

Meditation of Mary, wife of Clopas

He was silent,
quite still,
his body limp and lifeless,
like a rag doll,
like a broken puppet.

And I thanked God that at last it was over,
his ordeal finally ended.

But it wasn't,
not quite.

He moved again,
just the faintest twitch,
the last flickering ember of life,
but enough to prolong our hopes,
enough to prolong his pain.

He was still breathing,
still suffering.

We watched wretchedly, torn by conflicting desires —
the longing to see him come down and prove his enemies wrong
the longing to see him find peace in the cold embrace of death.

But suddenly his eyes were open,
wide,
bright,
triumphant;
the lips were moving,

eager,
excited,
exultant;

and his voice rang out:

‘It is finished!’

An acknowledgement of defeat, some said afterwards,
a last despairing cry of sorrow.

But it wasn't,
not for those who heard it,
not for those with ears to hear.

It was altogether different -
like sunshine after storm,
like rain after drought,
like laughter after tears -
in gloriously unexpected,
wonderfully surprising.

He had stooped and conquered,
staked all and won.

Defeat was victory,
darkness was light,
death was life.

I didn't see it then, mind you,
I can't pretend that.

It was just a glimpse at the time,
a glimmer barely understood.

But what I did see, with sudden staggering clarity,
Was that until that moment,
until that last victorious shout,
he had lived with the awful burden of holding the world's fate in his own
and wondering whether he could see it through.

At last it was done —
he had honoured his calling,
fulfilled his mission,
walked the way of the cross.

It was finished,
and with a song in his heart and joy in his eyes
he bowed his head and surrendered his spirit.