

Meditation of John

He was groaning,
a sound like I'd never heard before,
a sound I never want to hear again —
awful,
stomach-churning,
indescribable
the sound of unimaginable pain,
of overwhelming sorrow,
of utter isolation.

And I could watch it no longer.

I thought I was ready for it,
prepared for the worst,
for I knew he had to die.

But I wasn't ready,
not for this;

I never realised people could suffer so much, "
that anything could be quite so terrible.

But I know now,
and I'm telling you straight,
I'd have felt sorry for anyone facing that -
a robber,
a mugger,
even a murderer!

My heart would still have bled for them.

But to see Jesus there,
a man of such gentleness and compassion,
a man who had always loved and never hated,
a man who had brought healing to the sick
and wholeness to the broken,
it all but finished me.

What had he done to deserve this?

What crime had he committed?

What was it about him that aroused such passion,
such devotion,
yet such loathing?

I prayed that God would finish it,
put him out of his misery,
but still the torment continued,
still they mocked him, delighting in his pain.

I knew he was suffering, but even then didn't realise how much,
not until he lifted his head and I saw the despair in his eyes,
not until he spoke and I heard the wretchedness in his voice
'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Then I realised,
and my blood ran cold.

He felt alone,
totally alone,
abandoned by everyone he'd loved and trusted,
even by God himself.

He could cope with the rest -

he'd even expected it —

but God?

It was the final torture,

the ultimate agony,

a pain beyond words.

He was groaning, a sound like I'd never heard before,

a sound which suddenly I understood,

and a sound I could listen to no longer.