

Dry Tree

Dennis Clark

Luke 23

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

This year, for the first time in many years,
we're thinking of hosting a dead and drying tree
in some public room of our house, one garlanded
in lights, the blossoms of dying winter—and hanging
on its branches the fruits of this year's fiddling and fretting—
all largely in celebration of a birth
far in the past and mainly now forgotten,

that led to death—as all births must, and ought,
this one fertilizing the whole earth
despite the hustle of all our giving and getting

baubles, gauds, glittering, swinging, banging
about as we bear this cross, bearing the bargain
we made with death that made our dying free,
laid on to bear it in our stumbling fears.