

xiii. Love's cry.

(Mt. 26:26-27:60, Mk. 14:22-15:46, Lk.22.19-23:53.)

Take and bless
the bread, the cup. Tenderness
is resting on the tongue
with simple touch and, on
the lips, your blood – all barriers removed.
Let them taste how you have loved.

Peter rises, wavering on his feet
and frowning ardently, until you meet
his eye on this last night of liberty.

The ageless unrelenting flood
comes to whispering Gethsemane
with sweat like drops of blood.

Judas comes to kiss your cheek
and, on this evil hour,
he slyly takes his leave
as you are lead away
among the watching crowds.

The High Priest calls on you to speak.
Tell him you will come with Power,
like sunshine on the morning clouds,
and watch him tear at his well-tailored sleeve
enraged by your blasphemous display.

Pilot cannot understand
your silence. A wave of his hand
could save your life, but how can he ignore
the High Priest's hatred and the mob's wild roar?

Simon of Cyrene knows all too well
how the whip may soon begin
to lash his hide. With accusing stare -
and recoiling from the smell –
he grips the wood and lifts the weight
from your stooped raw skin.

Your executioners reach out with care
to take your clothing as a well-earned fee.
They cruelly raise you up and wait

for the thrill of the naked scream.
You hear the women's voices distantly
as in some half-forgotten dream,
and, when the torment is complete,
silent mourners come to hide
your lifeless body, pale and crucified,
under a linen sheet.