

*Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

I guess every mother does that about her darling baby.

Judith Wright's poem *Woman to child*

ponders the little one being fashioned

from conception to birth in her dark womb, safe from harm.

The babe is nourished for nine months entirely by her,

sustained and empowered with her 'dreaming blood'.

That phrase flags up Wright's native Australia:

an Aborigine's dream encompasses all time, all creation.

I suppose every mother thinks, 'Is this going to be the One?'

Johnny Mathis' hit [\*When a child is born\*](#) has a lot to answer for.

But for Mary he was the One who moved multitudinous stars.

For every mother there also comes the separation,

the birth, the distancing: her withering enabling flourishing.

Particularly so for Mary, a sword piercing her own heart

as she watched him die so very cruelly.

Today, just eight days after that wondrous birth we carol over.

Mary handed over her tiny vulnerable baby to strange men.

They mutilated his intimate flesh, as they would do at Calvary.

Circumcision seems a bizarre way to start a new year,

a bizarre way to start a New Testament.

If I'd been feisty Mary I'd have told them

to take a running jump; or words to that effect

Whatever, Mary, the epitome of faithfulness,

remained the source,

the root of the Word made flesh,

dancing with him on Easter Day

*You who were darkness warmed my flesh*

*where out of darkness rose the seed.*

*Then all a world I made in me:*

*all the world you hear and see*

*hung upon my dreaming blood.*

*There moved the multitudinous stars,  
and coloured birds and fishes moved.  
There swam the sliding continents.  
All time lay rolled in me, and sense,  
and love that knew not its beloved.*

*O node and focus of the world -  
I hold you deep within that well  
you shall escape and not escape -  
that mirrors still your sleeping shape,  
that nurtures still your crescent cell.*

*I wither and you break from me;  
yet though you dance in living light,  
I am the earth, I am the root,  
I am the stem that fed the fruit,  
the link that joins you to the night.*

In this new Year of our Lord 2023

who will you root and sustain? Who will you join to the night?

Who will you dance with in the living light?