

Easter (III)

The empty tomb was like a mouth aghast,
 all presence gone and so fast. Only clothes
 remained, limp like a broken heart.
 It lacked all life, no hope could fill the void,
 no clues to follow, or hints to clutch at,
 not even angels. I have seen men as such.

Yet as the minutes passed, and the thin light
 inspired the sparrows and the larks,
 I heard a tune that earlier I was deaf to.
 Not too early and not too late, before
 the dew had dried and in the length
 of shadow and of light, I could believe
 the tale before ever I was told.
 The tomb was empty but my heart was full.
 Love pieced together Christ and made him whole.

West Malling Abbey

You know how a moving camera seems
 to make the buildings move themselves,
 though nothing could be more fixed.
 Well, it was like that. I was walking
 on a winding path and the tower
 and the chapel roof began
 to move around themselves, like
 a model of the constellations speeded up.
 The path and the river at my feet wound
 round a different figure of eight,
 and I became a dance within a dance,
 moving to the sacred space of church.
 There we made a circle round the sacrament,
 and passed the kiss of peace.
 Christ came round in bread and wine,
 until all ceased. I could hear my breath
 grow quieter in the silence of a little death.
 The dance had done its thing.

Prayer and the Hair Salon

I am a priest of Winchester.
 A candle flickers in the upstairs cell.
 I watch the snow fall on the heads
 of the passers-by. My prayer is soft
 as snow. It does little but
 cover the ground, and the candle shivers.

Opposite and down is a Hair Salon.
 I can see the long napes of necks
 as the hair is lifted, curled, and cut,
 or pinned with papers like bookmarks.
 I pray, and because of the cold
 hug my already tight cloak tighter. Why?

Strange contradictions don't have
 answers always. It happens so.
 What do I pray for: that the heat
 could be shared, that I should get a
 haircut, that they will put down
 their scissors and pray?
 Not yet. Someone higher looks at me,
 and says 'poor fool'; or perhaps,
 'all you need to do is stay'.

David Scott is Rector of St Lawrence's Church, Winchester. These poems are from his new book Piecing Together (Bloodaxe).