



Grain

"There are two things that interest me: the relation of people to each other, and the relation of people to land." –Aldo Leopold

Field

- ¹ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
- ² for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.
- ³ Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
- ⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.^[a]
- ⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Savior.
- ⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.^{[b][c]}
- ⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in. Psalm 24: 1-7 (semi-continuous reading is verse 7)

Thoughts by William Mattson, Rhinelander, WI

The songs of a river and the songs of the sea are obvious as water plays its tunes on rocks, and roots, and logs and against itself in crashing rapids and thundering waves. Ecologist Aldo Leopold goes further and suggests that if you are very quiet, very still and very patient, like a monastic, you may be able to hear the ancient hymns of the hills. He describes them as vast pulsating harmonies written by the winds and storms, and the lives and deaths of its unassuming plant and animal denizens. On the other hand, in the coming weeks Mother Nature will perform one of its largest, loudest, and longest lasting musical performances ever played. Its immense size, duration, and primitive origins have even inspired some musicians to want to jam with it. This symphony will be offered nearly simultaneously and nearly everywhere, if you live in one of 15 east-central states, by the 17-year cicada after the adults erupt from their silent, monastic underground confinement of 17 years. From sunny treetops they will compulsively sing out their hearts for 2-4 weeks. Males do a fast tempo, high pitch version of Gregorian chants by employing pulsating, buzzing timbale drums to attract females in order to renew their fragile cycle of life. These extraordinary chanters otherwise secretly sip sap from the roots of trees in dank, darkness for 17 years, growing slowly to become short-lived, noisy musicians for just one lifetime hymn. Nobody yet understands why an insect emerges to sing and mate only once in 17 years. Most other cicadas, like our common dog day cicada, emerge without fanfare annually and hum-buzz chant to us on warm summer days. All of Creation's mysterious hymns are precious and sacred gifts. Let's celebrate and give thanks.

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Many blessings upon you,

William Mattson