

# The wind among the trees

I sat among the trees once. And a wind was blowing.  
Quite a strong wind; I could hear it in the trees –  
rushing, rushing. A lovely sound, soothing to my ears.  
I stopped what I was writing and began to listen.

I remembered that Jesus said that the Holy Spirit was like  
the wind. You could hear it; see its effect.  
But you couldn't see the wind itself. You couldn't see  
where it was coming from, nor going to.  
And I wondered, "Are you showing me something about  
your Spirit, Lord?"  
So I sat, and I listened, and I watched.

They were big, old trees where I sat.  
Tall they were, in an ancient wood, well-branched,  
shapely.  
Beech, grey bark against the clear blue of the sky.  
And leaves: they were leaves that knew the wind;  
leaves that let the wind know them.  
They looked, like beach leaves look in a wind: full of life –  
and with a certain beauty all their own.

I watched the great crowns of those great trees.  
I watched the branches sway and the leaves turn.  
And I saw that they didn't all move together:  
they moved as a gust caught one, and let another go;  
a sway here; and there, a swing, gently, back;  
with the leaves settling;  
while still another took up the game afresh  
and came to life.

I thought about the boughs of all those great trees  
not moving all as one,  
and realised, that's how it is with us.  
When the Spirit blows through us: he gusts,  
and each breath grasps a branch here, or there.  
And just because we don't all move together,  
does not mean the breath is any the less from God.  
Back there among the trees my eyes were upwards,  
towards the tall branches.  
It was there, after all, that the actions was.  
"Is it so with us?" I wondered.  
"Is it the reaching upwards that catches the Spirit?"

Now, hardly had that thought suggested itself,  
when powerfully, bushes along the ride side,  
low down, mere shrubs and seedlings,  
*they* rocked and swayed, as a strong draught  
swept down from the height and along the path.

“It’s not just the tall; it’s not just the great,” I thought.  
The wind blows where *it* wills,  
and the Spirit blows where *he* wills –  
certainly among the tall and mature,  
who have known the gales of decades,  
but also on the forest floor where the youngsters are,  
and the lowly, the dwarfs, the misshapen,  
who never could make it to the top.  
So it is with everyone who is brought to life by the Spirit.

Then it seemed, in my wood, that the breathing of the  
wind eased. Rushing ceased; movement stilled.  
And in the peace, across the road, among the larches,  
I heard a different sound.  
Same wind: among trees: but a new sound.  
Larches are different – they have needles, not leaves –  
and the needles play a finer, higher, rarer music.

Theirs is also music of trees responding to the wind.  
No less music for being different.  
Only another movement in the wind-wood symphony.

“Then *I* must never imagine,” came the thought,  
“that *my* kind of tune  
is the only sound pleasing to the ear of my Lord.”  
He sends the Spirit: the Spirit blows where he wills.  
And there comes the sound – of response  
among all those brought to life, by the Spirit.

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