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## What Is Broken Is What God Blesses

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# What Is Broken Is What God Blesses

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Uploaded by Jason Tham for Jimmy Baca

## What Is Broken Is What God Blesses

Jimmy Santiago Baca

The lover's footprint in the sand  
the ten-year-old kid's bare feet  
in the mud picking chili for rich growers,  
not those seeking cultural or ethnic roots,  
but those whose roots  
have been exposed, hacked, dug up and burned  
and in those roots  
do animals burrow for warmth;  
what is broken is blessed,  
not the knowledge and empty-shelled wisdom  
paraphrased from textbooks,  
not the mimicking nor plaques of distinction  
nor the ribbons and medals  
but after the privileged carriage has passed  
the breeze blows traces of wheel ruts away  
and on the dust will again be the people's broken  
footprints.

What is broken God blesses,  
not the perfectly brick-on-brick prison  
but the shattered wall  
that announces freedom to the world,  
proclaims the irascible spirit of the human  
rebellious against lies, against betrayal,  
against taking what is not deserved;  
the human complaint is what God blesses,  
our impoverished dirt roads filled with cripples,  
what is broken is baptized,  
the irreverent disbeliever,  
the addict's arm seamed with needle marks  
is a thread line of a blanket  
frayed and bare from keeping the man warm.

We are all broken ornaments,  
glinting in our worn-out work gloves,  
foreclosed homes, ruined marriages,  
from which shimmer our lives in their deepest truths,  
blood from the wound,

broken ornaments—  
when we lost our perfection and honored our imperfect sentiments, we were  
blessed.

Broken are the ghettos, barrios, trailer parks where gangs duel to death,  
yet through the wretchedness a woman of sixty comes riding her rusty bicycle,

we embrace  
we bury in our hearts,  
broken ornaments, accused, hunted, finding solace and refuge  
we work, we worry, we love  
but always with compassion  
reflecting our blessings—  
in our brokenness  
thrives life, thrives light, thrives  
the essence of our strength,  
each of us a warm fragment,  
broken off from the greater  
ornament of the unseen,  
then rejoined as dust,  
to all this is.

<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/what-broken-what-god-blesses>