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September 27 Vincent de Paul

Deborah Humphreys S.C.

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BY

DEBORAH L. HUMPHREYS, S.C.

tell me all about this –
daughters, dancing away, gliding
along the cobbled road
to a promised paradise, an aisle
 facing an altar, a dream to be
willing and faithful as Abraham

now tell me how it is
your soul burns
but not your feet, even through
inflamed calluses and the street
though a quiet *rue*, is slick
with rain, spit and piss

dare you ask permission
to beg hospitality
the shelter of the homeless
the instruction of the unschooled
and grasp at the same hopes
the least of the coin

Cordiality, properly speaking, is the effect of that charity which one has in one's heart.

*(Saint Vincent de Paul,
conference to the Daughters of Charity, 2 June 1658)*