



“Upside Down” — A Reflection on a Poem

RE-SOURCE #1 — February 2 – May 27, 2023

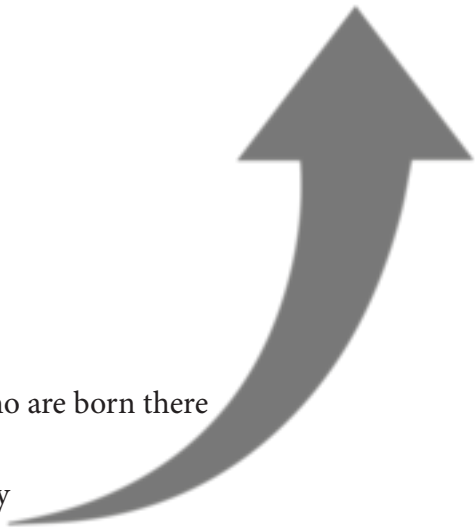
From the website of Brian Draper, journalist, writer and BBC host of *Thought for the Day* — <https://www.briandraper.org/>

“[This] poem reminded me of the direction of travel Jesus takes upon the Incarnational way; ... The movement of the heart ... turns the usual ‘top down’ approach to life on its head, and starts from the bottom instead. **So make sure you get all the way to the bottom of the poem. Read it aloud, if you can ...**”



Refugees By Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way



(now read from bottom to top)

The world can be looked at another way

The world can be looked at another way

Wow! Starting from the bottom makes the difference here — which, as I say, resonates for me with the Incarnation. I guess that's so much of what the wilderness becomes about, for Jesus, when he shows up there — to show that the world can 'be looked at another way'.

Jesus' temptations, in particular, seem to cry out to be turned upside down, like the poem. Life is not about proving or defending yourself, but demonstrating God's mercy; Jesus' desire is not to gain all the kingdoms of the world, but to redeem and share Creation....

But even the idea of wilderness can turn upside down. We have our usual expectations of what it must be like: tough, stark, punitive, maybe; but that's how the ego sees it. And to be fair, it needs to be a place beyond familiarity, to show us how familiar our temptations have become, hidden in plain sight.

For Jesus, above all it was a place to cultivate love, not survival skills. He entered with his Father's words still ringing: 'This is my son ...' And I love to think he let love carry him, ever deeper into God's ways of seeing, and being. Brian Draper

