

Monday Lunch

by Ann Bogle

I am Bible in my reading. It takes about five good days to read a passage fully. *1 Samuel* has been fully rich. *OT* is condensed and so is *NT* in a different way. Truth is mesmeric. For me and other people I know, the end is not nigh. Some people are beginning life anew with a fresh puppy. I did not grow up with The Second Coming. *The Second Coming* turned out to be a novel by Walker Percy. I recommend it. I felt in reading *The Second Coming* in the late 1980s that a miracle of prose and dialogue were in progress as I turned pages. Naturally, the end felt nigh for Jesus' followers, in grief and steeped in his recent absence as they were, He their beloved. I like Jesus' sardonic outlook and philosophy. He was an observer of people, of men. I told a man over lunch that I had read that Jesus' words, those he was known to have spoken, gathered and read continuously, would amount merely to two hours of speech. Jesus lived to be thirty-three and spoke hardly at all, if so. The man said that Jesus was a frequent guest speaker and proselyte. Proselyte means in Greek "a newcomer to Israel" and a stranger. The man then gave me three choices: A.) Jesus was a good man, a rabbi. B.) Jesus was a preacher. C.) Jesus never lived. The more I ventured to say, and all the while I stayed spare—nearly stuttering and able to eat only half a bowl of gazpacho—the more the man reduced Jesus' chances and mine to a story. The man may later have told his wife, someone I haven't met, that I had witnessed to him. C.) "Jesus never lived" could mean "it up." I liked it that the man said that no one has any business telling someone else what to do except in getting someone off the Titanic. Earlier that morning a tree in the yard had filled with starlings, and on the way home after lunch, the sky held planes that looked like starlings, floating together.

