

The Song of Mortal Beingsⁱ

1. O God, the beauty of your name fills all the earth, so even from the tips of little ones, the innocent, the suckling babes your praise shall rise to overflow the heavens.
2. From there, the center of your household strong, your enemies are stilled and our avenger bound in chains and gone.
3. So when I lift my eyes to see you there, I see the height of heaven itself, a book of beauty your fingers wrote. I see through veils of stars and space, the canopy of sun and moon you set in place.
4. Then who are we to stand before all this and see? Do you see us and do you care?
5. Yes, we are mortal beings set in this world, below the splendor of transcendent space.
6. You placed us here, vice-regents of your realm, and gave the earth into our care.
7. You bid us cherish all this that's ours, all beast and creatures of the wild.
8. The birds of air, the fish of sea, the plants, and everything that lives and moves are we to know and love.
9. We sing this song of praise to you; your name beyond all this we know. We sing first here so we can learn to care at all.

ⁱ NOTES:

1. This Psalm is a beloved hymn to God of the universe. Imagine the psalmist standing at night under the bright canopy of stars singing this poem. The night sky has always been for humanity a source of wonder and awe. Looking up on a clear night with the vast star-field spread out above puts our lives and world into a very different perspective. We see ourselves as small and insignificant in the vastness, but are we? A voice out of the universe seems to answer our question, "you have a sacred place and a role to fulfill."
2. In this poetic version of the Psalm the term "vice-regents" is used to express the part we play in the universe.
3. Suppose we begin to imagine the earth as literally in our care. Again, it is precious gift to be conserved and not squandered. This is the theology of creation at its best within Christian tradition.

MEDITATIONS:

- A. Interestingly, the psalmist sees a multilayered universe; the visible and the invisible are one reality woven together with the affairs of earth and humankind. We live in the great web of creation. The question always is how much do we love the creation, how seriously do we take our vice-regency? For many, the center of that care revolves around themselves. The creation and anyone else is peripheral. So I have to ask myself from time to time, "How seriously do you take your cosmic responsibilities?"
- B. The final verse of the Psalm expresses the fact that in direct relationship to God we can learn to care for something outside ourselves.

This translation, notes and meditations were taken from "**ANCIENT SONGS SUNG ANEW: the psalms as poetry**" by Lynn C. Bauman
