

‘Reading Scripture as a Time Machine’

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Psalm 38 mentions those lovers standing aside
with no mercy, no empathy.

No hands reach out to pull out those arrows,
no one to lift us from the well or to soothe our sores.
Commentators dwell on stereotypes, the repetition
of a dread-filled mission.

This misery certainly has been described before:
been there, done that, thus a diminishing sorrow.

Wait! Did anyone notice the word “lovers”?

Conventional wisdom focuses on relatives, kinfolk.

Look again at the chorus in that Psalm.

“Lovers”? The writer suddenly becomes more
appealing. More than one, eh? At last, intriguing.
Here, I’m willing to help. I’ll help pull out those barbs
if you can hold still. Or is it me? Am I the one stuck
in this morass? Yet I feel more happiness than grief,
just reading this takes me back to a Sunday School past
and I still hear our youthful voices in synchronicity,
calling in harmony, “Who is the King of Glory?”

No one answers, but the replay is satisfying. I am ten
again, titillated by the word “lovers” and all that
wonderful repetition, like waves at the beach
sending me into a good night, a good night,
the way summer vacation can teach, now and then.