

THE FIFTH WORD

I thirst

Poetic prayer by Bonnie Baird

Reading of Luke 7: 36-50

Reading of John 19: 28-29 NRSV *After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty."*

A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

I thirst

We hear your words ushered up from a great distance past parched lips. And wonder at their meaning.

And I am the woman who meets you at noon by a well. You know my story and my shame. My isolation and my grief over what once was but is no longer. You ask for water. And let me draw down on your compassion and wholeness and absolution.

And I am the man who holds out a cup on the sidewalks of the city and gives a blessing to all who pass by. "Some change? That's ok. Have a good day." Can you see me?

And I am the daughter moving a wet sponge across the parched, cracked lips of a dying parent. What more can I do but this little thing?

And I am the firebrand dreaming of a better world for all. Everyone sharing so there's enough. Everyone enough in themselves. Speaking words prophetic and angry and terrible. Thirsting for the balance.

And I am the planet groaning. Trying to renew.

And I am the child who sees the world as pure wonder.

And I am the person wrestling with addictions who's reduced to a label.

And I am the refugee who cannot go home.

And we are the couple who notices the water turning to wine in our marriage.

And I am the single dad/mother trying to build a good life for my children. Give me wisdom?

And I am the northern village without clean water.

And I am a priest praying, wondering if it makes any difference.

I thirst, you say. From your elevated vantage point. From your blood soaked cross.

You know our pain and our joy. And we see yours, just a bit, on our best days. And sometimes on our worst.

You are still visible in our world and in the faces of those we meet.

I thirst, you say. But then you pour yourself out for us, over and over again. Unexpectedly. Quietly. In ways that astound and transform us.

We hold up our meagre offering to you, like someone did that day of the cross, and we know it to be sour.

But it's all that we have. Turn it into something better?

O Living Water, immerse us in you.