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ABOUT MY NEIGHBOR, LORD

It's hard to love him, Lord.  
If he stays hidden in the crowd we call mankind  
I can pity his disadvantaged state,  
his lack of freedom or his hunger pangs.  
But give him riches, give him a tongue  
that disagrees with mine, give him eyes that lust,  
hands that grasp, flaws and face so different--  
It's hard to love him, Lord.

Harder still when he curses, steals,  
rapes and kills. I try to recall  
his children's cries and his elders' search  
for crumbs of hope. I try to say  
"There but for thee go I."  
But oh-- it's hard to love him, Lord.

It's easy to condemn him, Lord, say "pearls  
before swine," avoid your second great command  
and retreat to my hearth, the comfort of my kind.

But that makes me a victim too--  
of the tyranny of class, possessions, random place  
and that most clever one who smiles when I forget  
the role model you provided.

It must be hard to love me, Lord.

--Glenn Holloway