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The Hound of Heaven - homage to Francis Thompson

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The Hound of Heaven – homage to Francis Thompson

Jacob Van Wyk

2014

Stoneware clay sculpture in three sections, 48" tall

From the collection of Sanneke and John Kok

Excerpts from *The Hound of Heaven* – poem by Francis Thompson 1893 on following page.



I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the midst of tears
I hid from him, and under running laughter.
.....

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
by many a hearted casement, curtained red,
trellised with inter-twining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread,
Lest, having Him, I must have nought beside.)
.....

I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
.....

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'
.....

I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
.....

Ah! must—
Designer Infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood 'ere Thou
canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower
i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount, . . .
.....

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds,
Yet ever and anon, a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity.
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets
slowly wash again.
But not 'ere Him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal; Cypress
crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether Man's Heart or Life it be that yield thee
harvest, . . .
.....

Now of that long pursuit,
Comes at hand the bruit.
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea: . . .
.....

'Rise, clasp my hand, and come!'
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, Fondest, Blindest, Weakest,
I am He whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest Love from thee who dravest Me.'

(warwick.ac.uk)