



# HOLY WEEK AT HOME

A collection of poems by  
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## GREATER LOVE

He  
Washed my feet.

He  
Scoured the grained-in dirt  
From my tired, aching feet:  
The lowest task.

He  
Did not ask  
Another to be servant, but  
He  
Knelt  
Stripped to the waist.  
His voice and touch were firm  
And love was there.

He  
Did not care, as we did  
What we thought of Him  
He  
Knew.  
That was a question we had answered  
Once already, and for Him  
It was enough.

My feet were rough  
And filthy from the street.  
It was the strangest moment  
And so sweet.  
His work-scarred hands could be as gentle  
As His eyes.

It came as a surprise

To us that He should be insistent:  
Cherishing  
His grovelling role, when I for shame  
Would take His place.  
My eyes were not on status then,  
But on His face:  
His smile the only accolade  
That I desired.

He seemed inspired  
And worked with bent head and methodically  
Through all, there was a sense of urgency:  
I felt it - and I think  
The others did.

But Peter hid  
"You'll never wash my feet!"  
Shrank from the cleansing, kneeling Christ. Perhaps  
He felt his Lord had disappointed, being kind.  
But Jesus would not be denied,  
Not yet.  
He  
Had his way -  
His own sweet way -  
Before the bitter path His feet would tread

Sit, Peter. Let Him serve you. Let Him love  
Specifically. He has not time enough  
For much more human tenderness.  
O give  
Him chance to wrap His mysteries  
In acts of love.

Soon one will leave, clean-footed  
The circle of the candlelight.  
He goes out to bring down the night.  
Then will your Lord be torn,  
Then, then be scorned.

## PASSOVER TOASTS

'To Life!'

But your will soon be taken:  
Broken as the bread is broken;  
Poured out like the wine for us.

'To Freedom!'

You take chains upon you:  
Prison, death and Hell laid on you;  
Bound and led to Caiaphas

'To Blessing!'

But you hang accursed,  
Peace riven from your heaving breast.  
Are blessed those who mourn?

'Jerusalem!'

Tears on a hill;  
Tears in the garden: 'Not my will  
But Yours'. If only you had known

This day what is needed for peace  
This day what is needed for peace.

## **PASSOVER**

We slink through alleys, less than men and crushed  
By unjust rule, beneath proud Roman feet.  
My heart beats fast tonight. The meal is hushed  
But joyous in the light. Life seems too sweet,  
The wine too strong - it burns me and I quake:  
To tear the bread tears my own soul somehow.  
It is my own too-much-loved flesh I break.  
What do I fear? Man? God? I do not know.

To go to God is not a fearful thing,  
But men have taught me to be faint and fall  
And they will kill the man these men name king.  
I hate our secrecy, when truth is all!  
Do I blaspheme? I whisper it no more.  
Father, behold: I stand - stand at the door.

## **DISCIPLE**

I just don't understand You: never did.  
I followed and I listened and I hoped  
That it would one day all fall into place  
But now, hid in the darkness of Your face,  
I sense a deeper, stranger mystery:  
Something that slides away from scrutiny  
But leaves small traces of an agony  
That I thank God I do not understand.

The cup comes nearer, passed from hand to hand.  
You tremble, but the room is warm and we  
Close in around You. I don't want to see  
What You see in its depths. And dare I drink  
While still not understanding? Dare I shrink?  
I taste, and trust You for the thoughts You know I think.

## GETHSEMANE

I stood tall with the bread, now crumple in  
Upon myself, for my betrayer's loose  
Out in the world. The night is black as sin  
And they are coming: stay? Run? I must choose.  
And so I kneel, and so I pray, as when  
I knelt on fragrant grass by breathing sea  
And raised my all to You. But that was then,  
Eternities ago, when I was free.

I mourn, I mourn for my lost Galilee  
In this dark garden, with this poisoned cup  
Swimming before my eyes. Father, Your will  
Not mine be done. I am abandoned - see!  
They slumber and I cannot wake them up,  
And there are soldiers swarming up the hill.

## LONELY VIGIL

The waiting is the worst of it.  
The slow trickle of mindless minutes dumbly suffered  
With closed eyes and clenched mouth,

Dwarfed by the shadows of strongly-rooted trees  
Twisted by teaching winds, learning to bend, unbroken.  
Feeling exquisitely, completely, all that must be relinquished.

The scrape of stones on knees worn raw with prayer;  
The buzz of insects in their day-long dance,  
Small as men to the Almighty;

The fragrance of the grass, appreciated only  
In the absolute stillness of a heart  
Despairing over its goodbyes;

The voices of friends, drugged with wine and sleep,  
Slipping away from the ear as the burned boat slips  
From the desolate unfamiliar shore;

The distant chime of metal and the scent of flames;  
The bob of lamps snaking across the night:  
They herald darkness – why are they bringing light?

## **THE BETRAYER**

The trembling hand of Judas takes the cup.  
Red, the wine washes over his lips -  
Lips that have spoken betrayal - he slips,  
Spilling a drop.  
Seated at his master's side,  
Doors of forgiveness open wide,  
His soul is tied:  
Speaking in his mind the price  
Of a jar of Nard and a sacrifice.

Their hands touch as they share a bowl  
And satan stirs within his soul,  
But Christ knows well, and well can prove  
The twisted falsehood of his love:  
As all ask questions anxiously -  
Could it be me? Or me? Lord, me?  
Surely not me?

At Christ's command he leaves the light  
And when he leaves them, it is night: -  
Night for his soul that shrinks from sight.  
Yet torches light his path to hell -  
That one sad place he knows so well -  
A lonely hill. A coward's kill.

With eager step and eager kiss  
He greets his Lord and turns from bliss.  
"Rabbi" "My son, I taught not this!"  
One kiss, softer than mockers' blows  
Ironic prelude is to those  
And wounds love more, as Judas knows.

Silver won't purge the stain of blood:  
White heat in his cold, guilty palm  
Sears without balm.  
Yet he, who saw those loving eyes  
And drank his ransom, still denies:  
Alone, hanged, ravaged, cursed he dies.

His silver rots the temple yet;

The hearts of men too soon forget:  
There's many a Judas to be met  
In fields of blood.  
Could it be me? Or me? Lord, me?  
Surely not me?

## **JESUS & JUDAS**

Jesus hosts Judas in the secret room's  
Warm wavering light; in kneeling tenderness  
Washes the feet that raced to seal his doom  
Clean with the godhead's tears; each dangling tress  
An echo of love's fierce futility:  
A woman's costly gift misapprehended  
As waste, when weighed against utility.  
This gift could have been sold. Jesus defended  
The prophecy of her devotion, blessed  
Her heart's extravagance, and Judas lost.  
Yet in the darkened garden, stood as host  
(For darkness is his home, Jesus its guest)  
When Judas might have pointed: this man, this-  
Why draw so near instead and waste a kiss?