

*...All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust...*

Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Renascence"

Opportunity Unmasked

by Joanne Records Bodner

I

Chaos and disease seize screens each day.
We view fractured humanity and ask
Where is God amidst it all? We pray
And search the space that holds our holy call.

Make straight the path, our prophets cry,
To the Lord who dwells at the center.
Unity will open our eyes to see
Ourselves with others in eternity.

II

We are the ones crying for our mother
As blue knees grind our black skinned necks
Into the grey pavement 'til we gasp our
Last breath of white air, lying still forever.

We are the blue legs grinding black bodies,
Etching images cast anew to far places.
Led by duty, blinded by bias, we flash
Inserts of history for future view.

We, distraught, are the brown woman shoving
Child onto the back of one who sought,
Fought, clawed, and crawled around the wall,
Falling into freedom as she could not.

We are the military-suited guards
Stopping forbiddens from crossing the line,
Stashing them in tented bins; the little ones
Whisked to hidden places, stranger faces.

We far away, worn out workers await
One dollar pay, the labor of a day.
This side of the world we cheerful shoppers
Cram our carts as we charge plastic cards.

Rage ignited, we gather, parade
City squares, ripping down horse-mounted
Statues of discounted, pale heroes,
We, who lived a past now dishonored.

We are children unfed at night, morning too,
Those are we, who grind unwanted food,
Stashing the rest in a waste-filled pile,
Not terribly sure which is trash, which is child.

The parent beaten, the young girl sold, the
Homeless hated, we are all. Anew we confess
Through a deep place yet hidden from view,
We are the beater, seller, hater, too.

III

We are burning; we are drowning at sea.
God's heart is breaking, waiting to learn who
We will be. The doubting disciple who hides?
Mary Magdalene faithful at his side?

We lead double lives, though we are one,
Even as Jesus gives grace to all,
Let us pray to mend our jagged edges
And raise one ladder leading to Him.

As did our mothers who forged plagued streets,
We seek the steppingstone of charity.
The Holy Spirit points the way to build
A bridge, a path leading us to unity.

IV

Our Prayer

Jesus, open our hearts to the pain in the world
that we may see through to the other side. We
breathe as one, suffer as one. In others
we see the face of God; in us they see the
same. Dear Lord, you have but a single face.
It is we—we are the ones.

Amen