

The Gilded Arch

*that great absence / In our lives, the empty silence / Within, the place where we go /
Seeking, not in hope to / Arrive or find.* “Via Negativa” by R.S. Thomas

Introit

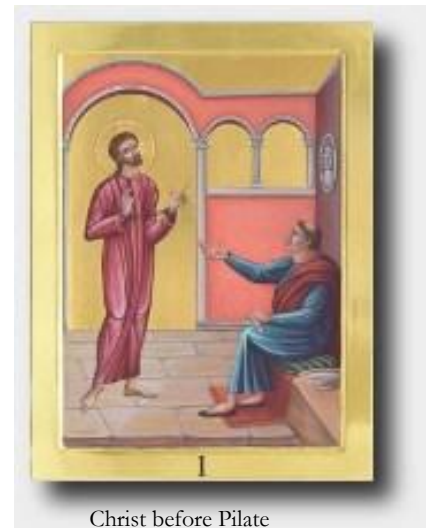
And so it starts,
not in the foreground of words
but in the gold negative spaces.

I

I'm Nobody witnessing first hand:
the absent whispers of Beth Shammai bindings
as if defining divine rules,

The Man - mere agent with aquamanile,
bailing out,

the silence of infinity responding
with a world, more present because dying.



Christ before Pilate

II

Through the gilded arch of hope
sorrow has its own rules,
good, truth and beauty live side by side

with their opposites, in the silence of expectation
that allows everything still to be said;

maybe losing life in order to find it -
agápē so deep it is easy, no matter how hard.



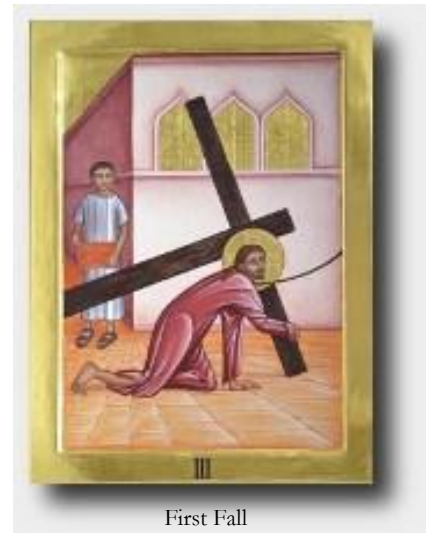
Imposition of the Cross

III

The Boy in me is there
not knowing where I am,
outside the protective halls,

locked inside what I know.
At the turn I do not like what I see,

the underbelly of empires
in the wilds of our co-creation.



First Fall

IV

All these things in her heart, a mother
who *found favour* inconceivable
in the life-world of words,

stands without deference to the fateful lance
and Longinus Nobody's silence of obedience,

storgē's wisdom so deep, yet to pierce
through a baffling, golden portal.



Jesus meets his Mother

V

Surprise, because "he who hears" – Simon the pilgrim
falls into step not from The Faith
that divides; turning from command

to side by side compassion
that makes obedience irrelevant,

taking this chance in hand with hope's certainty
that what he does now makes sense.



The Cyrenean bears the Cross

VI

Out of the crowd that one day, a witness
 sheds convention and shame,
 unveils the shameful silence of friends,

 unmask the kyriarchy face of cruelty
 with the tougher risk of kindness -

 a small history of uncovering honour, a woman
 touching the face of human-kind : the vera ikon.



Veil of Veronica

VII

My Boy can see the falls of self-declared followers,
 cover-ups, mental reservations, feelings sublimated
 to system-worlds of power and Pontifex;

 at a click - Innocent III, slaughterer of the innocents
 using Francesco *illiteratus*, smeared in pig-sty mud,

 to *repair my Church* through the missings,
 the wants of creation's canticled gold:



Second Fall

Laudato sie, mi Signore cum tucte le Tue creature,
 Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures.

VIII

In the footprints he has just left, women follow still,
 not as *my child*, but teachers
 listening for the echoes of what was not said

*I did violate the rules of the Powers-that-be: law-temple-empire
 to expose the murderous logic of system-elite-regime
 to attest the source at the heart of law, and failure to be true
 to the prime law of love.*

Still the Rosalie Rendus guide the Frédéric Ozanams'
synthèse harmonieuse de la justice et de la charité.



Christ meets the Women of Jerusalem

IX

My Boy, now man, holding the sentence and silence
 at the fall from the higher ignorance of wonder
 to passionate beliefs - fossilised or fashionable,

 from creation's abundance and evermore *Won-Whys?*
 to the 'One Truth' authored answer in the prison

 of language; dogma displacing life's inner light
 where faith, hope, and all loves - eros, ludus, mania,
 pragma, philia, storgē, agapē - are one.



Third Fall

X

The die is cast, the story of fathers
 who send their sons - sent them out to die,
 to kill, strip and rape for the fatherland -

 as sacrifice towards a world for virgin daughters
 to die more slowly under command.

 There's another day's story of swords to ploughshares,
 soldiers to workers finding the *body of His death*
in the poor lost ones, the abandoned ones – all brothers¹.



The Stripping of Christ

XI

That tempting god demands sacrifice
 in peace and war, in home and office.
When he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar.

 Always someone to raise the Power's hammer
 against the anarchic golden promise,

 but long since my Boy-man gave up on the idea of
 an innocent son ritually killed for the sins of humanity.



Christ is nailed to the Cross

¹ Dorothy Day

XII

Pomp and porphyry rule
mans the barricades now,

rules a greying patiens community.
No gold in the silence in this death.

Where is your victory?
There is no sting

where the spirit of surprise,
silently spurts from Death's body.



The Crucifixion

XIII

The gold of Hope returns to hold life in the one
and, gently, death in the other hand,
wise enough, wiser than the stone heart,

to breathe side by side with brothers and sisters,
though strangers, sparking something unsayable;

to see how they love one another
crossed from a system to the life-world.



The Deposition

XIV

So ends the beginning, in the underworld
of silence and no song,
no blooms, no signs, no wings

no hope, save the missing all.
Whisper wonderful, counsellor, now prince of dust

*Pray me a vision of my one, my Boy, my man
out of the dust of the real thing, a rimple in space-time
for everything natural, infinite and yes - someone to thank.*

Once, wrong to the light, a hint, then something,
lost, found, a glint in the dust, golden.



Entombment

Note: The Stations of the Cross installed in 2014 in Wymondham Abbey, Norfolk, are by iconographer Helen McIldowie-Jenkins. She used 14th C Italian painting techniques and style, imagining herself present and witnessing first hand each stage of Jesus' journey to Golgotha. http://www.elenisicons.co.uk/gallery7_thumbs.htm