

SOME CHRISTIAN POEMS - David Levey 2010

Prologue - David Levey

There is nothing worse
than 'Christian' 'verse'.

1. Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.
For great is his love towards us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord
endures for ever.

2. Psalm 42

Why are you downcast, O my soul?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my saviour and my God.

3. Psalm 74

Why have you rejected us for ever, O God?
Why does your anger smoulder against the sheep
of your pasture?

4. Psalm 70

Hasten, O God, to save me;
O Lord, come quickly
to help me.

...

Yet I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
O Lord, do not delay.

5. Nunc Dimittis

Sovereign Lord,
as you have promised
you now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory
to your people Israel.

6. Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs
is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

7. Trees - Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks to God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

8. Owl - Chris Mann

Tell me, night-hawk,
who-whooping
from that black untidy splotch of a pine,

do you also shiver
with the beautiful
and dangerous love of the stars?

Imagine the infernos,
the heart-throttling cold,
the bone-bursting vacuum above our heads.

Imagine the whirl-holes,
the gusts of fire-dust,
the light-years of loneliness in space.

Who-who are we,
I call back to you,
that we can breathe in such a wilderness

and sing?

9. A Farewell in Advance of Death - Chris Mann

Since I am due to breathe my last
before your eyes have shut your gaze
on this our time on earth,

and since in that feared final hour
I may not have the strength to shape
the words for what I feel,

let me try now, when springtime's rush
of rain and buds and flying ants
bursts through dull fears of death,

and say straight out that you were loved
from when my eyes first looked on you
until they ceased to see.

Your face, the dress you wore that day,
the fresh green leaves behind your head
are now small thoughts in space

that thin and fade, as time flies on,
with kin long gone, your wedding speech,
our first child in your arms.

So more than ghosts, let me now praise
that passageway of lights and dust
my whole life moves towards,

that aging I may learn to love
each meal, each prayer, each kiss with you
as if it were our last.

And if that first night on your own
you wake and wonder where I am
and what I'd say, read this,

and know that in your memory
I'm yours to call back as a shade,
or let go, as you wish.

10. From Seeing the Cosmos in a Grain of Sand - Chris Mann

Adaptation of the second part of Mann's inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Rhodes. The first part of the lecture examined the microcosmos as well as several limits to scientific knowledge. This is the last stanza.

Think then of the hot explosion of energetic matter and antimatter at the start, the emergence of gas, stars, dust and galaxies out of a framework of constants, of precise guiding parameters and see in the micro-architecture of the nucleus the macro-engineering of the universe and the bio-electronics of the brain.

Language. Language. Language. Metaphor after metaphor, opening, linking. If you by now have glimpsed, albeit for a flash the cosmos in this grain of sand don't be surprised if awe shimmers a metaphor of metaphors within your mind, don't be reluctant to say with Newton, with Einstein, Blake and other such seers in different continents of languaged culture round the planet's lingui-sphere, *Laudate Dominum. Shanti shanti. Om Om. Masimbongo Somandla. Amen. Amen.*

11. Prodigal Sons - Chris Mann

I heard you craved a woman, kicked in her township door, whole bunch of guys, feverish eyes, that woman on the floor.

The neighbours heard her crying and shut their ears in fright. Don't witnesses get stuck with knives when gang-law rules the night?

I heard a docket vanished, a cop friend killed the case, and when you pass her on the street you laugh right in her face.

Shame on you, Shame on you, Shame, shame, shame, shame, Sha.....me on you.

Why don't you stop your lying, why don't you get real strong, why don't you face the facts and say, 'Woman, we did you wrong.'

I blame you on apartheid, on post-apartheid too, I blame you on the fathers who turned their backs on you.

I blame you on the schools, the drugs and poverty, but right and wrong is here and now not chained in history.

Shame on you, Shame on you, Shame, shame, shame, shame, Sha.....me on you.

Well don't you know a woman is made like you and me? She's also got a heart that yearns for love and dignity.

Hey no one thinks you're cool when you start getting rough, Hey can't you hear the devil say,

'Enough, boys, enough!'

I don't care where you're hiding, I'll sing you back in view, so those who love this land can say, Shame, shame on you.

11a. Easter Epiphanies - Chris Mann

Whoever grew wise without sorrow?

Whoever loved until they'd trusted enough to bleed?

And who understood until they'd shivered in terror at their ignorance?

11b. The Consolation of Emmanuel - Chris Mann

Never think you're not believed in and loved, for even when damaged by the death of loved ones, betrayed by friends who'd won your trust and broken by those who demean your worth, there is one who in silence accompanies you, a person familiar with suffering, a shade accustomed to pain.

Never think you're not believed in and affirmed, for down the dark hours of guilt and remorse, the nights embittered with self-repugnance, the seasons where faith has shrivelled to a husk, there is one who in silence accompanies you, a person familiar with suffering, a shade accustomed to pain.

Remember the presence of Emmanuel, and be in the bones of your being consoled.

12. The Apologist's Evening Prayer - C S Lewis

From all my lame defeats and oh! much more From all the victories that I seemed to score; From cleverness shot forth on Thy behalf At which, while angels weep, the audience laugh; From all my proofs of Thy divinity, Thou, who wouldst give no sign, deliver me.

Thoughts are but coins. Let me not trust, instead Of Thee, their thin-worn image of Thy head. From all my thoughts, even my thoughts of Thee, O thou fair Silence, fall, and set me free. Lord of the narrow gate and the needle's eye, Take from me all my trumpety lest I die.

13. Epitaphs and Epigrams 8 - C S Lewis

All things (e.g. a camel's journey through A needle's eye) are possible, it's true. But picture how the camel feels, squeezed out In one long bloody thread from tail to snout.

14. From Footnote to all Prayers - C S Lewis

Take not, O Lord, our literal sense. Lord, in Thy great, Unbroken speech our limping metaphor translate.

15. From After Prayers, Lie Cold - C S Lewis

Arise my body, my small body, we have striven Enough, and He is merciful; we are forgiven.

16. Homo Sapiens - Evangeline Paterson

What kind of a thing is a man, who is
Born from a clod,
Blind as a mole from his birth, and yet,
Breathed on by God?

The feeblest of earth-nurtured passions
Can hold him in fee.
Yet he will not admit of a God who is
Stronger than he.

He knows of the guillotine blade that is
Poised to descend,
And yet he incessantly clamours for
Life without end.

He besieges the portals of heaven
With wherefores and whys,
And then, lest the portals should open,
He closes his eyes

And comes to the bitter conclusion
That happier they
Who make a success of divorcing
The god from the clay,

Avoiding the manifold problems
Besettign a clod
Who is born with the mud in his soul, and who
Tries to be God.

17. Seeing for a Moment - Denise Levertov

I thought I was growing wings—
it was a cocoon.

I thought, now is the time to step
into the fire—
it was deep water.

Eschatology is a word I learned
as a child: the study of Last Things;

facing my mirror—no longer young,
the news—always of death,
the dogs—rising from sleep and clamoring
and howling, howling,

nevertheless
I see for a moment
that's not it: it is
the First Things.

Word after word
floats through the glass.
Towards me.

18. Tenebrae - Denise Levertov

*Sunday, August 31, 2008 at 10:16pm
(Fall of 1967)*

Heavy, heavy, heavy, hand and heart.
We are at war,
bitterly, bitterly at war.

And the buying and selling
buzzes at our heads, a swarm
of busy flies, a kind of innocence,

sharp-glinting. What harsh rustlings
of silver-moir
to remind me of shrapnel splinters.

And weddings are held in full solemnity
not of desire but of etiquette,
the nuptial pomp of starched lace;
a grim innocence.

And picnic parties return from the beaches
burning with stored sun in the dusk;
children promised a TV show when they get home
fall asleep in the backs of a million station wagons,
sand in their hair, the sound of waves
quietly persistent at their ears.
They are not listening.

Their parents at night
dream and forget their dreams.
They wake in the dark
and make plans. Their sequin plans
glitter into tomorrow.
They buy, they sell.

They fill freezers with food.
Neon signs flash their intentions
into the years ahead.

And at their ears the sound
of the war. They are
not listening, not listening.

(1972)

** Tenebrae (Latin, darkness) are church services for the last three days of Holy Week that commemorate the suffering and death of Christ. The candles that are lighted at the beginning of the service are extinguished one by one after each Psalm is sung or read, symbolizing the darkness that fell on the land at the time*

19. The Avowal - Denise Levertov

As swimmers dare
to lie face to the sky
and water bears them,
as hawks rest upon air
and air sustains them,
so would I learn to attain
freefall, and float
into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,
knowing no effort earns
that all-surrounding grace.

20. Royalty - Luci Shaw

He was a plain man
and learned no latin.

Having left all gold behind
he dealt out peace
to all us wild men
and the weather

He ate fish, bread,
country wine and God's will

Dust sandalled his feet

he wore purple only once
and that was an irony.

21. The Revolutionary - Luci Shaw

Do you
wince when you hear His Name
made vanity?

What if you were not so safe
sheltered, circled by love
and convention?
What if
the world shouted at you?
Could you take the string
of hoarse words – glutton,
wino, devil, crazy
man, agitator, bastard,
nigger-lover, rebel

and hang the grimy ornament
around your neck
and answer
Love?

See the sharp stones poised
against your head! Even
your dear friend
couples Your Name with curses
(‘By God! I know not God!)
the obscene affirmation
of infidelity
echoes, insistent
from a henhouse roof.
Then – Slap! Spit! the whip,
the thorn. The gravel
grinds your fallen knees
under a whole world’s weight
until
the hammering home of all
your innocence
stakes you, stranded,
halfway between hilltop and heaven
(neither will have you)
And will you whisper
Forgive?

22. The Foolishness of God - Luci Shaw
1 Cor 1:20-25

Perform impossibilities
or perish. Thrust out now
the unseasonal ripe figs
among your leaves. Expect
the mountain to be moved.
Hate parents, friends, and all
materiality. Love every enemy.
Forgive more times than seventy-
seven. Camel-like, squeeze by
into the kingdom through
the needle's eye. All fear quell.
Hack off your hand, or else,
unbloodied, go to hell.

Thus the divine unreason.
Despairing now, you cry
with earthy logic - How?
And I, your God, reply:
Leap from your weedy shallows.
Dive into the moving water.
Eyeless, learn to see
truly. Find in my folly your
true sanity. Then Spirit-driven,
run on my narrow way, sure
as a child. Probe, hold
my unhealed hand, and
bloody, enter heaven.

23. From Blood Count - Luci Shaw

II
How well chosen wine was
to stain our souls with remembrance!
He knew
how it burst, vivid,
from the flushed skins of grapes
grown for this sacramental crushing:
a shocking red, unforgettable as blood
a rich brew in the cup, a bitter
burning in the throat,
a warmth within
chosen well to etch on our lintels
the paradoxes of
a high priest bound to his own altar,
death as a tool of love,
and blood as a bleach.

24. No Place for Adoration - Alan Paton

I saw the famous gust of wind in Eloff Street
It came without notice, shaking the blinds and awnings
Ten thousand people backed to the wall to let it pass
And all Johannesburg was awed and silent,
Save for an old prostitute woman, her body long past leasure
Who ran into the halted traffic, holding up hands to heaven
And crying my Lord and my God, so that the whole city laughed
This being no place for adoration.

**25. From Meditation for a Young Boy Confirmed
- Alan Paton**

I
I rise from the dream, and take suddenly this pen and this paper
For I have seen with my eyes a certain beloved person, who
lives in a distant country,
I have seen hands laid upon him, I have heard the Lord asked to
defend him,
I have seen him kneel with trust and reverence, and the
innocence
of him smote me in the inward parts.
I remembered him with most deep affection, I regarded him with
fear and with trembling,
For life is waiting for him, to wrest the innocence from his
young
boy’s eyes,
So I write urgently for this beloved person, and indeed for all
beloved persons,
I write indeed for any person, whoever may find something in
these words.

VII
You will observe that virgins do not bear children, and that dead
men are not resurrected;
You will read in the newspapers of wars and disasters, but they will
report miracles with impatience.
You will be distressed, you will not wish to repudiate your
commitment,
You will not wish to disappoint your parents, you will suffer deep
troubling of the soul,
You will cry out like David before you, My God, my God, why hast
thou forsaken me?
Do not hastily concede this territory, do not retreat immediately,
Pass over the slender bridges, pick your road quickly though the
marshes,
Observe the frail planks left by your predecessors, the stones
gained only by leaping;
Press on to the higher grounds, to the great hills and the
mountains
From whose heights men survey the eternal country, and the city
that has no need of moon or sun,
But do not lie to yourself, admit this is the journey of the heart.

26. Indian Woman - Alan Paton

You, Indian woman in the rain,
Do you not see me coming?
Do you not see it is a whiteperson coming
In his automobile?
What, you will not yield?
Neither will I then
And the brown-coloured mud
Rises in a fountain bespattering
Your stubborn garments.

My God, but your hair is as white as snow
I did not know you were so old, Indian woman
For had I known you were so old
I would have conceded something
I would have bespattered you
Not quite so venomously.

27. Praise Song for Luthuli - Alan Paton

You there, Luthuli, they thought your world was small
They thought you lived in Groutville
Now they discover
it is the world you live in.

You there, Luthuli, they thought your name was small
Luthuli of Groutville
Now they discover
Your name is everywhere.

You there, Luthuli, they thought that you were cained
Like a backyard dog
Now they discover
They are in prison, but you are free.

You there, Luthuli, they took your name of Chief
You were not worthy
Now they discover
You are more Chief than ever.

Go well, Luthuli, may your days be long
Your country cannot spare you
Win for us also, Luthuli
The prize of Peace.

28. Death of a Priest - Alan Paton

Most Honourable I knock at your door
I knock there by day and by night
My knuckles are raw with blood
I hope it does not offend you
To have those marks on your door.

I know you are there Most Honourable
I know that you hear my knocking
But you do not answer me
Pity my impotence I cannot reach your power
I cannot bring you my tale of sorrow
You may die and never know
What you have done or your may fall
And leave no chance of its undoing.

Most Honourable the sorrow is not my own
It is of a man who has no hands to knock
No voice to cry. A sorrow so deep
That if you had it for your own
You would cry out in unbelieving anguish
That such a thing could be.

Most Honourable do not bestir yourself
The man is dead
He fell down the stairs and died
And all his wounds can be explained
Except the holes in his hands and feet
And the long deep thrust in his side.

29. Adam - Colin Duriez

Adam, you were a fool, a sheep-head, to eat that fruit;
God had told you you would die,
told you death would come,
told you what death was.

God could have merely said,
'Obey me in your love for me.'

He could have made you a machine.

Free-will is a gamble;
a gamble, like all gambles,
possible to lose.

Adam, to see your folly
exploded into inhuman nightmare,
into death-camps, into power-greed,
into unfeelingness toward unjustly starving;

to see your free act of guilt exploded
is my yardstick for your human meaning,
my gauge to measure your freedom,
your machinelessness,
as God's image-bearer.

30. H'm - R S Thomas

and one said
speak to us of love
and the preacher opened
his mouth and the word God
fell out so they tried
again speak to us
of God then but the preacher
was silent reaching
his arms out for the little
children the ones with
big bellies and bow
legs that were like
a razor shell
were too weak to come

31. The Coming - R S Thomas

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crossed buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant with slime.

On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it; as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

32. From Poplar and Pine - Guy Butler (Italy, 1944-1945)

III
Shall I set my soul for a long dark siege,
defend the laws with a face of stone?
or let it sing, and have no use
by carrying bells for love alone?

Confronted by pain and savagery,
and my own heartlessness,
how do I strike a mean between
power and tenderness?
Towers, trees, justice, mercy,
where do you meet and work as one?
Nowhere, it seems, except perhaps
in a father God who gave his Son?

33. From Whoever-Whatever-You-Are - Guy Butler

Come.
The hour is yours,
the invitation open and urgent.
Come.

With whom am I pleading?
I do not know,
But Whoever-whatever-you-are,
come, come.

Perhaps you think I am merely
a forbidding penal island on which
old flames and infantile fears

mutter treason, or madness –
if I were to set them free
what would I do, what would I be?

...

Beyond the frontiers of my skin
a continent of naked tribes, strange beasts,
sources of hidden rivers.
I know it is there, but how can I explore it?
How can we draw ourselves out of ourselves?
We can only be willing to be drawn.
I have been willing a long time now.
Come.

Perhaps you will not come until
I set my captives free.

Whoever-whatever-you-are,
you who alone can make
me known to me.

I open the gates.
I let them go.

They take a long time to quit their cells.

I do not like the way some look at me.

I like it less when they don't even look behind.

And still you do not come.
Perhaps when my only care
is no longer my own long deep
solitary confinement,
when I long to know what has become of them,
perhaps,
Whoever-whatever-you-are,
perhaps you will come.

34. Hakotel* - Elias Pater

On what sombre mystery do these stones brood?
A wall, no more! No wide staircase of marble
up which flows the charming multitude
in the high terraces of Herod's temple.
It is the memory of that fatal day
a Roman tossed a brand and midst the crash
of columns, the screams of men, the trumpet's bray,
a thousand years of history turned to ash.
Two more days for God, two thousand years
have passed, the nation stands, its wounds unhealed,
at its cenotaph, too sad for tears.
Perhaps a watcher on the wall will shout:
'Come quick, come quick, adore, the stones cry out!
And those who hear will gather and be sealed.

* Hebrew: *The Wailing, or the Western, Wall*

35. A Short History of British India (II) - Geoffrey Hill

Suppose they sweltered here three thousand years
patient for our destruction. There is a greeting
beyond the act. Destiny is the great thing,
true lord of annexation and arrears.

Our law-books overrule the emperors.
The mango is the bride-bed of light. Spring
jostles the flame-tree. But new mandates bring
new images of faith, good subahdars!

The fluttering candles of the wayside shrines
melt into dawn. The sun surmounts the dust.
Krishna from Radha lovingly untwines.

Lugging the earth, the oxen bow their heads.
The alien conscience of our days is lost
among the ruins and on endless roads.

36. Not so, Not so - Anne Sexton

I cannot walk an inch
without trying to walk to God.
I cannot move a finger
without trying to touch God.
Perhaps it is the way:
He is in the graves of the horses.
He is in the swarm, the frenzy of the bees.
He is in the tailor mending my pantsuit.
He is in Boston, raised up by the skyscrapers.
He is in the bird, that shameless flyer.
He is in the potter who makes clay into a kiss.

Heaven replies:
Not so! Not so!

I say thus and thus
and heaven smashes my words.

Is not God in the hiss of the river?

Not so! Not so!

Is not God in the ant heap,
stepping, clutching, dying, being born?

Not so! Not so!

Where then?
I cannot move an inch.

Look to your heart
that flutters in and out like a moth.
God is not indifferent to your need.
You have a thousand prayers
But God has one.

37. Prevailing Winds - Heather Johnston

Lord,
I watch trees sway
beneath the prevailing winds
and hear their sighing sobbing
as low branches bend
brushing the earth beneath.

And I, too,
bent low
beneath this burden of grief
hear my keening wailing
borne away on the wind
feeling its fingers brush my wet cheeks.

And in the bending low, Lord
do I come nearer you?

38. Nothing There but Faith - Edwin Muir

Nothing, it seemed, between them and the grave.
No, as I looked, there was nothing anywhere.
You'd think no ground could be so flat and bare
No little ridge or bump or bush to brave
The horizon. Yet they called this land their land,
Without a single thought drank in that air
As simple and equivocal as despair.
This, this, was what I could not understand.

The reason was there was nothing there but faith.
Faith made the whole, yet all they could see or hear
Or touch or think, and arched its break of day
Within them and around them every way.
They looked: all was transfigured far and near,
And the great world rolled between them and death.

39. The Horses - Edwin Muir

Barely a twelvemonth after
The seven days war that put the world to sleep,
Late in the evening the strange horses came.
By then we had made our covenant with silence,
But in the first few days it was so still
We listened to our breathing and were afraid.
On the second day
The radios failed; we turned the knobs; no answer.
On the third day a warship passed us, heading north,
Dead bodies piled on the deck. On the sixth day
A plane plunged over us into the sea. Thereafter
Nothing. The radios dumb;
And still they stand in corners of our kitchens,
And stand, perhaps, turned on, in a million rooms
All over the world. But now if they should speak,
If on a sudden they should speak again,
If on the stroke of noon a voice should speak,
We would not listen, we would not let it bring
That old bad world that swallowed its children quick
At one great gulp. We would not have it again.
Sometimes we think of the nations lying asleep,
Curled blindly in impenetrable sorrow,
And then the thought confounds us with its strangeness.
The tractors lie about our fields; at evening
They look like dank sea-monsters couched and waiting.
We leave them where they are and let them rust:
'They'll moulder away and be like other loam.'
We make our oxen drag our rusty plows,
Long laid aside. We have gone back
Far past our fathers' land.
And then, that evening
Late in the summer the strange horses came.
We heard a distant tapping on the road,
A deepening drumming; it stopped, went on again
And at the corner changed to hollow thunder.
We saw the heads
Like a wild wave charging and were afraid.
We had sold our horses in our fathers' time
To buy new tractors. Now they were strange to us
As fabulous steeds set on an ancient shield.
Or illustrations in a book of knights.
We did not dare go near them. Yet they waited,
Stubborn and shy, as if they had been sent
By an old command to find our whereabouts
And that long-lost archaic companionship.
In the first moment we had never a thought
That they were creatures to be owned and used.
Among them were some half a dozen colts
Dropped in some wilderness of the broken world,
Yet new as if they had come from their own Eden.
Since then they have pulled our plows and borne our loads
But that free servitude still can pierce our hearts.
Our life is changed; their coming our beginning.

40. Christ in the Universe - Alice Meynell

With this ambiguous earth
His dealings have been told us. These abide:
The signal to a maid, the human birth,
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

But not a star of all
The innumerable host of stars has heard
How He administered this terrestrial ball.
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of His earth-visiting feet
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
Heartshattering secret of His way with us.

No planet knows that this
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,
May His devices with the heavens be guessed,
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way
Or His bestowals there be manifest.

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alieng Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The myriad forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our, turn, we show to them a Man.

41. Alcoholic - John Berryman

O all the problems other people face
we have intensified & could not face
until at last we feel alone
thick in a quart of company a day.

I knew I had a problem with that stuff
& problems with my wife & child & work;
But all what help I found left me intact
safe with a quart of feral help a day.

DT's, convulsions. Hospitals galore.
Projectile vomiting hours, intravenous,
back in the nearest bar the seventh day.
God made a suggestion. I went home

and I am in the 4th week of the third treatment
& I am *hurting*, daily, & when I jerk
a few scales seem to fall away from my eyes
until with perfect clarity enough

seems to be visible to keep me sane
& sober towards the bed where I will die.
I pray that You may grant me a yielding will.

I pray that my will may be attuned to
Your will for & with me.

42. A Stranger in this Land - Cliff Ashby

Lord, I am lonely
And the sun is shining,
Listless, while the wind
Shakes the ageing leaves.
The harvest has been gathered
All is bagged and barned,
Silos burst with grain.
Why, Lord, must I still stand
Dropping blind seeds
Onto a barren soil?

Come, sweet Jesus ,cut me down
With the sickle of Your mercy,
For I am lonely
And a stranger in this land.

A FEW OTHERS WORTH READING:

Ingrid Andersen (SA)
Sheila Cussons (Afr)
Bonaventure Hinwood (Afr)
Themba Msimang (Zulu)
D B Z Ntuli (Zulu)

FURTHER READING:

Batchelor, Mary, ed. 2005. *The Lion [Eerdmans] Book of Christian Poetry [abridged]*.

Davie, Donald, ed. 1981. *The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse*.

Thomas, R S, ed. 1963. *The Penguin Book of Religious Verse*.
Impastato, David, ed. 1997. *Upholding Mystery: An Anthology of Contemporary Christian Poetry*. OUP