

Modern Lamentations I

The image that swirls freely in perilous realms between
sleeping and awake
my banner of fullness in grief embodies every impulse.
Fissures on the surface unveil the aspects of consequence
And echoes of confusion and understanding.
That feeling of helplessness when tragedy is unstoppable
Regret stands in the foreground
How could things have been different?
(But these wonderings are barren tables built for food.)
Madness filled the spaces between clarity and fogs of
dementia.
Shouting across the lake, I knew I could not be heard, nor was
I ever.
O the ugliness of There-is-nothing-we-can-do—
The anger of lost years when things that could be reconciled
were not.
Truth elusive and yet garish
These mysteries rise in a silent season and whisper their cold
commentary
But still there is more, (though I dare not guess).
I stand by the unmarked graves of both thanksgiving and deep
wounds—
now scars.
These are the moments when you wonder if you failed even as
you survived.
And what is left, is an unseen mist.
There is no fixing when peace and truth are shrouded beneath
the strong arm of will.
Like the unraveling of precepts when the narrative spins a
tale of dissonant perplexity.
May the dawn of all things reconcile the pieces like glass
stained in grief
assembled in the aperture of the soul.

Today is Most Noble

God holds the future and redeems all of yesterday.

But today is closer to me.

What an amazing concept today, right now, really is. Today- I hope you aren't planning a siege on your enemy. I hope you aren't judging the person in the room. I hope you aren't swallowed up in regret. I hope you aren't poisoning your time with trivial, toxic thoughts of your own wealth, vanity or scheming revenge. I hope you are in the moment for this moment fashions eternity.

Today is a gift which is moving forward faster than thoughts or plans

Today is where i am right here and right now.

Today is an opportunity to change the little things

Today is closer. tomorrow is a promise and yesterday is an eternity from anything I could attain.

Today is most noble!

Holy From Beginning to End

Before the first man had first breath

Before the mystery of death

Angels worshiped the Holy one

The majesty of God's own Son

From infinite past he was and is and is to come

Holy

Holy above all living things

Before the glory of every king

Holy beyond man's striving for power

Holy beyond man's grandest hour

Holy

His fingers cast the stars in place

Holy

The fiery jewels in distant space

Separating land from sea

The master of eternity

His grand design, His perfect plan

To reconcile the fate of man.

Holy

He could not look on sin

Holy

And on a cruel hill
Among the vulgar accusation
The wreck of every wayward nation
He took the cruel condemnation
The dagger deep of dark damnation
The angels watched in disbelief
The sky was torn. a mother's grief
This God who crafted night and day
This Son of God, had found a way
To take the burden of the sin
The holy one in human skin
No peace on Earth
No Kings would bow
Betrayed, alone
Our punishment- a tragedy
God, why have you forsaken me?
The grand moment of redemption and
The death sentence of hate
History's darkest hour
The triumph of sins power
Or so it seemed
But in this act

Man's deepest shame

Is now redeemed.

Letting God Out of the Box

I'm always amazed how the church as a whole
is so quick to throw rocks at the sheep in the fold.
We question each other's theology,
spar over worship philosophy.
We've got more fusses than one tongue can tell
while outside the world is going to hell.
We are driven by creeds, and motions, and clocks,
haven't we learned not to put God in a box?
Would Jesus approve of our political labels
or would He come in and start busting up tables?
Does He tire of us telling Him what He should do,
what gender must teach, what strategy's true?
Is the Bible the life source or inflexible judge?
Is the church a haven for sinners or a group with a grudge?
Do we think we can settle for boycotts and strife
instead of seeking the lost and giving dead people life?
What were we thinking when in front of the press?
we majored on minors choosing to curse and not bless.
I have to tell you from my point of view
I keep wondering what in the world Jesus would do.
Would He have us disputing which method is best,
or making transformation be our holy quest?
After all that's what this journey's about,
not who has more sheep or who has more clout.
I despise the reports of our ugly catfights.
I'm appalled by the task of reading sinners their rights.
When you preach condemnation, consider this fact,

they don't know Jesus. How'd you expect them to act?
And please understand, I'm not where I should be.
When i'm pointing at you, I'm pointing at me.
There are times when i haven't lived up to His Name,
when i've only the man in the mirror to blame.
But now is the time to reject the mask,
to heed the call, and get back to the task,
to burn the political, decaying façade
for an all out pursuit of our passionate God.
Let's spend our time living meaningful lives
giving mercy to sinners not dangerous lies.
Let's bear the cross and drop the rocks,
proclaim the good news and let God out of the box.

Grace and Recompense

This Fire of Love
unquenched by Eden's wreck
and flowing seemingly in perpetuity
toward all that soon will be
in all its violent beauty
He shall hold all hell's poison and heaven's glory.
Small beginning, love's grandest story
from the heartbeat in a virgin's womb
til one Sunday rising from the tomb
One
for all...
Once
for all...
This is the salvation from garrulous platitudes and languorous
days

Advent... in slightest breath, in manger lay.
Ten-thousand kingdoms would bow through ages.
The cause of grace and recompense
From distant past to future tense:
Jesus

homeplace

My grandfather lived
in a rustic house near a sloping cool branch with slippery
stones
and verdant woods
I walked slowly toward the treeline where
mystery lay
and there in the shade of autumn's bough
i see darkness rising
close of day.
but death,
a far
closer
angel visited then and will and again because
it is unchanged, like the virgin nest of the wip-poor-will
though unwelcomed

tender unforgiving visitor on the side of the hill
where i last heard his voice.
away

The Belly of the Beast

Everybody ends up
in the belly of the beast.
There are few exceptions
from the greatest to the least.
You stumble into quicksand.
You're weary of the world.
Lies wreck your reputation.
Insults, viciously, are hurled.
Addiction lies in dormancy
then rears it's ugly head.
Depression sinks in slowly,
Like the whispers of the dead.
A chronic, stubborn stronghold
infiltrates your weakened mind
Confidants betray you.
Sometimes, friends are hard to find.
Childless in your 40's.
"Will I ever be a mother?"
Inside an unfamiliar place
Near no sister or no brother.
You're in the doctor's office
And hear devastating news.
You lose your hair to chemo.
Indeed, no one gets to choose.
Your marriage ends abruptly.

He left you with no choice.
And for others, it's the silence.
Separated from His Voice.
Adversity just happens
and no one gets a pass.
But this- your devastation,
is God's Holy Master Class
Yes, this strong Professor
is bolder than the rest,
His challenges are brutal
and He's silent in the test.
He's far above all reason
—mysterious is He.
His text book is His Word.
His school— adversity.
But in each fearful crisis,
we're cradled by the light
There's joy within the suffering,
There's peace amidst the fight
Within our devastation
—the bleak, forbidding war
God shakes us in our deadness,
with His fearsome roar
What we assumed would end us,
And our melancholy tales
speaks only of His grandeur,
His timing never fails.
And in our silent terror,
He's not worried in the least
Despite how darkness lingers
in the belly of the beast.

Save Me

Do not save me from the storm.
Do not keep me safe and warm.
Save me from my love of ease.
Save me from my vanities.
Save me from deceptive pride.
And all that I, in shame, would hide.
Save me from my foul ambition.
My self-centered, duped condition.
From all that speaks so well of me.
Save me! All I want is thee!

Song of Everything

Movement 1

Small and deep from Ocean's breeze
The beast and birds, grass and trees
God's great creation- verse libre'
The divine grace, and soul commision
The lonesome wish for one decision
The burning of the wasteland
Sinks to shores of tumultuous consequence
And in the storms, slicing through the soul
Fear, love, wounds, doubt
Greed, truth, war, shout
Flesh, lies, wind, deep
Merge, wide, run, leap
And surging through the threshold

Of each
Safe throughout eternity.
Wondering, we stare into the dark
Ominous
Infinite tapestry of stars
We breathe deeply
We love and lose
We learn and choose
This is what makes the man
beyond an accidental clan.
Ours is the mystery
Finding the great one in three
Believing and striving
Wondering if we're the one who's hiding.
O God of revelation
O God who once did speak
Burning bush, hand on wall
War of Hur and Aaron's arm
But mystery-incarnation
Author of the vast creation
a gentleness and calm release
He grew and kept
He bled and wept
Placed cloistered in a borrowed tomb
behind a stone and Roman seal
With Him the vanquished hopes
death cradled purpose jealously
He stood watch
The treasures of Christ's import silent, trapped and forgotten
and then... In a moment the grand verdict was announced
Resurrection underscored the cross
Snatching victory from cruel loss
Still and sure rules of natural laws reversed
Alive he justified the cursed
Those Lost within the trap of sin
The vagabonds were welcomed in.
He lives and speaks

The redeeming voice is drowned
in the cacophony of constant sound
But if you listen
He will speak.

Movement 2

The aroma of alabaster
An unmistakable scent
Beauty and extravagance
An elemental composition of a woman
Surrendered, vanquished, undone
Reckless passion borne of pain
Wasted treasure endless gain

I, too, will waste my life
For the One who spits in mud
The rescuer amidst the flood
The friend who calls me from a tree
The ghostlike vision on the sea
The Prophet at the healing pools
Arms outstretched to bands of fools
The One who breathes life into bones
Who understands wearisome groans.
I need his love not sterile proof
That distances and stands aloof.
The thing he so desires in me
Is trusting what I cannot see
Dispatching demons vanity
Through squeals of pigs calamity
And still the grand design is true.
The God who renders all things new.
Yes, He will render all things new.

Movement 3

Everything born of adversity is hewn in opportunity
This primordial ballet of soul chrysalis
Set in motion the grand orbit of redemption.
His prophecy:
Few will come
The road is narrow
Author of the moon and sparrow
The Beauty of uncertainty
Vicarious fortitude of faith
Lilies are the adornment
Of brutal sun and driving rain
Courage borne in doubting rubble

Yet I struggle
I wonder
Formulas crumble
The Word of God labors through perfect storms
Headless giant
Harlot hero
Hungry mass
Balaam's ass
Less about a set of rules
More of mercy for the fools
What is the hope for the world?
It is the Church
A building hewn from the heart of whoring dirges
Wandering,
Unfaithful
Captive and ungrateful
And still she is a bride of beauty
Still she is the one beloved
Still pursued with priceless passion.

The one that through the ages
Distorted graces
Wrecked lives with shame
Divided races
The bride that pierced the side of the groom
The bride that judged without restraint
The crimes of tyranny and hate
Scorching the earth with un-civilization.
Chasing lovers of pleasure and pieces of gold
While scorning the poor, seeking, driving,
feuding, striving to be significant before the grave
Keeping score, imploring, folly, enclave of lies.
Is a man more a man by trusting himself
Or is there peace for such a wretch?
Much of self- is more like rot

Movement 4

Jonah cries a screed in prayer
For three days and nights.
In the belly of the beast.
He was saved and he was devoured
Both happened.
The three Hebrews under the thumb of a king
Stood and refused
The furnace ignited
They fell and they were saved.
Both happened
The rattles of a dying man
A late Messiah at a desperate scene
The stench of death and
And Lazarus moves
He was dead and alive

Both happened

Stephen shouts the truth of grace
Pharisees of rage and hate
Pummeled by the stones of man
Horrid death and glory seen
Both happened.

From Joan of Arc's pyre
To Bonhoeffer's stand
From martyrs' fire
Executioner's hand
I was destroyed
And I was redeemed.
Hated and esteemed

Both happened.

Movement 5

Lord, teach me to pray.
Let my prayers be so immersed in love
That all I want is you!
I will waste my life for just a glimpse of you
Prayer must be romance
Its composition stained with tears
A courtship brief
Eternity is the festival redemption
And the prayers of the saints
Cascading through all generations

May I touch the robe of Jesus
May I hear the silent voice
May I trust the hand of Jesus

Prayer becomes my holy choice

Everything is waste and void
Everything futility
A chasing after winds obtuse
Mortal insecurity
But constant intercession
Saves heart and heals the soul
Disciples grand possession
Broken, wounded lives made whole

The pure and holy iconoclast of satan's furtive plans
Our dark and ancient rival
The father of bitter strife and self worship.
Traveling to and fro
His mouth stuffed with accusation
With an urgent mission of damnatio
His hands brewed an ancient libation:
chaotic tumult, relentless oppression
He credits to his favor all terror and obsession.
Prowling through the scrapheap east of eden's gate.
Minions; victims of lucifer's mendacity
Cast down with everything that scorns grace
From magnificent and worshipful
To vengeful knaves
The keeper of doom
The digger of graves

But death, sin and disease
The reproach of all...
Lucifer falls to his knees
As all dastardly scum fallen foes
The song of redemption sounds

To every star, hamlet, city and road
First, the song heard only be those who
Listen
But as day turns to day
The sound grows
It baffles the skeptics.
The music brings sweetness to the faithful
And remorse to the cynics
It is victorious, unflappable, unstoppable and loud.

The song is heard from the east
The rising sun heralds the new day
This perpetual day of grace
Will soon crush the dark desolation
And the schemes of fallen angels.
No longer will men strive against men
Or chains repress the weak
No longer will disease and death
Attack the least of these.
Orphans, unborn innocents
Those on distant shores repressed
Will soon hear the ever growing anthem of redemption.

Amen, amen, amen!

Fine'

And here is the name that binds men's souls to grace
It shelters, protects, and resurrects Kingdom and soul
O to Jesus I bow my knee
O to Jesus I live and breathe
O to Jesus I stand in faith
O to Jesus All is won
O to Jesus I run the race

Just a Touch

Hope and mercy shine through the threshold of love everlasting
The eyes of ever born grace

Just a touch

As she crawls through the mass of shuffling feet
and the cacophony of voices.

Eternity kisses the distance
between normal and divine.

Speaks the woman:

I have heard of you.

I don't ask for your embrace
and yet this act is selfish

(I believe)

I long to stretch toward the hem
of Almighty Wonderous Cross-bound God.

And now another one is reaching through the crowd on hands and
knees...

Another spiritual beggar-

The one who writes these words.