

One winter

Forty new O Antiphons

by [Diane Tucker](#) in the [December 2, 2020](#) issue

O Red-Faced Jesus of the Upset Tables,
keep relieving us of our religious greed.
Please topple to the ground our self-salvations.
Tear up moral scorecards and one-upmanship.
Bless us with true poverty of spirit
that we may flock into your house of prayer,
bringing nothing but our yawning need.

O Lover of the homeless and the addict,
never let us rest, respectable and clean,
assured that we are “not like those people.”
Show us the homelessness of our cold hearts.
Show us our own “acceptable” addictions.
So turn our souls to loving those you love
with your holy love, which is our true Home.

O Loud and Lavish Lover of the awkward,
the shy and scared, the socially inept,
open our eyes to all their silent beauties.
May we not miss the faithful hearts among us,
not full of many words, but big with love.
May we never idolize exalted speech.
Bless us in our stuttering wordlessness.

O Brother Jesus, who lifts us in temptation,
stand beside our weak and struggling minds.
Help us see past our long-besetting sins.
Be the bridge over rushing cataracts
threatening to drown us one more time.

Show us your patient eyes on the far shore.
Give us grace and strength to hold your gaze.

O Lord of all the failing and forgetting,
may peace come down on all who have dementia.
Preserve, in age, their humour and their hearts.
Be with newly nameless sons and daughters.
Fill the grieving with your everlasting Name.
May all that's lost leave space for re-creation:
rest and reflection, silent hours, and song.

O Jesus, King who kneels and washes feet,
teach us how to lead by bending down.
Thrust a pin in our inflated egos
and change our lording-over into loving.
Help us serve the small, to be devoted
to the blessing of the little and the least.
Help us know ourselves as lowest of the low.

O Fashioner of every bird and beast,
Designer and Creator of the crow,
the Mind who made up pigeons, rats, raccoons,
help us who live in cities love them still.
Show our thin hearts the place you made for all
the creatures' lives that share our concrete days.
May alley fur and feather bring you glory.

O Lord of the cattle on a thousand hills,
free us from the fear of giving freely.
Deliver us from hoarding to ourselves
blessings that you've poured on us like rain.
Give our souls assurance of abundance,
that you have, and long to give us, all we need.
Show us the beauty of wide-open hands.

O Healer of all sickness and all sin,
pour blessings on those whose daily work is care.
Give nurses, doctors, counsellors your grace

and patience with your broken, wayward children.
Help them grow in holy love and courage
and give them days of deep and lasting rest.
May they feel the health and wholeness they would give.

O Lord of every path and passageway,
Door and Key and Bridge across the abyss,
Flashlight in the darkness, blackout's Candle,
steady us on our way with your bright wisdom.
Make us quick and nimble with our love
on the Jesus-path of kindness—no detours!
Resurrection Lord, light our way home.

O God of words and music, we give thanks
for psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
connecting us to long-ago believers.
We thank you, Lord of sound and harmony,
for the Church's many voices raised in praise.
Sing your Spirit in our hearts and voices,
that our gratitude might brim and overflow.

O Lord of leaves, O Maker of the trees,
O Rooter of all life by living waters,
Pruner of branches, Ripener of fruit,
Lord who sweetens sap and reddens berries,
help us through the season of cold hearts.
When bare of fruit, build us firm in faith.
Feed our hidden roots until the spring.

O Father of Secrets, Knower of all things,
O Mind who gives our smallest prayer his ear,
O Bearer of black sins, Patient Listener,
thank you that you cherish every hair
and every breath and every stumbling step
your silly sons and daughters finally make.
You know but love us still, Refuge Divine.

O Lord of bodies, God who came a man,
Creator of head to toe, who called it "very good,"
God who walked in dust with feet of flesh,
All-Divine Incarnate as a man,
thank you for our senses, for our skin,
for bones and breath and voices, ears and elbows,
for all you fashioned fit to live your praise.

O Lord who thought up kangaroos and cacti,
and threw the stars like snowballs into space,
who dashed the Milky Way across the heavens
like a child in love with finger paint,
lift our busy eyes from all distractions
that we might see the beauty you have made.
Help us to awaken and awaken.

O Spiller of Rain, Scatterer of Snow,
One who frees the wind and aims the hail,
prepare our hearts and bodies for all weathers.
Help us warm the chilled and house the houseless,
dry the soaked and still the storm-tossed soul.
Help our small selves be thankful in the tempest,
brave the blizzard, praise you in the bluster.

O God of Twilight, Lord of Day to Night,
Spinner of the Earth, O Sunset Painter,
our hearts lift praises for the many blues
you spread above us as the evening falls,
pinks and reds projected on the clouds
and orange fire spilt across the mountains.
Our souls sing out in thanks for all your colours!

O Friend of Sinners, Lord of Gentleness,
a single wounded reed you will not break.
The smallest spark of faith receives your Breath
until that living coal ignites a fire
that fuels the sorry soul, that heats the heart.
Kindle every fire that sleeps within us

that in this world we may be warmth and light.

O Living Water, Depthless Source of Life,
revive our drooping days, slake every thirst
when we fill our dry and foolish hearts with dust.
Slick our sticking throats that we may praise
your flooding grace. And teach us how to drink
the sweetness that will never let us drown,
but only make us lush with flowing love.

O God of Sun and Moon, King of the Stars,
the heavens praise you with each constellation,
each silver point of light-year-distant fire.
More plenteous than sandgrains by the sea,
you've seeded the whole universe with sparkle.
And more than these, as long ago you promised,
are all the twice-born children of the faith!

O Lord who spread the silver on the salmon,
you sculpted sleek the dolphin and the whale.
What joy the otter and the seal's play bring you,
the eagle's dive, the cormorant's spread wings.
All these you raise beside the glinting inlet
and fill them full of fish your own hands hatched.
We sing with thanks your love for sea and shore!

O God of rain and those who love the rain,
of all the walkers under their umbrellas;
give us eyes to see you in the mist.
May we breathe your mercy in the chill.
Fill our bones with green rainforest fire
that we might see and love the weak and wet.
Help us to help each other home and dry.

O Father of the dark, abortive day,
when rain drowns all and plans go down the drain;
when storms knock us about, when baking burns,
and duties force us far from home and hearth.

When tired minds cannot redeem the hours
and all the hours we have slide by too fast.
For our flat hearts be God of all Tomorrows.

O God of Time, O Lord of Memory,
You set your works like jewels in our souls.
When we seek the light they flash and sparkle,
reminding us of victories long past,
of sweet vows kept, dear promises fulfilled.
When all we see seems heartless, born of lies,
dear Spirit, shine your light on what we know.

O Jesus Christ, down in the winter solstice,
the dark pit of the year, the lowest low,
be with us in our waiting and lamenting.
Assure us that our cold hearts are not dead,
but dormant now, only to wake anew.
Help our emptiness believe your filling.
Crushed by this world, embrace our sighing souls.

O Lord of the Sunrise, Lifter of the Light,
Spreader of the gold and copper morning,
unfurl this day before as your gift.
Stuff our hearts with thankfulness as treasure.
The brisk new day, the hours yet to fill,
let all we do with them reflect your love,
that we may mirror back to you your glory.

O Father of the orphan and the childless,
You who set the lonely into families,
and draw the sad and timid into friendships,
usher our injured souls into their healing.
Give us eyes to see each other's beauty,
even the trust-lame, even the sour-souled.
So we might feed each other, crack us open.

O Lord of Silence, glorious soundlessness,
of sound's anticipation and its memory,

God of seashore rhythms, birdsong breather,
sing us into silent hours and days!
Free us from the world's insistent clamour,
the chatter that chips away our peace of mind.
That you might speak to us, help us be quiet!

O King and Father of the blessed martyrs,
Keeper of their death-reflected light,
how lovingly you bring each beaten body home to you.
You make them ever whole.
Grant us, in your love, the hearts of martyrs,
so that in this lying world we love the Good.
Teach us to live your death-defying Truth.

O Lord of Yes, O Ruler of all that is,
Filler of the void, Chaos Tamer,
You who set the tides and spun the planets,
who drew the Fibonacci and the fractal,
show us creation's glory, large and small,
the atom and the galaxy together.
We are held together by your love!

O Sin Healer, Brother of the Saved,
Collector, Keeper, Mender of the lost.
You gather up our broken, misplaced pieces,
remake our souls, recast each twisted heart.
In you we die and rise, our new true selves.
Shatter, we pray, our tiny hearts of stone.
Give us hearts of flesh that we might bleed.

O Waker of the rain, Lifter of every leaf,
You whisper into life each sleeping bulb.
Each daffodil's green arrow rises for you,
warmed in winter by your burrowing love.
So too we lie in wait, in darkness buried,
Incapable of life without your touch.
Pull us heavenward, Lord, into your light.

O Master of the sunlight and the sky,
Windsmith, Field Feeder, King of Trees,
How thoughtfully you build in us a garden
to meet the green and glorious world you made.
Warmth and water feed us, and the sun,
as it does limbs and grasses, lifts us up.
The apple tree and we, alike, bear fruit.

O Ear to all our prayers, Heaven's Listener,
how we try your patience when we whine!
And yet you see the fear inside the whinging.
You bear our angry cries so tenderly
that when the tantrum's over and we're weary
your arms will still receive us and forgive.
Dear Patient Lord, love us to repentance.

O Resurrecting Lord, remember us
as we labour in our sad, decaying flesh.
Outwardly we waste away, forgetting
the inward self you constantly renew.
As time and gravity consume our bodies,
fill us with your bright forever-life,
the quenching water of Life that swallows death.

O Prince of Life, Bridegroom to the Bride,
Host of Heaven's perfect marriage feast,
take pity, Lord, on this world's wives and husbands.
Help them love and listen. Help them wait
while you sand off rough edges and sore points.
Help each to see the other's special beauties
and know the spouse anew, a precious gift.

O Safe One, Sure One, Refuge from the din
we find ourselves immersed in every day,
rising from within or loud without:
the world's deafening, distracting cries.
The needs we cannot meet, the mess beyond us,
the puzzle and the pains we cannot solve,

these we bring in weakness to your Strength.

O God and Father of our hidden life,
Keeper of Secrets, Bearer of our tears.
Fill your bottle, Jesus, with our weeping,
to water seeds that fall to the ground and die.
All our suffering springs at last to singing.
Almighty Mason of our misery,
from our ruins fashion a cathedral.

O Lord, Curator of creation's bounty,
Clouds' Custodian, Seas' Husbander,
Cause us to remember we are gardeners.
Help us fall in love with earth so deeply,
we'll work for more than money, more than gain.
Pierce our hearts with arrows of conviction
to nurture every splendour that you've made.

O Lenten Lord, Holder of these days,
God of Waiting, King of the Not Yet,
help our forty fasting days prove fruitful.
You are the Life, the Raiser Up from Death,
the Steadfast Light we see in every distance.
Lift our heads, heavy with condemnation.
Bear our barren darkness to new day.