



Dustbin Saints

I.
Gather for prayers to every form of life
inside a one-room building with three doors,
always white and seldom heated in
one hundred fifty years or more,
a New England village church on a hill
set in the wet shadow of a mountain,
testament to small scale, potting shed
for the always seeking of the One & Other.

Those praying are sometimes saints
without wings or any other outward sign
of the divine — except a gift
for almost infinite acceptance,
sweet nothings of yes to strangers
who may come hobbled by history,
disowned when simple silence
would have better salved the pain.

An edginess plays among the prayers,
as if the belief they seek seems too cheap
if too easily achieved, seems too simple
to explain what they already know,
as if the experienced heart cannot accept
the less worse as more true,
cannot reject what it suspects it owns
and may land on its doorstep tomorrow.

II.
So many voices and genders of God
inhabit this place that its congregants
have long stopped counting,
have tried to find new ways to listen,
say important things they know
within a willingness to suspend belief

and disbelief at the same and always time.
These dustbin saints know Job's trials,
have sung the harmonies of Gilead
and listened as war-stung lands
blew sand around the gates of Eden.
Their gospels move within the ordered canon
and without: dug up, found or fell upon,
where fears are wrestled to the ground
from time to time, a little band of Jacobs
trying once more to touch the One & Other.

III.
Spirits here are built on life and death,
laughter living within death's own dealing,
the stories that lead them in
and out of other worlds,
the passing of the newly emptied bowl
from pew to pew when even silence is a healing
and the scars of shared griefs
seed blessings of bread or wine or witness.

And there's salvation here as well
for all the sometime dustbin saints,
not from the fear of fire and brimstone
but from their sentenced terms of life,
their places as particulars and singulars
and for the wish boiling in their bellies' cells
to find a community of refuge,
for, and only for, minutes at a time.

W.R. Hastings

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				