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A Meditation on Creation

by Karen A. DeMol

You know the creation story. Genesis tells it to us: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was formless and empty.” Or as another translation has it, “waste and void.”

Void.

Nothing there. *Nothing.*

No star, nor green tree. No force of gravity. Not even black holes. No color. No sound. Silence.

Nothing.

“ And the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.” That is how he began.

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” Light! And with it, color, light prised into vibrant purple, gentle yellow, brilliant red, colors enough for every shade of lake and flower, colors enough for a thousand paintings, set out there right at the beginning of things.

And sound. God made that too, somewhere in those days of primeval silence, conceiving the idea of sound, spinning out into his world the sine wave, choosing the pitches of the overtone series from which would spring tunes and harmonies in a thousand shapes and sizes, building into the woods and fibers the resonance power, a megaorchestra of tone colors. And God made trees, rosewood and ebony and black granadilla. No man made these marvels.

Then God made us. Made us with eyes to see shade and shape. Made us with ears to hear the shimmering rustle of leaves, the staccato of lightning, the percussion of thunder, the mottos of birdsong. Made us larynxes to sing. Made us with hands to fashion clarinets from the granadilla and Steinways from the ebony, to the call forth flutes from the metals hidden in the depths of the earth.

Then God charged us. “You are my stewards,” he said. “I charge you to care for my world, my precious world. And I charge you to explore my world, discover its secrets, develop its potential. See, it is a splendid garden with myriad wonders and intricacies. It is complete and perfect, the way I made it; but it has potential that I leave in your charge, in your care. Take my color to rejoice your eyes. Take my sound to rejoice your ears; make things of it, imaginative things, beautiful things. Sing your joys and play my glory with radiant sound-shapings.”

“You are my stewards,” he said. That is our calling, that is our task, we artists, we musicians: we are stewards of God’s world of sound, God’s world of light and color and shape.

But not for your own glory, he said. Use it in my honor, because it is my world. And use it to care for the others I have made, to whom I have also given ears and eyes. This too is our calling, to nourish our neighbors in the matters of sound and shape, light and color. When last he walked this earth, he said, “Feed my lambs.” He said, “Feed my sheep.” Feed them with all good things. And when I come again, he said, I will review your stewardship.

*Let the whole creation cry
Glory! to the Lord on high!*