

An excerpt for Holy Week from

# *Not Counting Sundays*

A Lenten Journey  
Of  
Forty Days

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Created for Holy Week 2020

This material is part of a larger project that spans all forty days of Lent. This excerpt of the days from Passion Sunday through Easter Sunday, including the last six days of Lent, have been prepared for distribution now in response to the separation forced on us all by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since we can not gather to mark the days of Holy Week this year, we need other ways to walk through this time, and to focus our contemplation as we journey toward Easter.

The author is David Kaiser, a retired ELCIC pastor and an active poet. He has spent quite a bit of time in Hong Kong in the last 20 years, including time during the SARS outbreak there. Much of this poetry was written while he was in Hong Kong.

Frank Armistead is also an ELCIC pastor who has worked with indigenous people in Regina. In the last few years Frank has studied fine arts at the University of Regina, and participates regularly in art shows with the Aurora Art Guild.

## *Passion Sunday*

*Oh Mad Lover!*

*Who can begin to know your passion?*

*You thought it not enough to be born,*

*To keep company with us,*

*To tent among us.*

*Now to open yourself even to our opinions,*

*Our quickly changed allegiance,*

*To risk even our rejection.*

*You come again.*

*You walk our main streets.*

*Wet our back alleys with your tears.*

*For it is only enough also to die.*

*Oh Mad Lover!*

*How can we know your passion?*



***you wet our back alleys with your tears***

day 35

**monday**  
monday in holy week



*street sweepers bagged ... the memory*

monday morning  
sunday's parade is over  
street sweepers bagged  
the slightest memory  
i eat breakfast standing up  
choking down too hot coffee  
take the down escalator two steps at a time  
race the closing train door  
just to save two minutes  
enter the argument with james and john  
about promotions and chairs  
wondering all the while if we actually  
are supposed to save the world  
i delete that idea  
along with thirty-seven  
junk e-mail messages

day 36

tuesday  
tuesday in holy week



*near the end now*

near the end now  
the journey recorded  
sweet memories shot in 35mm  
to fill shelves of albums  
with no details but dates  
places and names  
delightful evidence  
in two dimensions  
for the creative additions later  
of imaginative exaggerations  
designed to make the stories fit  
for coffee breaks  
where one-upmanship  
breaks out  
the storms stronger  
the hills higher  
the dangers more incredible  
the denials denied  
complaints candied  
with the subtle implication it is all gospel truth

day 37

wednesday  
wednesday in holy week



*crucifixions for the sake of many*

false words

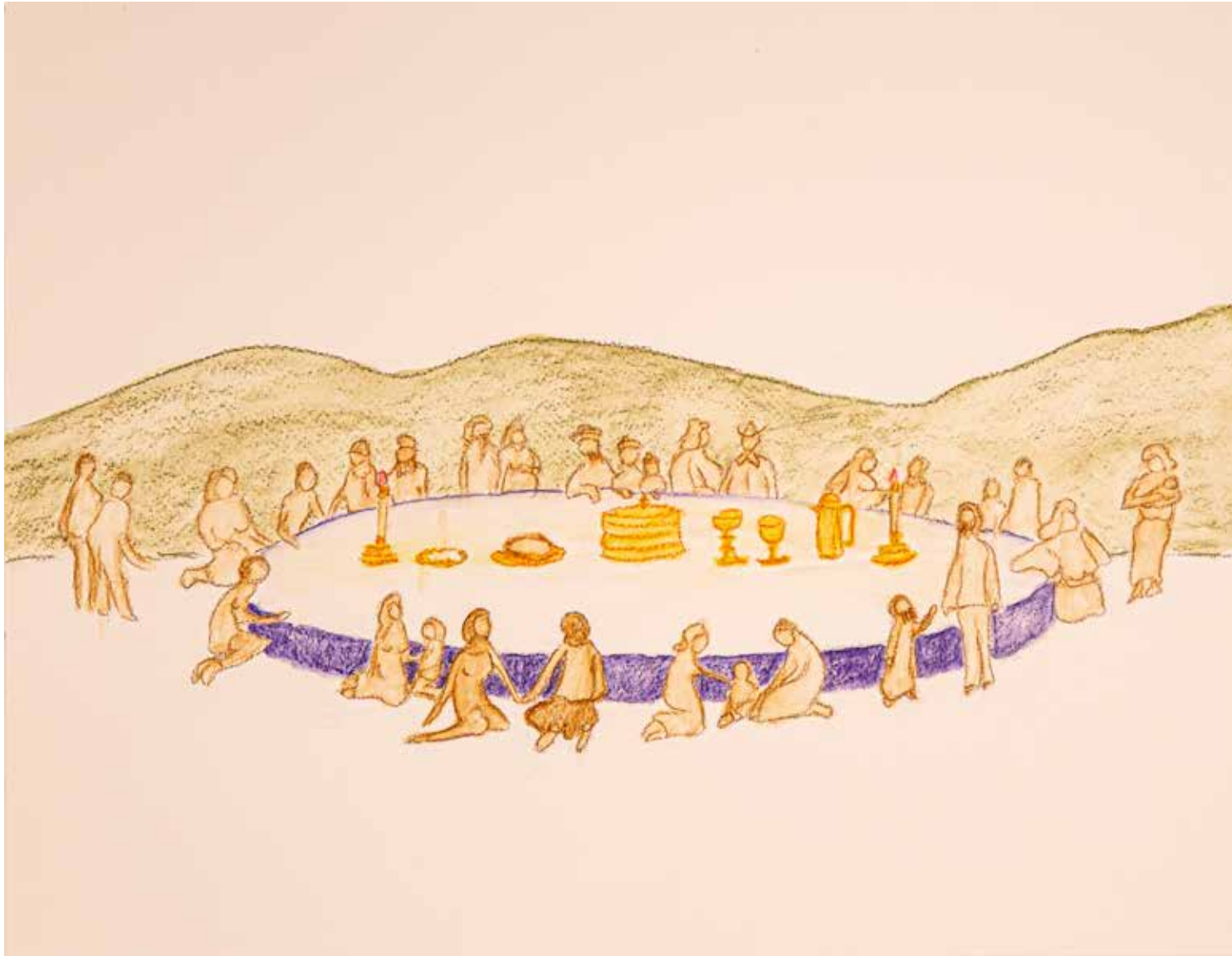
where deceit is considered clever  
greed masked as mere survival  
hatred justified as zeal for truth

crucifixions of one  
for the sake of many  
all subtle excuses  
for doing nothing

day 38

thursday

maundy thursday

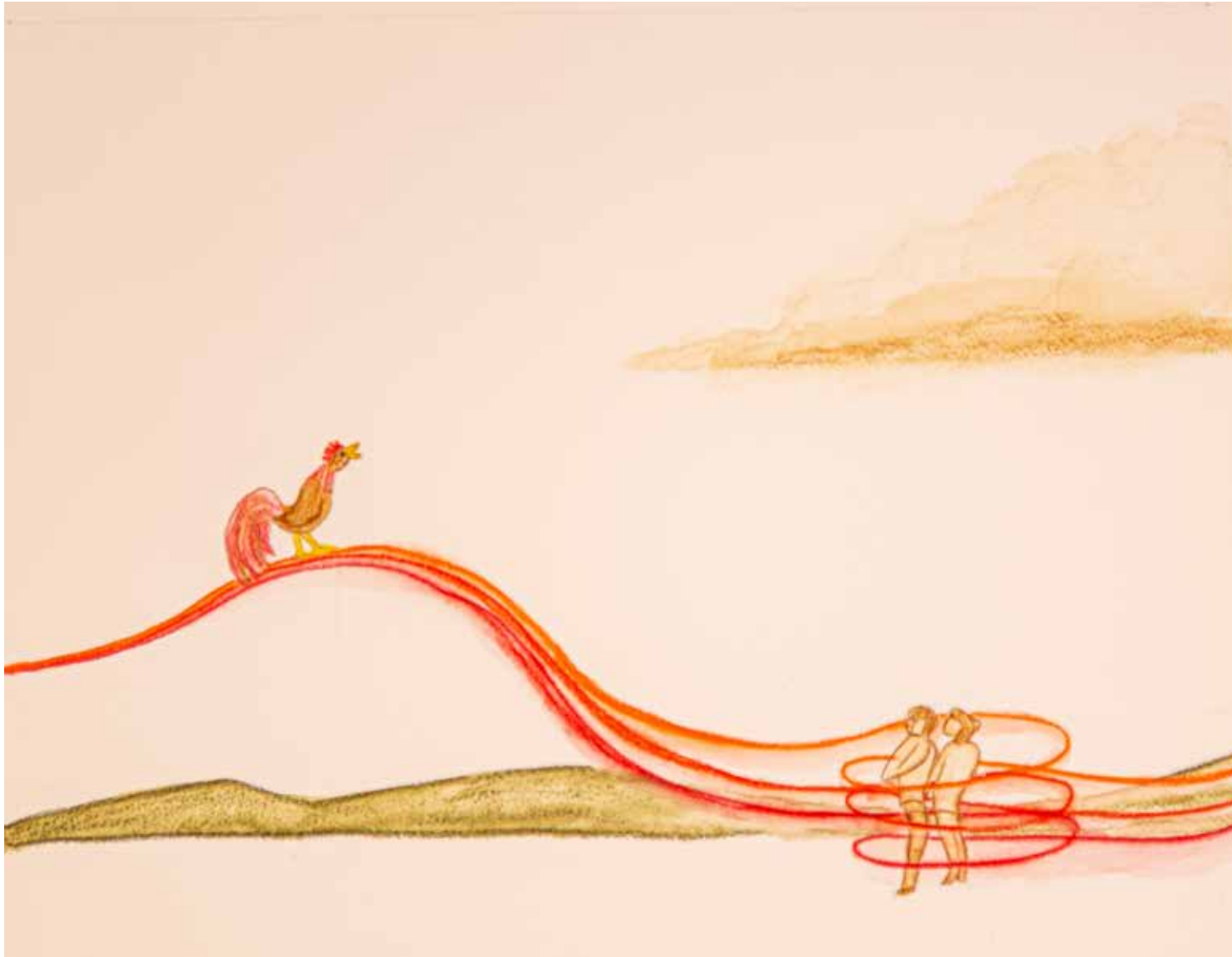


thursday's dinner is served  
a final meal before moving on  
bread and wine  
fare simple  
as manna and spring water  
yet i am glad to be here  
even the crumbs lord  
that fall from your table  
are sufficient

*bread and wine  
fare simple*

day 39

good friday

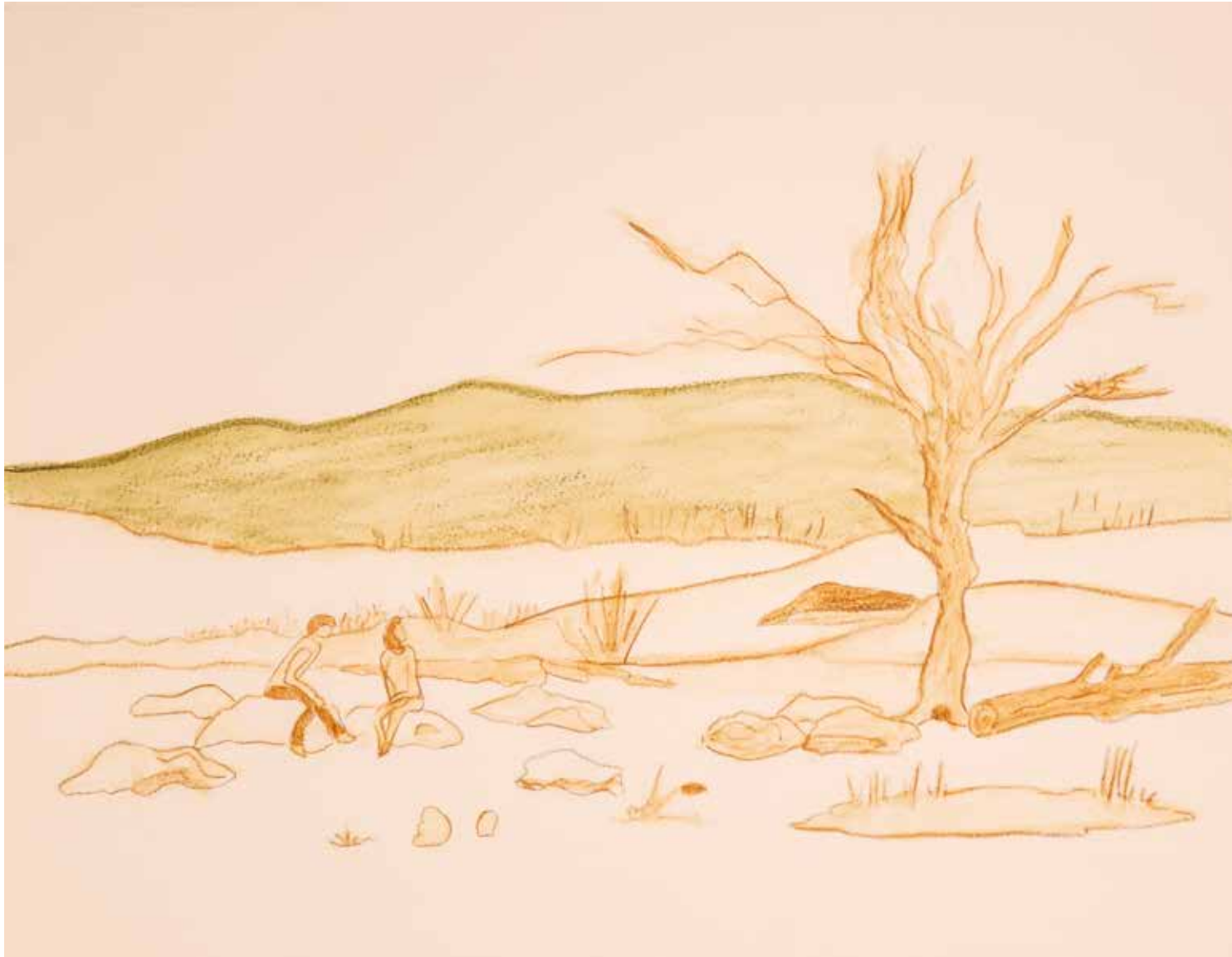


*rooster shut up*

rooster shut up you blithering idiot  
what do you know about anything  
the sun is dark eclipsing everything  
midnight at three in the afternoon  
a comforting interruption of sorts  
afforded this convenient moment  
i run and hide  
to avoid this awkward moment  
what do you know about anything  
save your noise for morning  
dare to crow again i'll cock-a-doodle you

day 40

saturday  
holy saturday



*life may yet be found among the stones*

stopped dead in my tracks  
no mincing chicken steps now  
i am suspended  
finished  
the word a parenthesis on the right  
a lop-sided smile of relief and end  
yet ellipsis marking the steps  
ahead into promised lands  
  
filled with sheer hope  
i wait to the steady hum of locusts  
watch birds carrying red yarn to their nests  
see a salamander sunning  
all evidence that life may yet be  
found  
among the stones



## *EASTER Sunday*

*In some mysterious but sure way  
his mercy finds us in our wanderings,  
his grace forgives our many sins,  
his Spirit refuses to give up on us,  
and something of his love flows  
through us to others*



*his love flows*

## seven easter haiku

pure white lilies bloom  
spring colors the hillsides green  
gold bells tip out sound

stone is rolled away  
women and men run to see  
believe the story

loud sunday city  
bargain price on meals and phones  
miss the miracles

worried deep in heart  
she cried her fear, "where is he?"  
then he said her name

light returns with spring  
life arrives with wintered birds  
new nests made with hope

oxymorons stand  
opposites are one the same  
black white death is life

alleluias ring  
in cemeteries birds sing  
death has lost its sting