

Foolish Shepherd

Don Francisco

The vision came unbidden, at an unexpected pass
Where the winds of change blew colder
Whippin' snow that cut like glass
But like an old man in regret
For foolish sins and wasted youth
The scene that lay before me
Had no beauty save its truth
For the wind came down the mountains
Never slowing, never still
And the sheep were scattered shepherdless
Alone across the hills
They were prey to every beast that roamed
And entrapped by every curse
And they stumbled in their sickness
In their weakness and their thirst

Below them in the valley
The polluted waters flowed
Where the shepherds that were hirelings
Sat and argued what was owed
And the ambitious and abusive bragged
And they boasted on their might
And their profits from the slaughter
Of the ones who could not fight

And the wind just kept on howling
As I cried, "Oh Lord, how long
Will your people be the victims
Of the ruthless, proud and strong?"
And at once there came an answer
In the quiet of my soul
"The time has come for judgement
And to make the wounded whole"

"For my heart is still a shepherd's heart
I know each one by name
The ragged and the beautiful
The healthy and the lame
And I myself will lead them out
And I'll feed them on the best
In pastures by still waters
In a place of peace and rest
O, but woe unto the shepherds
Who abuse my sheep and kill
With harshness and severity
You've bent them to your will
And today I am against you
As I take them from your hand-
When the fire of judgement comes
The stubble will not stand!"

Then darkness filled the valley

And I saw it take up form
Screaming winds and fire and lightning
More than any earthly storm
Where it passed were no survivors

For the land was cleansed and bare
But the streams flowed clear and purified
And the grass grew green and fair

I saw a man come walking
And his heart glowed like a flame
All the sheep began to run to him
And he called each one by name
He spoke to them in gentle words
And he soothed their fearful minds
And he healed the brokenhearted
And the crippled, sick and blind
Then many others like him
All with hearts that glowed the same
That before I hadn't noticed
From the farms and fields they came
They weren't famous wise or noble
But they spoke a common word
A word the flock could recognize
And follow when they heard

They led them in green pastures
By still waters in the light
Standing guard against the wolves
And other creatures of the night
Going out into the mountains
In the darkness and the cold
Bringing back the lost and wounded
To the safety of the fold
And the news went out around the world
In every street and town
That something wonderful was here
That heaven had come down
And millions gave their hearts in trust
That long had been betrayed
And the bride at last was ready
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