



RESTORING YOUR SOUL THROUGH PSALMS

The following excerpts are from Malcolm Guite's forthcoming book *David's Crown: A Response to the Psalms* (Canterbury Press, 2021).

Here's a link to his blog where you can read his commentary as well as hear him read these poems:
[Guite Blog](#)

Malcolm Guite Poetic Responses to Psalms 20-24

(from his forthcoming Corona of Psalms)

Psalm 20

All given for your growth, and your delight,
All flowing for you from his sanctuary.
Even before you enter in, his light

Is blessing you. May mystery
Still draw you on, arouse your heart's desire,
And may each glimpse become epiphany.

May brief sparks blaze into a Holy fire
Whose light and warmth illuminate your mind.
And may some scent and sense of heaven inspire

Your thoughts and words. May everything remind
You of your Lord that you may put your trust
Entirely in his name, not in the blind

Dependence of this world, whose weapons rust
Into the soul and kill it from within,
But may you find in Christ, riches and rest.

Psalm 21

Now may you find in Christ, riches and rest
May you be blessed in him, and he in you
In Heaven, where to grant you your request

Is always blessing, for your heart is true:
True to yourself and true to Christ your king.
Breathe through this coronation psalm and view

The glory of his golden crown, then sing
The exaltation, goodness, life and power,
The blessing and salvation Christ will bring.

But first he wears a darker crown. The hour
Is coming and has come. Our Lord comes down
Into the heart of all our hurts to wear

With us the sharp *corona spina*, crown
Of thorns, and to descend with us to death
Before he shares with us the golden crown.

Psalm 22

Before he shares with us the golden crown,
He comes to share with us the crown of thorns.
Our hurts and hates close in and hem him round

Mock and humiliate him. All the scorns
With which we blaspheme God in one another
Are concentrated here among 'the horns

Of unicorns', the lions mouths, the slather
Of our devouring wickedness. He takes
It all and turns it into love. He gathers

All of us and by atonement makes
Our peace with God. He speaks to us of mercy
Even as we pierce him. No-one slakes

His thirst. I tremble at the mystery
For Christ himself is crying through this psalm,
To suffer my own dereliction for me.

Psalm 23

To suffer my own dereliction for me,
To be my shepherd, and to lead me through
The grave and gate of death, in strength and mercy

Christ has come down. At last I've found the true
Shepherd and the false just fade away,
Before him. I will sing of how he drew

Me from the snares I set myself, how day
Dawned on my darkness, how he brought me forth
Converted me and opened up the way

For me, and led me gently on that path,
Led me beside still waters, promised me
That he'd be with me all my days on earth,

And when my last day comes, accompany
And comfort me, as evening shadows fall,
And draw me into his eternity.

Psalm 24

And draw me into his eternity?
But who can rise up to that holy place?
Can all its splendours really be for me?

Before that holy fire I hide my face
My hands were never clean, as for my heart
He'll search out its impurity and trace

The sources of its sin in every part,
And in the whole, its weariness and stain.
Who can ascend? I cannot even start.

But even as I fear my hopes are vain
My saviour comes, his love revives my hope
I feel him search my wounds, deal with my pain,

And offer me again the healing cup.
Raising my head, he says: Now rise with me
The gates will open for us both, look up!