

THE CONFESSION STONE

by Robert Fleming, text: Owen Dodson

This is a cycle of songs written by the Canadian composer Robert Fleming to words by the American poet Owen Dodson. These are songs of Mary – the mother of Jesus. They are the poet's conception of Mary's thoughts about herself and others on that hard stone of confession on which most of us kneel at some time in our lives.

1.

Oh my boy: Jesus,
my first and only son,
Rock on my breast, my first and only one,
my first and only son.

O my Jesus: my first and only one.

Born of God and born near his sun,
bright boy: my only one:

O my Jesus,
rest on my breast, my first and only son:
Oh my boy Jesus
Rest, shhh
you need the rest.

2.

Don't pay attention to the old men in the temple.
they have given up.
Tell them what you told me:
cast the sinners out, clean the house of God,
load the rich with grief, prepare the poor with hope
and, Jesus,
don't stop to play with Judas and his friends along the
way.

3.

Jesus, did you know that Lazarus is back?
Jesus, are you listening?
Laz'rus has come back.
His grave is still open
and Martha tells she heard
three angels singing with three birds:
their feathers brushed together.

Jesus, are you hearing?
Laz-rus has returned to Bethany.

Jesus, won't you answer?

Laz'rus has come back and he's calling for you.
He says that death was gentle and woke him up early.

Jesus, are you praying?
Laz'rus has returned.

4.

There's a supper in Jerusalem tonight
and I wish that I was there,
I'd journey anywhere to be with Jesus:
to stroke his hair,
Remind Him, O my baby dear,
I'd journey anywhere to be with Jesus tonight.

There's that supper in Jerusalem tonight
and I could be right there.

But I don't dare to journey to Jerusalem tonight.

O my Jesus, you're eating in Jerusalem tonight.
and I wish that I was there.

O my boy, take care
at that supper in Jerusalem tonight.

5.

Cold and icy in my bed:
laid on the ground of Jerusalem:
eve'ry flow'r is withered,
the birds have left their song,
the sun wears a twisted eye.
I'm alone with your dream of redemption, my Lord.

Save Him, save our son.
I'm his mother: save Him:
Let me rock him again in my trembling arms.

Save Him
I'll receive the silver from Judas,
Help him.
Your word is all my world.
I'll receive the silver from Judas' hand
and spend it on nothing.
Save Him, Jehovah, help Him, my God,
Bless him, My Lord, redeem Him, my husband.
Oh save Him, save Him, save our boy.

6.

Bring me those needles, Martha
I believe I'll knit Jesus a scarf.
Go on snapping those butterbeans.
What time is it? Let me see now:
Knit one.
You say it's twelve o'clock?
Snap enough for Joseph and Lazarus:
They'll be home before you're through.
Martha, what time is it?
Purl two, purl one,
knit one, purl two.
If I had the star of Bethlehem, I'd
Knit three
and light His sky.
Where was I Martha?
Oh yes, knit one, purl seven.
What time is it Martha?
Knit three, purl ten.
It can't be near three o'clock.
Where was I? Knit, purl twelve, purl, nothing.
Martha, don't leave me alone.
Where are you Martha, Martha,
Where are you Martha?
Martha!

8.

Oh my boy: Jesus,
my first and only son,
Rock on my breast, my first and only one,
my first and only son.
O my Jesus: my first and only one.
Born of God and born near his sun,
bright boy: my only one:
O my Jesus,
rest on my breast, my first and only son:
Oh my boy Jesus:
Rest, shhh, you need the rest.

7.

Everything is black,
Air, water, sun, moon,
all light, dirt is black.
Heav'n is in mourning for our Son.
The earth is dead, it will rise again, Almighty God.
Now I understand what light is:
it is our Son.
It is Jesus, no longer trembling in my arms.
it is the Christ.
O my boy, Jesus,
My first and only son,
My first and only one.
Now on my knees, with Joseph at my side,
I ask thee:
Send the resurrection now.
Give the air and water and sun
and the moon and the dirt:
thy light again.
Send the presence almighty God,
send it even to evil ones.
I see Jesus, in the clouds
Oh, Free him from death for life:
We must be free to sing:
Loose the birds for their songs,
Bloom the flowers for their songs,
Light Martha, whose brother came back from death.
light Mary Magdalene,
light Gethsemane's gardens:
Light those walkways with lilies,
and heal the wounds of Christ.
Let me rise up into your starry sky and love our Son,
and praise thee,
and praise thee,
Ah, comfort me in paradise.