



'EARTH'

2 – 8 Mar

Week 2 – Supplementary Resources

ANTONY GORMLEY RA
CLOSE V
cast iron, 27 cm high

"I wanted to make a work about sculpture, about movement and stability and about the tension between the forces of gravity and centrifuge. Here is a body attached to the earth like a child to a mother, except that here the body is adult and the mother is the earth. I wanted the body completely prone, holding on for dear life, as if in danger of being flung into deep space and through this to evoke the feeling that nothing is fixed (we want fixed points but know that there aren't any). Like an X, the body marks a spot which is nevertheless not fixed. We all know we are on the move: the earth is turning on its own axis at 1670 km/ hour and around the sun at 108,000 km/hour; part of a universe that is expanding at a rate difficult to determine. This is the opposite of the proud and heroic standing male statue; a small body totally dependent on a larger one, both lost in space."

ANTONY GORMLEY RA

Additional reading:

Sculpture: Anthony Gormley RA's notes on 'Close V'	1
John 13. 1 – 17: Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet	2
Proverbs 8. 1 - 8, 19 - 21; 9. 4b – 6: The Gifts of Wisdom	3
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**John 13. 1 – 17****Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him.

And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.'

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to

him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!'

Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.



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Proverbs 8. 1 - 8, 19 - 21; 9. 4b – 6

The Gifts of Wisdom

Sophia

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her
voice?
On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
'To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.
O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.
Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;
for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.
My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.
'You that are simple, turn in here!'
To those without sense she says,
'Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight.'

What of the woman who lives in the man
Waiting to be welcomed?

Borne in his blood, embedded in his
bone,
Enfolded in the creases of his skin:

She searches out the pathways of his
spirit,
Knows the secret places of his soul

Her mouth forms words, each becomes
itself;
her ear hears mysteries, her nostrils
breathe in ecstasy

The love of letting be shines in her eyes;
Her fingers touch and quicken all
creation,

Such is the woman who lives in the man
waiting to be welcomed.

Richard Skinner **supplied by Francoise**



Week 2 – Supplementary Resources

Wilderness Meditation II: To The End of Time

By the end, I didn't want to go. By the time the moon looked me full in the face a second time, my temptation had become, not leaving, but staying: travelling eternally east-west under the opening and closing of the moon's sail. Seduced by the tiny chamber of this wilderness in which each day the same, each day anew, I conduct this strange, stripped-naked interview with God.

My cousin, a crazy-man I loved as my brother, did that. Went into the wilderness to live out the grand dance with God, sustaining himself with the meagre gleanings to be had from the nooks and crannies of the desert. We saw him sometimes, nearly speechless except for prophesy, full of a fine, wild joy that hummed with the resonance of the high places where he lived.

* * *

Of course, it wasn't all about communing with wild beasts and angels, or sulking down gullies till the moon rose and rescued me. Those intense times burnt their lightning-shapes onto my mind. But then they faded, until the hours and days of simply walking, resting, praying, sleeping, walking, began to be the way I had always lived.

With no-one else to care for, I luxuriated in the absolute attention of God. I was a single blind cat-cub, squirming under the rasp of its mother's tongue: all-present, all-finding, all-giving. Out under the sky, it is simple. (How artfully in cities we create houses to live in, and fool ourselves that when we are inside them, God does not see us.)

The constancy of that unroofed mutual gaze was heady at first, but settled down into something – well, maternal.

Washing out my battered garment at a junction of the river, or spreading it out to dry sun-stiff while I sat naked on the shore and pulled snarls out of my hair, I would find myself arrested, all senses alert, in a kind of ecstasy of quietness. Peace, but not as the world knows it.

I saw visions, in the flaming clouds of desert sunset and sunrise, of the shores of heaven. Of a world bigger than our own, in which the story of our people is the great story of all people. I was shown with the eyes of my soul the day when history completes itself: our homecoming to the country that lives behind those veils of fire.

More domestically, through a kind of sorcery made possible by love, I conjured my mother's house - sometimes so clearly, I could see her at her household tasks as if she was there in front of me. In my vision she was oblivious, but the strength of my longing could make her look up, as if she sensed my presence. Seeing nothing, she would frown and push strands of her hair back into its covering, in a gesture so familiar it felt as if I could lean across and do it for her. Illusion, but powerful. Or I would see my father's workshop, smell the curls of fresh wood as they fell from his plane. Watch him working with utter absorption on the doorframe he was making, or the panel of a cart. Now him, he never looked up. It would take a military detachment marching through the yard to break his concentration.



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Deep in the wilderness, even these memories binding me to family, identity, community fall away, as if the knots have just worn themselves undone. Here I am a rounded pebble from the bed of the desert, fitted snugly to God's palm, anonymous and belonging. I am part of the riches of this bare place with its luxurious minimalism. As time goes by, it is easier to envision its permanence, than its ending.

But it is ending. For one thing, my body isn't standing up to the punishment. I have lost more weight than I can afford to, the cuts and scrapes on my hands and feet are not healing so well now. My hair is long enough to braid back, my itchy beard is growing into fullness. Light-headedness is my wavering companion, as I rove the canyons or rest in caves during the fierce heat of the day, listening and waiting on the voice of God.

Which, as distinctly as it called me to this place, is sending me away.

I don't want to leave. The moon and I are family now: she is as much my sister as any I left at home. The thought of living in a rhythm not the desert's suffocates me. And I am no clearer why I am being called away from here, than I knew what I was coming to when I came. Fortunately, perhaps. Had I understood more, I might have prepared myself. And how can you prepare yourself against your God?

* * *

In the last days, the worst risk was refusal. I wanted to keep within myself the slow, upwelling grandeur of this desert conversation. God allowed me that.

When I left, I carried the wilderness with me, and we kept faith with one another to the end. It was the last thing to leave me, the last place to know me whole.

As it was, I had barely the strength to return. I picked my way back along the canyon rims, not taking the arduous route along the riverbed. Now, the broken cliffs against the night sky seemed as friendly to me as the huddled roofline of a village.

Reluctance took hold of me. I wanted to stay on this journey, in this way, indefinitely, until my body disintegrated under me. The desert had become dear to me but even its dearness was muted, beside the urgency of holding onto this time which was slipping through my fingers like grains of sand. All I could feel was the nearness of God, more essential to me now than water, beating quietly like the drum-beat of the sun on the landscape, like the pulse in my own neck.

As I walked, I felt fear rise. How would I live, without the freedom to float and soar on God like an eagle on the shining wind? How, herded by the needs of earthbound men, could I walk free in joy?

God's answer came on the desert breeze, and in the silence after it lifted and then dropped its restless skittering of dust and pebbles at the edge of the great void: I am with you, to the end of time.

J Rowbotham 2008