: We gratefully recall all that our beloved Olive was to us; all that she stood for in the world. May we continue to live in the companionship of her spirit, and carry out as much of her purpose as we can. May we be loyal to the values and causes for which she gave her life. Thus in our life may she still live on, to our own comfort, and the welfare of thy world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Through the long day support us, O God, till the evening time when the shadows lengthen; when comes thy stillness in the rising stars; when the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in thy great mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Bring us, Almighty God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness and dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no foes nor friends, but one equal identity; no endings nor beginnings, but one equal eternity, in the habitations of thy majesty and of thy glory, world without end. **Amen.**

Singing

Crossing the Bar

Words: Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). Music: Rani Arbo, arr. Peter Amidon.

Sunset and evening star, And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar, When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep, Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell, And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell, When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face When I have cross'd the bar.

Sharing Peace (and anointing with Chanel No. 5)

Singing

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Words: from *New Version of the Psalms of David*, 1696. Paraphrase of Psalm 42:1-7.

Music: Hugh Wilson, adapt. and harm. Robert Smith. #658 in *Hymnal* 1982.

1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cell - ing, joy of heaven, to
 2 Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all thy
 3 Fi - nish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less

earth come down, fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
 life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -

faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
 more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - way bless - ing,
 ly re - stored in thee: changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,

pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
 serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our

thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

Blessing

Life is short. Death is sure. Love endures.

So let us choose a way of love,
Early, and often, and for the long haul;

May we laugh when we can and cry as we must.
May we live fully and die well.

And may Mercy, Grace, and Peace
Rest upon us and remain with us and all the world,
This night and forever.

Amen.

Singing

Day is Done

Words: Daniel Quinn, alt. Music: Traditional Welsh.

Day is done, but love un - fail - ing dwells ev - er here;
Eyes will close, but you, un - sleep - ing, watch by our side;

5
Sha - dows fall, but hope pre - vail - ing calms ev' - ry fear.
Death will come; in love's safe keep - ing still - we a - bide.

9
Great - Cre - a - tor, none for - sak - ing, take our hearts of love's own mak - ing,
God of love, all e - vil quell - ing, sin for - giv - ing, fear dis - pell - ing,

13
Watch our sleep - ing, guard our wak - ing, be - al - ways near.
Stay with us, our hearts in - dwell - ing this - e - ve - tide.

A Final Moment

We pull in the energy around us, breathing in all we want from this experience.
Amen. **Amen.**

We send forth the energy of this experience into the cosmos, breathing out all we wish for the world.
Amen. **Amen.**

We are still, arms at our sides and palms open, blessing and completing this moment
Amen. **Amen.**

Postlude

Ave Maria

Music: J. S. Bach and Charles Gounod.