

# This Is My Body

Marden Clark

A deacon offers the broken bread.  
Aware of awkward wait as bishop  
Receives the bread of ritual first,  
I take it up, thoughtless of blessing,  
Aware of deacon's ordered moves,  
Of solemn quiet, of neighbor's child  
Squirming, of hunger vague from fast.  
I chew, surprised by sudden savor —  
Of bread, not flesh, of flavor and texture:  
Savor against a full day's fast,  
Flavor and texture of bread homemade.

A pulse of guilt: no remembrance  
In savor, nothing in it to know  
The bread blessed and sanctified to souls,  
Just savor from hunger: guilt deserved.

But that broken body! muscles parted  
By nails and spear, blood pulsing through:  
Textured flesh, earthmade, red blood  
Too thick to pour through flesh unflayed.

A deacon offers the water tray.  
Aware of sharpened thirst from fast  
I take a cup, aware of need,  
Of children's noise as consonance.  
I drink, surprised by sudden savor.  
The tiny cup of water/wine  
Washes not bread but flesh to flesh,  
Texture and flavor, celestial savor.  
Not bread alone, but with it water  
Confirms and testifies: I feast.  
I hunger and thirst no more.

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*MARDEN CLARK is emeritus professor of English at Brigham Young University. He has published poems, essays, and stories in DIALOGUE, Sunstone, the Ensign, BYU Studies, and professional journals. His book of poems, Moods: Of Late (BYU Press, 1979) was co-winner in 1979 of the Association for Mormon Letter's poetry prize. His collection of short stories, Morgan Triumphs, was published in 1984 by Orion Books of Midvale, Utah.*