

MURMUR

A recurring motif of the way of God's mercy in the world
is the Spirit's murmur of two words:

What if?

When the profound simplicity of such a murmur is heard
and enters the chambers of one heart, then another,
and a people give it credence despite doubts and detractions,
investing in a risk lit by that first murmur,
a new story is graciously dared, latest kindling of ancient lore.

What takes flame and makes flame and renews each day the fire,
is the invitation to belong, the impulse to serve with mercy,
and to learn from this meaning-laden, memory-vested place,
as the house draws into its story those who arrive
with hearts as open as that red-bright door.

Good stories unite and gather us around the hearth.
Good stories inspire and transcend their own limits,
working their way for goodness, to re-mind and re-hearten,
the disparate drawn into one,
as the diverse water vessels poured what became the one water,
affirming the origins yet leaping outwards, flowing onwards,
claiming connections, recognizing kindred,
stirring todays and coaxing tomorrows.

The Irish have a legend about an enchanted harp,
a lyrical instrument that of its own accord plays three melodies:
lament, lullaby and rhapsody: three variations that evoke the whole of life.

What sorrows do we tell, what songs of peace are ours, what echoes of Magnificat joy?
Thirty years ago, invisible strings arrived from myriad cultures
to craft here a new harp,
to enable a music already enshrined in the story but as yet unheard.
What music has it played since, that has travelled truly from ear to spirit?
What music is humming, reverberating between the walls and floors?
What melodies are insistently sounding but still wait to be greeted at the door?
Where is the music of *What if?* this day?

Catherine received the question, *What if?*
She made it a home and gave it a voice.
Her companions rendered the murmur into tunes beyond their imagining
and we in our complex, fractious time sing on,
the words in sometimes unknown tongues, yet melodies familiar,
sometimes dissonance, sometimes harmony,
but sing we do.

All it takes is one heart to receive the Spirit's *What if?*
and one voice to persuade an idea to sound,
all it needs is a people to take up the tune gratefully, gracefully,
and to keep singing,
to keep singing to the music of the harp,
in and from, about and beyond Catherine's house,
God's mercy in perpetual making.

Amen is a word for continuing,
it signifies a bringing to being, not an end,
and so, we sing with joy and hope and awe,
Amen, Amen.