

BRIER: GOOD FRIDAY

E. Pauline Johnson

Because, dear Christ, your tender wounded arm
Bends back the brier that edges life's long way,
That no hurt comes to heart, no soul to harm,
I do not feel the thorns so much today.

Because I never knew your care to tire,
Your hand to weary guiding me aright,
Because you walk before and crush the brier,
It does not pierce my feet so much tonight.

Because so often you have hearkened to
My selfish prayers, I ask but one thing now:
That these harsh hands of mine add not unto
The crown of thorns upon your bleeding brow.



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EASTER

POEMS



CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881)

ALICE MEYNELL (1847-1922)

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852-1940)

KATHERINE LEE BATES (1859-1929)

E. PAULINE JOHNSON (1861-1913)

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

COUNTEE CULLEN (1903-1946)

DONNA LEE DAVIS (B. 1945)

"Gethsemane" and "Because We Are Thomas" ©2005 by Donna Lee Davis,
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BECAUSE WE ARE THOMAS

Donna Lee Davis

*Asked whether the Shroud of Turin is
the burial cloth of Jesus, Pope John Paul II replied,
“The Church has never pronounced itself in this sense.
It has always left the question . . .”*

Because we are Thomas—
each of us—
imprisoned by importunate doubt,
He left a sign to satisfy.
Proof positive, a picture:
His worldly flesh recorded
by other-worldly means.

Because we are Thomas—
visual creatures—
craving visual truths of cathode ray
or live by satellite,
He left a sign for our own time
(no less for other generations, but
assuredly for this, our obdurate age)

because we are Thomas—
qualifying faith—
that should we choose,
we may yet look upon His face,
His piteous wounds, and—
Thomas freed—rejoice,
“My Lord! My God!”

EASTER NIGHT

Alice Meynell

All night had shout of men and cry
 Of woeful women filled his way;
Until that noon of somber sky
 On Friday, clamor and display
Smote Him; no solitude had He,
 No silence, since Gethsemane.

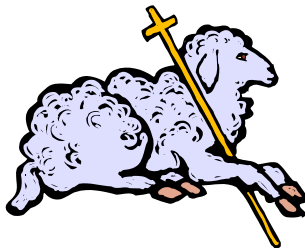
Public was Death; but Power, but Might,
 But Life again, was Victory,
Were hushed within the dead of night,
 The shutter'd dark, the secrecy.
And all alone, alone, alone
 He rose again behind the stone.



ALONE INTO THE MOUNTAIN

Katherine Lee Bates

All day from that deep well of life within
Himself has He drawn healing for the press
Of folk, restoring strength, forgiving sin.
Quieting frenzy, comforting distress.
Shadows of evening fall, yet wildly still
They throng Him, touch Him,
Clutch his garment's hem,
Fall down and clasp His feet, cry on him, till
The Master, spent, slips from the midst of them
And climbs the mountain for a cup of peace,
Taking a sheer and rugged track untrod
Save by a poor lost sheep with thorn-torn fleece
That follows on and hears Him talk with God.



GETHSEMANE

Donna Lee Davis

Could you not watch with me an hour?

Weak with drowsy shame,
Their leaden eyes met furtively;
Heads bowed. But no words came.
Only the wakeful, ardent moon,
Seductive as a dream,
Addressed the silvered olive trees
That answered, gleam for gleam.

Could you not pray with me an hour?

Useless on their knees,
They roused to hearts still heedless,
Mute—unlike the soothing breeze
That murmured of tempting pillow moss
And silken garden sand,
Of man's sad incapacity
For being more than man.



A GUARD OF THE SEPULCHER

Edwin Markham

I was a Roman soldier in my prime;
Now age is on me, and the yoke of time.
I saw your Risen Christ, for I am he
Who reached the hyssop to Him on the tree;
And I am one of two who watched beside
The Sepulcher of Him we crucified.
All that last night I watched with sleepless eyes;
Great stars arose and crept across the skies . . .

Then suddenly an angel burning white
Came down with earthquake in the breaking light,
And rolled the great stone from the Sepulcher,
Mixing the morning with a scent of myrrh.
And lo, the Dead had risen with the day:
The Man of Mystery had gone His way!

Years have I wandered, carrying my shame;
Now let the Tooth of Time eat out my name.
For we, who all the Wonder might have told,
Kept silence, for our mouths were stopped with gold.



GOOD FRIDAY

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Am I a stone and not a sheep
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy Cross
To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss,
And yet not weep?

Not so those women loved
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;
Not so the thief that was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon
Which hid their faces in a starless sky,
A horror of great darkness at broad noon—
I, only I.

Yet give not o'er,
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more
And smite a rock.



A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

Sidney Lanier

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last,
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.



SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

Countee Cullen

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet He called my name.
He never gave a sign to me,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, "I will not bear
His cross upon my back;
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,
And He was very weak,
And in His eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.



CALVARY

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We gibed him, as he went, with houndish glee,
Till his dim eyes for us did overflow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice wretchedly—
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.

But after nineteen hundred years the shame
Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
That outraged faith has entered in his name.
Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord, how long
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!



PRINTING AND ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

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