

Holy Thursday 2020

“I have longed to drink this cup with you”
Says the One whose mandate is to love
Gathering with friends around a festive table
(A practice now forbidden in these times
When social touch is poison, and the way
We best love one another is to stay apart).

The symbols of this day held in our hearts
Forbidden, in this season, to our bodies.
We cannot drink the wine and share the bread
We cannot pour warm water over feet, and dry them
gently
The altar is already stripped of all
We treasured in our life, now borne away.
Our quiet vigil in the emptiness
The symbol that contains our love, today.

Pandemic Triduum: Good Friday 2020

The symbols that contain our love today
Bare, lonely crossbeams, water, wood and blood
Hymn lyrics that we cannot sing together
Invite us now to die into a strange new life.

Wondrous the word repeated in our song
What wondrous love is this, my puzzled soul
Now asks, feeling the weight of loss
Invited to an opening of heart
That *washes all our sins and grief away*
That can receive a suffering born of love
Stronger than grief or death. I stand, survey
And hope to offer back *my life, my all*.

Holy Saturday 2020

I offer back my love, my life, my all
In time of mourning, in the incongruous sun
Of morning after death brought in the night.
All scattered to our homes, we cannot meet
For burial, or vigil by the tomb
All scattered to our homes, tonight's new fire
Must burn remotely, and by faith, not sight.
Rejoice! The new fire sings of victory
The light shines in the darkness, distantly
We claim the promise, while it is still dark.

While it is Still Dark

(John 20:1)

I wait for light
Praying in darkness
for all I cannot know,
mend or understand,
held in this dark love.

While it is still dark
an elusive presence
calls my heart,
restless as the light
is long in coming.

Into the darkness, an old chant comes:
Wait for the Lord:
keep watch, take heart:
Waiting for light. While it is still dark.

Easter Mourning 2020

While it is still dark, the empty tomb.
Without an explanation, opens up
And everything is changed and quiet hope
Begins to dawn in me. I go to walk
In freedom through the neighborhood
On this spring morning when the blossoming
Of dogwoods, redbuds, tulips overwhelms
With beauty of a spring oblivious
To all our human sadness. Gardeners
Are out in their own yards, preparing soil
And sowing seeds that bode a better time
When gathering to grieve, we may rejoice.

PANDEMIC TRIDUUM, by Kathleen Henderson Staudt, (in *Viriditas: New & Selected Poems* (Wipf & Stock, 2023))

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