

I'm going to do something a bit different for the reflections during Advent: each week I will provide a reflection comprised of a picture, a poem, and probably a brief reflection on the piece of art. All the pictures are chosen from *The Art of Advent* by Jane Williams (the Archbishop of York's chosen Advent book for 2018) and all the poems are from *haphazard by starlight* by Janet Morley. Feel free to use them for house groups, for your own personal devotions, or not at all!

Light of the World, William Holman Hunt, 1900



Setting aside that this is of its time – a very white, European, non-Jewish, non-Palestinian Jesus, Christ as the light of the world is a major theme for Advent and Christmas.

The paradox of the painting is that here is the light of the world, yet he is standing outside a closed door, knocking, waiting to be invited in.

Black Rook in Rainy Weather by Sylvia Plath

On the stiff twig up there
Hunches a wet black rook
Arranging and rearranging its feathers
in the rain.
I do not expect a miracle
Or an accident

To set the sight on fire
In my eye, nor seek
Any more in the desultory weather
some design,
But let spotted leaves fall as they fall,
Without ceremony, or portent.

Although, I admit, I desire,
Occasionally, some backtalk
From the mute, sky, I can't honestly complain:
A certain minor light may still
Lean incandescent

Out of kitchen table or chair
As if a celestial burning took
Possession of the most obtuse objects
now and then –
Thus hallowing an interval
Otherwise inconsequent

By bestowing largess, honour,
One might say love. At any rate, I now walk
Wary (for it could happen
Even in this dull, ruinous landscape);
sceptical,
Yet politic; ignorant

Of whatever angel may choose to flare
Suddenly at my elbow. I only know that a rook
Ordering its black feathers can so shine
As to seize my senses, haul
My eyelids up, and grant

A brief respite from fear
Of total neutrality. With luck,
Trekking stubborn through this season
Of fatigue, I shall
Patch together a content

Of sorts. Miracles occur,
If you care to call those spasmodic
Tricks of radiance miracles.
**The wait's begun again,
The long wait for the angel,**
For that rare, random descent.