

MIDCAREER FESTIVAL, 9 Mar 73, from Willis....38 years ago tonight I passed from pre-maturity ("I never was sure before"), having passed five years earlier (age 12) from prepubescence. During the intervening five years, the chief spiritual influence in my life was the daily reading of the Gospels: Jesus my hero-guide-deliverer through the darkneses and across the chasms. Now, like you, I've arrived at presenility, which is the most sobering term for midcareer, premessianic joy being the most festival term.

For the formal devotion on this festival occasion, I have chosen prepubescence as the life-stage....literally, with the poem below; figuratively (but literally to "the child of the past within") with L.12.22-32. After I read the Scripture, please be in silence with the poem of a nine-year-old, preparing yourself to share on the following questions: (1) What's her father like? (2) What's her mother like? (3) What's her God like? You may or may not, then, want to relate this to the following quote from a favorite uncanonical saint of mine, Simone Weil (THE NEED FOR ROOTS, Beacon/51), which I happened on in my devotional reading this morning: "Amidst all the present forms of the malady of uprootedness, the uprootedness of culture is not the least alarming. The first consequence of this malady, equally affecting all spheres, is generally that, relations being cut, each thing is looked upon as an end in itself. Uprootedness breeds idolatry" (p.68f).

GO!

FURTHER CLUES from other of this child's poems, given me a few days ago: "Try and love a little." "Read Run Love/ Do some things/ Do It now/ Read Run/ STOP!/ BEAUTY LOVE TRUST Hope/ LOOK NOW!" "God is my Father/ What he gave us./ He gave us everything./ He is my Father,/ He made me./ It's no magic,/ It's no power./ He is LOVE trust + hope./ He helps us/ My father is not my Daddy/ He is just borrow-ing me:/ The end." "BEAUTY/ FLOWERS GRASS/ BEAUTY/ TREES WATER/ BEAUTY/ BUSHES LEAVES/ BEAUTY/ GIRLS BOYS/ BEAUTY/ MOM DAD/ BEAUTY/ SMILE/ BEAUTY/ GOD HEAVEN/ He did IT ALL IN SIX DAYS." "Once upon a time/ A girl named Mommy/ And a boy named Daddy./ Mom + Dad/ I love them/ I am whatGodgave to them to borrow./ THE B."

RUSH Rush Rush!  
CAN you stop?  
God CAN!  
YOU CAN TOO TRY IT!  
Sit down STAY A while.  
He doesn't mind.  
He made Peace.  
He made The Green Grass  
He made the Sky.  
come on stop and look  
See the BEAUTY

"Here is a prayer/  
Fire water/ He made them  
all/ I am his child/ He  
is my father/ He gave my  
parents to me/ THE B."

"I love mommy/ She loves me/ I can tell/  
...I love Daddy.../ You try not to cry/  
Some try not to lie."