



*“Hope” is
the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune
without the words –
And never stops – at all –*

**So wrote Emily Dickinson,
a reclusive poet of the 19th century,
who spent most of her life as a ‘stationary pilgrim’.**

I too, along with millions of others, have spent much of this Covid year
a stationary, sedentary pilgrim,
living in feathery, tuneful hope,
often without words to express the overwhelming feelings
provoked by the endless sound bites of doom.

But deep in the soul
the spirit of life is vibrantly alive and active
and often new shoots of awareness
poke their heads above the gloom.

The eye is dazzled by sudden flashes of beauty –
in the blue flash of a kingfisher’s wings
or rain drops glinting on leaf and petal.

A small child, surely not much more than two,
bravely propels her pink pint-sized scooter,
carefree, around the playground,
while big brother joyously tosses a ball at the netball ring.

Small treasured memories of birdsong replace the roar of traffic and train
lifting the heart and bringing a smile to the face.

A friendly local policeman
makes a regular call to ensure that all is well.

And in quiet prayer
the sick and dying and suffering of the world
are raised to new life
in the God who creates and re-creates
and gathers up the whole world
in tender and compassionate love.

Time stands still for brief moments,
and I am blessed and renewed.

Marie Challacombe SM

