

ADVENT DEVOTION: DECEMBER 2, 2022

LUKE 21:1-4

POVERTY AND ABUNDANCE

"The following are poems created by participants of the Asheville Poverty Initiative, a non-profit ministry where many of our visiting AYM groups serve. *To read all of the poems, visit the December 2 link on the Advent page.*

She's alone most of the time since she lost her husband. It's quiet where she lives, how she lives, and the days are long. Her work is solitary. So it's good to get out. Truth is, she's not thinking of the money at all, of the two small coins she rubs together, hidden in her pocket. She's thinking of the company, the people she's about to see, who all know her by name. The young man who gives her a hug. The boy and his mother who play in the garden, the smart chess players, dogs scuffing and rough housing under the table. She drops her coins in the offering without a second thought and heads over to see her friends and catch up on the news. Truth is, she's not foolish, or a martyr like people like to think. She just knows there is enough to go around. There is more than enough when they all come together. The birds visit the feeder and drop food on her head and she laughs. A woman hands her a warm cup of coffee. She joins everyone at the table. The thinness of her life grows and glows in the wake of such abundance.

-Leslee

"No one gives more than the one who leaves with nothing." -Steve

Widow with all she has to give
*clink** clanque*
Two copper coins.
It's just what that is.
perhaps to His notion,
"All I have to give."

Yet when I reflect back.
I can't help but ignore the lack.
You see, there is much richness in my life.
Those two copper coins, are no sacrifice

I'll look around;
a congregation of people, food, art, LIFE: LOVE
And know I have found
the fortune that I dove.

-Melenn

REFLECTION

When have you given your all without giving it a second thought?



POEMS CONTINUED...

What seems the simplest gift may be the largest possible for the giver. A gift can look like, or be a sacrifice of someone's well-being:
I give something of myself with these coins. I still have breath, and am glad to have something to share. I hope this gift will be used for the good of someone who needs it or the community, yet this may or may not happen. I honor my husband with this, as he would probably want. I forgive those who may take advantage of my poverty for their benefit. God wants me and all I have learned. Jesus, I want to follow you.
-Jody

They're all laughing
But all my old gods come here with me:
reflection and fertility and warmth and war
to greet, welcome the newcomer
I don't bring them out often
I'm not supposed to
Shame runs so rampant here,
cackling around the room
assuming assessing condemning
the tall men dressed in finery
ruffling their feathers
standing in their circles
hungry eyes scouring the crowd
every tithe bearer
they are their own, I hope,
but their slick black judgment fills and corrodes these
old stone halls
That's why I'm here, really
with my old friends, guides of generations,
they are plenty familiar with this newcomer's ways
faith, acceptance, cooperation
they know the only true shame is when your
neighbors go cold and hungry
The only true pride held in knowing we are all well fed
I place my coppers on the altar
they slide to the side of the growing pile
the newcomer smiles, the old ones dance
All our eyes, meeting, feel the same truth
to give, receive, release
to let the world flow around and through
the realm of connection, love. heaven on earth
it's always been here when we let ourselves see it.
-David

Go in with all your heart
This is the Divine art
Any soul that is smart
Make the leap and start
What is the fruit of giving all?
The trees in the fall.
It may seem scary to leave
myself bare, what will I have
when there's nothing to spare?
a flame lingers there.
-Nathan

To give
the weight of two copper coins
compares not to the courage
of the giver who with
empty pockets pours faith
unending grace -
the giver gives goodness
a monopoly over the
mad with a toss that
changes time
the sound subtly echoes
against the other shiny coins
to wander without the weight
of things
to be, to give
is to live.
-Kristalyn

I have heard things about this miracle teacher,
amazing rabbi for awhile.
Since my husband passed, leaving me with our two
young children, a shelter with bare walls., I have
been living in despair. What's the point of living if all I
feel is desperation, brokenness and pain?
A neighbor knocked on my door while I was
kneading dough for dinner last night. "Jesus
will be hanging out on the mount just outside of
town, we're going to catch him, maybe he can bless
us and give us some good preachings."
"I am not sure about that, I have a cleaning job in the
morning. I need that money."
As I lay on the floor with my sons, the words from
that teacher Jesus came to my mind. All of a sudden
I felt my body lighten, my head clearer. I don;t know
why, but I decided to go see it for myself tomorrow.
-AJ