

# The Love of God

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Ruth A. Johnston

*For He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

We learn the love of God from wind & rain.  
On him who has sufficiency the Giver  
Decants a flood—the bony arid plain  
Sees loaded clouds rush past to gift the river.

To south, rain favors east—  
To north, the west;  
Man's merit matters least—  
The place is blessed.

The bird-bath dry, we ask if God marks right—  
The ripe hay soaked, we cry He coddles crime.  
Say rather God is chary to indict,  
Allowing place & chance to life & time.  
We learn the love of God from wind & rain.

We learn God's mercy from the mold & rust;  
Our dust & bracken thicken mile by hour.  
We view our tiny rescuers with disgust,  
Fleeing our shame & stink with shave & shower.

Dung beetles roll brown balls—  
Mites eat our slough—  
Worms turn the litterfalls  
To earthy duff.

Mistake & sin should stifle us, but dirt  
Grants space & air to those who wear the boot,  
Who wear their fortune easy as a shirt,  
Who pick & peel the worm's death as a fruit.  
We learn God's mercy from the mold & rust.

We learn God's patience in the random things:  
A comet's lifetime cycle out of sight—  
The seventeen winters' pause for locust wings—  
Kadupul flower that blooms one hour at night.

Rare chances we cannot  
Anticipate  
Disrupt the fated lot  
That we await.

If buds sleep tens or centuries of years  
To wake a Buddha or an Andes Queen,  
What lotus-wonder grows among my fears  
To grace with white the 3rd millennium green?  
We learn God's patience in the random things.

We seize the day & charter hours like kings  
But learn God's patience in the random things.

We cast our skins & clog our steps with dust  
But learn God's mercy in the mold & rust.

See greener grass but tenant your demesne—  
Husband your dew & irrigate the pain—  
And learn the love of God in wind & rain.

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**Ruth A. Johnston** is the author of *A Companion to Beowulf*, *All Things Medieval*, and *Re-Modeling the Mind*. Her poetry has also appeared in *Measure*.