

From George Herbert: The Country Parson, The
Temple. Ed. John N. Wall, Jr.

THE CHURCH

EASTER WINGS

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,

Till he became
Most poor:
With thee

Oh let me rise⁶⁸

As larks, harmoniously,

And sing this day thy victories:

Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame

Thou didst so punish sin,

That I became

Most thin.

With thee

Let me combine,

And feel this day thy victory:

For, if I imp⁶⁹ my wing on thine,

Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

THE CHURCH

THE ALTAR

A broken A L T A R, Lord, thy servant rears,¹
Made of a heart, and cemented with tears;¹
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.

A H E A R T alone
Is such a stone,²
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.³
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name.

That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.⁴
Oh let thy blessed S A C R I F I C E be mine,⁵
And sanctify this A L T A R to be thine.

^{90.} *mystical repast.* Link between the Eucharist, the Church's sharing in Christ's passion" (BCP, p. 264).

COLOSSIANS 3:3

*Our life is hid with Christ in God*²⁰⁹

My words and thoughts do both express this notion,
That *Life* hath with the sun a double motion.

The first *Is* straight, and our diurnal²¹⁰ friend,
The other *Hid*, and doth obliquely bend.

One life is wrapt *In* flesh, and tends to earth.
The other winds towards *Him*, whose happy birth

Taught me to live here so, *That* still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which *Is* on high:

Quitting with daily labor all *My* pleasure,
To gain at harvest an eternal *Treasure*.

From The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas: 1934-1952

VISION AND PRAYER

New York:
New Directions,
1971.

I

Who
Are you
Who is born
In the next room
So loud to my own
That I can hear the womb
Opening and the dark run
Over the ghost and the dropped son
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?
In the birth bloody room unknown
To the burn and turn of time
And the heart print of man
Bows no baptism
But dark alone
Blessing on
The wild
Child.

[154]

I

Must lie
Still as stone
By the wren bone
Wall hearing the moan
Of the mother hidden
And the shadowed head of pain
Casting to-morrow like a thorn
And the midwives of miracle sing
Until the turbulent new born
Burns me his name and his flame
And the winged wall is torn
By his torrid crown
And the dark thrown
From his loin
To bright
Light.

[155]

When

The wren

Bone writhes down

And the first dawn

Furied by his stream

Swarms on the kingdom come

Of the dazzler of heaven

And the splashed mothering maiden

Who bore him with a bonfire in

His mouth and rocked him like a storm

I shall run lost in sudden

Terror and shining from

The once hooded room

Crying in vain

In the caldron

Of his

Kiss

[156]

In

The spin

Of the sun

In the spuming

Cyclone of his wing

For I was lost who am

Crying at the man drenched throne

In the first fury of his stream

And the lightnings of adoration

Back to black silence melt and mourn

For I was lost who have come

To dumbfounding haven

And the finding one

And the high noon

Of his wound

Blinds my

Cry.

[157]

There
Crouched bare
In the shrine
Of his blazing
Breast I shall waken
To the judge blown bedlam
Of the uncaged sea bottom
The cloud climb of the exhaling tomb
And the bidden dust upsailing
With his flame in every grain.
O spiral of ascension
From the vultured urn
Of the morning
Of man when
The land
And

[158]

The
Born sea
Praised the sun
The finding one
And upright Adam
Sang upon origin!
O the wings of the children!
The woundward flight of the ancient
Young from the canyons of oblivion!
The sky stride of the always slain
In battle! the happening
Of saints to their vision!
The world winding home!
And the whole pain
Flows open
And I
Die.

[159]

II

In the name of the lost who glory in
The swinish plains of carrion
Under the burial song
Of the birds of burden
Heavy with the drowned
And the green dust
And bearing
The ghost
From
The ground
Like pollen
On the black plume
And the beak of slime
I pray though I belong
Not wholly to that lamenting
Brethren for joy has moved within
The inmost marrow of my heart bone

That he who learns now the sun and moon
Of his mother's milk may return
Before the lips blaze and bloom
To the birth bloody room
Behind the wall's wren
Bone and be dumb
And the womb
That bore
For
All men
The adored
Infant light or
The dazzling prison
Yawn to his upcoming.
In the name of the wanton
Lost on the unchristened mountain
In the centre of dark I pray him

That he let the dead lie though they moan
For his briaed hands to hoist them
To the shrine of his world's wound
And the blood drop's garden
Endure the stone
Blind host to sleep
In the dark
And deep
Rock
A w a k e
No heart bone
But let it break
On the mountain crown
Unbidden by the sun
And the beating dust be blown
Down to the river rooting plain
Under the night forever falling.

[162]

Forever falling night is a known
Star and country to the legion
Of sleepers whose tongue I toll
To mourn his deluging
Light through sea and soil
And we have come
To know all
P l a c e s
W a y s
M a z e s
P a s s a g e s
Quarters and graves
Of the endless fall.
Now common lazarus
Of the charting sleepers prays
Never to awake and arise
For the country of death is the heart's size

[163]

And the star of the lost the shape of the eyes.
In the name of the fatherless
In the name of the unborn
And the undesirers
Of midwiving morning's
Hands or instruments
O in the name
Of no one
Now or
No
One to
Be I pray
May the crimson
Sun spin a grave grey
And the colour of clay
Stream upon his martyrdom
In the interpreted evening
And the known dark of the earth amen.

[164]

I turn the corner of prayer and burn
In a blessing of the sudden
Sun. In the name of the damned
I would turn back and run
To the hidden land
But the loud sun
Christens down
The sky.
I
Am found.
O let him
Scald me and drown
Me in his world's wound.
His lightning answers my
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.
Now I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

[165]