

Three Poems

By J. Patrick Kelly

Winter Dawn

Terce begins in darkness,
and the voices rise through the cold
to the timbers hewn in the hills
that loom still beyond
the snow white bricks of these walls.

These old, old songs.
We chant right into the light,
slow at the window and grey,
till all the world is full of winter,
and we are singing
to the most ancient of days,
the God of deserts and desperate children,
the God of kingdoms lit forever
in the dust and song of our hearts.

The Inner Fountain

I lie in bed listening to the inner fountain,
sweet and ceaseless
as the sky empties
and the birds sleep songless.
I lift my head to see the moon
come up from the valley
to fall all gold in the falling water.
I am either far from home
or home at last.



J. PATRICK KELLY

J. PATRICK KELLY has taught English at the Summit Country Day School in Cincinnati since 1980. He is married and has two daughters, a dog, and a house on a hill. His poems are inspired by time spent at the Abbey of Gethsemani.

Eucharist

We come to church as if there had never been Easter
and we must be busy with the work of crucifixion.

When the priest stands at the table
it is always now—the upper room
the bloody lintels, the guards
gathering in the courtyards of the temple.

All week we have broken faith;
now in the always we are breaking bread,
requiring blood because we cannot love,
and so the son must die
and we must witness
what we've demanded.

Again and always we come to know
in the breaking of the bread,
in the blood of the lamb.
Again and always we wish peace
and eat together
and the bread in our body rises
and the blood in our blood shines.
Again and always we abandon
the sanctuary for the world
where we forget, we forget...
and the empty tomb stands waiting
for the broken Christ again.