

# DOWN HOME: Hearing the hum of a happy heart

November 30, 2012

All my life, I've been a hummer.

Not a gas-guzzling, pseudo-military vehicle, of course. But the guy you always hear coming; little tunes emanate from the back of his throat.

When we all get to heaven, I'd like to ask the Lord why some people are hummers and others aren't. Maybe I won't care by then, but I've been curious lately. I mean, I can't stop being a hummer. At work, I prefer silence. So, I don't listen to the radio or my tunes, because I don't want to be distracted. But almost every day, I'll hear music, and I'll realize it's me, just humming away.

{mosimage}Sometimes, I can figure out why I'm humming the particular song that runs through my head. Like the other day, when the words and music to "O Bountiful Provider" played like a continuous loop. After the first 30 or 40 times, it started to get on my nerves. Later, I realized the last tune I played through my earphones was Cynthia Clawson's lovely rendition of that evocative hymn.

Similarly, I know why I always hum James Taylor's version of "Mexico" when I body surf in the Florida Gulf. Years ago, I figured out when I'm 25 yards off the coast, there's nothing between Mexico and me but water. So, Sweet Baby James sings "Mexico" in my noggin. Of course, if I follow that logic, I should hum "O, Canada" every time I visit the Panhandle, because there's nothing between my hometown, Perryton, and the Canadian border but barbed-wire fences.

Some songs have played in my head at least once a week for decades. Like

Bob James' theme from Taxi and almost everything Lyle Lovett ever sang, but mostly "She's No Lady (She's My Wife)" and "If I Had a Boat."

Of course, Baptist preacher's kid that I am, a fair share of hymns flit about. But being the "not normal" preacher's kid that I am—reasoned by the one who knows me best and loves me most, Joanna, my wife—they aren't your regular hymns. The Top 3 are "Immortal, Invisible," "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" and "O God Our Help in Ages Past," with occasional interruptions by "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us."

(By the way, I wish a psychologist would conduct a study on why hummers hum the tunes they hum.)

The other day, the context of the moment definitely pushed the buttons on my internal jukebox. The temperature hovered in the mid-70s, and golden leaves floated to the ground. And I hummed "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" as I outlined our flower beds in red and white lights. Idealists and advertisers might argue with my song selection, but in Texas, it makes perfect sense.

When I thank God for my blessings, the first item that generally comes up after I mention my family and friends is music. Humming is the soundtrack of my life.

I hope it pleases God, because it sure makes me happy.