

GATHERING

Advent 1

The days cling to raveling, ruddy cheer
but nights already know
how dark — cold, relentless — leaks in,
stealing, starving, banishing
us from each other.

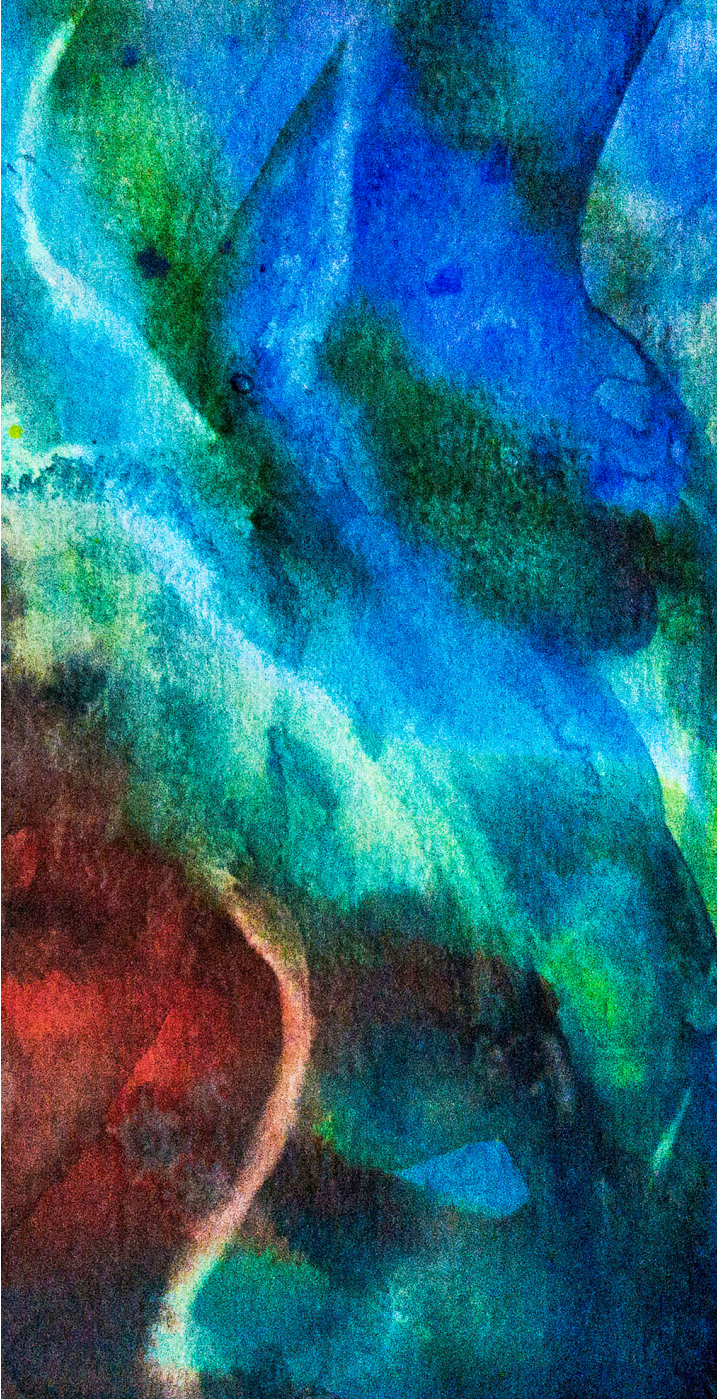
We are becoming islands
in a dark and spreading
night sea.

So every morning I gather
creased scraps of shine worn thin,
like old foil from summer lunches,
and crimp, squeeze them
into crowns, mirrors
behind every photon I can catch.

Day after day I attempt constellations
that just might cast some faint
but living light
beyond us —
hoping, hoping someday soon
to signal across the abyss,
“Here. Now. Gather us
into Life.”

Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Poetry by Claire Keene
Art from “Creation” by Vikki Myers



BEARING

Advent 2

Grace comes like snow —
discreetly.

It is a million small awakenings,
moments surprising and weightless,
each a promise of symmetry
amid confusion,
each a touch that stills
then passes on.

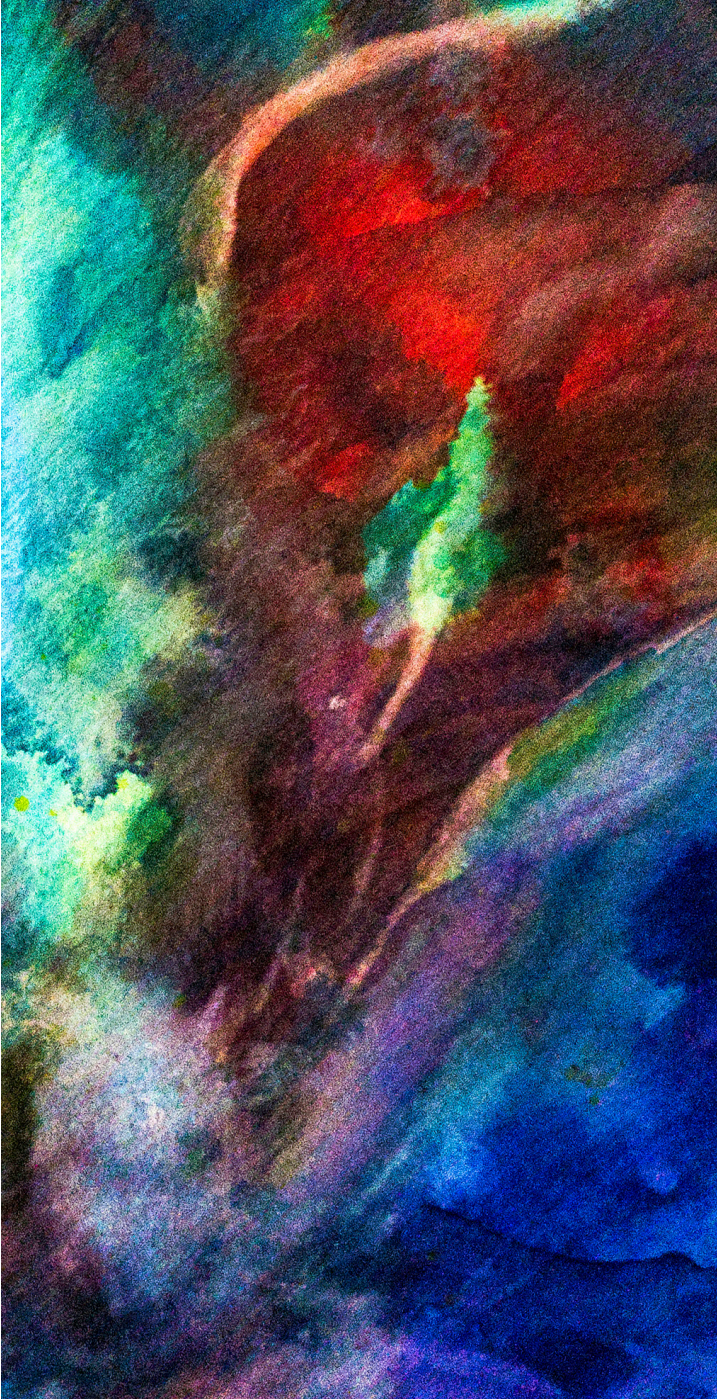
Grace comes like snow —
in storms white and silent and full.

We bear it because it is a gift
beyond our grasping
and because its generosity
and its spareness
are the same:

the eternal
scattered forth like bread
broken
in abundance.

Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Poetry by Claire Keene
Art from "Creation" by Vikki Myers



WRESTLING

Advent 3

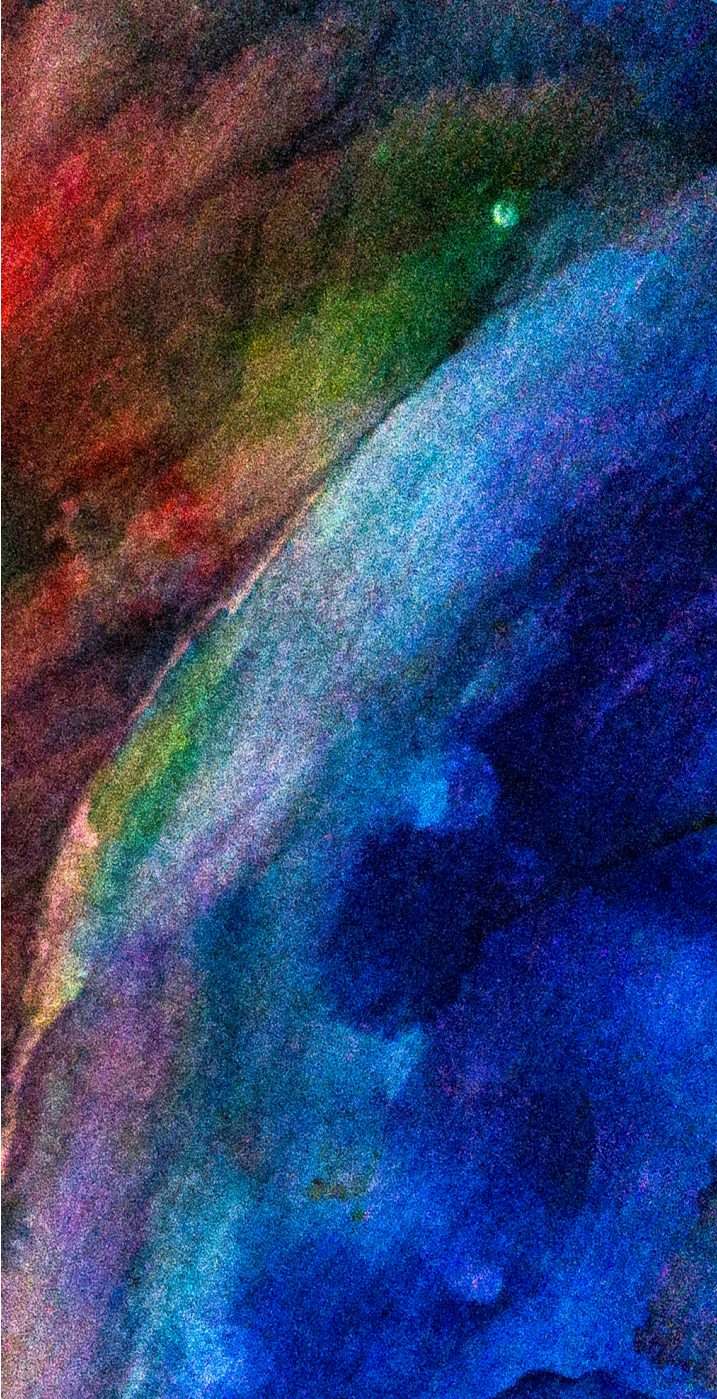
The Word of the Lord
comes to us in the darkness,
the seed of an unseen Lover
with whom we wrestle
as if half-wakened from sleep.

So the Word becomes flesh in our bodies,
at first a silent, secret challenge
but swelling forth as a sign,
for as we yield
we are given joy for food.

Our flesh becomes His,
and we know ourselves less and Him more,
this Word pulsing at our deepest hearts,
this Light who has broached our darkness
forever.

Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

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PRAYING

Advent 4

Dear Lord, we wait
between the pains
that wash over us in waves,
tugging us deeper into this night.

What rhythm
can we gauge this waiting by?
What sign?

We hear the angel.
Some say it is the Angel of Death
with a burning sword.
Some say it is the Angel of the Lord
with a song as sharp as joy.

We know there is a darkness
and a rending
and a Promise.

Dear Lord, we wait
for the cry that will shatter our captivity,
for your bursting forth before us
like a star.

Dear Lord, we pray
for the Promise to be a Body,
of flesh and blood and water born.

Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Poetry by Claire Keene
Art from "Creation" by Vikki Myers