



Poems for Eastertide

Advent Anglican / Spring 2021

Welcome

After the challenges of a Lenten-like year, it's time to feast on some poetry: that miraculous union of sound and sense, that lyric mystery we cannot master. We never simply read poems. Poems "read" us. The best verse reads into our struggles and anxieties, gives voice to our wordless desires, heralds conviction in our hearts, quickens our contemplation, and ushers us back into the Garden of God's truth, mercy, and love. I have endeavored to select poems that accomplish this feat from a variety of eras and traditions, and look forward to touring them with you during this season of Eastertide. "O, taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).

Deacon Jeremiah
Eastertide 2021





Week Three

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.





Love's as warm as tears,
Love is tears:
Pressure within the brain,
Tension at the throat,
Deluge, weeks of rain,
Haystacks afloat,
Featureless seas between
Hedges, where once was green



Love's as fierce as fire,
Love is fire:
All sorts—Infernal heat
Clinkered with greed and pride,
Lyric desire, sharp-sweet,
Laughing, even when denied,
And that empyreal flame
Whence all loves came.



Love's as fresh as spring,
Love is spring:
Bird-song in the air,
Cool smells in a wood,
Whispering "Dare! Dare!"
To sap, to blood,
Telling "Ease, safety, rest,
Are good; not best."

Love's as hard as nails,
Love is nails:
Blunt, thick, hammered through
The medial nerves of One
Who, having made us, knew
The thing He had done,
Seeing (what all that is)
Our cross, and His.



- C.S. Lewis

The Altar / George Herbert (1633)

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant rears,
Made of a heart and cemented with tears:
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.

A HEART alone
Is such a stone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:

That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
Oh, let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine.





Hero

With Skywalker, the hand,
Potter, the scar,

Gawain nicks his neck
on the Green Man's blade,

and between Gollum's teeth
is Frodo's severed finger.

Each returns home
with a wound, a blight

now coupled to a routine
unworthy of cinema or song.

Divorced from all gilding,
the true quest begins.

Such myths are why I cannot listen
to ministers who offer life

without pain, why I lie down
beneath inaccessible stars

as lungs breathe in and out
an unsung portion of possibility.

It is why, in this constellation,
there must be one beyond

the world's *kleos*:
a wounded hero,

the source of each
echo.



Psalm 40

Notes

Les disciples Pierre et Jean courant au sépulcre le matin de la Résurrection / Eugene Burnand (1898)

Supper at Emmaus / Rembrandt (1628)

Icon of St. Francis (<http://wp.production.patheos.com/blogs/standingonmyhead/files/2014/10/francis.jpg>)

The Four Elements / mDiMotta / divantart.com (2019)

The Standing Stones of Stenness / orkneyjar.com (2021)

Frodo ("Doors of Durin" / tolkiengateway.net) / Gawain (John Howe: "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" / schoolworkhelper.net) / Potter ("Harry Catching the Snitch" / Pinterest.com) / Skywalker ("Return of the Jedi" / fanpop.com)

Icon of the Four Gospels / The Book of Kells (9th century)