

3rd June 2022

Tick

**“But of course the clock just kept slowly ticking away.
Tick, tick, tick, tick – like it was chipping away at me, at my life.”**

Ryu Murakami, *Audition*

The clock in my study stopped. For three days it told me it was 9.37. And while the clock was undoubtedly accurate twice a day, a stopped clock wasn't really much use. I hadn't had time to source a new battery for it, but today I got it started again. And I never realised how loud the "tick" was in my study clock. It seems now to be *very* loud indeed after the silence of the past three days. The "tick, tick, tick, tick" might even be "chipping away ... at my life", as it was for the writer, Ryu Murakami.

I could, of course, examine the innards of my study clock to find out what *makes* it tick. But what would be the point of that? It's satisfying enough that the clock "slowly ticking away" tells me its working *and* that the time showing is now accurate. That'll do me just fine ...

Dylan Thomas, in his *Poetic Manifesto* from 1961, warns against digging into the innards of something else to find out what makes it tick.

You can tear a poem apart to see what makes it technically tick ... You're back with the mystery of having been moved by words. The best craftsmanship always leaves holes and gaps in the works of the poem so that something that is not in the poem can creep, crawl, flash, or thunder in. The joy and function of poetry is, and was, the celebration of man, which is also the celebration of God.

What Dylan Thomas says about poetry also apply to issues faith, and in particular, to the nature of God. There are holes and gaps in my faith, just as Thomas indicates there are in the best of poetry. They are there so that other things, new things, personal things, insights, revelations, meaning, call them what you will, "can creep, crawl, flash, or thunder in". Leave no gaps, have a faith with no spaces, and you have a belief-system that's devoid of wonder, mystery and growth. Know how everything works, and you have nothing else to learn.

So now that my study clock is ticking again, I'm reminded that my faith is working too. But I won't take it apart to examine its inner workings. I'm just happy that it's there and it's doing its job, "slowly ticking away".

A prayer for today

A tick of a clock. A new revelation from God.

Things appear to be working just fine. Amen