

*Thomas Sees Anew*

(with apologies to *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss)

The first day of the week, in a dark upper room  
In the eve of the day, when the mood was of gloom  
They were waiting . . . locked into that space without joys  
When Jesus' disciples heard a loud noise.

They stopped their boo-hooing and looked toward the sound.  
Could it be the Master? Their hearts started to pound.  
They heard him say, "With you may God's peace abide."  
He held out his hands. He showed them his side.  
"It's really me! Believe it! There's no need to fear.  
What are you all doing hiding up here?  
You can't stay cooped up. Do I make myself clear?  
My father sent me and I'm sending you. So get up and do what I've asked you to do."

But Jesus' message barely was heard. The disciples' rejoicing drowned out all the words.  
"You're alive. You're alive," they all cried with a shout.  
"Jesus has risen, there's no need to doubt."

To quiet the riot, Jesus held up his hand and said "Peace be with you" again to his band.  
The disciples sat down then, and turned their attention  
They hoped for a story – 'twas the Master's convention –  
To make his point known in a humorous vein,  
Or by making them puzzle o'er a theme in their brains,  
Whichever, the point was made just the same.

Jesus took a deep breath, his chest it did swell,  
And he exhaled that breath over all of the Twelve.  
Oh, wait, make that Eleven, for Thomas the Twin had stepped out for supplies.  
Oh, wait make that Ten, for Judas Iscariot had met his demise.

In that exhale of breath the Holy Spirit imbued  
The disciples with power of forgiveness and viewed  
Them as Jesus' agents, priestly as any Levite.  
Why, they could withhold forgiveness – She gave them the right!

The disciples, emboldened, worshiped the Lord,  
Promised to stop hiding and go spread the Word.  
The evening's excitement came to an end.  
The disciples went off to bed assured that their friend  
Had done what he'd promised, he was back from the dead.

But, in all of their joy the disciples forgot  
That Thomas was shopping and saw Jesus not.  
He came in from the market, all tired and sore  
Sat down on a bench, dropped his bags on the floor.  
That's when the Beloved Disciple came near  
And spoke words he thought Thomas would be pleased to hear:  
"Thomas, dear Thomas," he said with a shout,  
"Jesus has risen, there's no need to doubt!"

Thomas looked up with a squint and a glare.  
"B.D. cut it out," he said without care.  
"I'm exhausted from carrying all of this stuff.  
Jesus is dead and I've had enough.  
You all have obviously had too much wine  
You're making me angry, you're wasting my time.  
For me to believe you I have to have proof,  
Do you think I'm some crazy, delirious goof?"

No one would answer, no one could believe that Tom felt the others were bent to deceive.  
Their joy was electric – their hope was renewed.  
But, Thomas was silent, and bleak was his mood.  
Mary Magdalene then kissed him on top of his head.  
"He'll be back, Thomas. He loves you," she so gently said.  
"Now why don't we all get some rest. Go to bed."

The next day, before Thomas could rise from his cot  
The Zebedee Brothers were in his room like a shot.  
James and John began telling their story with zeal  
"Jesus was here, Tom. He's alive. It's for real."  
Thomas rolled over and, facing the wall, told the Zebedee boys that it wasn't their call.  
"Go away," Thomas said. "I'm on to your plot.  
"I can't believe in a risen Lord I've seen not.  
So until he appears again I will not shout 'Jesus is risen. There's no need to doubt.'"

Through the whole week each disciple argued their case  
As to how they saw Jesus, how they looked on his face;  
How they saw his wounds openly, his breath on them felt  
Even that the Master told them to get over themselves.  
Each day they went out to the market to share  
The story of Jesus, though with care,  
For the disciples knew it was still dangerous out there.

But, Thomas, still consumed with great grief  
Only wanted to hide, only wanted to sleep.  
In his dreams he saw Jesus, he stood whole and alive  
And Thomas was pleased to stand at his side.

But all dreams soon fade like a feathery cloud  
we wake to reality and again cry aloud.  
For six days, Tom mourned, he wept and he cried.  
He barely ate and turned all who would help him aside.  
“I want to believe you guys. Really, I do.  
But, unless I see nail prints, it just can’t be true.”

Thomas stayed in his misery, stayed in his brood  
Until the new week began and Peter said, “Tom, enough of this mood.  
We’re gathering together, in the same upper room  
We’ll share a meal, enjoy each other, but absent the gloom.  
Believing or not, your family now  
Wants you to join our remembrance, it’s how  
Jesus is with us again and again.  
It’s just as he promised, come see my friend.”

Reluctantly, Thomas rose from his cot.  
“I still don’t believe in a risen Lord I’ve seen not.  
But I’m tired of crying, I’m tired of sobs  
I’m tired of feeling like a miserable blob.  
I’ll go up to dinner, I’ll eat with my friends  
And from there bid this melancholy mood to an end.  
I have to move forward, I can’t stay asleep,  
so I’ll take one step at a time, I’ll just creep  
back into the real world, I’ll not be a lout  
when my friends say “He’s risen, there’s no need to doubt.”

So, Tom gingerly made his way up to the room  
And tried very hard to cover his gloom.  
When he opened the door, the voices were loud  
Jesus was there, in the midst of the crowd.  
He was there, he was there, it wasn’t a vision  
Thomas stood frozen, and made a decision.  
“I’d better retreat,” he said, as fear took ahold.  
“The Master will be furious. It was as he told.  
He’s here, he’s alive. And, I didn’t believe.”  
Just then, Jesus called out “Thomas” and rolled up his sleeve.

“Do I duck!” Thomas thought. “I’m sure I’ve been had.  
I’m sure there’s a thunderbolt headed my way. This is bad.”  
But, Jesus just smiled and said “Thomas, don’t hide.  
Come place your hands over my wrists and my side.  
Everything I told you would be is now true.  
God’s love lives forever; God’s love is for you.”

Overcome with emotion, Thomas moved with a plod,  
He embraced Jesus and said trembling "My Lord, and my God."  
"Don't be afraid, Thomas," Jesus replied. "You believe now that you've touched my hands and  
my side. For others it won't be so easy, so you  
must understand there's much work to do.  
Go tell my story, go let them see that because you love them, they can also love me.  
Tell them I understand when sometimes they doubt, because I know I seemed absent to you in  
your pout.  
But, I'm always here with you. I'll stand at your side. In your doubt, in your faith, God's love  
shall abide."

The Zebedee brothers stood by with a smile.  
And Peter and Mary exchanged winks all the while  
Thomas rejoiced with a dance and a shout,  
"Jesus IS risen, there's no room for doubt!"