

## **“Song in a Weary Throat”**

**Rev Nathan Detering**

**April 30, 2017**

*“Here is the world; beautiful and terrible things will happen.*

*Be not afraid.*

*Because this is what we are about:*

*We hold hope for each other when hope is hard to find.*

*We plant seeds that will one day grow.*

*We are prophets of a future not our own.*

*We cannot do everything,*

*But we can do something.*

*So forget your perfect offering.*

*There is a crack in everything.*

*That is how the light gets in.”*

On Sunday morning for the last many months,

Maybe since when I realized that that the news cycle wasn't some fever  
dream,

But actual history happening in my actual lifetime,

And I realized the lonesome walks in the woods alone wasn't going to cut it,

And beautiful Mary Oliver poetry about marshes and seashore and birds and  
bears wasn't alone wasn't going to cut it,

And heartrate busting hill intervals on my bicycle so that I couldn't think of  
anything else alone wasn't going to cut it,

And date night with Karyn alone wasn't going to cut it,

And afternoon superhero saving the world movies with my kids at the AMC  
in Framingham, the theatre all dark and womblike,  
alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And trying to coax lilies and pink English lavender and periwinkle creep  
And, the hardest of all, young grass seedlings, from my resistant Holliston  
soil alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And silent meditation before the house stirred alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And staring into happy, unconditional love as long as you feed me Golden  
retriever eyes alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And additional sessions with my wonderful therapist of many years wasn't  
alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And minister retreats with their small groups and one-too-many sermons  
And liturgical dance really wasn't going to cut it,  
And prayer in any of its four forms – thanks, gimme, whoops, and wow –  
Alone wasn't going to cut it,  
And addictive refreshing the news app on my phone definitely wasn't going  
to cut in,  
And staying up at night, blinking into the dark, asking for strength and help  
And inspiration to be the minister you need me to be, and these times need  
me to be, and I need me to be alone wasn't going to cut it....

Yeah, after realizing that most of what I have typically done in my life to  
help me feel centered and strong and mostly non-anxious and  
Comforted and soothed and still and rooted and resolved and resilient  
Wasn't enough to help my soul grow and that I needed to add another  
practice to my repertoire –  
Because please tell me you know that religion is so much less about belief,

And much more about behaviors we practice –  
 I began, on Sunday mornings, arriving here in our 1830 sanctuary ever  
 earlier, usually before anyone else, which is how I like it,  
 so I can put in fresh candles and unlock doors and open shutters,  
 because windows are the cracks that let our light in,  
 and wrestle again with the wick that never stays intact in our chalice lighter,  
 And print off a copy of the sermon, and check to see if what I have written  
 actually still sounds as good, or better, or worse than when I last read it,  
 Because you never know,

All so I can be done with all my tasks in time for the choir and Sarah and Siu  
 Yan to arrive and begin rehearsing whatever it is they will be singing that  
 day or, as is the case today, what they are preparing for the upcoming Music  
 Sunday...

Me making a fresh cup of my coffee (is this my second or third? If it's my  
 third I'm going to preach really fast!),  
 And taking my seat usually in the sixth row back, on the edge so the sunlight  
 Will shine on my face...

Sarah gathering everyone and starting, first, with this warm-up sigh  
 (Sarah, would you do it? Choir?)

The sigh meant, I guess, to warm up and release the vocal chords,  
 But that I hear and feel as a sigh of relief and release...

All the angst and held breath of the week that lives deep in the diaphragm,  
 Coming up through the chest, and up through the throat, rising, rising,  
 And out of the mouth....AAAAAaaaaarhhhhhhh!

Friends, do it with me?

The living, loving sigh coming as a song of relief and release out of perhaps  
Weary throats...

And once settled, me there in the 6<sup>th</sup> row, the time now 9:45,  
and many of you getting ready to come here, trying to rally yourself and,  
too, whatever other humans you may share life with,  
Debating as you pull sweaters over heads and shoes on feet, I'm sure,  
If you want to be spiritual but not religious today, meaning  
You hang out solo rather than be in community,  
Because, hey, the sermon title didn't look that interesting!  
But then hopefully lured or chided into coming anyway because you  
Remember your minister telling you that we come to worship not for  
ourselves so much as the person next to us,  
Because trying to live a life all independent and individualized and solo is  
so...wearying and, frankly, unwise, because we need each other, right?  
Yeah, we do.

We hold hope for each other when hope is hard to find.  
We plant seeds for each other that will one day grow.  
We singing each other's songs, when the songs may be our taste and when  
they're not,  
Because we need songs to come up out of our throats,  
Especially when we're weary.

Friends, our worship theme is vulnerability this month. I don't like  
vulnerability.

Which means I have yet another growth opportunity before me.

Oh yeah.

But the vulnerable thing to say that it has been wearying year...  
Me, like you, maybe just a little tired of the news cycles,  
And the constant email alerts to sign this petition and attend  
That rally,  
And the energy it takes to stand up and resist,  
And pay attention and get and stay 'woke,'  
All of worthy and necessary and needed and important,  
Especially for those of us learning that our privilege means that  
Many of the things happening in the news won't directly affect us.

But in a headline and tweeting world and not a song or choir world,  
in a time when Trump talk and North Korea  
And Mother of All Bombs get all stuck in my weary throat,  
Me coughing and choking,  
I've been coming on Sunday mornings all year and sit there in the 6<sup>th</sup> row to  
Hear the songs, to let them wash over me,  
To help me move from the cacacophony of the world to the choir for my  
spirit.

So,.. (as M. Marty says) because we live and breathe noise more than we  
realize,  
And because the pace of our digital lives is pretty much ridiculous,  
And because there is fear that overwhelms young an old,  
And because of the punishing rhetoric about people we don't care to know,  
I need our choir's music more than ever.  
Choir, you are my song, our song, for our weary throats.  
Bless us, for we are in need of blessing...

