

xiv. Why?

(Jonah 4:9-11)

*I had begun to bless
your name once more. My defeat
was heartened by your friendly shade,
so why have you betrayed
my final shred of happiness?*

*When you called me out of Israel,
why could I not travel to some sweet
and distant land to hide? Why could
you not let me drown when I fell
into the stormy sea? Why was I found
by smirking enemies and, when my voice
warned Nineveh about the wrath to come,
why did you listen to their flood
of whining misery? Why do you rejoice
at the mournful bleating sound
of sinners seeking unearned peace? Some
strange madness makes you want to rid
this cruel world of punishment.*

*Why did you allow my hopes to turn
into a putrid source of grief?
When you watch your creatures and lament
their twisted ways, why do you care
for their sorrows and count every hair
on their heads? Why not let them burn
and fade away? The blessing, the relief
of punishment would bring such ease.*

*Why do you not turn your face
from this desolate land
where I share hatred with my enemies?
Why do you come into this poisoned place?
Why do you hold out your hand?*