

Jesus, Crucified: D.H. Loewen

The blood that flowed on Calvary
Was freely shed, just for me.

I nailed one of His hands to the tree
I helped to arrest Him in Gethsemane.
I sat with Peter around the flame--
When questioned, I denied His name.

I stood with the soldiers in Pilate's hall
We laughed and mocked Him, one and all.
"This man is innocent," Pilate said.
But we roared, "Crucify!! We want Him dead!"

"Give us Barabbas, we'll let him go free.
But we want Jesus, nailed to a tree!"
"He's yours," said Pilate as he washed his hands.
"Do as you will with the Son of Man."

We took Him out and stripped Him down
Whipped His back, till blood stained the ground.
We marched Him up Golgotha's hill
Spit, beat, and slapped Him at will.

I put the first of the nails in His hands,
Yes, I crucified The Son of Man.
He hung on the cross that whole long day,
And while He suffered, I heard Him pray;

"Father forgive them, they don't have a clue.
They only do what they have to do."

I wasn't really there, I'm sure you know,
Yet my every sin, struck another blow.
He bled. He suffered. Then He died--
For my sins, He was crucified.

I'm sorry Jesus for my sin
I humbly ask you to take me in.
The blood that flowed on Calvary
Was freely shed just for me.

(from) Justified; The Thief Upon the Cross: John Piper

The prosecutor's case was built
With ease. He bragged about his guilt,
And cursed his way from court to cross
Without remorse, as if the loss
Of his own soul to endless woe
Were sealed, and he would have it so.

But now his vicious mouth was still,
And something deep within his will,
Begotten by the quiet prayer
Of this reputed King, was there
As new and strange to wickedness
As orchards in the wilderness.
And from his lips there came a word
That none from him had ever heard.
He turned his head so he could see:
"Jesus, is there a hope for me?"

At first he feared the Lord was dead.
But then he lifted up his head
To see the fruit of his travail,
And softly spoke around the nail,
"Today with me in Paradise
You'll reign beside the feeble Christ."
And when he heard the Saviour die,
He gave his agonizing cry:
"My God! My God! How can this be!
Why hast thou not forsaken me?"

And do we not this time of year
Repeat these words with godly fear,
And stand in awe of sovereign grace
That put a God in sinners' place,
And turned his head to hear our plea!
Who is a pardoning God like thee!

The awesome truth of candle three:
A sinner justified and free!

From "The Dream of the Rood"

Anglo-Saxon, 8th century, trans. Richard Hammer (1970)

The earliest Christian poem in English

The Rood (cross of Christ) speaks:

"It was long past – I still remember it –
That I was cut down at the copse's end,
Moved from my root. Strong enemies there took me,
Told me to hold aloft their criminals,
Made me a spectacle. Men carried me
Upon their shoulders, set me on a hill,
A host of enemies there fastened me.

"And then I saw the Lord of all mankind
Hasten with eager zeal that He might mount
Upon me. I durst not against God's word
Bend down or break, when I saw tremble all
The surface of the earth. Although I might
Have struck down all the foes, yet stood I fast.

"Then the young hero (who was God almighty)
Got ready, resolute and strong in heart.
He climbed onto the lofty gallows-tree,
Bold in the sight of many watching men,
When He intended to redeem mankind.
I trembled as the warrior embraced me.
But still I dared not bend down to the earth,
Fall to the ground. Upright I had to stand.

"A rood I was raised up; and I held high
The noble King, the Lord of heaven above.
I dared not stoop. They pierced me with dark nails;
The scars can still be clearly seen on me,

The open wounds of malice. Yet might I
Not harm them. They reviled us both together.
I was made wet all over with the blood
Which poured out from his side, after He had
Sent forth His spirit. And I underwent
Full many a dire experience on that hill.
I saw the God of hosts stretched grimly out.
Darkness covered the Ruler's corpse with clouds
His shining beauty; shadows passed across,
Black in the darkness. All creation wept,
Bewailed the King's death; Christ was on the cross....

“Now you may understand, dear warrior,
That I have suffered deeds of wicked men
And grievous sorrows. Now the time has come
That far and wide on earth men honour me,
And all this great and glorious creation,
And to this beacon offers prayers. On me
The Son of God once suffered; therefore now
I tower mighty underneath the heavens,
And I may heal all those in awe of me.
Once I became the cruellest of tortures,
Most hateful to all nations, till the time
I opened the right way of life for men.”

Good Friday: B. De Jonge

When they crucified Jesus,
the day became night
as darkness was sent from above.

So far from the Father
lonely, forsaken
yet, so near in His infinite love.

When they mocked Him and flogged Him,
they were unaware
of the darkness that clouded their mind.

The sin of the world
was put on His shoulders
as He offered His life for mankind.

When they thought they had killed Him,
they had taken His life,
He had given it out of free will.

In the outside world
no-one knew what had happened
far away, on Golgotha's hill.

But, the Father in mercy
and endless compassion,
looked down from on high on His Son.

Who committed His Spirit
in the hands of the Father,
and in triumph cried out: It is done!

Poems for Holy Week
Translated from the Spanish by Latayne Scott

FRIDAY

Blood throbbing like muffled drums
Tendons stretching like fence-wires: tune-taut
But soundless
His reproach streaks the silence like
Lightning in darkness.
Two eyes, raging from the sandstorms of a
Thousand tears, finally close.
The body hangs limp as wet drapery on a limb.

EGO EIMI

He is the Mighty One
He is the Creator,
The Great One
He who can bring victory
Out of the mingled paste
Of blood and ashes of defeat
How do I know
How can I say this
I stand with my elbows touching
Those of sorrowing men and women
Frozen in a slice of Friday-time
When all the world's hopes
Were laid in a hastily-washed heap
In a borrowed tomb
With no hope
No hope
No hope
Until the first rays of Sunday
Bathed the empty tomb ledge