Aubade

Philip Larkin

I work all day, and get half drunk at night.
Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare.
In time the curtain edges will grow light.
Till then I see what’s really always there:
Unresting death, a whole day nearer now,
Making all thought impossible but how
And where and when I shall myself die.
Arid interrogation: yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes afresh to hold and horrify.
The mind blanks at the glare. Not in remorse
- The good not used, the love not given, time
Torn off unused - nor wretchedly because
An only life can take so long to climb
Clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never:
But at the total emptiness forever,
The sure extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always. Not to be here,
Not to be anywhere,
And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true.
This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says no rational being
Can fear a thing it cannot feel, not seeing
that this is what we fear - no sight, no sound,
No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anaesthetic from which none come round.
And so it stays just on the edge of vision,
A small unfocused blur, a standing chill
That slows each impulse down to indecision
Most things may never happen: this one will,
And realisation of it rages out
In furnace fear when we are caught without
People or drink. Courage is no good:
It means not scaring others. Being brave
Lets no-one off the grave.
Death is no different whined at than withstood.
Slowly light strengthens, and the room takes shape.
It stands plain as a wardrobe, what we know,
Have always known, know that we can’t escape
Yet can’t accept. One side will have to go.
Meanwhile telephones crouch, getting ready to ring
In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring
Intricate rented world begins to rouse.
The sky is white as clay, with no sun.
Work has to be done.
Postmen like doctors go from house to house.

**Jesus and the Woman of Samaria  John 4 5 – 26**

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink’. The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’