

Jesus Practices Distress Tolerance

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The chickadees do not sit and graze. They make
their choice and flit away to build their hoard
where they'll remember. They are so fast and do not
worry much about the high
flying redtails. It's the shrikes and the cats,
the jays and the crows who pilfer their nests—*Chicka
dee dee dee* they cry
and even the sparrows and the finches count
the warnings and heed. They take one piece
and fly to their secret troves, a false nest,
a hidden cleft, a tangle in the trees.
When I come by they flit away and cry,
the dees left in the air. Once, I knew a man
who fed them from his hand. Their hallux
pierced his thumb. When they left he mourned the dees,
each one a hole in his hand, a furrow
in his side. Of course they are afraid.
They have been given a black cap to wear
and a name to sing that lengthens with the fear.
I do not blame them. It is hard to be
in this world. They call
*the boy's a peeping tom, the car
is leaking oil, the tire will hit the pothole,
the balance is running low. It is raining again,
too soon, and the tree is loosening
its bough, and you are full of plastic.
The kids are hungry again. The cargo
ships are weighted down and there's
nothing left to do. Dee, dee, dee.*
They were there above the waving fronds
and the limb-torn trees—all I heard—
the hosannas on the way. *Chickadee
Chickadee. Chickadee dee dee.*