

*The Reed of God*, by Caryll Houselander (1944, reprinted by Christian Classics in 1990. 128 pp.)

This series of lyrical meditations and poems leads the reader into a deep appreciation for the work of God in the human heart. Caryll Houselander, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century English Catholic mystic, sees the relevance of the Virgin Mary and her Son in every experience, in all of the human condition, even in events of World War II.

The book has four parts. The first reflects on some of Mary's experience: emptiness, fiat, and Advent. It ends with a lovely poem addressed to Christ the Good Shepherd:

“Pastoral”

I am your reed, sweet shepherd, glad to be.  
Now, if you will, breathe out your joy in me  
And make bright song.  
Or fill me with the soft moan of your love  
When your delight has failed to call or move  
The flock from wrong.

Make children's song, or any songs to fill  
Your reed with breath of life; but at your will  
Lay down the flute,  
And take repose, while music infinite  
Is silence in your heart; and laid on it  
Your reed is mute.

The second part reflects on Mary and the Incarnation; the third, on Mary's experience (and ours) in seeking for her lost Child. The fourth part summarizes Houselander's vision of Christ in everyone:

“In some [people] He is newly born. In some He is a child. In some He is homeless. In some He is ignored, unrecognized, mocked, betrayed. ...Christ remains a child on earth—not only in actual children but in helpless people, in simple-minded people, and in the many moments of simplicity that come to the sophisticated” (pp. 114-115).

*The Reed of God* can be found in the Christian Life [CHL] section of the Lending Library.