

Oasis Session 4 – Additional Material

Poems from previous weeks:

R S Thomas – The Coming

And God held in his hand
a small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
as through water, he saw
a scorched land of fierce
colour. The light burned
there; crusted buildings
cast their shadows: a bright
serpent, a river
uncoiled itself, radiant
with slime.

On a bare
hill a bare tree saddened
the sky. Many people
held out their thin arms
to it, as though waiting
for a vanished April
to return to its crossed
boughs. The son watched
them. Let me go there, he said.

Lent by Jean M Watt

Lent is a tree without blossom, without leaf,
Barer than blackthorn in its winter sleep,
All unadorned. Unlike Christmas which decrees
The setting-up, the dressing up of trees,
Lent is a taking down, a stripping bare,
A starkness after all has been withdrawn
Of surplus and superfluous,
Leaving no hiding-place, only an emptiness
Between black branches, a most precious space
Before the leaf, before the time of flowers;
Lest we should see only the leaf, the flower,
Lest we should miss the stars.

Poem – from 'Aurora Leigh' by Elizabeth Barrett-Browning

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,

Scripture reading:

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

(Matthew 13:44-46)

The Bright Field by R S Thomas

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.



I wonder where
you have seen the
sun break through
this week?

I wonder when
you have turned
aside, like Moses?

