

24. Now



In March 1994, a month after the playwright Dennis Potter had been diagnosed with a terminal cancer, he was interviewed by Melvyn Bragg. “All we know for sure is the present tense,” he said, “and that nowness has become so vivid for me that, in a perverse sort of way, I’m almost serene.” And then he spoke about a tree he could see from his window, a plum tree in blossom.

“Instead of saying, ‘Oh that’s nice blossom’”, he mused, “I see it is the whitest, frothiest, blossomest blossom that there ever could be... The nowness of everything is absolutely wondrous... There’s no way of telling you; you have to experience it... but the glory of it... the comfort of it, the reassurance...”

Moses was stopped in his tracks not by a tree but by a bush (Exodus 2. 1-6), flaming with glory rather like Potter’s plum blossom. It demanded Moses’ attention. He stopped, he turned aside, he looked. And in that looking, he found God, the eternal ‘now’.

In his poem *The Bright Field*, R.S. Thomas echoes the mystics’ insistence that we too live in the moment. “Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past,” he says, “but turning aside, like Moses, to the miracle of the lit bush”.

Today...

...turn us aside to the holy beauty of the present moment,
that we may find you there, O God, in the nowness of things.

Amen