

I would like to share some reflections on a piece by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, a young poet from Colorado:

Freedom

To walk alone
on the dirt road.
Whatever the weather,
to be grateful for it.
To step and step
and step again—
not toward an end,
but for the joy
of stepping.
Squirrel tail.
Creek scent.
Swish of last year's leaves.
Nowhere to be
but here.
And the next here.
And next. To know
the self as traveler.
To know the self
as road.
To know each step
as freedom when
there's nowhere
to go.

The poem combines simplicity with depth, using the image of life as a journey, where all we have to do is place one foot in front of the other.

I was particularly struck by the lines “To know the self as traveler. To know the self as road”. It was the second sentence that made me pause. What does it mean if we see ourselves as the road? Two - seemingly contradictory - thoughts came to mind: the first was that we take our fate in our own hands and determine the road we travel as we point each step in a particular direction. The second arose from Jesus saying “I am the way”, suggesting that the choice of road is not in our hands. If Jesus is the way, what is that way?

The life of Jesus was marked by prayer and unstinting service to others, by love of God and love of neighbour, culminating in the inevitability of suffering and death. This is the way Jesus described, and it is also the path he trod: “even unto death, death on the cross” (Philippians 2:8).

So how can these two thoughts be integrated? I would suggest it is through a combination of choice and acceptance.

We each have to discover our own prayer journey - although fortunately there are signposts along the way. Then we are each given our own opportunities to demonstrate our love of our neighbour - I am sure that when the Good Samaritan set off on his journey, he had no idea how it was going to turn out; we cannot determine the opportunities we are given, but we do have the choice between accepting and rejecting them. And finally, we have no choice but to accept pain and suffering, and we have to face the inevitability of death - but we are comforted by the hope of Resurrection.