

poiemma

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*

Tables

‘You prepare a table before me in
the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.’ ~ Psalm 23:5

Editor's Letter

At my Australian primary school, there was an isolated spot between the gymnasium and the art room called the Kit Kat Corner. In the early days, the Kit Kat Corner was an eight-year-old's prison cell, furnished only with a mouldy desk and a single chair. It's where they'd send you if you were *really* bad, forcing you to sit facing the wall and write lines during the entirety of lunch.

i will not throw bark at my friends.
i will not yell during class.
i will not eat mrs jacob's printer paper.

It sure was a bad place to be. Everyone walking past would know that you'd done something terrible. Eventually, the school turned the Kit Kat Corner into a little game area, adding giant Jenga and hopscotch squares.

But for the older kids, it was hard to forget that horrible desk.

Looking back, it was definitely a good way to make sure we'd never repeat our bad behaviour, because that's what you do when kids are bad. You discipline them. But God has a different strategy. Instead of sending the sinners away and isolating them from Himself and the world, Jesus sat with them and ate with them, getting to know them on a personal level. Matthew, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdelene; all of them pushed out by society, but welcomed by the Lord.

Praise God for His mercy and grace. Even though we dissappoint and we blame and we hurt those around us, the Lord still says, 'come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. He invites us to His table even after we've mocked His meal.

But that doesn't mean we can act however we want and ask for forgiveness later. Those people that sat and ate with Jesus turned away from their old ways and left it far, far behind them. They walked with Jesus and learnt from Him, choosing life over the wordly path despite the consequences and hardships that many of them faced. Not without fault, of course, but their example of repentance shows that anyone can be saved. Being a 'good' person doesn't save you, and being a 'bad' person doesn't condemn you. Only the acceptance of the Lord as your saviour and rescuer will guarentee eternal life and lead you through a journey of purpose and peace on this earth.

So, even if you've thrown bark at your friends or been a bit stale in your faith, God is always waiting with open arms. There's always a seat at His table.

Will you take it?

God bless you all.

Jasmine Krnjaic, Founder and EIC



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the dinner table on christmas eve

mama tells us to pass
the leche flan from across
the dining table, a rectangle
stretching until the edge
of the room; that's why
a round one is better, papa says
in all his chineseness as he
scoops another serving
of mango sago in his bowl,
while auntie spreads christmas
cookies from the side
of her chair all around the table—
it's time to treat yourself, she
insists, and we chatter and laugh
until someone asks where the games
are, and the table is one big mess,
so mama stands up, and auntie does too,

Shekina Oh

of course, with me and my sisters
and my girl cousin grabbing the mop
and the vacuum; I wait, yet only
papa joins in—sweeping the floor
and wiping the table, all while
my cousin's brothers and father
stare on their phones on the night
of christmas eve, freezing while
we move and move,
breaking our backs until our mouth
cracks: dude. do you really
have to be told on christmas eve?

- * Shekina Oh is a high schooler and an aspiring writer. In her spare time, she likes writing (of course), making small crafts, and watching Instagram reels.

I remember the days when the tables were empty,
free of tasty meals.

I remember only one meal together with my
friends
on the occasion of Indian festivals,
sitting on the floor
where everything we ate carried extra taste.

On other days, we sat in different corners
not because we lacked togetherness,
but because everyone found comfort in their own
company,
watching TV while eating,
holding on to favorite songs between bites.

Sometimes sitting under a tree,
feeling the gentle breeze pass by,
reminiscing memories that keep returning.

And so, it was beautiful
a table with the least stories,
yet the ones it held were the most precious.

When I was six,
I remember my twin and I
sitting beside my dad,
learning the folding in bookbinding.

The easiest and most perfect folds were his.
From him, I learned punctuality;
from him, I learned quiet perfection.

Little memories hold so much in our hearts,
often more than we understand at the time.

In the days of darkness,
I return to those best days
with my mum, dad, twin, and younger brother.

Not perfect,
but complete in ways that mattered.

An example of love not always shown
but always carried,
quietly and deeply within the heart.

* Shwetha A is a writer from Kerala, India.
Her work is inspired by real-life moments
and quiet emotions, often exploring themes
of family, memory, and unspoken connections

Shwetha A

A FEW MOMENTS THAT STAYED



There is a night that abides in my heart deeply:
A table set underneath a bright light
so small a meal, a passing time it seemed,
yet something deeper stirred beneath its frame.
For tables aren't wood and nails alone,
but a special space where hearts are laid to rest.
An invitation carved in unseen ways,
to sit, to trust, to share, to simply remain.

We don't normally set our tables for that.
We may still chose with care for souls we let come
near,
each plate, each seat arranged with gentle
thought.
It declares, 'I have made a place for you to stay.'

I've read about tables written into time.
Where covenants were sealed with bread and salt,
where peace was poured like wine between two
hands,
and the trust was found in what was freely shared.
And there He sat, with those He called His own,
not by mistake but at the appointed time, bestow.
He broke His body and offered His cup,
love laid bare before their concerned eyes
even though one who turned his heart away
was seated close, with honor at his side.

Imagine love that knows the wound to come,
and still extends the hand that offers bread and
wine.

AN INVITATION SET

Then I thought of you, and of that night,
how you had set a table of your own.
Not only for three courses, but creating a space
for us to breathe.
To laugh, to speak, to rest in honest ease.
You didn't say it out loud, yet I could hear:
'you matter here!'
And in that room, so warm with simple love
I felt a peace I did not name till now so clear.

That dinner was no simple meal we shared,
but breathed with traces of the more divine.
A quiet proof that blessed things still bloom
in ordinary rooms, through human hands
intertwined.
Each seat becomes a place where grace is able
for He meets us gently at the table.

Tyesha

* Tyesha is a South African graphic designer/
illustrator and visual storyteller exploring the
spaces where identity, passion, and meaning
meet.

ABUNDANCE DANCE AT THE TABLE

our sordid stories:
reluctantly nibbling
on the required vegetable intake
generously mounted
like guests arriving late

the heaviness
of that lonely
porcelain plate
reflecting a burden
uncarried,
gluttony of hate

listen, I'm not asking you to eat with Me,
I'm asking you to eat Me
Oh hungry soul,
every bitter thing is sweet,
yet you haven't tasted Me

so go ahead,
butter My word
on both sides and

swallow me whole

there's more than enough
to go around
raise your glass
and drink Me
until you are full

RISKA DU PLESSIS

* Riska du Plessis is a poet,
songwriter, and visual artist from
South Africa.

meg wilson

There is a place that whispers in my dreams on peaceful evenings. Within my mind's eye I see a river of glass, clouds reflecting on the murky water beneath. The osprey screams a song overhead, swooping to grasp a fish from below the surface of the water and eventually making its way back to the tilted nest on a platform beside the pier.

As I slumber, I see my childhood self sitting on the dock and watching my family, the rare treat of a cookie pack in my hand. My parents and two brothers are a part of this scene as well. Dad is standing on the boat, holding out a hand to Mum as she takes a large step off the pier and into the safety of the rocking Key West. My brothers make their way onto the boat next, too proud and able to take my Dad's hand as they jump from the wood to the smooth fiberglass, no shoes on their feet. Next, it's my turn. Dad takes my hand as I, the smallest of the crew, take a giant step. As the boat swings further from the pier, Dad takes me from under my arms and places my tiny frame onto the floor of the boat. I sway and steady myself, then make my way to the front of the boat. I sit in Mum's lap, fitting in the space perfectly. As my brother detaches the ropes and Dad maneuvers the boat away from the pier, I awake from the dream of peace.

I often think of this place—of this scene. The cabin at the river was not glamorous. The screen on the porch was ripped, and the foam on the ceiling was cracked. Frequent repairs needed to be done, and it seemed there was a daily need to clean up pinecones. There was no TV, and certainly no WiFi or cell phones when I was a young child. Despite this, when I think of this place I think of peace and of belonging. I am reminded of hard work and family. I see myself as a child, unable to fit in with those in the regular circles of my life. In this place I was with the people that loved me, and that I loved in return.

As my life has evolved, each season brought me to new people and different places. I often wonder if (or when) I will feel the sense of belonging that I felt as a child in that place. It is then that I am reminded of the truth found in the Word of God, a truth that echoes the feelings from that perfect scene in my childhood.

Most believers know, or know of, the 23rd Psalm. David wrote this Psalm with the knowledge of Christ's love for Him, and it is packed full of the reality that we belong with Christ. Let's look at what God says in the first two verses of this chapter.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams.”
(Psalm 23:1-2 ESV)

When I read the first two verses of this Psalm, I imagine a shepherd with a sheep upon his shoulders stopping for rest beside a rippling stream, the sound of quiet water lulling the sheep to sleep. The shepherd stays with the sheep as it sleeps, protecting the delicate animal. After their rest, the shepherd once again picks the sheep up. Eventually, the two make their way back to the flock and the shepherd places the lost animal onto the ground. Upon seeing those like him, the now-found sheep frolics in the green grass, clearly belonging with others of his kind.

In this scene I am the sheep, guarded and protected by my Shepherd. I am safe with Him and belong upon His shoulders. While this scene is one of perfection, life does not usually look so picturesque. Even in the spaces around us that we feel we should fit in, we do not always have the feeling of inclusion that we so desire. Thoughts of our own unworthiness and doubt cloud the truth of our belonging, and we don't always feel accepted or worthy of the people around us.

"Thoughts
of our own
unworthiness
and doubt cloud
the truth of our
belonging

At the same time, those people don't seem to make an effort to include us in the community. We often forget that our feelings, while they are valid, are not always based in truth but on the way that we perceive different moments of our day. No matter how we feel, it is a fact that we still belong in and with the family of God.

There is another truth that ties to this one in John 3:1. The verse reads:

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

This verse highlights a greater truth—one higher than the truth of belonging in the family of God here on earth. This verse tells us that we belong to our Savior. He loves you and I enough to take immense pain upon Himself on your behalf and on mine. He is our reason for living, and He is the one who allows us into His kingdom of belonging. It is all because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection from the dead that we are able to experience the belonging that comes with being a part of His kingdom. While we can rest secure in the knowledge of these facts, they call us to something greater than ourselves.

As we make our way through the days we are given here on earth, we must remember that there is work to be done. Knowing that the Lord accepts each of us into His kingdom shouldn't just change us, but it should change the way that we relate to those around us. With full assurance of His inclusion of each of us, let us love others well. The Lord has reached out to the least of us, so we must always strive to do the same. May we always remember that we belong to Christ, and that we are His. It is because of this knowledge that we are able to share our lives with others, always creating a space of belonging for those whom He has placed into our circles.

Though you may not always feel like you belong with others, rest in the gentle assurance that you belong in Christ in His family.

If Christ is your Lord, you are His child.

- * Meg creates stories of redemption, showcasing the beauty that comes from the ashes of life. She believes that the Lord brings beautiful stories from each of our broken ones.

* *Reading Bible Stories at the Table* is by Joana Melo, a Brazilian children's book illustrator and a Christian. She wants to glorify Christ in every possible way through her art.



ECHOES

in the wilderness **DAN
CHRIS**

Let other creatures hear my
melodies,
let them enjoy the sweet sound of
my violin.
For humanity has refused to pay
attention,
too busy, too blinded to appreciate
the tension.

All are in search of greatness, of
wealth and fame,
the pressure to earn high has
removed all pleasure and gain.
What's a life without joy, peace, and
a sound mind?
An existence empty, hollow, and left
behind.

But I, in my leisure time, have
found a table to sit,
a refuge from the chaos where I can
play and quit.
I take my friends with me, my Bible
by my side,
along a bottle of water and my trusty
violin, my pride.

I play for nature, for the birds to
dance and sing,
for the trees to clap and sway to the
rhythm that I bring.
And as I play, I feel the cool breeze
on my skin,
a sense of peace and calm that I've
been searching to win.

What else do I seek but peace of
mind?
A sense of connection to the word
of God, so divine.
So let me play, let me sing, let me
serenade,
for in the music I find solace and a
peaceful shade.

* Dan Chris is a poet whose emotionally
charged work explores social justice,
identity, and personal growth.

At Grandma's Table

Huina Zheng



* Oksana is an illustrator working with watercolor and digital art. She creates from the heart with God's guidance and inspiration.

UNWORTHY:

broken & scarred

priya komala

An unworthy vessel
broken and shattered to million,
but You loved each piece of me.
You took all of it and fixed it
You moulded me with Your hands,
carved me with Your fingers.
In You I was made whole.
What a privilege to be in Your hands,
even to be a vine and be crushed under Your feet.
I take honor and cry,
'bring out of me new wine!'
Whatever You do is beautiful.

When I thought it was over,
You were not yet done with me.
When I called it the end,
You were my beginning.
In my darkness You were light.
In my sorrows You were hope.
I ran away but You chased me
I tried hiding from You but
You were right beside me!
I was a mess but You washed me,
made me whiter than snow.

My bitterness is now sweet as honey
I have tasted and seen Your goodness.
Even for a blink of an eye,
I can't imagine being without You.

In the uncertain, I desire to seek You 'cause
my brokenness was an offering You did not despise.
Full of scars but filled with Your grace.

* Priya Komala once found herself running from God. Her 'yes' to Him healed her, and she wants others to know that He is willing to heal and fix many. Its never too late for God!



Thumb Drummer

Aries Cid

She drums the coffee table,
her blissful thumbs unstable.

Her fractious dad reprimands,
ignores his own contrabands:

those humorous coffee sips
with percussive coffee drips.

So Miss Thumbs and the Coffettes
jam for their toast, ham, and eggs.

He preserves his stern facade,
desserts his pride and applause.

*Aries Cid is a Filipino-American
and a Las Vegas resident who
finds inspiration in insomniac
imaginations and suburban
nights.

BETWEEN HEARTBEATS

Sarrah Almidfa

Layla first noticed it in the pause. Not exactly in the silence, but the moment after sound ended, when everything should have settled but didn't. That was when it came.

‘...stay...’

Her hand froze under the running tap as cold water slipped over her fingers and pooled at her palms before dripping onto the floor. The sharp taste of mint lingered on her tongue, suddenly too strong, almost bitter. She quickly turned off the tap.

‘Who’s there?’

Her voice echoed slightly against the bathroom walls, then disappeared. Nothing answered. Layla stared at her reflection in the mirror, her breathing louder than it should have been.

It’s nothing, she told herself.

The next morning, she searched for it anyway. One article from a psychology website explained that the brain fills silence, creating sound when it expects something to be there, especially when linked to memory or emotional stress. She read the sentence again, slower this time. It made sense. But it didn’t explain why the voice felt familiar.

Over the next few days, it followed her.

Not constantly, only in pauses: the gap between elevator floors, the second before someone replied, the moment after she closed a door.

‘...don’t...’

Layla stopped mid-step in the hallway, the air suddenly feeling heavier against her chest. She looked around, but there was no direction to the sound. It wasn’t behind her or ahead of her. It existed inside the silence itself.

By the end of the week she stopped ignoring it. Instead she started waiting for it, standing still for longer than necessary and letting the quiet stretch out just a little more.

One evening, she stood in her kitchen with her palms pressed against the cold marble counter. The refrigerator hummed steadily nearby, creating a soft vibration beneath her hands that she could feel more than hear. She didn’t move. She waited.

The hum clicked off.

Silence expanded.

‘...leave...’

Her breath caught, but this time she didn’t step back. She stepped into it. Because now she knew.

The voice wasn’t unfamiliar.

It wasn’t imagined.

It was remembered.

Her mother.

Gone for a year, yet suddenly close in a way that didn’t belong to sound. Layla swallowed, her throat dry.

‘I can’t hear you properly,’ she said quietly. The silence deepened, as if it were listening.

"The voice wasn't
unfamiliar.
It wasn't
imagined.
It was remembered."

‘...listen...’

Layla closed her eyes. She stopped searching for words, for sound, for something clear and defined. Instead, she focused on what remained: the warmth in her chest, the way her breathing slowed, the way the tension she had been carrying for months began to loosen.

‘I’m here,’ she whispered.

For a moment, nothing changed. Then something shifted. The silence no longer felt empty. It felt full—not with sound, but with presence.

Layla exhaled slowly, her shoulders dropping as something inside her finally settled into place. The refrigerator hummed back to life and the world resumed its rhythm, but she didn’t wait for the voice again. She didn’t need to.

Because now she understood. It had never been something she was meant to hear.

Only something she was meant to feel.

- * Sarrah Almidfa is an Emirati writer based in the UAE. Her work explores themes of identity, memory, and human connection through a reflective and observational lens.

PSALM 23:5

A DECONSTRUCTION ANATOMY LOGINOV

Psalm 23: 5

I. The Table (In the Presence)

The wood is scarred with initials,
carved not by craftsmen, but by bored,
angry teenagers.
The cafeteria smells of bleach and cheap
gravy.
I sit where the light is greyest.
My enemies don't carry swords—
they carry silence, cold as a plastic tray,
and the jagged edges of laughter
I was never invited to join.
Lord, You set the table here?
Between gossip and isolation?
Yes.
The bread is still warm.

II. The Oil (The Anointing)

It's not a golden jar in a temple.
It's my mother's hand, smelling of onions
and Nivea,
brushing hair from my forehead
before the soup is served.
It's the way she looks at me—
a quiet recognition that says: You are still
here.
The world tried to erase your face today,
but under her palm
I find my contours again.
This oil is simply permission to belong.

III. The Cup (The Overflow)

The rim is chipped.

We pour the wine, the tea, the bitter water
of the day.

You said it runs over.

And it does—messy, spilling onto the lace
cloth,
staining the history we tried so hard to keep
clean.

It overflows with things I never asked for:
the grief of 1994, the car crash of 2004,
the rent due on Monday,
the beautiful, terrifying ache
of being loved by a God
who doesn't mind a stained tablecloth.

My cup is full—

not with gold, but with the salt of my own
life.

And for the first time,

I don't reach for the cloth to wipe it away.

- * Anatoly is a writer from Saint Petersburg whose work explores memory, belonging, and the quiet spiritual weight of everyday life. He's inspired by stories told at tables, the tenderness of family rituals, and the way small moments can reveal something eternal.

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dedicated to uplifting a community of emerging
Christian creatives who might otherwise slip
through the cracks of contemporary art culture.
Our goal is to foster more of God's presence in the
literary and creative space. So tell us, how does salt
and light reflect in your eyes?

check us out!

