

The GARDEN of WILDERNESS

'By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. Psalm 137:1-4

Our 'wilderness places' come in many forms. Sometimes like barren bomb sites; sometimes like thorny disorientating overgrowth. When life leads us through desert places, or we are overwhelmed by confusion and feel far from home, we may despair. Sometimes we simply cannot see the bigger picture. Yet there is worth-ness to be found in the wilderness.

Cheerful Unrepentant Weeds

In the beginning
God saw the cheerful unrepentant weeds:
thistles and dandelions –
and God saw that they were good.
They were fruitful and multiplied.
They bloomed on poor soil
and in the barren wilderness;
they brought colour into a solemn world.

God considers them as well as the lilies –
they don't toil or spin either,
but they breed like rabbits and spread like wildfire.
Never anxious about tomorrow,
today they reclaim the wasteland,
break through concrete, transform bomb-sites.

They are treasure
hidden in a field.
Common as muck, but
clothed in purple and gold
they proclaim the presence of
their creator.

God, knowing the secret
of life and death,
created green shoots
that spring up after rain...
and seeds that will only grow
if they fall in the earth and die.

These weeds –
as down-to-earth as you or me –
are parables
of the wisdom and work of God.

Lord, when all is unfamiliar
and not of my choosing,
stay near.

When I am far from home
and strangeness surrounds,
bring comfort in a stranger's land.

When doubts flood in
and memory twists
the journey of your love for me,
remind me of your promise
that you will never leave me
or forsake me.

I will walk in hope
and wait for better days.



Poem by Jan Sutch Pickard (Dandelions and Thistles). Prayer by Eddie Askew (There was a Garden) with permission. Photo AEM Chelsea 2017