

The Ballad of the Judas Tree

by Ruth Etchells

In Hell there grew a Judas Tree
Where Judas hanged and died
Because he could not bear to see
His master crucified
Our Lord descended into Hell
And found his Judas there
For ever hanging on the tree
Grown from his own despair
So Jesus cut his Judas down
And took him in his arms
“It was for this I came” he said
“And not to do you harm
My Father gave me twelve good men
And all of them I kept
Though one betrayed and one denied
Some fled and others slept
In three days’ time I must return
To make the others glad
But first I had to come to Hell
And share the death you had
My tree will grow in place of yours
Its roots lie here as well
There is no final victory
Without this soul from Hell”
So when we all condemned him
As of every traitor worst
Remember that of all his men
Our Lord forgave him first.

Matthew 18:12-14 New International Version (NIV)

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Psalm 46: 1-3

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.