

Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 21, 2023

Recommended readings: pp. 258-266, "Self-Defense" (part 2), p. 268, "March 16, 1870," and pp. 269-270, "Like to the Rushing of a Mighty Wind"

Tracy K. Smith's poem, "Like to the Rushing of a Mighty Wind," is derived from a speech given by the first Black member of the U.S. Congress, Senator Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi, about the Georgia state legislature refusing to seat Black men who had been recently elected.

...Many of my race
sleep in the countless graves
of the South. If our dead could speak,
what a voice, like to the rushing
of a mighty wind, would come up
from the ground. Her whole people,
white and colored, should race
to each other wholly and with honor,
meet and fit for admission of events
transpired. Now, sir. Sir, now. I wish
my last word upon the bill before us to be:
Now.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (Acts 2:1-2)

So much fear, so much death, so much oppression. So much African American blood spilled. Freed in name only for so long. And when some were duly elected, they were denied their right to represent the people who voted for them. The voices of the dead, echoing the voice of the Holy Spirit, cried out for justice. For liberation. What began on the first Pentecost, the birth of the church, finds its echoes in the cries for justice from those whose lives were stolen from them because of who they were. Today, we unite our voices with that rushing, mighty wind, calling for a powerful change, the rebirth of freedom.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, fill us once again with your righteous wind that sends us forth as new people, determined to never forget, but also committed to never again allowing such terrible injustice to rule our land. May we race to each other wholly and with honor, as your children. Amen.