



The Ninth Day of Christmas January 2, 2021

"Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle/Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella"

I guess I have a thing for songs that focus on the seemingly unimportant characters in the Christmas story. Perhaps it reminds me that we are all important to God, no matter how insignificant we may feel, or others may see us. This one recounts the story of two young girls, farmhands, that discover the infant Jesus and his family in the stable. In the Christmas pageant, if they even made it in, they would have been lumped in with the mass of shepherds, I suppose. But here they are named! They run to alert the village and, coming with cakes to celebrate, the townspeople knock on the door. But this celebration is one of silence and wonder as we watch the beautiful baby sleep and dream.

Now, as a Presbyterian child who spent many a Sunday afternoon in the fellowship hall at potlucks, I appreciated these villagers who knew how to throw a party. Cakes seemed like a much better gift than frankincense, gold, and myrrh. And the admonishment to celebrate babies quietly (decently and in order, too) also made sense to my childhood self. As a kid who needed to understand the logic of everything, who needed everything to be right, I appreciated the realness of this story.

But, actually, I didn't know these words until the song was completely grafted on my heart. See, my grandmother would sing this song to me as she held on her lap every year around Christmas. She would sing it as she folded laundry with five-year-old me rummaging through her closet, trying on her shoes and dresses. She would sing it as we watched Grandpa cut the bottom of the Christmas tree he'd brought home that was always too big to fit in the room. It was her favorite Christmas carol.

But she sang it in French. I didn't know what she was saying, but I knew they were good words, and I knew she loved me. To me, this song is a hug. My grandmother died almost a decade ago, but this song still wraps her arms around me and envelops me in her love. She taught me more about that little baby in the manger through her loving actions than anyone else.

There is something about music that does that. It brings people back to us. Or maybe transports us to them in that heavenly place where they are, just for a moment. I wonder what that song is for you?

Prayer

God of love, thank you for songs that embrace us and love on us. Thank you for people who have taught us about you, about Jesus, about love. Thank you for that baby in the manger. Grant us the moments of quiet contemplation in this season to watch and wonder about that charming child. Amen.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".

Rachel Watson

Supervised Practice of Ministry Intern 2020

Listen: "Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle/Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella"