

Longing For Rainbows

God asked Noah to make an ark
a huge boat in a land locked place
far from the sea or lake
(I wonder how long it took to build?)
Nowadays,
in the days of global warming
and climate change
maybe it doesn't sound quite so stupid
an ark, with rooms and decks
made of cypress wood and pitch.

God asked Noah to bring two
of every kind of living thing,
male and female of each species
(I wonder if they took the snake?)
Nowadays,
in the days of habitat destruction
and animal extinction
maybe it doesn't sound quite so stupid
a gene bank for breeding purposes
a mobile, floating zoo.

God asked Noah to stock the ark
with every kind of food that is eaten
and to store it ready for the rainy season
(I wonder how long it took to feed all those mouths?)
Nowadays,
in the days of fuel strikes and blockades
and power lines blown down
maybe it doesn't sound quite so stupid
to carry 40 days supplies
and just maybe they carried a bottle of wine.

And the rains came down
and the floods came up

and amazingly the ark floats

and the rains came down

and the floods came up
and amazingly the animals don't kill each other

and the rains came down
and the floods came up

and amazingly the food does not run out

and the rains came down

and the floods come up

and amazingly they all survive to repopulate the earth.

But of course they do
for this is just a story
a rather good story
that we can turn into carved children's toys
and posters for the wall

But devastating floods are real
and global warming is real
and habitat destruction is real
and animals becoming extinct is real
and human suffering is real

and a dove returning
carrying the olive branch of peace
is an sign of hope
a sign of starting again
desperately needed in our war-torn world

and just maybe
having completed their time afloat
and arrived at dry land
Noah takes the last of the bread
breaks and shares it with human and animal alike

and just maybe
when the dove returns
with a symbol of living vegetation
Noah takes that bottle of wine
celebrates and shares it with human and animal alike

for this is what, many millennia later, Jesus does
in the face of destruction and catastrophe
in the face of human sin and violence
Jesus takes bread and wine
symbols of life and death and shares them with us all.

[share bread and wine]

and three days later
we are looking at an empty cross
silhouetted against the dawn of the morning
sign of the promise of new life
sign of God's love for humankind.

and three months later
we are looking at a rainbow
refracting light across the dawn of the morning
sign of the promise of new life

sign of God's love for all species of life.

and so we come to the here and now
and we are looking at the signs of bread and wine
amid the terraced houses silhouetted across the dawn of the morning
signs of the promise of new life
sign of God's love incarnated among us.

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