

19th November 2020

Smile

**“What’s the use of worrying?
It never was worthwhile,
So, pack up your troubles in your old kit bag,
And smile, smile, smile.”**

George Asaf, Pack Up Your Troubles

Robert Herrick was a 17th century English lyric poet and cleric. He’s best known for his book of poems, *Hesperides*, which includes the poem “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time”, with its familiar opening line, “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may”. Robert Herrick’s poetry is quite beautiful.

In 1648, he penned a poem with the title *Cherry-Ripe* – whose words are beloved of generations of school choral groups ...

*Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe I cry,
Full and fairs ones; come and buy:
If it be so, you ask me where
They do grow? I answer, there,
Where my Julia’s lips do smile;
There’s the land, on cherry-isle*

Robert Herrick never married, and none of his love poems – as far as we know – is connected with any one woman. But the beauty of his writing shows that he loved the depth and the variety of life. He knew what love could mean. And he knew that a smile – from Julia, or anyone else – could transport him in an instant to lands of beauty and delight.

But is such a moment of beauty and wonder only to be confined to the beginning or deepening of a relationship? What about the toothless grin of a baby in a busy bus on a wet day; the recognition on the face of a child as you wait in the school playground; a huge grin on a friend’s face when they see you at the airport Arrivals’ Gate; the smile in the eyes of a nurse as she comes to your bedside, even though she’s masked and gowned? “Where my Julia’s lips do smile ...”

Where is Julia’s smile for you today? Where’s your moment of transformation, of grace and healing, hope and love, beauty and delight?

A prayer for today

Lord, show me your smile in the wonder of your world. Amen.

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