



As Jesus Loved

I thought I knew how to love
but I found
that I really didn't.
I was just giving my love
to those who loved me back—
to the clean children,
the respectable folk,
the well-behaved teenagers,
the obedient ones;
but I didn't have any real feeling
for the runny-nosed dirty child
next door,
or for the quarrelsome old man
across the street
who played his radio
so maddingly loud.
So God had to admonish me—
and He did.
He showed me to my shocked surprise
that I was passing by
on the other side,
that I wasn't really walking
in His footsteps at all;
because when Christ
lived on our earth
He ate with publicans,
and sinners,
He talked with the woman
at the well,
He humbly washed
His disciple's feet,

and He loved sinners everywhere—
the tax gatherers
the prostitutes,
the doubters,
the hungry,
the untouchables of His day,
He loved them all.
Through my tears I saw
that I was not really following Him at all;
and then I understood
that if I wanted to be His disciple
and bear His name,
I must be willing to give up
my selfish convenient little world
and mingle with the lost ones—
minister to their needs,
heal their wounds,
share their sorrows,
and offer a cup of water
in His name.
I must love as Jesus loved;
for unless I do,
how are the lost and lonely ones
around me
going to believe
that God loves them—
if they cannot see
His love in me?
How, tell me,
how are they ever
going to know? ~Viola J. Berg