

Pieta

The woman, arms loosely wrapped around him whose heart, exhausted, no longer pours out blood, remembers Simeon's mysterious words, her heart pouring out long treasured memories:

- his first feeding, in a cave, wrapped tightly, his sucking, a psalm accompanied by lowing, braying, snorting, and shuffling hooves, his audience strangers come from the night with amazing news to this amazing sight, a heartwarming private act now public, no less a spectacle than the heartache that brought him to be laid across her lap;

- his first word, coaxed by her coaching, "Abba," babbled by a boy to his mama, echoed in his last cry to his father;

- his first step, tottering, grasping her fingers, his last staggering under the Roman lash;

- being about his father's business worrying her, while amazing teachers with the depth of things learned at her knee.

The woman cradles his head at her breast one last time, speaking to his broken body, "Oh, that you might once more suck fully on the milk of my comfort." But the flow now coming from her is not sweet milk coaxed from her nipple by eager infant lips but her tears moistening his dried blood, blood that had freely flown between them in her womb, having now been poured out upon the earth, his side pierced, finishing it, making it clear, his lips silent, his final lesson taught in his last words, "Abba, thy will be done."

Understanding now Simeon's words to her, "A sword will also pierce through your own soul," she comprehends too the depth her own words, "Let it be to me according to your word," words she had chosen when first God's word began to grow like a sentence forming in her womb