

HOSEA'S HEART

When I first felt the flaming burden of Thy roaring Word—
seizing my inmost being, sizzling like a consuming fire,
rumbling while bottled up, until it burst forth from my lips—
I thought my mantle verbal, like that of Amos and other seers.

But no, O Thine-Own-image-Maker, Master of metaphors:
circumcision's eighth-day cut, Tabernacle's symbolic art,
and then me, a fleeing, whoring harlot's weeping husband,
single-parent, father of our prophetically abandoned brood!

And now, the burning Spirit-burden roars within once more:
“Go bring Gomer back!”—embrace her defiled embodiment
of a selfishly wicked, faithless, wandering heart of adultery,
buy back that wayward spouse and tell her, “Welcome home!”

Of course, Thou knowest, O Potter of my yielded clay, I will.
This fiery weight that churns within my fragile mortal frame
is Thine own heart's history of steadfast love for us, for Israel,
Thy faithless people, long ago espoused as corporate wife.

When we'd spurned Thy care's primal nuptial glory for idols,
Thy long seeking won and wed us; our offspring multiplied,
yet off we fled again to strangers' arms in lust—lost slaves,
whom now Thy patient loving grace redeems, renews, restores.

So, here's my bag of coins clutched weakly as I trudge off
with stinging wet eyes, praying these tears wash away the hurt
still raw inside, perplexed at how to forgive, yet recalling, too,
sweet times, and yes, Lord, how the children need their mom!

— *David L. Hatton, 5/7/2018*