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Two Poems by Demie Jonaitis

In addition to writing poetry in English, Demie Jonaitis has produced excellent English translations of Lithuanian folksongs and of written poetry in *The Green Linden* and *The Green Oak*, both by Voyages Press, New York.

Compassion

A Lithuanian Refugee Priest in Our American Garden

From sod to sky, our robins rally
his sickled hymns; from rose
to rue, our bees erode his terrors;
our garden, though, won't close
his wounds: seeds blow beyond our fences,
trees grow towards stars, not dew;
walled-in compassion dries and crumbles
like iron and bamboo ...

Restless, deaf to robin parleys
and blind to bee ballets,
he haunts our hidden rocky barrens —
coigns where no life stays —
he digs, gives of himself — a garden;
ejecting rock and root,
planting birch and rue, he nurtures
the earth's beatitude ...

He works till twilight's sickle dooms him
to night's communal bed;
so much to do, he grieves, star-buried,
diminished like the dead —
while seedlings which shall shelter robins
and tenement the bees
stir below him in his darkness
and rise like galaxies.

Last Supper

This decade falls like Christ; the root is cut — the crucifier
comes with promises to bury us; hospitably greet him with
our prize-hog kisses — our etiquette in gadgets, stack his
supper table with herring like nails, vodka bottles —
hammers, pickled beets — blood, and cabbage soup steaming
hot like Baltic, Chinese, Ukraine, Vietnam tears... mock him,

or course strip him with our know-how, lash him with glass-spiked wheat, crown him with steel that thorns our cities, skyways, farmlands, oceans; wound him with our have-all; stone him, stone him with our jets of gold ...

but not with Jesu Rock — that
Rock's embarrassing: love the enemy? judge ourselves, not him in his omnivorous hungers? (unrealistic, fanatical, absurd, corrupt!) change butcher's blood to wine? steel to Bread? gadgets to Gospels? road to Resurrection? walk on stormy waters until the dead awake and blind men see? (unnatural, suicidal, crass!)

Let's have our supper now — we'll go to Mass tomorrow; impractical, tonight, to imitate the Saviour; secrete Him from the crucifier, entomb Him like a promise, in sacraments rewomb Him.

procrastinate, procrastinate —
tomorrow resurrect Him in a wafer; today, don't turn the other cheek — hate — go blind the blind — go kill the dead...