

Light spilling and filling, filling and stretching; it is early light of **day**. Bethphage and Bethany. 4 miles apart. Only towns along the **way**. People traveling and hurrying, hurrying, unnoticed, from Bethany just 2 miles **more**. Excitement building and heightening, lights of Jerusalem inviting, this day holds so much in **store**. But for a moment returning, returning and turning to Bethphage already **awake**. Well, who can sleep really, canyons echoing, revealing, the party only 6 miles **away**? Passover and dancing, and dancing and drinking, lamb roasting in sacrifice and **flame**. Celebration, veneration, a people's salvation; each year the story's the **same**.

So in Bethphage, amid the raucous, the commotion, the day already well **underway**. With sheep bleating and bolting; donkey braying, complaining; unknowingly tied loosely at **gate**. And old men gathering and talking, talking and laughing, a brand-new day **awaits**. Footsteps approaching and taking, taking, encroaching, "Hey! That's not your donkey! **Wait!**" Odd explanation, justification, "The Lord needs it"—and that makes it **okay**?" Nodding and shrugging, shrugging, assenting; the donkey is taken **away**. They think nothing of it, children racing and shoving, mothers scolding and loving, a village going about its **day**. But now breathless and running, sweat dripping and pouring, pouring and dripping on **cheek**. Like joy dripping and spilling, spilling and filling, a boy begins to **speak**. "The donkey—it's carrying, braying and bearing, I mean Jesus—is on the **way**! Come on, get hurrying, hurrying and scurrying, Jesus is coming **today**! And old woman rocking, rocking and creaking, her voice croaking from rickety wooden **stool**. "Bethphage's location is not destination," she says "Boy, don't be a **fool!**"

Still, heads rising and seeking, eyes seeking and searching, in the distance dust and a **cloud**. Dust rising and swirling, swirling and whirling, and from the canyons an echoing **crowd**. Curiosity rising, rising and swirling, and rumour, word travels so **fast**. Feeding and miracle, miracle and healing, welcoming poor and out**cast**. Love and inclusion, insurrection, intrusion to rich and powerful and **cruel**. Could life be changing, changing, rearranging; why push against the **rule**? But the real speculation, and tickled imagination—what the fuss was all **about**? A man, Lazarus dead and rank, rank and rotting, this Jesus cries, “Lazarus, come **out!**” And Lazarus comes tripping, in grave clothes tripping and ripping; 4 days in the grave I’m **told**. I heard it from a cousin, best friends with Mary, from Bethany just down the **road**. Tis a young woman now speaking, beckoning, seeking, “Come on, let’s go, follow **me!**” Crowds nearing, approaching, clamouring, encroaching—“Maybe Lazarus is there! Come and **see!**”

Donkey braying and plodding, people pushing and trodding, bodies pressing tighter and tighter to **see**. Her body jostling and bumping, heart pumping and thumping, her baby wailing and dangling at **knee**. Arms raising and shielding, shielding, protecting, at the roadside she joins the **line**. An old man grinning, and breathing, breathing and reeking: bitter radish, garlic, and sweat—heavy and mingled with **wine**. A girl, a water jug jostling and jiggling, jostling and falling from **hands**. Shards crashing and exploding, splashing and shattering; in millions of pieces, it **lands**. Water pouring and spilling, spilling and filling, every crack and crevice of **ground**. All around voices shouting, shouting and crying, out loud a deafening **sound**. Palm branch shading and waving, waving and falling, “Hosanna! Lord save us”, one

cries. Another prophecy recalling, telling and calling, “On a donkey your king comes to **ride.**” And the honour, adoration; adoration and tradition; to worship and honour a **king.** Lining the road, fallen branches and clothes; all around now, cries and Hosannas **ring!** Frenzying and stripping, stripping and falling, the man next to her is practically **bare.** People running and scurrying, scurrying, chopping; palm branches waving; falling **everywhere.** “Hosanna! Lord save us! Joining along in crowd mentality. She too, is shouting, shouting and crying, “Hosanna! Lord, save **me?**” Tears streaming and pouring, pouring and filling; filling and washing her **eyes.** She hadn’t come to be saved, whatever that means; “Hosanna! Lord save!” The cries **rise.**

From Bethphage to Bethany, 4miles, and walking now, just 2 miles **more.** Donkey plodding and braying, braying and carrying—a King to Jerusalem’s **door.** Soldiers guarding and fearful, fearful and threatening, the streets on high **alert.** Prophecy rising and dancing, dancing and swirling, like a child beneath mother’s **skirt.** Hosannas ringing and singing, singing and mingling with too much Passover **wine.** God delivering and saving, saving and leading, volatile, explosive story **line.** A city in turmoil and rumbling, rumbling and trembling, and earthquake shaking to the **core.** Streets carpeted and spreading, wild speculation and rumour, the Hosanna! means so much **more.** For our tables, food. For our families, health! Hosanna! Lord come to save your **own.** Just government, life and freedom for all! Hosanna! Take back your **throne!** Lord save us! Hosanna! If us, what would be our **cry?** Jesus will you stop in our town, swirling around; or will you, like the world, pass on **by?** “Look! Your king

rides and is coming, is coming to **you**. Humble, obedient on a donkey he rides. He rides to make all things **new**.”

Love and inclusion, insurrection, intrusion to the rich the powerful and **cruel**. Could life be changing, changing, rearranging; why push against the **rule**? It was implication, insinuation; the foundation of God’s reign of **peace**. But it looked more like trouble brewing and stewing and rising on the **streets**. An uprising, a reprising, protest marching—she should’ve stayed at **home**. Perilous, contagious, volatile, dangerous, would they storm the **throne**? A mother fearing, disappearing, child dangling at her **knees**. Sneaking, racing, hiding in a garden, a refuge, a grove of olive **trees**. Water trickling and spilling, spilling and filling, an ever-changing **stream**. Water spilling and filling, washing and growing a baby’s peaceful **dreams**. While the rabble continuing, then quieting and fading, the interest **dissipates**. Breath sighing and relaxing, relief spreading in wide smile upon her **face**. And Jesus? No storming, no violence, no taking, no grasping a rightful throne by **force**. Not even entering, but turning and veering away from castle and **courts**. Instead, looking, perusing the tables, the booths and displays. Like curious consumer, or religious intruder; at the temple where fires of sacrifice **blaze**.

And now day fading, fear evading, seems the worry, the trouble is **past**. Feet sore and aching, aching and plodding, it’s time to go back at **last**. One mile, then another, on the road, on the way past quiet Bethany. Was Lazarus really there, alive, living and tripping from grave clothes released and set **free**? Feet swollen and

swelling, palm branches broken scattered; scattered all **around**. Cloaks dusty and trampled, broken shards; splashing water long since seeped into pores of the **ground**. And now turning, yearning, returning, plodding, footsteps toward home's **door**. Mind churning and turning, heart burning and yearning—what was this day **for**? Evening fires burning and glowing, glowing and sparking; the smell of roasting **meat**. Water jug poured and spilling, spilling and dripping down upon her **feet**. Something spilled, something filled, and poured down from **above**. In days to come would they know the spilling, filling of God's **love**?

Day's beginning, now its ending, darkness descending; night is drawing **nigh**. Boy breathless and running, running and shouting; shouting aloud the **cry**. Heart thumping and pumping, "Jesus is coming!" God's love does not pass us **by**." Her head raising and seeking, eyes seeking and searching, in the distance dust and a **cloud**. A few followers remaining, donkey braying, complaining; feet dusty and tired, no **crowd**. Is this the Messiah contemplated, awaited? Our long-awaited **king**? Yet deep in her aching, her yearning and turning, "Hosanna, Lord save us," the cry **rings**. "Hosanna! Lord save us!" Shouting and rising; rising from depths, the **cry**. In our world too, in these days, in these times, in this hour. "Lord, don't pass us **by**! Hosanna! we **pray**. Save us, from what, we can't **say**. While we yet look to power, and rulers and **kings**. Decrying weakness, humility, no shards of humanity. Empty shells; fearful hearts, songs silenced, no voices to **sing**. Hosanna! Lord, save us! Hurrying and scurrying and worrying for our **place**. Lord, save us! Hosanna! Tears streaming, and spilling, streaming and marking our **face**. Darkness shadowing, night falling and

marking the shadows of death's **door**. Do we think for Bethphage, our hearts, our world, as it is; always was, forever**more**?

For in the days coming, once again a boy running, sweat pouring and spilling on **ground**. News traveling and circling, circling and swirling would come to this people, this **town**. A woman hearing, words searing, child suckling and dandling; dangling off her **knee**. That the peace sought and discovered, in a garden uncovered, in a grove beneath old olive **tree**. Now comes violence churning; churning and turning, No protesting, but arresting, soldiers and swords **unsheathed**. Betraying, denying, a friend crucifying, all those who have followed will **flee**. And in streets rising, uprising; frenzying and stripping, Jesus naked—"Behold your **King!**" Shouting and raucous, Hosannas! now silenced, the sounds of their "Crucify! **ring**."

Branches scattered and rotting, tattered and rotting like flesh 4 days in the tomb. But on the path, water's seeping, life's sprouting, and calling, and birthing like child from a womb. A strange resolution, this love's revolution, on a cross rising and dying in **love**. Grace is poured and spilling, spilling and filling; filling with life from **above**. Shards crashing and splashing; splashing and shattering hatred's power and slavery's strong **bands**. Love's power pouring and spilling, spilling and filling, from wide-open nail-scarred **hands**. Something spilled, something filled. Filled and overflowing, pouring down from **above**. Compassion and mercy, weakness revealed and revealing; breaking and broken, broken, unbreakable **love**. In Christ's love and life emptying, emptying and pouring, **is** life's coming to **be**. And our singing our crying, our crying and rising, "Hosanna! Lord save us! O Lord. Hear our plea."