

# A Smile In Church



Evelyn Ritchie Tower

## LAMENT FOR BYGONE CHINA

I've only two lotus bowls left  
From life as The Dame in the Shoe;  
Not ruling out arson and theft,  
What happened a full twenty-two?

Quaint bowls, the right size, the right heft  
To hold any food that I knew,  
But innocent, easily reft  
Of selfhood so China-ly blue

Some fell to the floor and were cleft  
In siblings protracted to-do,  
Or maybe slipped out like an eft  
In clearance of garbage and goo --

Our kitchen, rank amateur chef'd  
And seldom receiving its due,  
Had dishwashers blinded, stone-deafed,  
And rash as a loose kangaroo.

So, now I'm a ship hoisting wheft  
Without any cargo or crew;  
I've time to be gracious and deft  
At setting the table for you.

## JEALOUSY AMONG THE BODY PARTS

I Cor. 12: 14-26

### 1. Foot

Why couldn't I have been the hand?  
I have to slog through mud and stand  
While my so-clever counterpart  
Takes charge of work, worship, and art.  
*Hand* touches others, I must not;  
*Hand* writes, makes things - I only trot  
As beast of burden on demand;  
Yet I am just as smart as *Hand*!

### 2. Ear

I cannot signal, like the eye -  
I'm helpless as a passer-by  
To change events. What I take in  
I store for *Tongue* to put in spin.  
But if I were the eye, I'd be  
A better witness, sharp to see  
Truth over all, in earth and sky-  
I'd serve *Tongue* better than the eye!

### 3. Nose

Can't I be brain? Can't I be heart?  
Can't I get off this comic part?  
I'm tied to food and cleanliness,  
A prey to funny earthly stress;  
Let me be serious, let me edit  
The soul's experience, to my credit;  
Oh, if I had a chance to start,  
I could do *brain*, I could do *heart*!

"LEVIATHAN WHOM THOU HAST MADE TO PLAY"

The whale bounces and dips.  
Somersaults, springs, and skips,  
Songs of joy on his lips.

God, who gave him the deeps  
As a playground, still keeps  
A fond *eye* on his leaps;

In *the* midst of the spray  
Where his giant pets play  
Is the Lord's holiday.

## JACOB'S LADDER

Lucky Jacob, to make camp  
Right beside an angels' ramp  
As he fled from Esau's wrath,  
Finding on that stony path  
Heaven come down to covenant  
Even with him, the miscreant --  
Lucky Jacob! He learned first  
Heaven is nearest, when earth's worst.

NATIONAL AWARDS entry

1. Poetry

CUES FROM DAVID

*"The Lord is my shepherd"*

Mine, too, little David.  
I'm no good with slingshots,  
(never practiced, like you,  
on rocks and bushes,  
to be able to hit a lion  
or a bear, or venture all  
and knock out Goliath!)  
so I depend on Your rod,  
Your staff, to comfort me  
When I call for rescue!  
You always come across to me, cowering,  
and slay the wild beast, or cage it;  
You take care of giants  
And send me another song.

THE GIVER  
For Mother Teresa

Like a prayer wheel

Her blood spins

With a power that

Underpins

Every day's full

Disciplines;

Love of Jesus

Jessamines

Filthy dying

Scabrous skins.

A vigil given,

A prayer apiece,

And pain's captives

Find release;

Who like loving

St. Therese

Of Calcutta

Makes long peace

Without treaties,

Without cease?

## SEARCH

Girder beneath the wall

Source of anecdote

Proto-substance

Of Mendeleev's chart,

Outline of theme,

Number portrayed in numeral

Pattern maker and smasher

We seek You.

Heater of suns, unresting wind,

If we should scent your presence

Within coincidence,

If a sudden twirl revealed

Your signet

And we named the Name

Must You bless us?

*Evelyn Ritchie Jowers*