

Three Poems

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One of my favourite poems is Mary Oliver's "[Making the House Ready for the Lord](#)." In it, the poem's speaker is trying to clean up her house, to make it "as shining as it should be," for a visit from God. But, she keeps running into problems: mice under the sink and squirrels in the walls. Her dilemma is that she doesn't want to kick them out of her house: "but it is the season / when they need shelter, so what shall I do?"

The speaker concludes that they've already invited God in by sharing their home with these creatures. They believe that God will visit regardless:

**"And still I believe you will
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-
goose, know
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in,
Come in."**

What I love about this poem is the idea that God doesn't need us to have everything perfect; God will meet us where we are. That was the idea behind these poems. We come to the communion table empty-handed, broken in our own ways. But, God meets us there with comfort, grace, and mercy.

Home

*When we were still far off, you met
us... and you brought us home.*

Sometimes, it's the dark house
with a solitary candle
in the window, lighting up
the night, or a whistle
from the back porch,
sometimes a letter marked
with stamps that has chased me
across the globe,
or the stranger's hand I grasp
in the pew, saying
I'm here. Come home.

And there—I see You now
far in the distance, standing
on the hilltop blown red
with roses (how much sweeter
for Your crown?),
one scarred hand outstretched
in greeting, and You say
I'm here. Welcome home.



Setting the Table

We set the table
with our best
yet there's a crack
in the blue ceramic plate
a butter knife is spotted
with rust
the glasses are coated
with film from the dishwasher
and a ruby sauce stain blooms
on the crisp white table cloth

We sit and eat anyway
The wine is still
red and full
the bread heavy
on the tongue
tastes of honey

and You
God of the hummingbird
an emerald wink
of dusky wheat at harvest

paint over our cracks
with gold

broken
beautiful
complete



Bud of Mercy

I stand at the table,
hands open, awaiting
spring, awaiting the burgeoning
of flowers, pulsing thunder,
torrential rains, boulevards
bursting with green.

I await the green beginning
of my heart.

The attendant presses
the bread—fresh, soft, golden
like brown sugar—into my palm,
and it weighs nothing,
a new bud of mercy,
ready to unfurl.



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