

The Divine Conspiracy
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I. PAN

It started with the wind, blowing across meadows.
Then Pan, the Greek God of shepherds and their flocks.
found the wind and directed it into his pipes.

The wind of the pastures taken into his lungs
And blown over hollow tubes, the giant reed.
The sounds of the fields, focused
Toward pitch, melody, music.

And then someone got lazy.
Reeds grew larger and more fixed.
A servant cranked a pump, filling lungs larger than any god's.

One note added to another and another and another...
Harmony was born and blessed.

In Greek, organon, in Latin, organum,
Meaning instrument or tool,
The means by which the wild winds of Pan's meadows
Swell into the beauty of human culture.

II. SEVENTH GRADE

I'm in seventh grade and I'm fleeing from boring worship.

Down, down, down, into the bowels of the church,

Fleeing from blue hair, from droning speech, from restless infants,

From my own anxiety.

Down the dank staircase and the long, dark hallway,

To the office of my father, the minister, the one who's sermon does not yet play a role in my perception of existence.

My father's office, for this brief hour, is my sanctuary.

A comfy couch, Sunday morning football on a black and white,

Time to think about friendship, funny movies, and my emerging identity.

I have escaped.

And then, the organ.

The bowels of the church rumble

Reminding me that the work of the people continues.

The work of building community did not cease when I left it.

I am caught up in the liturgy I sought to avoid,

In the community that will eventually love me into vitality,

Though, for now, they do so without my consent.

I turn off the TV.

My heart now knows, this is something more than boring.

Week after week, this becomes my worship.

In anxiety and insecurity, I flee what invites me.

I descend to the church's gut.

I wait.

The organ finds me,

Sometimes with raw, unfamiliar Bach.

Sometimes with a hymn, which, at age 12, is already familiar like television jingles.

Before I named my own feelings, stresses, yearnings

The organ named them for me

Anger

Joy

Relief

Confusion

Resolution

III. BUILDING UP

At Corinth, the people were just going through the motions.

They were uttering sounds, but not entirely sure why.

Some spoke in tongues, spoke to God, but no one else benefited.

Paul said, "Let us make sure when we speak,

It is not only for ourselves, and not only for God, but also for each other."

Let the sounds we make, the music we create, be for the sake of others...

Upbuilding

Encouragement

Consolation

If someone blows randomly into an instrument, Paul continues,

Who will want to listen for very long?

If a trumpet is blown to sound like a dying animal,

Whom will that motivate?

When we go on and on and pretend like we're making sense,

Its like shouting vainly into the wind.

Let us make music.

The world is full of sounds.

Let us make music.

The world is full of gossip.

Let us make music.

The world is full of boring platitudes.

Let us make music.

Let us make music, and for these purposes -

to build one another up,

to encourage the despondent,

to console the bereaved.

In the western church, organs were added to sanctuaries not to supplement prayers

Not to augment beauty

Nor even to inspire the so-called faith "full"

Though these certainly happened

The organ participates in a conspiracy

A human conspiracy with the divine

A divine conspiracy

"Spirare" - to breathe

"Com" - together

The organ breathes with the people

Supports the singing of the congregation

The congregation, strangers becoming friends,

Who sing to build one another up,
Who sing to encourage a sister, a brother,
Who sing to console one without hope.

The organ is not a collection of pipes.
The organ is not a keyboard.
The organ is not the bellows.
The organ is the whole building.
Like a heart beating within the chest,
This organ extends life to the extremities.

The organ is a symphony at hand
The flutes of Pan
The bells of tall towers
The reeds of the Nile
The ocean winds bellowing in a seaside cave

Whether we enter or whether we flee
The primordial sounds of creation find us
Nothing is without sound
Buried in the belly of the earth, a new song is being composed
Even without our consent
And it will find its voice in us.