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**Opinion: The mountains are dancing**

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Did you know that something quite extraordinary happens every April right here in New Hampshire? I can tell you that I’m absolutely certain it’s not what you expect!

Yet, every year, it’s enough to bring my heart to that same place of hope that happens when I saw, for example, that young girl singing a song from “Frozen” in a Ukrainian basement or one of the several musicians setting up their own solo orchestra in some littered, dirty, deserted town square to fill the air with music, music tender and enduring enough to drown out the flash of sirens.

But I first discovered this awe-filled yearly event many years ago in a poem by e e cummings, “when faces called flowers float out of the ground.” Here is just the first verse:

when faces called flowers float out of the ground

and breathing is wishing and wishing is having—

but keeping is downward and doubting and never

—it’s april (yes,april;my darling) it’s spring!

yes the pretty birds frolic as spry as can fly

yes the little fish gambol as glad as can be

(yes the mountains are dancing together)

I just knew that one day I’d get to go to New Hampshire and visit Joy Farm, e.e. cummings’s summer home, because I just knew it was there that he found those mountains dancing! And, sure enough, in the mid-1980s, fate brought us here, and soon after, in April (of course), we made our way up to Madison in search of Joy Farm and those dancing mountains.

It was a weekend and, being April, lots of snow was still on the ground. We managed to find the entrance to the long driveway up to Joy Farm but it was fenced off and clearly not passable by car. Undaunted, me, already in full swing with those dancing mountains, was not so easily dissuaded!

So, we made our way back to town in search of someone who might be able to give us some kind of permission to venture up to the farm by foot. My husband, whose feet were a little closer to the ground, well, actually “on” the ground, kept reminding me that those mountains would not be dancing, so unabashedly, with me in jail! Luckily, we were able to locate a man with some authority, in one of the local establishments, who gave us the ok.

I remember he looked quite puzzled when I, especially, could not be persuaded to return in a couple of months when the road to the Joy Farm would be passable. Didn’t he know those mountains were dancing now?

So, at last, up the long driveway we went! The house had been vacant for a while yet still felt to be alive, standing, waiting patiently for the return of bare feet, frivolous chatter, the smell of barbeque and stargazing off the porch. The grounds were open and rambling and a small gazebo-like room, in the middle of the backfield, seemed timeless.

But, without a doubt, it was those dancing mountains, cradling, holding us, that kept me frolicking round and round as if I could somehow fly right into the center of their waking, unguarded “alive;we’re alive,dear:it’s (kiss me now) spring!” pulse.

Away with respectable composure! Down with petty self–consciousness! Let’s dive as “all the pretty birds dive to the heart of the sky” and climb as “all the little fish climb through the mind of the sea!”

It’s April! We’re sun-drenched alive! Our “faces like flowers float out of the ground”! We’re opening “as every leaf opens without any sound!” We’ve quivering, waking, pulsing as “the little fish quiver so you and so I.”

So, yes! Let’s dance, unbridled and undone, for “its april (yes,april;my darling) it’s spring”! and, most wondrously…

“all the mountains are dancing; are dancing”

*Rev. Dr. Stephanie Rutt is founding minister of the Tree of Life Interfaith Temple in Amherst. She lives in Nashua. To read more of her writing visit becomeaforceforgood.com.*