

Two Poems

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Personal Easter

Let them bring gifts, let them bring pious eggs.
There are no kings at Easter, only men.
Two nights ago, we drained cups to the dregs
And did not know that we should live again.
The stars move on, we battle with our plagues.
What god will rise now from the frozen stone?

A few flowers sprinkle over breaking earth.
Birds hover, dive. Why do they fill my mind?
The Holy Ghost has more august a birth
Than this; the tongues of fire could singe and blind.
Oh God, last year I chose my own poor death
Yet you arose me, left Limbo behind.

A Nurse Gone Sick

You cared for us and now I hear that you
Are sick. I sometimes guessed at it perhaps;
There were those days when you seemed near to tears
As if you could not bear the trials and traps
Of nursing those whose minds have gone askew.
They seemed too much for you—our pains and fears.

And once I said in secret to a friend,
'She understands since she has suffered too.'
Odd that I should so nearly comprehend
Yet learn your pain the wrong way round. For you
Had come not to a starting but an end.
Now I regret that far too late I knew.