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# STUDIES

IN  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

The Word That Clamors

*Jesuit Poetry That Reflects the Spiritual Exercises*

JAMES TORRENS, S.J.

## THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence, the studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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the Spiritual Exercises*

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*James Torrens, S.J.*

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STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

30/3 · MAY 1998

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## *For your information . . .*

You never know what the mail will bring! That is perhaps even more the case when one is the editor of a journal such as *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. As examples of the more unusual, consider the following three missives from recent weeks. The first is a serious advertisement for a book that uses eight biblical texts and midrash to retell stories of several women in the Bible. The idea and the subtitle of the book, *Biblical Women, Irreverent Laughter, and Righteous Rage*, are arresting; but what surely attracts the most attention is the title itself, *Spiritual Lemons*. In the second example, a person at a state correctional facility writes to offer to become “an asset to the Jesuit/Catholic faith by being a spy/decoy/undercover worker to further the cause of same, to use the means . . . to fact-gather on religious, political, etc. dissidents and so-forth, and report via various subversive means.” The writer also offers to give speeches in Catholic churches and other institutions “about how the Virgin Mary via her faithful, obedient servants ‘on the streets’ helped me to receive my freedom.” The third piece of mail, several printed pages, brought the news that besides being “the mother of God and the mother of Christ,” the Blessed Virgin Mary is also the “Spouse of Christ” and the “Spouse of the Holy Ghost” and the latter “conforms also to the natural law.”

On a completely different note, I have regularly called attention in these comments to various Jesuit anniversaries. This year, 1998, and this month of May bring such an anniversary, one especially important for the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus and through it for the American Assistancy. On May 31, 1823, one hundred and seventy-five years ago, what became the Missouri Province came into existence when seven Belgian novices, two priests, and three brothers stepped ashore at St. Louis on the Mission Bank of the Mississippi River. They had started their journey on April 11, walked the “National Pike,” the old Cumberland Road from Maryland to the Ohio River at Wheeling, traveled down the Ohio by flatboat to Shawneetown in Illinois, and then tramped across southern Illinois, covering an average of twenty-five miles a day, until they reached St. Louis. From there began what came to be a province that at one time stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border and from the Appalachian Mountains to beyond the Rockies. At one time the province included territory that is now part of seven of the ten United States provinces. From the original Missouri Province, in the course of successive divisions through the years came the Chicago, the Wisconsin, and the Detroit Provinces. Today those four provinces have a membership of 1,171 Jesuits, almost one third of all the United States Jesuits, with nine colleges and universities, ten retreat houses and spiritual centers, twenty-two parishes, eighteen high schools or middle schools, several domestic missions, and formal province institutional commitments in many other lands, not to mention numerous other corporate and individual apostolic works. *Ad multos annos!*

Another anniversary, this one international. Exactly four hundred and fifty years ago this year, the Society of Jesus began its apostolic work in Africa. Simão Rodrigues, one of the first companions and at the time provincial of Portugal, sent four Portuguese Jesuits to what was then called the Kingdom of Kongo. They landed in Africa on March 18, 1548. Among their earliest works were the first catechisms in the indigenous languages and, within a generation, a college at Luanda, today the

capital of Angola. Father General has written a letter to the members of the Portuguese Province and the African Assistancy to commemorate the occasion.

Just a year ago, in the May 1997 issue of *STUDIES* I had mentioned the *Review of Ignatian Spirituality*, edited from Rome by Joseph Tetlow, S.J., as "an international forum on the spirituality rooted in the Spiritual Exercises." The most recent issue has a special article that fully lives up to that concern for the Exercises and to the internationality of the enterprise as well. Its rather commonplace title, "Notes for the One Giving Exercises," conceals a very informative and perceptive series of findings on four central questions about the Exercises that a panel of experienced directors and consultants from around the world arrived at during their meeting in Rome last February. The four questions read as follows: "Whom are we inviting to make Exercises? What are we offering them? What do we expect to happen? What actually happens?" The participants came from Brazil, Germany, Canada, the United States, Poland, the Philippines, Italy, India, and the Congo. You may be surprised at and you will surely be enlightened by this brief, eleven-page article. The *Review* can be reached at the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality / CP 6139/ 00195 Rome Prati/ Italy. The telephone number is 39-6-689-77-384 and the fax 39-6-687-92-83. (No, I have not omitted a last digit on the fax number; it is just one of the idiosyncrasies of the Italian telephone system.)

Also last year, in an earlier *STUDIES* I had referred to a particular book as one that "every once in a while . . . comes along that opens up a whole new line of thought and interpretation." Here is another such book, *Landmarking: City, Church and Jesuit Urban Strategy* by Thomas M. Lucas, S.J. (xvi + 245 pp.; Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997; \$34.95). The November 1997 issue of *National Jesuit News* has already published an excellent review of the book by Edward W. Schmidt, S.J. The book gives the first extended, carefully researched study of St. Ignatius's urban vision for the Society of Jesus, doing so with insight, imagination, and the ability to successfully tell both an overall story and many illustrative particular stories. To give but one example of research, who would ever have thought that about one thousand of Ignatius's almost seven thousand letters dealt with real estate in one form or another? And what forms they were! And what a difference this can make to our portrait of Ignatius and our understanding of what Jesuit apostolates really have been and perhaps ought to be for the future. To the pleasure of a good read add the pleasure of handling a book beautifully designed and handsomely published.

As happens every year at the end of the May-June meeting of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, several members will finish their three-year term of office and several will be waiting to take their places in September. My thanks and, I am sure, those of the readers of *STUDIES* go to Gerald Fogarty and Clement Petrik, both of the Maryland Province, and Carl Starkloff of the Missouri Province. Our new members-to-be are Philip Chmielewski (CHG), Richard Hauser (WIS), and Thomas Lucas (CFN). I shall tell you more about them in the September 1998 issue of *STUDIES*.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*

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# IN MEMORIAM

**Edward Malatesta (1932–98)**

China Hand and Spiritual Guide

## **The Question**

### **(La pregunta)**

Oswaldo Pol

Everybody passes  
and asks—  
from the narrow space left them  
by the bodies of others  
and the crucial adventure  
of the journey—

they pass in a long line  
and ask me

“Your God . . . Where is your God?”

*The original Spanish text:*

Todos los hombres pasan  
y preguntan  
—desde el espacio estricto  
que les dejan los cuerpos de los otros  
y desde la aventura necesaria  
del viaje—

pasan en larga fila  
y me preguntan:

Tú Dios . . . ¿Dónde tu Dios?

# THE WORD THAT CLAMORS

## *Jesuit Poetry That Reflects the Spiritual Exercises*

### INTRODUCTION

What lies ahead in these pages is a sampling of recent Jesuit poetry reflective of some aspect of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. I had some misgivings while soliciting these texts, because poets do not, after all, pick subjects to write about; rather, they follow the thread of some striking experience or rhythmic pattern. But when I listed the highlights of the *Spiritual Exercises*—leading concepts, key annotations or meditations—and invited submissions from Jesuit poets, I received plenty, and their enthusiasm for the project really buoyed me.

This collection would be valuable, I think, simply for making the point of the living and persistent influence of the *Exercises* on our works of imagination. But its real intent is more practical, more geared to the readership of *STUDIES*—to afford a stimulus, render substantial help, be good company to anyone making the Exercises today. These poems, often with vividness, present the contemporary context in which God invites us and Jesus Christ comes to us.

I got an initial push for this project from *A Commentary on the Sonnets of G. M. Hopkins* by Peter Milward of the Japanese Province, a book reissued by Loyola Press (1969/1997), which I dipped into during my annual retreat. So many of those poems are notable for a contemplated presence of Jesus Christ—"The Starlight Night," "Spring," "The Lantern out of Doors," to say nothing of the better known "Windhover," "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez."

We may as writers be awed by so much in Hopkins that we could

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never hope to duplicate—those jammed-together, exclamatory, drum-beat lines, his horror of Latinisms and startling reach of vocabulary, his innocent awe-struck faith, his tremendous empathy for the struggles of ordinary life, not to mention the “terrible sonnets,” where he is holding on for dear life. But his work invites us not so much to match his quality as to carry forth our mutual tradition. Hopkins had a very Ignatian way of seeing. Jesuits today will have a different idiom—will be experimental and questioning and devotional in a different mode—yet they will be faithful to the same insights that drove and supported Hopkins.

Undeniably, some very authentic Jesuit writing does not fit under headings from the *Exercises*, which might well be a kind of Procrustean bed for them. This is the case, in particular, with Jean Mambrino of the French Province, although you will find two poems by Mambrino under “Principle and Foundation.” I discuss Mambrino’s resolutely different direction in the afterword, but will also point out here his effort, in each of his volumes, to work in a different form, in a new rhythmical and structural mode.

My familiarity with Mambrino centers on a well-named volume *Oiseau-Coeur* (loosely, “with a bird’s heart”), published in 1979, which includes two earlier collections and a new one. The very title of the book suggests lightness, aspiration. The poet, in this work, is preoccupied with the earth—its rocky landscape and woods and watery stretches, its birds, the effects of wind, and especially the play of light. The human being, when traceable in the text and the poet’s vision, seems drawn into it by the aura of place, by a silence or absence that conveys a mystical Someone. In illustration I offer one representative poem, “A Lone Cypress Suffices” (“Un Seul Cyprès suffit”).

### A Lone Cypress Suffices

A lone cypress suffices  
 at the heart of distance  
 to make the hills turn  
 the forests    homesteads    hills  
 and light detached from the sky

still it is at the center  
 of nothing  
 it seems outside of the day

of a green deeper than the pines  
 almost black

it enlivens it gives bearings  
to a round of hills  
the noise of invisible water  
the bitterness of forests

what can it know  
it lasts and shapes out  
*the nothing from on high.*

*The original French text:*

Un seul cyprès suffit  
au coeur de la distance  
pour faire tourner les collines  
les forêts les mas les collines  
et la lumière détachée du ciel

et pourtant il n'est au centre  
de rien  
il semble à l'extérieur du jour

d'un vert plus foncé que les pins  
presque noir  
il anime il oriente  
la ronde des collines  
le bruit de l'eau invisible  
l'amertume des forêts

que peut-il savoir  
il dure et désigne  
*le rien d'en haut.*

This collection benefits not just from a taste of Mambrino but from three Spanish-speaking poets—Emilio del Rio of Spain, Luis Carlos Herrera of Colombia, and Osvaldo Pol of Argentina—and one Dutchman, familiar to readers of *STUDIES*, Paul Begheyn. Paul is principal translator of his own poems and I the polisher; for the other poets, I bear all the responsibility.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow poets who responded with such alacrity to this project, even from Down Under (Peter Steele), even from north of the Arctic Circle (Edward Ingebretsen, spending the year in the University of Tromsø, Norway, as a Fulbright fellow). I must also apologize into the unknown—to all those Jesuit poets not appearing here. Their absence may well be due to a *lapsus mentis* on my part, but more likely they are unknown to me and I look forward to learning of them. Now may all readers savor what follows.

## FIRST WEEK

### Spiritual Exercises, Definition

#### Preliminaries, First Annotation

We may consider “spiritual exercises” to mean any way of preparing and disposing the heart to rid itself of disordered affections and to seek God’s will for one’s life. The notion of exercise involves exertion, overcoming one’s laziness and resistances.

### Element

Peter Steele

Praying to you can be talking to the sea  
Out there beyond this field, those trees  
And the last tongue of land.

It is where our language ends, our dreams begin,  
A world of no more world, the place  
Where earth sweats into space.

And being a timid man with a taste for armour  
Inside as well as out, I pray  
That you will keep your distance.

Mostly it seems to work. You have the goodness  
To leave me home and dry. Why then  
Do I feel, unwilling, brine

In averted eyes, sweat on the folded hands,  
The tongue stung as with salt, and inside  
The tide mounting my veins?

## **The Brink**

Vernon Ruland

The conch in one hand  
of Vishnu welcomes you  
to worship. In his other,  
a discus of fire slams you  
to ashes if you refuse.

A curious tourist, perhaps  
you nibble free at every shrine.  
Beware the sacred threshold!

Swept quick beyond your depth,  
no longer seeking but sought,  
you'll not back out unchanged.



## Generosity

### Preliminaries, Fifth Annotation

It is crucial for the one making the Exercises to enter on them with a large heart and generosity (“grande animo y liberalidad”) toward our Creator and Lord, offering all one’s desires and freedom, all one has and is, for whatever it is God wishes.

## The Possibles

### Edward Ingebretsen

I make you my offering  
in peace; from my fields and forests  
twig and cut of oak  
the unaccustomed wildflower

I make you my offering  
of clay hands; these are all  
that is final to me  
the reach, the reach,  
the failure ever to reach

I make you my offering  
in peace.  
You are all the sky to me  
the light of my eyes,  
my thriving

I make you my offering, the possibles:  
you are my day  
the late orange sun  
and the going home  
the night

you are  
the quiet of my heart:

Father.

## Ups and Downs of the Spirit

Preliminaries, Sixth Annotation

The person directing the Exercises should look for the following in the exercitant: not a flat, untroubled surface, but some waves, some heights and depths, excited moments and darker, uncertain times. A lot hinges on faithfulness to the instructions of Ignatius.

### **The Cat Starts Scratching**

William Rewak

Young, the desire is not there:  
no evil intent, or even  
rudeness; the heart is not baked enough  
to want the final touch; the brain  
has no antecedents to know the lack.  
What seemed piety, for most of us,  
was either a need to please or a halting  
attempt to discipline grace. Like  
disciplining a cat. If peer  
followed peer into the darkness and named  
it light, there was, at least, company  
and therefore corroboration. But two eggs  
every morning, for years, you want  
more. Some parts die  
and they tug, not forgotten; some  
start pulsing, urging, unready.  
And the cat starts scratching; the light  
is still darkness but it beckons, insistent,  
then you know and desire finds its way.

## Prayer, Essentially

### Preliminaries, Modalities of Prayer

The *Exercises* instruct us in prayer, whether by setting the pattern for meditations and contemplations or by attending to the specific variants suggested in the appendix—examination of conscience, prayers dwelt upon word by word, or rhythmic matching of words to breaths.

## Psyche at Prayer

George McCauley

What does she see,  
 her eyes cast  
 down a chasm  
 deep within her, deep  
 cascading space, her  
 special silence framed  
 against a silent world,  
 donna immobile,  
 her mouth half-parted,  
 stopped in air as  
 though she'd scare away  
 a bird-like presence,  
 listening all  
 at once, if that  
 is possible, to the  
 unspeaking  
 universe, her arms  
 reposing unadorned  
 upon her limp thighs,  
 her very form  
 a waiting, wanting,  
 what? Is it  
 because she cannot  
 have or is too  
 full of having?  
 I watch her wake  
 from prayer,  
 the way her eyes

at first seem  
 pricked by the  
 undarkened sun,  
 the way she shrugs  
 off dreams  
 reluctantly  
 and flicks  
 a woolly caterpillar  
 from her hem  
 without killing it,  
 and shuts the  
 gospel book upon  
 her knee with reverent  
 finality as though  
 she knows  
 a secret now  
 that must be kept  
 next to the car keys  
 in her purse.  
 She pats her hair,  
 and looks around  
 as if to say  
 she's fine,  
 she really is,  
 and smiles upon  
 the newborn world.

## A Kind of Air

Edward Ingebretsen

After all—  
being a kind of air  
others shall breathe  
to set down roots, throw out branches  
that connect and reach—  
one doesn't live for oneself.

So we go on  
faithful to nothing  
if not to our own diminishing  
in the steady ways  
death overtakes us.  
Our single task: finally to be honest—  
the bag of virtue we carry  
remains empty, if we must fill it.  
Our only work: to awake  
where God can find us—  
Samuels, all, in the other room.

Prayer, then, is the shape  
breath takes:

my God  
do not forget  
that it was you  
in the cornerless night  
who first awoke me.  
Claim my voice.  
I ask your forgiveness  
and the shadow of your light.  
For this is the beautiful thing  
a Samuel is given to do:  
early awakened,  
to seek you.



## To the Creator Glory

### Principle and Foundation

The psalms of praise, especially Psalms 95 to 105, can help us bridge, and attune to, the new environment of the *Exercises*. We begin harping not on ourselves but on and to God, joining a great chorus in praise and reverence of the Goodness in whom we live and move.

### Psalm 23

Francis P. Sullivan

My Shepherd, my field,  
My well, my brimming drink,  
My steady pace, sturdy weapon,  
My balm, my home, my God.

### Psalm

Francis P. Sullivan

(1995, a year before his death)

The thought of you does not keep me alive.  
I am too much animal, you are too much spirit.  
I have tried prayer for the newly doomed,  
as if I'm on a sphere's edge looking at infinity,  
to ask you to come console their terrified eyes,  
but I drift into half sleep, the pleasure of immunity.  
Though I have heard doom words and seen the days ahead  
roll up on me like a poster to its blank side.  
I do not want immunity. If I could open one hand,  
motion you somewhere, sit in this chair, or stand  
where I can see you a minute! If I could shake my head  
in amazement at your arrival, or have tears of joy,  
or sense you had some grief, smelling moisture of you,  
or the odor of your love for the different roses in the vase,  
the play of baby's breath, or the light below the evening star  
out the window, rusty and rough and squeaky like a hinge!  
This is not demand. Animals are distracted.  
There is always another scent for them, until there isn't.

## Exaltavit humiles

Daniel Berrigan

All things despised, capricious, cranky  
have an hour of morning. Sumac jostled  
by shouldering oaks to the forest edge—how it burns  
clearer than they. And cobweb, no more than an afterthought,  
trembles at dawn like new-hammered silver.

The crouching rocks, overlaid  
with purest lace.

The wild brown grasses;  
a canticle at the furnace door:  
*Bless the Lord, rime at morning, frost and cold air!*

Roots, bound hand and foot, hear and heave mightily,  
lie cruciform, await the breaking spell.

For a moment nothing is wasted, nothing of no moment:  
to the banquet grace calls, grace clothes the unwanted poor.

## Morning Rises

Jean Mambrino

Morning rises from the calm waters  
and the birds taking to flight  
open the heavens  
open from their wings  
a breath of freshness  
that to uplifted faces leaves

only exile every heart  
alone on its isle and wounded.

For every bird in its flight  
carries the heavens off.

*The original French text:*

Le matin monte des eaux calmes  
 et les oiseaux dans leur envol  
 ouvrent le ciel  
 ouvrent de leurs ailes  
 la fraîcheur qui respire  
 ne laissant aux visages levés

que l'exil chaque coeur  
 dans son île seul et blessé.

Car chaque oiseau dans son vol  
 emporte le ciel.

## The Gift Le Don

Jean Mambrino  
 (translated by Jonathan Griffin)

"Life, my sister . . ."

—Pasternak

The munificence of the lilacs upon the heights of evening  
 is no less ephemeral than their scent which never ceases  
 to spread about, to conjure the dawn  
 sky in the deep of the twilight, blood on the sea,  
 sombre love, suavity of tears, the blue  
 trace of a wound, and always the abundance of the fragile  
 flowering, when lovers breathe their bliss,  
 have longed, since they were born, to retrieve the useless  
 fullness exhaled by each fragment of life,  
 at each secret instant of the world, where they nest  
 in the assurance of that gift which speaks only of April  
 and prepares summer where the lilacs will be no more.

---

*The original French text:*

“Ma sœur la vie”

—Pasternak

L'étincellement des lilas sur les hauteurs du soir  
n'est pas moins éphémère que leur odeur qui ne cesse  
de s'étendre alentour pour susciter le ciel  
de l'aube au fond du crépuscule, le sang sur la mer,  
le sombre amour, la suavité des pleurs, la trace bleue  
d'une blessure, et toujours l'abondance de la fragile  
floraison, quand les amants respirent leur bonheur,  
désirent dès leur naissance retrouver l'inutile  
plénitude exhalée par chaque fragment de vie,  
à chaque instant secret du monde où ils se nichent,  
dans l'assurance de ce don qui ne parle que d'avril  
et prépare l'été où les lilas ne seront plus.



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## Death Speaks to Life

### Principle and Foundation

The philosopher Karl Jaspers was notable for concentrating on the questions put to us by our mortality, the fact of death. That can well be said of Ignatius and of the concept "saving one's soul." How can we be now what we would like to be, before our Creator, at our final moment?

### Reconnaissance

Vernon Ruland

I sit on this slope  
wondering what is  
this thing I am.

My questions climb  
like laser darts  
slicing the clouds.

What will become of  
me, the warm cistern  
behind this left ear?

Will this awareness  
I feel now, persist  
beyond the darkness?

Will it matter then—  
dying, and after—  
that I sat wondering?

## Now or Never

Vernon Ruland

Too little time  
to glance back  
as the torrent  
vaults and tumbles.

Before they open  
your deferred letter  
mending blunders,  
blurting out love—  
people die on you.

## Lean Essentials

Vernon Ruland

I like the condensed power  
in aging masters—disciplined  
minimalism, trimmed clean  
of velvet gush and flare.

Relaxed magic of *The Tempest*.  
Beethoven's taut final quartets.  
Late Heidegger and Wittgenstein  
edging toward wordless reverence.

The dynamo sputtering slow, each  
creative spurt must be rationed.  
Death prompts a no-nonsense style,  
impatient with preliminaries.



## The Sin of the World

First Week, First Exercise

This is what we look earnestly to the Lamb of God to take away—the sin of the world. At a certain moment in experience, the recognition of evil seems crushing. Lest we live in some spiritual never-never land, our prayer needs to reproduce that, on the way to liberation.

### Roadrunner

William Rewak

“It’s a bright and guilty world.”

—Michael O’Hara in *The Lady from Shanghai*

Only a child thinks forever:  
 having learned of no other possibilities  
 in the few years the three of them sat  
 hunched together for the evening news—  
 with a flip to the Roadrunner during commercials—  
 she presumed the conversation would continue;  
 she remembered, early on, the bustle  
 on oatmeal mornings, riding high  
 on her swing out by the long green beans,  
 and laughing as words made sense.  
 Sunshine was heavy then, burrowing  
 into the earth and exploding into sunflowers,  
 sweetpeas and blue larkspur—the blossoms  
 she’d pick and arrange around her day;  
 afterwards, she scattered the dried petals  
 as sacramental leavings of a finished task.  
 But she thought things human remained  
 (as she thought bones would always be straight):  
 then, without careful parsing, one went  
 one way, the other another,  
 and the evening news continued its digression;  
 mornings were quiet. She objected  
 she had not been prepared, that swings and beans  
 were no lesson, the sun should have hinted  
 at a colder language. You don’t hear  
 whispers on a swing, she learned; you miss  
 eyes looking into the distance when the Roadrunner

has you riveted, wondering if once again  
he'll evade doom. You don't notice  
hands not touching and you don't know  
about the black space when words fail.

### Holy Week, 1965

*(North Vietnam, the air raids go on)*

Daniel Berrigan

For us to make a choice  
was always a wrong choice—  
why not die in the world  
one was born into? what was wrong?

They were patient almost as time.  
Their words ate like a tooth.

They looked into our eyes  
wild by starts, like the times.  
They saw  
and marveled, and shook. We saw  
out of the edge of the eye  
hell;

                    out of the center eye  
a command. And blinked  
their asperges away; *be blind.*

## Colloquy

### First Week, First Exercise

I imagine Christ our Lord before me, as he enters into his passion. In him God has become human and is acceding to a painful death for my sins. I ask myself what I have done for Christ, what I am doing now for Christ, what I ought to do for Christ.

### **Ecce homo**

(Zie de mens)

Paul Begheyn

He stands there on display,  
no longer able now  
to hide his nudity.

The untouched body,  
not yet delivered  
to the brute passions,

rises majestic,  
proud as a tree  
high over the herd.

The judgment room goes still  
and every menace  
stiffens to a pose.

He plants his left foot  
a half-step ahead

and offers his cheek  
as if for the first time  
he connects to those who  
have known him long.

Now there's something between us:  
I here, you there,  
savior of desire.

You reach me a mirror  
in which your life  
no longer but mine

in all its poverty  
is figuring.  
Have mercy on me, Man.

#### *The original Dutch text:*

Daar staat hij nu ten toon,  
niet meer in staat  
zijn naaktheid te bedekken.

Het onberoerde lijf,  
nog niet aan drift  
van beulen prijsgegeven,

rijst majesteitelijk  
fier als een boom  
hoog uit boven de kudde.

De ruimte zwijgt, bruingrijs,  
en elk gedreig  
verstart tot loze pose.

Hij zet zijn linkervoet  
één stap vooruit,  
en biedt zijn wang alsof er

nu voor het eerst iets is  
met wie hem al  
zovele jaren kende.

Nu gaat het tussen ons:  
ik hier, jij daar,  
verlosser van verlangen.

Jij houdt een spiegel voor,  
waarin niet meer  
jouw leven, maar het mijne

in alle schamelheid  
te prijken staat.  
Ontferm je over mij, mens.



---

## One's Own Sin

First Week, Second Day

The key words penned by Ignatius for this meditation are *proceso* (the unfolding of one's sin), and *ponderar* (weighing their evil), and *quien soy yo* ("Who the heck am I to act this way?"), and *exclamación* (an outcry of surprise that the earth still holds me).

### Priest Remembers Heroin

Eric Zuckerman

I touched the former spot  
I used where purple vein  
is nicely plumped

and slid a phantom needle  
in and drew up phantom  
blood. Recalling how

the drug could change  
a hand-towel into filigree,  
I pressed the phantom

plunger like a method actor  
dies. I caught myself the way  
a snore wakes up a train

commuter, and when I cracked  
my breviary the psalm displayed  
was one of praise.

## Talisman

Daniel Berrigan

I wear  
for sign of debt  
a silver medal of Christ  
sterile of flower or word,  
itself time's flower  
molten and hard; face incised  
in the year's acid,  
a savior's eye  
sleepless, surviving man.

I wear it, a weakling  
who kisses the knees of the strong man he fears  
and in the dust, may yet  
arise to love.

The face turns full profile away—  
from time's stinking silver, Judas's kiss?

But a chain swings the rabbi full about.  
The face is become a  
a savior's change of heart.  
He turns to me.  
I may yet  
if silver outlast flesh

die unhangd in bed,  
bought, sold for silver.



## Closing Prayer

First Week, Second Exercise

“End with a colloquy of mercy, reasoning and giving thanks to God our Lord for having given me life up to now, proposing amendment for the future, by his grace.”

### “Show Me Your Face, O God” (Psalm 61)

Daniel Berrigan

At land's end, end of tether  
 where the sea turns in sleep  
 ponderous, menacing  
 and my spirit fails and runs  
 landward, seaward, askelter

I pray you  
 make new  
 this hireling heart  
 ○  
 turn your face to me  
 —winged, majestic, angelic—

tireless,  
 a tide  
 my prayer goes up—  
 show me your face, O God!

---

## SECOND WEEK

### The Call of the King

Second Week, Start

Ignatius wants us to remember how loyalty, enthusiasm, and readiness to sacrifice can be galvanized by someone leading a crusade. The goal is far-reaching; the leader will be as close as the reach of his voice. So any shirker should be ashamed. A commitment has to follow.

### The Word Clamors

(A condensed version of a longer poem,  
"Clamor de la palabra")

Emilio del Rio

Call, kingdom and king—all one.  
Collector of stupendous sums,  
caster of nets, what gaze,  
what tone of voice brought to your face  
the invitation you took up at once?  
The Word was passing through, for the nonce,  
the sea was calm, and on the sand,  
as always, children played and ran.  
Jesus, your lips, human, expressed  
your very being, into words amassed.  
You spoke in a voice entwining  
flowers and green leaves, a voice filling  
with light, and snatching at us, urgent,  
firm. You on the mountain, ardent,  
alone, elected whom to call by name.  
We in your hands today affirm  
that this calling keeps on, alive.  
Word of the Father's realm of love,  
you touch me to the fire and light  
my mortal wick, so all may contemplate  
the presence shown in me by you.  
You, out of view, I can hear, touch, know  
in all the trembling of this life of mine,  
thanks to your Word in me, your stride  
over the new sand upon my shore—  
you, a gaze into the sphere of sea  
ending in no shore but in the deep  
where the Father sees in you his shape.



## The Incarnation

### Second Week, First Contemplation

We are to visualize here the condition of the world, its moral entropy or downhill dynamics in an unredeemed state. We are also to visualize God's taking stock, and the drastic step decided on to save the world—the Word's becoming flesh.

### Nacimiento

#### Oswaldo Pol

History had not happened, but held tight  
to a blind circle, and with no way out.  
Our doleful steps kept going round about,  
directionless. . . . Meanwhile, from a height,

God's gaze was on us, a lover whose delight  
was our humanity. He took the route,  
how daring! of the weak and the left without,  
Child in a manger and with love bright.

Such a recovery of time and blaze of sun!  
What pathways stemming from the old wound  
and leading ever to the Beloved One

in a communion joyful and consumed!  
Happy the Mother through whom this was done—  
the flesh of God to our own flesh attuned.

*The original Spanish text:*

La Historia no era tal y se enredaba  
en un círculo ciego y sin salida.  
Los pasos desandaban la dolida  
caravana sin rumbo. . . . Nos miraba

desde la altura Dios. Y desposado  
con nuestra humanidad, tomó la ardida  
senda del pobre, débil, sin guarida,  
Niño en pesebre y por amor marcado.

¡Oh cuánta luz! ¡Oh tiempo recobrado!  
¡Oh caminos que parten de la herida  
y para siempre llevan al Amado

en comunión gozosa y poseida!  
¡Oh la Madre feliz que nos ha dado  
carne de Dios a nuestra carne asida!

## **Salvation History**

Michael F. Suarez

With no water from the Roman rock,  
They lived like salt fish in a brittle wind,  
They drank only dryness from dusty rivers,  
And cried to God, we are not satisfied.

When Love saw the desert nation,  
The empty wells, the Roman legion,  
God said to himself let me go there,  
Let me give myself to the crush;

Send me into the winepress,  
Perhaps I could be enough.

## **Fiat**

Michael F. Suarez

Spirit muse, make me the gravid man.  
Seed me; great me that all will be  
Gestation and the bringing forth.  
Take me and let your desire  
Be mine. Fill me with your will,  
O Lord; abide with me in darkness  
And I shall sing of your light.  
Husband me that I in your  
Image and likeness might carry  
Your tribe. Though man, I am your maid  
And this makes me more; let it be  
Done unto me that all will be  
Gestation and the bringing forth.

## Knowledge

Daniel Berrigan

Everything known beforehand  
except  
the hand from a cloud  
releasing the rain's largesse,  
binding rain like sheaves,

Except the hand from the ark  
freeing a dove in air

except  
the dove  
blind, affrighted, tossed  
on the watery void

except you  
lodged there, living, secret,  
the world's nest egg

from whose birth  
rises our only  
hand ark dove

---

## The Nativity

Second Week, Second Day

The Spanish text of the *Ejercicios*, edited by Cándido de Dalmases, S.J., notes an insertion and a correction by Ignatius. Concerning our Lady almost nine months pregnant and seated on an ass, he adds, “as one may piously meditate.” In the second prelude he changes “inn” (*el diversorio*) to “the place or cavern of birth.” How important to him the envisioning of detail!

### Mother and Child

James Torrens

She is a teen age mother  
with an uninvited burden,

someone to wipe, soothe and feed  
and bawling for her attention.

What a scowl she is met with.  
Won't this derail her education?

Still we can't help applauding,  
when so many are sent back.

She's lucky, with a staff to lean on  
and a star she can steer by.

This child, asking so much of her,  
will better the world's climate.

### Shepherds to Shepherd

James Torrens

Shepherds to Shepherd come.  
Wolf guards, wielders of the hooked staff  
good for grasping the sheep's neck through brush,  
flock from the cold open field.  
Weathered they fill this shelter.

What then was the sky's song about?  
An infant's first sleepy stretch,  
Lamb regathering the scattered.  
Youth, you will get use from those spindly arms.  
They will be pinned apart  
but draw rustics like us on the glad run.

### Young Joseph's Arms

James Torrens

Young Joseph's arms  
clasp tightly.  
He fosters this small love  
with untold words,  
his eyes dark  
with the boy's own mystery,  
and cheeks pouched in a smile  
beatific as his.  
The infant nesting there  
is a sign of trust,  
and he with his roughened hands  
a sign of fathering.

## Two Standards

Second Week, Fourth Day

One of these two flags is strutted about with fanfare, shiny and calculated to impress. The other has been through battle and does not look like much. We need the intercessors, starting with our Lady, to help us detect the true colors and enroll under that banner.

### Two Standards

Francis J. Smith

Lady, clear-headed discerner of spirits,  
I cannot see the fire and direful smoke  
in Babylon. Please, you have a meeting  
with Lucy and Gabriel to plot a program  
of therapy to change my eyes, teased  
by offers, glossy brochures and promises.  
When I look over there, I see my name  
in neon lights, lionized, courted,  
posh offices, perquisites of success,  
caddie deference, a telephone of power,  
Riviera hours with Campari and soda.  
Is there a way, short of a cannon ball,  
to make me choose the plain standard  
behind Him who walks in a dull desert?

### The Lie

(La mentira)

Oswaldo Pol

Those whom the night  
does not disturb  
nor wind put on the alert;  
who go about like cats  
in their dominions, indifferent,  
through places we thought alien to them,  
not bothering with compass



or horoscope,  
 and passing up the relief  
 of ruminating a mandala,  
 they are the strong ones,  
 the free ones,  
 the people who one day  
 begging for peace  
 will show us the lie  
 of their innocence.

The original Spanish text:

Aquellos a quienes la noche  
 no perturba,  
 ni el viento pone en sobreaviso;  
 que van como los gatos  
 paseando señoríos, indiferentes,  
 por territorios que les creíamos ajenos  
 y prescinden de brujulas  
 y horóscopos,  
 negándose al alivio  
 de ir rumiando mandalas,  
 son los fuertes,  
 los libres,  
 los que un día  
 mendigando la paz  
 nos mostrarán la mentira  
 de su inocencia.

## A Meditation on Standards

Luke

Just after school yesterday when  
 the sun made parts of the house seem  
 like they were fading

Grandmama was in  
 the kitchen peeling potatoes and humming  
 about "something within I cannot explain"



## Call of the Apostles

Second Week, Seventh Day

Ignatius, after his three points from the Gospels, adds the following: "Consider how the apostles were of a rude and base condition, and the dignity to which they were so sweetly called, and the gifts and graces elevating them above all fathers of the New and Old Testament."

### Dom Lawton

In Memory of Abbot Bernard McVeigh

Eric Zuckerman

As a boy he crossed each summer  
on the Ile de France, stayed with  
English lords, knew what went  
with Bordelaise, and ordered  
Ris de Veau. Then a misting  
came, as when Bernard of Clairvaux  
lured away the high-born boys,  
their mothers aproning the smitten  
sons. Though Vivien's words  
on the eve of his departure:

"Really, Lawton, growing cabbages with old men . . ."

So the consequence took many years to settle,  
James and Vivien motoring up each summer,  
chauffeur at rest by the guest house gate, while  
cowl-draped Lawton—full monastic crown—  
would lead them by the hay-thick Trappist fields.

Sometimes at lunch at "21" she thought of Lawton's  
whereabouts, that sterile dorm he slept in  
with his robes on. It was all simply too much. . .

And James and Vivien died  
a year or so apart,  
their final home the Essex House hotel.

And Lawton

signed the papers that dissolved him  
of inheritance, then walked to choir  
    weaving  
from the oscillating spell.

**C. J. McNaspy, S.J.**  
(who died listening to Mozart)

Daniel Berrigan

And the light  
puts out your eyes.

I don't mean catastrophe  
    far from it.  
    Excess of soul  
        rising like yeast, zest—  
(obedient  
    to sweet exuberance)

is nearer—  
the point being,  
                    light.

My notion  
leans to a last day, yes  
    a last breath  
        a Jesuit death

unexpected, beckoned by  
Mozart's right hand  
    zestful, raising  
        a signal,

    a movement advertent,  
                    birds  
rising from earth  
    as from a dark throat—  
    your cry  
YES    YES

    and the light  
    puts out your eyes.

## To Better Distinguish Movements of the Soul

### Second Week, Rules for Discernment

The Illuminative Way helps us see that appearance is not always reality. By the semblance of good “the enemy of human nature” may be leading us astray. In pain, weakness, failure, the good angel may be touching us softly, as water does a sponge.

### Diving into the Wreck

Edward Ingebretsen

Diving into the wreck  
as the poet says—  
so the digging goes on  
in the basements of my heart.

Is it a well  
or a mine?  
Down is the direction  
either way.

Shall water flow  
or coal shine?  
The chemistry  
only confuses me.

Dig me deep.  
Dig through the shallows  
and blinds  
to the God  
who is in me  
like a small steel heart  
or an endless stomach  
keeping me hungry.

Dig me deep.  
Lord of brokenness  
I shall have nothing else—  
rich as I am still  
in this:  
my major vacancy.

## Jesus in His Public Life

Second Week, Later Days

When reading the gospel accounts of Jesus preaching and healing, we understand and even stage them according to the times in which we live. The medievals did that vividly. The mysteries of the life of Christ have their mode of presence in our milieu, with our participation.

### New Testament Scene

James Torrens

Then the Lord turned from Kingsley  
onto Division Street (the disciples  
bossy in suit and tie) and  
in the din one mumbled,  
“Lord, for pete’s sake, have mercy,”  
jealous of beggars pushing through,  
when the Lord’s eye fixes him,  
stilling the rabbit heart.  
Then Jesus winked. What  
could that mean but  
“Some mess, the lot of you.  
I was an innocent. I had no idea.”  
And the poor man got it, a word  
passes into him: Your wound  
shall be a scar, the scar turn  
bright, patience. At his breast  
the Lord then raises his bright  
hand in the fear not gesture.



---

## Ignatius in the Holy Land

(a song)

William Hewett

At last I kissed the holy ground;  
I walked where he walked his winding way;  
At last the holy city shone  
In bright late sunshine, in evening's calm.  
Holy the land where he lived, where he trod;  
Holy the ground he touched—  
Lord let me walk in your winding way;  
Let me Lord Jesus walk your way.

Let me touch each tree and rock  
Where Jesus walked once, where Jesus prayed.  
Let me climb each mountainside  
Where Jesus spoke once, where Jesus trod.  
Holy the land where he died, where he rose;  
Holy the tree he touched—  
Lord, let me linger, Lord, let me stay;  
Let me Lord Jesus live your way.

## The Jesus Prayer, I and II

Edward Ingebretsen

I

Jesus  
went to the stones first:  
to the voiceless lakeside  
to the urging crowd  
hungry-tongued as fire.  
He scattered himself  
in that burning sea.

The great Jesus  
hung adrift  
in the slow afternoon.  
He was no stranger  
to what we ourselves  
find so increasingly strange.

He took death  
as it came  
piecemeal, winningly  
small  
one flesh at a time;  
he welcomed it as the first fruit,  
his first born.

II

Jesus taught in parables  
and made geography  
our greatest—  
the precise placing of God  
astride the master boat  
disarming the wind  
riding the road into rock  
shaping the one word  
needed to free death.

In parables  
of ropes, nets and fish,  
in the tangle of catching  
and feeding, in sowing,  
in graces of going  
to hear stones sing  
lakeside—here  
Jesus took our name  
and wore it  
like a fine love.  
This, his  
major parable.



---

## Marriage Feast of Cana

### Second Week, Mysteries of the Life of Christ

According to St. John, and thus also to the *Spiritual Exercises*, this was the first miracle that Jesus performed. We find here the transformation of an earthly substance, to bless that radical change of orientation that we know as marriage. Jesus here begins to show his glory and gives us a sign of the everlasting banquet, at his mother's initiative.

### Cana

Peter Steele

It might have been a neurotic's paradise,  
With all that water there for endless washing,  
The catering shaky, and most of us wondering  
What sort of promise such a beginning held  
For the couple's days and years. And then the wine  
Ran out, clean out. What do you say—"One always  
Likes to be moderate at these affairs"—  
When what you mean is, "There's more need than they  
Can possibly provide for." Anyhow,  
After a while they gave us wine in flagons,  
The kind of thing it was a privilege  
To drink, or think about. I still don't know  
Where they had found it, how they bought it, why  
They kept it until then. I do remember,  
Late in the piece, a man who made some toasts  
And drank as if he meant them, and then left,  
His mother looking thoughtful: that, and the jars  
For water, and the way they seemed to glow.

## THIRD WEEK

### The Agony in the Garden

Third Week, Second Day

Here, as “his hour” arrives, we find Jesus plunged into the darkest, most sinister and most repugnant element. The whole of his humanity flinches, crying out to be spared. The orientation to his Father’s will, the arrow of his spirit, alone can direct him.

### The Agony in the Garden

Francis J. Smith

There are no angels here tonight.  
Not a garden with moonlight odors  
but a canyon under spidery clouds.  
The olive trees are strange with eyes.  
If only I could say “peace”  
to my shaking hands and still  
the pounding of this heart.  
This is what it is to wait, bound,  
for the sound of a shot,  
to sit the night in solitary,  
quite divorced, helpless in fear.  
I am all men and women left  
to their own nightmares. Tomorrow’s  
absurd *Ergo* condemns all spirits  
cased in this amazed flesh.  
Father, we must be prodigal.



## Way of the Cross

Third Week, Fifth Day

Is this not culturally difficult for us, despite all our violent programming—to accompany Jesus through his sufferings the way St. Catherine of Siena did, St. Rose of Lima, St. Peter Claver, St. Aloysius, St. Jean de Brebeuf, vividly and with tears? Ignatius would have us ask it.

### Station IV—Jesus Meets His Mother

(For Witnesses' Voices)

Francis P. Sullivan

You can't stop it.  
 You can't block it out.  
 You know who it is.  
 You can strangle shouting no.  
 You can kill yourself with frenzy.  
 You can die right there.  
 You can't stop it.  
 You can't touch anyone.  
 You know them all.  
 You know how far they go.  
 He is not finished yet.  
 He can take some more.  
 He can still breathe and see.  
 He has his bones intact.  
 He still responds to orders.  
 He can tell who gives them.  
 He knows this road.  
 He knows where it goes.  
 He knows who you are.  
 He dies when he sees you.  
 You are now the bitter wind.  
 You know what it is.  
 You are now ferocious mercy.  
 You are tenderness inflamed.

## The Death of Jesus

Third Week, Fifth Day

This is a central moment in our piety, the moment of awe. Each Good Friday brings our life to a stop, in solemnity, for gratitude, for kissing the cross. To enter this darkness, the death of Jesus Christ and the apparent triumph of evil, a great love and trust are necessary.

### The Primal Silence

Vernon Ruland

Lovers incommunicado,  
slack breath of a child asleep,

humid eye of a hurricane,  
stillness of secret wells

and stark tundras, the instant  
between finale and applause.

Long ago Christ cried out dying  
and tore open our silences.

Not whirlwind but a whisper,  
the deafening quiet of God.

### The Inmost Meaning of Certain Sacred and Neglected Words

Daniel Berrigan

*Let there be man* is one thing—but  
*let there be this, my hangman?* Yes,  
*no turning aside of nails. I*  
*appoint you to my flesh.*

*The hard fast rule, cried nails in Him, is love.*  
*Climb me, taste me, cried the tree.*  
*I am heavy, crown to limb*  
*with harvest Him.*

## In a Class of Moral Theology

Francis Sweeney

This was the fire that ran in the wake of the promise  
 Like bird-prattle as morning stormed hill after hill.  
 We have learned too well the ultimate craft  
 Ten thousand times more ready than the crossbow  
     or the mace,  
 And torn up distance like a madman's letter.  
 But still the swallows nest as once in Ur and Ascalon  
 And still our hearts go the same road under the earth.

Cain bludgeoned down his brother in a field  
 Last week in Georgia,  
 (And Abel, being black, went unavenged).  
 The girl who saunters in the evening streets  
 Was booty to an Assyrian conqueror;  
 Came in a troop of yellow-haired German harlots  
 To Venice on a Renaissance April.

Far off the insensible hammers ring the noon's long chime,  
 Hammers rapping clear and small like the ticking of a watch,  
 Pounding together and then one insensible hammer  
     beating on.  
 And we are wise as gods and know not what we do.  
 Cry mercy on us, brother with the briar garland,  
 My mock laureate, my minstrel hanged for a thief,  
 My weary Christ deaddrooping on the nails.

## The Heart Lies Open

(Selected lines from  
 "Abierto corazón")

Emilio del Rio

I look now at your face, abandoned  
 to blood, saliva, shadow,  
 and, though you are stone dead, at water,  
 blood, that from a burst heart flow.

I taste the water of a salt sea,  
the world's denial, its hollow shout  
of blind rebuff, knowing you sink  
into that tide to seek us out.

Son in your Father's arms,  
you aim to free us from the grip  
of death, giving us birth, shaping us,  
via your death, to life.

A world recovers at the Spirit's kiss  
from you, hearth where I lay my head,  
heavy with guilt and grief for the world  
that, torpid, scorns the life you bled.

*The original Spanish text:*

Mientras miro tu Rostro abandonado  
en sangre y en saliva y en tinieblas,  
y Agua y Sangre fluyendo todavía  
del roto Corazón, muerto de muertos,  
siento el agua de mar que amarga llega,  
la Negación del mundo, suficiente y vacío,  
la Repulsã más ciega. Y sé que Te hundes  
dentro de todas ellas a buscarnos,  
a liberarnos para el Padre, muertos,  
que nacemos de Ti, a configurarnos  
a través de tu muerte con la Vida.  
Hijo en brazos del Padre, dando el Beso  
del Espíritu al mundo recobrado.  
Hogar donde reclino mi cabeza  
culpable y dolorosa por el mundo  
de tanto muerto que no quiere Vida.



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## FOURTH WEEK

### Resurrection

Recent studies of the resurrection in the four Gospels emphasize confused amazement among the first witnesses hardly daring to believe for joy. The swing is from “we had hoped” to “were not our hearts burning within us?” Brightness is the visual effect.

#### Spirit All Around

(selected lines)

George McCauley

Like a morning stillness hung  
on rooftops streaked  
by the new sun, like a spire  
framed against the surging sky,  
like a sense of something missing  
before the first breeze stirs  
or greenness grows bright on the trees—  
Jesus lay there in the tomb.  
And the Spirit, Tongue of Fire,  
placed a reverent kiss upon his lips—  
eternal gratitude, unfeigned concern, yes,  
respiration, tendering.  
No force could hold the Spirit back.  
And like it dawned suddenly  
upon a drowsy man his children  
planned a picnic for that very day—  
Jesus jumped up.

**Easter Morning  
(Paasmorgen)**

Paul Begheyn

Here's how life looks sometimes:  
a night, closed down, dead.  
Here's how the question can sound:  
"Who will roll the stone from the tomb?"

And then the unexpected:  
discovering it's been rolled away,  
hearing someone say:  
"Don't be afraid."

Then, not to spend the night lying down,  
you go outside walking,  
going on and on, telling it:  
"He has risen."

*The original Dutch text:*

Zo ziet het leven er soms uit:  
nacht, dicht, dood.  
Zo luidt soms de vraag:  
"Wie zal de steen voor het graf weggrollen?"

En dan het onverwachte:  
ineens zien dat de steen al weggerold is.  
Iemand horen zeggen:  
"Niet bang zijn."

En dan niet blijven liggen in de nacht,  
maar naar buiten lopen,  
verder gaan, vertellen:  
"Hij is opgestaan."



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## Veneration

Michael F. Suarez

Fresh from bed, I come to you and laugh  
to think that you could ever live  
in this enormous room, or locked  
in a golden box for the comfort  
of my veneration.

For the life of me, I could never tell  
how you spend your life; my eyes never  
get used to you, nor ever understand  
the ways that you move.

I kiss no wife, no child; I hold no one in the night;  
I swim with no lifejacket against the rising tide  
of my own finitude that takes me to you.  
There are times when I am terrified,  
reading your good news,  
though you are the truth that leads me from the tomb,  
your disfigured body the beauty that lets me  
broken be disfigured in you.

## Atmosphere of Joy

### Fourth Week, Additions

Ignatius notes for this week: “Bring to mind and think on matters pleasing, happy, full of spiritual joy, such as God’s glory. Profit from the day’s brightness or from seasonal freshness—whatever will help you rejoice in our Creator and Redeemer.”

### Solitude (Soledad)

Luis Carlos Herrera

The breeze does not shake the palm trees,  
the pulsing of the sea upon the shore  
sweetens the sands.

There’s a feeling of boundless peace.  
Herons are pointing me  
to the north, the absolute.

Nothing petty has place in your confines.  
The bronze of light upon the waves  
works at sculpting my dreams.

Upon your horizon  
my hopes rise and rise.

And beyond the evening wind,  
beyond sea and cloud,  
immensity arises.

And my thought swells:  
O immense solitude . . .  
Today you will be my witness.  
This is no empty feeling.  
I am not in tears,  
Your waves spatter me, immense sea.



*The original Spanish text:*

La brisa no sacude las palmeras,  
el palpar del mar sobre las playas  
suaviza las arenas.

Hay una sensación de paz sin límites.  
Las garzas me señalan  
el norte, el absoluto.

La pequeñez no cabe en tus confines.  
El bronce de la luz, sobre las olas  
moldea  
la estatua de mis sueños.

Sobre tus horizontes,  
mis esperanzas  
van surgiendo.

Y más allá del viento vespertino  
y más allá del mar y de la nube  
surge la inmensidad.

Y se agiganta  
mi pensamiento:  
Oh inmensa soledad . . .  
Hoy sereas mi testigo  
No es vano sentimiento.  
Yo no lloro,  
me salpican tus olas, mar inmenso.

### **Enamored Dust**

Luis Carlos Herrera

Sister Death,  
who walk with me  
in the silence of my bones,  
in the harmony of a beat  
due to cease one day.

Dear heart, my heart,  
carrying within you  
life's rhythm:  
one day you will go silent.

Dear heart, my heart,  
to stay mute forever?  
to be dust, no more?

To be dust, no doubt,  
a sap feeding into  
the desert flowers . . .  
But to stay quiet, no.  
What is for sure: Dust  
you will be, enamored dust.  
Dust you will be, enamored dust.

*The original Spanish text:*

Hermana muerte,  
la que vas conmigo  
en el silencio de mis huesos  
en la armonía del latido  
que un día cesara.

Corazón, corazón  
que llevas dentro  
el ritmo de la vida:  
un dia callaras!

Corazón, corazón  
¿te quedarás eternamente mudo?  
¿Serás polvo no más?

Serás polvo sin duda  
y alentarás tu savia  
las flores del desierto. . .  
Mas no estarás callado,  
esto es lo cierto:  
“Polvo seras,” mas “polvo enamorado!”



## Responding to God in All Things

### Contemplation for Obtaining Love

Ignatius, who had “the eyes of his understanding” opened along the Cardoner River, points us toward the breadth of vision he was granted. Recognizing the tangible effects, the labor, the presence and overflow of God’s love wherever we look, we are impelled to wonder and thanks.

### To Attain the Love of Beauty

Excerpts from a *ghazal* (Persian and Arabic form)

Gerry Graham

All our bodies want, ever, is to love beauty.  
Loving what touches us, we make love to beauty.

A white linen hem, embroidered with gold crosses,  
Skims just above the floor in its prayer of beauty.

A river floods blue, cresting level with green fields;  
Cows digest this complex thrill by grazing beauty.

A man was his guitar for the length of a song;  
His fingers were moved strings; music played him beauty.

While Jesus died, soldiers who’d just crucified him  
Knelt and rolled dice for his garment’s seamless beauty.

The three hundred pound man sat in my kitchen chair  
Reading Plato’s Greek: sheer, original beauty!

Those 60’s blond bee hives at Mustang Sally’s! still  
How ranch ladies dressing up on farms style beauty.

A waitress at rest: bent over a tiny diner’s bar,  
Particular face lost in brief coffee break beauty.

Grandma felt Iowa was warm enough for corn  
By touch of bare butt to earth—beauty to beauty.

That boy's casket looked too short to bear without poised  
Gold, open-winged angels attached for just beauty.

With casual hand she brushed away blond bangs  
As if no hair dresser had planned ornate, curved beauty.

As chants left lacquered choir stalls, a candle's tongue  
Soundless consumed its own blue wax beauty.

### **As It Is**

Michael F. Suarez

1

The giver is the gift  
Again the gift is present, undiminished.

The giver is without limits,  
love universal, but specific,

prizing everything precious,  
as it is.

2

Disbuild the tower you have raised  
scatter the treasure you have saved

forget the points you'd thought you'd earned  
for good behavior.

The giver is the gift of worth:  
you do not get what you deserve.

**Because**

Daniel Berrigan

On the Don Diego  
the dugouts assemble  
like a sublime children's charade:  
"By River, Indians and Jesuits Enter the Mission."  
In my hands  
a leather-bound volume:  
"Summa Theologica, Venice, 1773."  
I sit awash.  
The vast tome opens like the throat of a sage  
to "Article Eighty-four:  
Wherein Are Adduced Five Reasons  
Why God Is Named Love."  
(In quaint Latin) "Because God is source  
of love, because  
God creates for love, because  
God would have us love as we are loved,  
because"—I raise my eyes,  
the multifarious jungle leaves astir—  
an open volume  
grown voluble, uttering  
reasons beyond number, for  
love beyond reason.

## Contemplation for Obtaining Love

### The Suscipe

The ever-practical Ignatius says, Don't just talk of your gratitude for God's immense creative goodness; give back with your very best. The old chevalier Ignatius gives all—*todo*—in knightly commitment. The aspiring and mystical Ignatius casts his response as a great love.

### The Monk to His Lord

Francis Sweeney

No, no, I will never regret that other season.

Broken on the wheel, the mind bludgeoned,  
In the deep dark when those with eyes are asleep  
And the day's clothing hollow and folded beside my bed,  
When all my sins come clamoring, almost precious,  
There is never a time I would not swear what I have sworn.

The Host for notary, my brothers listening and breathing,  
I spoke the bond, knowing the words, their meaning,  
Knowing the kind King-Brother would come in a moment  
God-sweet to my opened mouth.

But Christ, be with me when the battle is toward,  
The skies aflash with armies, the heart in mail.  
Be near me then, O King, Your hands on the bones of  
my shoulders,  
When the spirit has lost its logic to confound  
The rhetoric of the flesh,  
When all the charms they taught me cannot quench  
The omnipotent laughter of my body.



## Afterword

**T** S. Eliot, in his lecture and essay “What Is Minor Poetry?” (1944; by “minor poetry” he means poetry just a step below the greats), gives a pleasing estimate of anthologies, which I hope applies to this one.

Just as in a well arranged dinner, what one enjoys is not a number of dishes by themselves but the combination of good things, so there are pleasures of poetry to be taken in the same way; and several very different poems, by authors of different temperaments and different ages, when read together, may each bring out the peculiar savour of each other, each having something that the others lack.<sup>1</sup>

In the next essay in the same collection, “What is a Classic?” Eliot proposes some criteria for greatness, in particular that a work be comprehensive. Can religious poetry—what is pejoratively called “devotional poetry”—really be comprehensive? Doesn’t it confine itself to a narrow, if intense, band and leave out the broad range of human experience, the political and social as well as the sexual, romantic, and affective? One can immediately think of mystical poetry with an erotic frame of reference, as “La noche oscura” and “Llama de amor viva” by St. John of the Cross, and of poetry which, while religious, has a political cast, for instance much by W. H. Auden. But let the question stand.

I bring this up because of what Jean Mambrino expressed to me by letter as his decision against writing “poetry that is directly religious, confessional,” a decision he took so as “to reach a wide variety of spirits, believers of all the spiritual traditions or agnostics turned toward ‘the unknown god.’” There is a broad spectrum of human and spiritual themes to be touched on, Mambrino says, without having to be palpably religious or Jesuit. Agreed. That, paradoxically, is very Jesuit—finding the sacred in the secular, directing ourselves intently to those outside the pale and to whatever God has looked on and found good. A number of poets and poems in this collection—to name only Vernon Ruland, William Rewak, Gerry Graham, George McCauley—actually tend in Mambrino’s direction.

I will admit too that religious poetry is devilishly hard to write without fudging insights or rhymes and without treacle. The English Breviary, which contains some fine texts of hymns, could also well endure a thinning out of the weak ones. When the ten members of this seminar, at quarterly meetings, recite Morning and Evening Prayer, the leader often leaves out the hymn. I have to suspect the same happens in private reading.

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<sup>1</sup> *On Poetry and Poets*, 40.



That is a commentary of some sort. On the other hand, the very staple of the hours is poetic, the psalms.

The artistic spirit, to restate the obvious, leads one person one way and another person another, and in fact can lead the same person quite diversely from moment to moment. When Daniel Berrigan's collected poems appear, as they should soon, under the title *The Risen Bread* (Fordham University Press, John Dear editor), we will see what an amazing spectrum of subjects he touches, tones he takes, and how tightly the secular is wound to the sacred.

What a gift the imagination is, whether at work on words, images, colors, sounds, or some other class of material! The product does not have to be "Hurrahing in Harvest" to lead us to God. A piece of finely stitched fabric can do so equally. The one requirement is that the work be done well, as Maritain kept saying in *Art and Scholasticism*. T. S. Eliot said that what he looked for

in the work of any living poet when I met it for the first time, is whether this is *genuine* poetry or not. Has the poet something to say, a little different from what anyone has said before, and has he found, not only a different way of saying it, but *the* different way of saying it which expresses the difference in what he is saying?<sup>2</sup>

I have picked the poems in this collection by my brother Jesuits, first of all, of course, because they link in some way to the *Spiritual Exercises*, they open up vistas, but also because of how well they are made, how genuine. Reader, I hope you agree.

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<sup>2</sup> "What is Minor Poetry?"



## Authors

(and the Jesuit provinces of which they are members)

- Begheyn, Paul** (Netherlands). He is a staff member of the Ignatiushuis, Center for Spirituality and Adult Education, in Amsterdam, and editor of the Dutch-Flemish monthly journals *De heraut* and *Streven*. A collection of his poems and liturgical songs, *Onvermoeibaar Licht*, will be published in April, 1998.
- Berrigan, Daniel** (New York). Since the appearance of *Time without Number*, the Lamont Poetry Selection (Macmillan Company, 1957), he has published twenty-six poetry collections. The early work was gathered in *Selected and New Poems* (Doubleday and Company, 1973). An inclusive new edition, *And the Risen Bread: Selected Poems, 1957-1997*, edited by John Dear (Maryland), is currently in preparation from Fordham University Press.
- del Rio, Emilio** (Castille). After years of teaching and chaplaincy in the Colegio San José, Valladolid, he is temporarily in parish work in Gijón, Asturias. He has published six volumes of poetry, the most recent being *Arte de la fuga*, honored with the Premio Medialuna, Pamplona, 1991.
- Graham, Jerry** (Oregon). In 1996 he completed a Master's degree in creative writing at the University of Alaska. Currently he is in theological studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge. He tells us of this selection, from a 100-couplet-long *ghazal*: "A 'ghazal' is a classic Persian and Arabic form made up of autonomous and unrelated couplets—one may be sad, another joyous, another religious, another romantic—held together by the repetition of the rhyme word."
- Herrera, Luis Carlos** (Colombia). He is a professor in the School of Social Sciences, Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, and pastoral minister in the university. His poems in the collection *Mas allá del viento vespertino* are, he says, "a fruit of the search for God in the United States, as well as of the Contemplation for Obtaining Love."
- Hewett, William** (Britain). He is director of the Iñigo International Centre, London, and has composed a script of narrative and song about St. Ignatius based principally on the autobiography of the founder. The story and songs are available in *Iñigo: Full Text*.
- Ingebretsen, Edward** (California). He is a professor of English at Georgetown University, author of a critical study of Robert Frost and of *Maps of Heaven, Maps of Hell: Religious Terror as Memory from the Puritans to Steven King*, as well as of two collections of poetry, *Psalms of the Still Country* and *To Keep from Singing* (San Jose, Cal.: Resource Publications, 1982 and 1985 respectively).



- Luke** (Wisconsin). Luke is the poetic name adopted early by Joseph Brown. Brown, who earned a Master's in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University, has taught at Creighton University, the University of Virginia, and Xavier of New Orleans, and is presently the director of the Black American Studies Program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. His volume of poetry, *Accidental Grace* (1986), was a part of the Callaloo Poetry Series. He has just published *To Stand on the Rock: Meditations on Black Catholic Identity* (Orbis Books).
- Mambrino, Jean** (France). He has for decades been theater reviewer and occasional film and book critic for the Jesuit monthly, *Études* (Paris). In 1973 he produced the anthology *La Poésie mystique française*. He has published fifteen books of poetry since 1965, extensively reviewed, with others in preparation. Volumes in English translation by Jonathan Griffin include *Glade (Clairière)* (1986) and *Password (Le Mot de passe)*, ready to appear.
- McCauley, George** (New York). He has published his books of poetry through Something More Publications, New York City: *No Bright Shield* (1989), *Night Air Dancing* (1990), and *Aces* (1991), with musical scoring (jazz) for the title poem. Long associated with Fordham University, he is now staff writer for *Medical Mission News* of the Catholic Medical Mission Board.
- Pol, Osvaldo** (Argentina). He has for thirty years been a professor of theology, philosophy, and aesthetics at the Catholic University of his native Córdoba, as well as at a Catholic institute for teacher formation in that city. Besides his anthology of poems from 1965 to 1990, *Situación y criba*, he has more recently published *Las aves nos saben* (1997). Lila Perren de Velasco has written a critical appreciation of his work, *La poesía de Osvaldo Pol, tanto Dios, tanto hombre* (Córdoba, 1997).
- Rewak, William** (California). Poetry as well as photography has been his outlet and expressive mode during many years of governance, in particular as president of Santa Clara University (1977-89) and of Spring Hill College (1989-97). His poems have appeared in numerous journals.
- Ruland, Vernon** (California). With origins in the Detroit Province, he has been a professor of theology at the University of San Francisco and instructor in the university's honors seminars. Besides commercially published books in literary criticism, psychology, and world religions, he has desk-published seven chapbooks of poetry: *The Double Agent* (1980), *Poems of Reconnaissance* (1981), *Poems of Proviso* (1982), *Poems at Ebbtide* (1983), *Poems of Doubletake* (1985), *Poems of Odyssey* (1986), and *Poems of Nevertheless* (1997).

**Smith, Francis J.** (Detroit), a long-time professor of English at John Carroll University. His volumes of poetry include *First Prelude*, poems based on the *Spiritual Exercises* (1981), *All Is a Prize* (Cumberland, Iowa: Pterodactyl Press, 1989), and *Haiku Yearbook* (Cleveland: Cobham and Hather-ton Press, 1991).

**Steele, Peter** (Australia). He has a personal chair at the University of Melbourne, Victoria; is a former Australian provincial; and has taught at Georgetown, Loyola Chicago, and elsewhere. His first book of poems was *Word from Lilliput* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press). He has written books on Jonathan Swift and on modern poetry, as well as an autobiography.

**Suarez, Michael** (New York). He is currently resident in Campion Hall and pursuing a degree in English literature at Oxford. His poems have appeared in a number of journals.

**Sullivan, Francis** (New England). He died of cancer in August 1996, after years as a professor of theology at the Gregorian University, Loyola University New Orleans, and Boston College. He has done some notable translating of the psalms: *Lyric Psalms: Half a Psalter* and *Tragic Psalms* (Pastoral Press, 1983 and 1987 respectively). Sister Marnie Dilling, R.S.C.J., set a number of these to music. His poetry collections include *Table Talk with the Recent God* (Paulist Press, 1974), *Spy Wednesday's Kind* (Paulist Press, 1979), and *Credo and Other Poems* (Sheed and Ward, 1995). See also his late-life work on Bartolomé de Las Casas: *The Only Way* (Paulist Press, 1992) and *Indian Freedom: A Reader* (Sheed and Ward, 1995).

**Sweeney, Francis** (New England). He has been a teacher of poetry for many years at Boston College, where he has conducted the Humanities Series since 1957. The Series has brought him friendships with such repeat visitors as Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Susan Sontag, and Seamus Heaney. Besides his four books, he has written numerous op-ed articles and book reviews for the *New York Times*. In prospect is his selected poems, *Morning Window*, *Evening Window*, and his memoirs.

**Torrens, James** (California). He is an associate editor of *America* and was earlier a professor of English at Santa Clara University. He has produced two chapbooks of poetry, *Signs of Life* (1971) and *Riding the Long Spine: Latin America in Poems* (1992), as well as *Presenting Paradise*, translation and commentary of Dante's "Paradiso" (Associated University Presses, 1993) and a collection of poems and essays, *Reaching Toward God* (Sheed and Ward, 1997).

**Zuckerman, Eric** (Oregon). He is completing theology studies at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, and is in his ordination year.

## Acknowledgements

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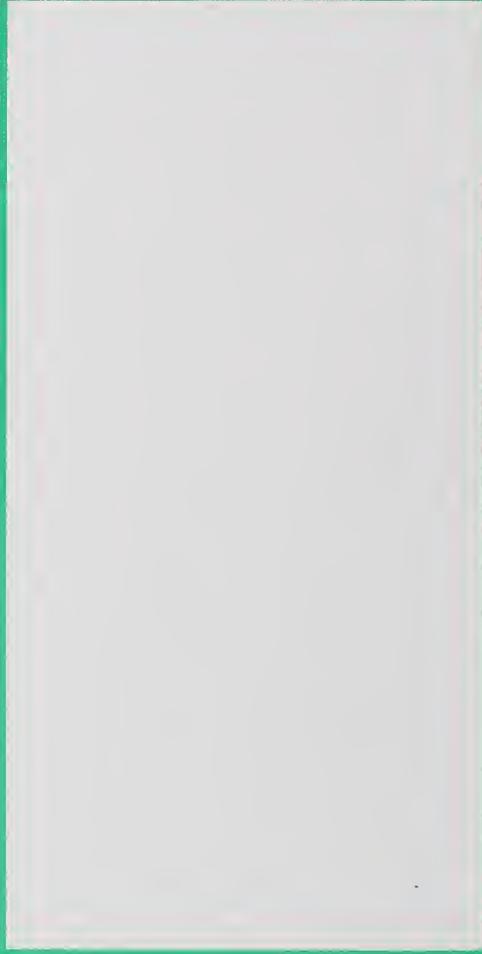
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