

A Beautiful Morning in Bethany

- the moment before Mark 14:12

written by Silvia Purdie

The sun rose that morning to the sound of crashing dishes.
Martha was cross, which meant that really Martha was anxious.
Mary and Jesus sat on the roof watching the sunlight touch the temple walls
and the doves swoop in the dusky light.
The house had a good view of Jerusalem,
she was proud of it,
but this morning the golden gleam of it mocked Mary
and terrified her.
She sat as close to Jesus as she dared
and she wept, quietly, tears falling softly.
The arguments were over.
No one could persuade him not to go.
She feared this would be her last moment with him.
If only Martha would sit a while
but that was not in her nature.
Mary could hear the others waking, moving about, reluctantly.
No one wanted this morning to begin.

And Jesus? How did he feel looking out towards Jerusalem
that deceptively beautiful morning?
He had decided to walk that path, but did he want to?
He had a ministry, a team to lead.
He had a home there, as much as he was at home anywhere.
He had a family, a funny mottly bunch but he loved them.
And he would give it all up
for what?
His face flinched with a wave of the coming pain.
As he looked at Mary and heard his disciples bumbling about downstairs
... how could he do this to them?
None of them deserved what was coming.
Would they survive? Would anything survive?

James and John were the first to the rooftop –
if it must be done, let's get on with it.
"Teacher", they asked,
"Where do you want us to set up the passover meal for tonight?"
It had begun and there was no turning back.