

It's difficult for us to understand or, indeed, believe the depth of God's love for us. It becomes something of a cliché, a passing reference, a nice idea and we carry on in the misery of our daily existence, earning our crust, surviving the day, being diverted by other news or entertainments. And then suddenly it may hit us, through the death, perhaps, or illness of a loved one, the depth, that is, that communicates love, that unfold its meaning. Here it is, in the words of John Bates, the biographer of the poet, John Clare, and of John Clare himself, *To (his daughter) Anna three years old. The sight of her neglected doll is the trifle that stirs his tenderness. He voices the thought of every parent of a sick child:*

*I think I never felt before
The love I bear thee now
And wish I'd shown my feelings more
My child could I know how
If thought could move the pain away
I'd think the very wind
To calms that it might hurt thee not.*

John Clare straining, perhaps, to find a way to bring his daughter away from the threshold of death. This is God's love for us, as a parent for a sick child, for a sick creation. And, lest we imagine God as free from feeling the depth of human love, he sends his own self, his own Son, to live that life, to live that love to its dregs. The Cross then becomes a symbol of that love and of its triumph through death. It's a turning point in the human story.

God thinks *the very wind* and calms it.

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