

21<sup>st</sup> November 2025

## Rainbows

**“Walk on a rainbow trail; walk on a trail of song, and all about you will be beauty. There is a way out of every dark mist, over a rainbow trail.”**

Anonymous, a traditional Navajo song, as quoted in “All Men Seek God: The Quest for Faith in the Words of Great Leaders and Thinkers” (1968) by Dean Walley

My reflection on clouds recently prompted a friend to remind me of a song from my student days, but which I hadn’t listen to for a long while. It was released in 1968 by the Canadian singer/song-writer Joni Mitchell, but is, perhaps, best known in the version by Judy Collins. It is, of course, the wonderful and evocative *Both Sides Now*. The opening lines are these.

*Rows and flows of angel hair,  
And ice cream castles in the air,  
And feather canyons everywhere ...  
I've looked at clouds that way.  
But now they only block the sun.  
They rain and snow on everyone.  
So many things I would've done,  
But clouds got in my way.  
I've looked at clouds from both sides now,  
From up and down, and still somehow,  
It's cloud illusions, I recall.  
I really don't know clouds at all.*

My daughter, who’s a teacher in the North of Scotland, was with us in Edinburgh to celebrate her elder nephew’s eighteenth birthday. On the way home, on a sunny but blustery Sunday, she reported that she was “chasing rainbows.” It was a lovely image, a touching metaphor for a special weekend. But the truth is, there would have been no rainbows if there hadn’t been clouds. Blue skies and clouds; sunshine and showers; brightness and darkness; threatening prospects and the promise of improvement. It’s the way of things. It’s what life is *really* like.

We might see our “angel hair” and “feathered canyons”, and be transported by our clouds to places of mystery and wonder. But we also know what it’s like when the sun is blocked, as the skies darken and we feel the rain and shiver in the snow. So, thank you Joni Mitchell. We know our clouds too, and, like you, we learn to look at them from both sides now – and still know that we can chase rainbows on our journey home.

### A prayer for today

*God of light and love, bless me again, as I walk on your rainbow trail. Amen*