

## Voices of Hope

What give me hope is the faith and trust that God is ever-present in the world, with us, among us, and within us. No matter what. The beloved English poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning once wrote:

“Earth’s crammed with heaven  
And every common bush aflame  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.”

I ride my trike almost every day along the length of the Milwaukee Trail for exercise; and when I started this practice several years ago, The Trail was new and had wide-open breath-taking vistas of the whole elegant sweep of the valley and the surrounding cloud-dappled mountains. But with Missoula’s rapid urban growth parts of the trail that had had those exhilarating, sweeping, beautiful views became enclosed with high-rise apartments and condominiums. And my rides became increasingly less fun as I grumped my way through those urban canyons.

Until one day I remembered an admonition from another much-loved author to seek the “Infinite in the infinitesimal.” For therein lies great hope and comfort. Hope nods, winks, and scintillates at us from every “common bush.” And every exquisite dandelion blossom. And every valiant little tuft of grass poking up in the sidewalk cracks. And every benighted beaver in the muddy irrigation ditch behind the Milwaukee Depot. And every elderly lady devotedly walking her beloved little dog.

As Joe Frank, an outrageous LA rock disc jockey of the 1960’s once said (on air!)

“God is as close as the vein in your neck....  
Every grain of sand is a message in code.”

Or...to quote a more reputable source (Theodore Roethke): “All finite things reveal infinitude.” And hope!

Barbara Barmeyer