

Songs of comfort

by [Karen An-Hwei Lee](#) in the [June 16, 2021](#) issue

The friendly cellist with a big heart, a long-time resident of a neighboring town where I grew up, who received bouquets from the flower shop where I trimmed roses, said his favorite thing to do after returning from a trip was grocery shopping, savoring the essentials of small life away from the airports and applause: buying milk, fruit like blessings of solace: bread, tea, local honey in a jar slow, lovely as sarabandes, those songs without words aired in isolation through the pandemic. After his dose, Yo-Yo Ma plays an impromptu concert for others waiting in the fifteen-minute interval after the shots to monitor allergic reactions. Masked, he lifts his cello out of its case, perhaps his favorite one named Petunia, then tightens the horsehair bow adroitly. The cello, with its mellow notes of melancholy mingled with hope, fills the hall, like the light at the end of the tunnel, the residents say. *Light at the end of the tunnel.* I know it must be true because I would never put this trite sentence in a poem otherwise. God is waiting for us to pay attention: God is waiting in the light.