

Two Poems by Malcolm Guite

Visitation (when Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth)

*Here is a meeting made of hidden joys
Of lightnings cloistered in a narrow place
From quiet hearts the sudden flame of praise
And in the womb the quickening kick of grace.

Two women on the very edge of things
Unnoticed and unknown to men of power
But in their flesh the hidden _{spirit} sings
And in their lives the buds of blessing flower.
And Mary stands with all we call 'too young',
Elizabeth with all called 'past their prime'
They sing today for all the great unsung
Women who turned eternity to time
Favoured of heaven, outcast on the earth
Prophets who bring the best in us to birth.*

Jesus meets his mother (on the way to Calvary)

*His darker path into the heart of pain
Was also hers whose love enfolded him
In flesh and wove him in her womb.

Again the sword is piercing. She, who cradled him
And gentled and protected her young son
Must stand and watch the cruelty that mars
Her maiden making. Waves of pain that stun
And sicken pass across his face and hers
As their eyes meet. Now she enfolds the world
He loves in prayer; the mothers of the disappeared
Who know her pain, all bodies bowed and curled
In desperation on this road of tears,
All the grief-stricken in their last despair,
Are folded in the mantle of her prayer.*

Ayodeji Malcolm Guite is an English poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic. Born in Nigeria to British expatriate parents.