

# Three Poems



*Saint Francis of Assisi  
in Ecstasy* by Anton van Dyck, between 1627 and 1632

by [Michael Williams](#) (February 2022)

## CONVERSION II

Rogue world, alone, adrift upon the void,  
Eternal bedfellow to cosmic dust;  
Contented to all stellar realms avoid,  
Basking in placid darkness; and my crust  
Rimed o'er in stillborn atmosphere and seas –

A global frost as hard as adamant!  
No eye beholds my vast topographies,  
No neighbor treks across my firmament.  
Yet nudged a bit by universal motions,  
A star arrests me with its phantom forces  
And dreaded sunlight floods upon my face:  
Now slowly ice melts into sky and oceans,  
Zoetic flourishings shall run their courses,  
And I have found community in space.

#### JESUS PRAYER

LORD, please fast-forward me into tomorrow  
That, JESUS, I might render you my sorrow.  
Restore a SON to what he rashly squandered  
When in his days OF dissolution, wandered –  
No, fled, – from his GOD, chasing after wind;  
What sins delight, these HAVE I surely sinned.  
An alien to MERCY and to hope;  
Spare me, and make a twitch UPON the rope  
Of grace, stretched round the world to grow A thinner

Emaciated soul; convert this SINNER.

kyrie eleison

the gory waterfall of calvary –  
what else can cleanse the grime, the filthy sludge,  
the cuts and burns and bile make remedy  
or else our species' wicked souls to budge?  
no romance was so gritty, nor a toil  
for love so worth the name of agony,  
nor shame embraced that made the world recoil:  
degradation redeems depravity  
the worldwide wail (that rattles heaven's walls)  
of wretchedness that, knowing or denied,  
squeezes God's heart of mercy and recalls  
why He in foul humiliation died  
and for that poignant and flamboyant death  
i kiss the crucifix with stinky breath

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Michael Williams is a Catholic convert, a crude man of letters, a bleeding heart and a goofball. He – like St. Francis – is wedded to poverty, but with moderate success. His interests (apart from writing) include smoking cigarettes, drinking beer and whiskey, reading history books, being a movie snob, and entertaining his friends. He lives in Anchorage, Alaska, and in addition to the *New English Review*, has also been published in the *St. Austin Review*, *Catholic Anchor*, and *White Rose Magazine*.

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