

Paper Cranes

Jay Caldwell

A paper bird is stronger than a hawk. Thomas Merton

Through the bare window
Of a breeze block hermitage
A man in denim overalls
Fold and refolds
Words calling out violence, bigotry
Into paper birds
Launches them high above the monastery walls

Hits home, wounds politicians
And is silenced by his superiors
But not for long
The need too urgent he
Smooths another piece of paper
Uncaps his pen
Prays for the right words.

Load, aim, release
Load aim, release
A thousand paper cranes
Folded for peace.

Jay Caldwell has been an avid reader of Thomas Merton since stumbling across *Elected Silence* in Hay-on-Wye. Merton's life and work inspires her to write every day as a form of prayer, and a means of processing world events. That writing often transforms into activism via published poetry or copywriting support for organisations such as Christian Climate Action. Jay lives in the Peak District with her husband, Sean and Romanian rescue dog, Ziva.

Grace

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As grace comes pouring down
Old covenants unseal:
The time for love is now.

As fear and greed resound
We have no hope to hear,
As grace comes pouring down,

An angel trumpet sound
Or see a star appear:
The time for love is now.

Hush! In this church's bounds
There's power here to heal –
As grace comes pouring down

And lights his golden crown
Let's bow our heads and kneel.
The time for love is now.

And we, once full of doubt,
May sense a heart that's real.
As grace comes pouring down
The time for love is now.

Faithful writer

Jay Caldwell

Our writing is an act of faith:
facing an empty page every morning,
when cleaning out the budgie
or refereeing the kids feels more appealing.

There is no shame in wishing
this were not what we felt called to do.
We plan great works for God
yet grope for words that do Him justice.

And while we've not been called
to minister in war-torn Congo
nor to serve communion
under fire in Iraq,

we still fight our own battles;
an invisible enemy wearing us down
with a non-stop bombardment
of insidious whispering: "what's the point?"

Each day we dredge up the courage
to put our work out there with honesty;
voicing doubts along with faith,
sharing hurt as well as healing.

And we keep writing in faith –
putting one letter after another,
in gratitude and humility,
trusting God to take care of the rest.