

## Three Poems for Maundy Thursday

'Prayer' by George Herbert

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,  
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
The land of spices; something understood.

'Holy Sonnet 10' by John Donne

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you  
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;  
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.  
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,  
Labour to admit you, but oh, to no end;  
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.  
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,  
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;  
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,  
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

'Woman to Child' by Judith Wright

You who were darkness warmed my flesh  
where out of darkness rose the seed.  
Then all a world I made in me;  
all the world you hear and see  
hung upon my dreaming blood.

There moved the multitudinous stars,  
and coloured birds and fishes moved.  
There swam the sliding continents.  
All time lay rolled in me, and sense,  
and love that knew not its beloved.

O node and focus of the world;  
I hold you deep within that well  
you shall escape and not escape-  
that mirrors still your sleeping shape;  
that nurtures still your crescent cell.

I wither and you break from me;  
yet though you dance in living light  
I am the earth, I am the root,  
I am the stem that fed the fruit,  
the link that joins you to the night.