

Don Shirley

"Too Small A Price"

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I awoke to hear the jailer turn the key and push the door
'Get out here!' he shouted, but I stayed there on the floor
Frozen in the terror that rose and filled my brain
I knew what they intended; I could not face the pain

Then soldiers came into the cell and dragged me to the yard
They threw me down before a cross and brought the whip down hard
'Carry it!' they shouted, as I struggled to my feet
I put my shoulder under it; dragged it to the street

I stumbled through a wall of screams as they drove me through the gate
It seemed that thousands lined the streets, their voices filled with hate
Like a wolf pack in the night that moves in for the kill
They closed the gap and followed us as we started up the hill

And it seemed I'd barely reached the top when they grabbed me from behind
They threw the cross down under me and tied the ropes that bind
The arms close to the beams as they nailed the feet and hands
And they raised the cross up in the air and dropped it in its stand

Through a blur of pain I saw the cross there next to mine
There were people all around it so I looked to read the sign
It was nailed there up above His head so the world could see the news
That the man who seemed so helpless there was the King of all the Jews

The crowd that stood around His cross made jokes

about His name
They shouted, laughed and spat on Him so I joined in
the game
I said, 'Hey! If you're the King why don't you get us
down from here?
The taunt just sounded hollow and it echoed in my ears

'Cause He looked at me with eyes that seemed to reach
into my heart
They shone a light on all my lies and tore my life apart
There was more that lay behind His gaze than simply
blood and clay
But knowing was too much for me; I had to look away

Then I chanced another look at Him as He was looking
down
Where the soldiers who'd just crucified us drank there
on the ground
And although He spoke them quietly, somehow His
words came through
He said 'Father, please forgive them; they don't know
what they do'

Then as if they'd heard Him speak, the crowd began to
roar
Whipped to frenzy by the priests who urged them on to
more
But the worse the accusations, now, the plainer I could
see
The guilt of the accusers - not the One there next to me

Then the man upon the other cross began to curse and
swear
But his voice was filled with venom as he hurled it
through the air
When all the horror that was in him and had laid his life
to waste
Came out in every syllable he flung in Jesus' face

And Jesus only looked at him, but something rose
inside of me
And in spite of all that watched us there, it couldn't be
denied
Because His righteousness and innocence were
shining bright and strong
I just couldn't keep my silence and that cursing still
went on

I cried out, 'Don't you fear the wrath of God even at the
end?
You'll curse us both into the pit - is that what you

intend?

We're only getting what we're due - we've sinned our
whole lives long

But don't you talk to Him that way - He's done nothing
wrong!'

Then with all my courage, in a voice not quite my own
I asked Him 'Lord, remember me when you sit upon
Your throne'

He answered me and, even then, His love was
undisguised

He said 'Before the sun has set today, you'll be with Me
in Paradise'

Well the shouts and curses did not stop even when the
sunlight ceased

But somehow in the midst of it, my soul had been
released

And though the agony continued, it was still too small a
price

To be allowed to hear those words, and to die beside
the Christ!

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