

Anne Waldman

The Lord's House

Herrick's poem is gladdening and comforting because he, and consequently the reader, are made happy and content by the simplest things in life, which may be interpreted on a deeper level, and accept them humbly from God with a child-like faith.

The warm, protected "cell" might stand for man's whole being and Herrick describes, and almost categorizes, further those things, those staples in life, which keep man alive in his "cell" - the bread, the fire, the water-cress. But God's gifts are more than mere necessities. He gives the poet "Wassail Bowles" and with his "plenty-dropping hand" makes the land fertile ("twice two for one") and makes the hen "teeming" and the ewes "healthy".

The poet's ~~state~~ porch, as is his fate, is low and void of state, but he is happier this way. He is happy just being alive. "Surely God's goodness and mercy will follow me (Herrick - the poet, me - the reader, me - man) all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This line of a psalm expresses the whole feeling of the poem, which may better be called a prayer of Thanksgiving, to me. The "house" may ^{also} be seen on three levels: 1) the literal dwelling place 2) man's whole existence or physical & mental being 3) the house of the Lord which man enters through his faith and love. The poet sees & God's goodness and mercy and abundance in the simplest, most basic ways and is joyful and thankful. He accepts the Divine in the simple (this poetic juxtaposition is gladdening in itself) and asks only for God's acceptance of him. I am ^{personally} gladdened by the poem.

because I can identify and understand to a certain extent with Herick. I too believe in a divine being and I want to be reminded of this existence in the things I can see and am familiar with. Man often overlooks these things and takes them for granted and it is good and healthy to be brought down to earth again, which ironically so-called enough brings man closer to God.

I have gotten too much out of this course to put into a few sentences, but perhaps "insight" is a good word to sum up everything -
Thank you!