

Everywhere

By Mark S. Burrows

“Love speaks everywhere.”

Bernard of Clairvaux

I wonder what Jesus makes of Lent and the ways we often trudge through this season with long faces, trying to get an honest bead on our mortality—*ashes to ashes and dust to dust*—stumbling along with thoughts of what we must do, lamenting that our best intentions are only sometimes noble and too often flattened by the weight of remorse and its sibling, shame.

Perhaps Jesus isn't worrying about what we didn't do properly and doesn't blame us for failing; maybe he's just befuddled by our inability to rise from our stubborn regrets and let life awaken us again to wonder, opening our hearts to delight

in this world that he so loves; perhaps his one wish is that we embrace the radiance that is ever among us — among the little and the least — and resist being blinded by ambition and its offspring, neglect.

Consider the lilies, he said, meaning the greening grace of life that rises from the depths of winter's hold; *look at the birds of the air*, he reminded us — and seize every delight that lifts us to live with widening mercy; *don't worry about your life*, he advised, and slowly I begin to sense what it might mean to believe that death couldn't still his desire or close his heart, that nothing could thwart

the reach of his kindness to underserving strangers or keep him from denouncing the selfishness and greed of those peddlers of religion and doves.

Maybe he's still wondering why we seem so satisfied with blame and ill at ease with his game of forgiving without measure of delay, and why we seem more intent on keeping score of wrongs than making things right; perhaps he's just confused at the ways we keep reducing resurrection to a single day, as if love could be so contained — when in fact it's happening all the time and still speaking everywhere for those with ears to hear.

Mark Burrows is an award-winning poet and translator, living and writing in Maine, whose most recent book is *You Are the Future: Living the Questions with Rainer Maria Rilke* (2024).

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