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Contemplative Ways for Being
THE CHILD AND THE HEART

Michael Fish, OSB CAM.

THE TREASURE, THE PEARL AND THE NET

The kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field.
The one who finds it buries it again; and so happy is she,
that she goes and sells everything she has, so that she may
buy that field.

MATTHEW 13



THE BRIGHT FIELD

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the
pearl of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

– R.S. THOMAS
LABORATORIES OF THE SPIRIT

There is a Hassidic tale about Rabbi Eisik, son of Rabbi Yekel of Cracow. After many years of great poverty that had never shaken his faith in God, he dreamed for three nights in a row that he should look for a treasure in Prague under the bridge which led to the king's palace, so he decided to do something about his dream. After a long journey he arrived in Prague only to find that the bridge was patrolled day and night by the king's guard. Nevertheless, he went to the bridge every morning and evening. Finally, the captain of the guard who had been watching him asked him kindly if he was looking for someone or something. Rabbi Eisik told the captain about his dream. The captain laughed good-humoredly, and said, "And so to please the dream, you poor fellow, you wore out your shoes to come here! As for having faith in dreams, if I had that, I should have been off to Cracow to dig for a treasure under the stove in the room of a Jew – Eisik, son of Yekel!" Eisik bowed to the laughing captain, traveled home to Cracow, dug up the treasure from under his stove, and built a House of Prayer.

– VERNA A. HOLYHEAD
WELCOMING THE WORD IN YEAR A:
BUILDING ON ROCK

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Not towards the stars, O beautiful naked runner,
not on the hills of the moon after a wild white deer,
seek not to discover afar the unspeakable wisdom, –
the quarry is here.

Beauty holds court within, –
a slim young virgin in a dim shadowy place.
Music is only the echo of her voice,
and earth is only a mirror for her face.

Not in the quiet arms, O sorrowful lover;
O fugitive, not in the dark on a pillow of breast;
hunt not under the lighted leaves for God, –
here is the sacred Guest.

There is a Tenant here.
Come home, roamer of earth, to this room and find
a timeless Heart under your own heart beating,
a Bird of beauty singing under your mind.

– JESSICA POWERS
THE SELECTED POETRY OF JESSICA POWERS

LOVE'S LAST

Love's last urgency is earth
and grief is all gravity

and the long fall always
back to earliest hours

that exist nowhere
but in one's brain.

From the hard-packed
pile of old-mown grass,

from boredom, from pain,
a boy's random slash

unlocks a dark ardor
of angry bees

that link the trees
and block his way home.

I like to hold him holding me,
mystery mastering fear,

so young, standing unstung
under what survives of sky.

I learned too late how to live.
Child, teach me how to die.

– CHRISTIAN WIMAN
ONCE IN THE WEST

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