

14<sup>th</sup> August 2021

## Immeasurable

**“A mystery is something immeasurable.”**

*e e cummings*, Foreword to an Exhibit

I don't know what e e cummings was referring to when he wrote *Foreword to an Exhibit* in 1944, but, for context, it's worth pondering the section which contains the words above:

*Art is a mystery. A mystery is something immeasurable. In so far as every child and woman and man may be immeasurable, art is the mystery of every man and woman and child. In so far as a human being is an artist, skies and mountains and oceans and thunderbolts and butterflies are immeasurable; and art is every mystery of nature.*

In my appreciation of Art, from music to paintings, from drama to opera, I agree absolutely. Art is a mystery, and a mystery is immeasurable.

But that has led me to reflect on two further immeasurable mysteries today. The first: Why did e e cummings use Lower Case letters in the signing of his name and in much of his poetry? If you want to explore that further, you're very welcome. But I think you might well find that it *remains* an immeasurable mystery ...

The second, and more taxing: Why am I the age I am? I don't mean adding the years from the day I was born to this year's birthday, nor even if I'm still worth anything at my age. But why have I lived this long when others don't live for a fraction of the years I've enjoyed? The youngest patient I helped care for in the hospice was eighteen when she died. Why? We can measure *her* years as I can measure mine. But the immeasurable mystery remains – why did she die young, and why am I the age I am?

Today is my birthday. So I give thanks for what I can measure, like my age, or height, or weight, and even the things I can't measure, like the love I've received, or the faith I have, or my worth and value. But I *shouldn't* worry about what I'll never know – the answers to immeasurable mysteries of life and death. A strange thought for a birthday? I don't think so, when tomorrow will bring as many immeasurable mysteries as today. And, if I'm still around to recognise that, then I'll try to be thankful once again.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, help me not to worry about what's immeasurable.  
Just surround me with the mystery of your love. Amen.*