



# *Windhover*

---

A Journal of Christian Literature

---

# Windhover

---

A Journal of Christian Literature

Spring 2015

Volume 19



# Windhover

---

A Journal of Christian Literature

Volume 19 • Spring 2015

**Editor**

Nathaniel L. Hansen

**Contributing Editors**

Joe R. Christopher

William Jolliff

Michael H. Lythgoe

Yvonne R. Schultz

**Print Coordinator**

Randy Yandell

**Copy Editor**

Amy Hansen

**Cover:** *Fortress V*

by Edward Rice

Copyright © 2015

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Press

Dr. Randy O'Rear, President & CEO

Belton, Texas



# Contents

<b>Brent Newsom</b>	
Epithalamion .....	1
<b>Miho Nonaka</b>	
Birthday Poem .....	2
<b>Yvonne R. Schultz</b>	
Creations (Take Two—They’re Small) .....	3
<b>Aaron Brown</b>	
All Creatures.....	4
<b>Richard Cole</b>	
The Silence of God .....	6
<b>David Wright</b>	
The Devil Wears a Sweater Vest .....	7
<b>Nathaniel A. Schmidt</b>	
Edenic.....	8
<b>Anjanette M. Shake</b>	
Homecoming .....	9
<b>Joe R. Christopher</b>	
Realism.....	18
<b>Chistopher A. Fahy</b>	
Leviathan .....	19
<b>Malaika Favorite</b>	
First Garment.....	20
<b>Chet Corey</b>	
On the Nativity of an Unnatural Act .....	22
<b>John Estes</b>	
Dispense as Written .....	23
<b>Edward Rice</b>	
Artwork .....	25

<b>Michael Hugh Lythgoe</b>	
Icons & Edifices: The Art of Edward Rice .....	28
<b>Suzanne McGowen</b>	
Leaving at First Light .....	31
<b>Benjamin Myers</b>	
Works and Days.....	32
<b>Timothy E. G. Bartel</b>	
Superstitions.....	34
<b>Tom C. Hunley</b>	
Eight Bits Usually Equals One Bite.....	35
<b>Maryanne Hannan</b>	
Interlude .....	37
<b>Chris Boldt</b>	
Dumbstruck .....	38
<b>Max Harris</b>	
Lost Boys.....	39
<b>Aaron Brown</b>	
Prayer.....	43
<b>David James</b>	
A Hard Act .....	44
<b>Michael D. Riley</b>	
Mary Elizabeth .....	46
<b>Jennifer Clark</b>	
Having Bought St. Joseph, I Bury Him .....	48
<b>Chet Corey</b>	
Return to Capistrano.....	50
<b>Liz Dolan</b>	
The Mystic of Annie B. Street.....	51
<b>Jeffrey Galbraith</b>	
Early Christian Advice Column.....	52

<b>Michael Olin-Hitt</b>	
Jesus and the Seven Dwarfs .....	53
<b>Dave Harrity</b>	
Loving Thy Neighbor.....	64
<b>David Wright</b>	
Cookie Bowman and Her Righteous Hand.....	66
<b>William Coker</b>	
A Fiercer Grace.....	67
<b>Frank Desiderio</b>	
Murder in the Rectory .....	68
<b>Michael Hugh Lythgoe</b>	
Early to Church in Oklahoma.....	69
<b>Liz Dolan</b>	
The Monastery on Lafayette Avenue .....	70
<b>Robbie Maakestad</b>	
The Sea of Galilee: My Assurance .....	71
<b>David Brendan Hopes</b>	
Zeal for Thy House .....	76
<b>David Wright</b>	
The Old Woman and Her Coin.....	77
<b>Liz Dolan</b>	
Once as a Novice.....	78
<b>Maryanne Hannan</b>	
Partial .....	79
<b>Brent Newsom</b>	
Ava.....	80
<b>D. S. Martin</b>	
Convalescence .....	81
<b>Toby F. Coley</b>	
Daughter's Lament.....	82



<b>Philip Cioffari</b>	
A Prayer at 68th Street.....	84
<b>Maryanne Hannan</b>	
If You've Got Breast Cancer.....	88
<b>Marci Johnson</b>	
Jesus Heals the Sick.....	89
<b>Richard Cole</b>	
Praying With Us.....	90
<b>Neil Carpathios</b>	
The Back of Christ.....	92
<b>David James</b>	
Good Friday .....	94
<b>Peter C. Venable</b>	
Yeshua.....	95
<b>Abigail Carroll</b>	
Dear Saint Francis .....	96
<b>April Vásquez</b>	
Seis de Enero .....	98
<b>Stella Nesanovich</b>	
Insignia of Passage.....	109
<b>Anita Huffington</b>	
Artwork .....	110
<b>Michael H. Lythgoe</b>	
Anita Huffington's Sculpture: Myths in Stone, Bronze, Wood .....	114
<b>Richard Spilman</b>	
Lazarus .....	116
<b>Anne McCrady</b>	
Pentecost.....	117
<b>Jeffrey Bilbro</b>	
Venice St. Mark's.....	118

<b>Anne McCrady</b>	
Ethics .....	119
<b>David Wright</b>	
Slow Metaphor, to Blue.....	120
<b>Dave Harrity</b>	
Hallelujah, I'm a Bum .....	122
<b>Liz Windhorst Harmer</b>	
Grafted .....	124
<b>Abigail Carroll</b>	
Benediction .....	130
<b>Benjamin Myers</b>	
The Communion of the Saints: An Aubude.....	131
<b>Contributors</b> .....	132
<b>Submission and Subscription Information</b> .....	141
<b>Invitation to Writers' Festival</b> .....	145



***Brent Newsom*****Epithalamion**

*for Amanda*

Welcome to where we dwell  
in the wounds that we inflict

on one another—another  
way of saying, on ourselves.

Injured, we limp and drift  
through dim-lit corridors,

sift cupboards for salves  
the other has stashed

away. Here paneled walls  
close in, all tongues

and grooves, scab over  
like mending skin.

Two (another  
another) too

many here,  
and none

too few,  
we join,

grafted: scion  
and stock,

your skin on  
my burn.

*David Wright*

## **The Devil Wears a Sweater Vest**

He must often leave hell's surprising and comfortable climate, and finds he needs the layered warmth here, in Illinois, where, in light of disbelief, a wind chill below zero, and the beer-scented prayers of baseball fans, he finds himself currying favor with the bland and foolish, wishing for the labored, clever evils of the past. Hear this, he almost says, I too wear a sweater vest, assembled by the hundred swollen hands of Chinese children. I too mean no harm.

## *Suzanne McGowan*

### **Leaving at First Light**

Sleep? That's rich. A shepherd barks orders  
to me—a princess, who never woke  
in the dark before. *Wife, leave all behind.*  
*We go at first light.* Lot looked at me as at  
a cockroach someone recently stepped on,  
but I know well we'll soon be back to Sodom.

The trunk, Daughters—two gowns for us each.  
Silk with lace edging, and another linen  
with gold buttons—do crush some flower  
petals in the folds. For you, Amyra,  
diamonds and sandals with gold leaf.  
Onyx and cultured pearls for Jashii. Also,  
I'll pack fine wool for me for desert nights.

He says he sent the servants on ahead  
to spare their lives. Imagine—servants!  
Let him take the trunk, then, all on his back,  
on his stubborn, descended-from-priests  
back. So little does he understand our needs.  
What decent man ever played down on the floor  
with his children? And if I mentioned dowries,  
*Cows are what I paid for you*, he'd say.

It's all Abram's doing. They are too content,  
he and Lot with sounds of sheep and goats  
under the stars. I ask you, stones from heaven  
on fire? Who else can think stones burn,  
much less break apart and fall to earth,  
but herdsmen who stink of sweat and goats?

We leave in the forenoon. Shaking, you said?  
No, nothing at all, only the rumble of some  
soldier guards who party in the street.

*William Coker***A Fiercer Grace**

In Mary Flannery's First Communion photo,  
her head tilts as though attending  
grace's whisper in blood and body—  
a grace inviting and mysterious as  
a silver-wrapped package tied with a silver bow,  
a grace sweet as celebratory cake with frosted filigree.  
But somewhere beyond loss, beyond understanding,  
beyond even misunderstanding, she found a fiercer grace—  
an acute grace sharper than the needle for daily medication,  
a chronic grace aching more than disintegrating joints.  
She wore this grace as a shimmering peafowl's feather  
for those who have eyes to see,  
and she wrote it down—the shout of grace  
at the end of a pistol barrel or on the tip of a bull's horn—  
for those who have ears to hear.

## *A Prayer at 68th Street*

### Philip Cioffari

*When someone we love suffers, we suffer with that person, and we would not have it otherwise, because the suffering and the love are one. ...*

—Frederick Buechner, *The Hungering Dark*

When my father's kidneys went bad, he had to give up going to church. I remember him saying, "It was a damn shame. Just when I need it most." He was receiving dialysis treatments three days a week, and that left him drained of energy, too fatigued to get to and from the church, much less sit through a service, even the abbreviated 12:30 Sunday mass: the one we liked to joke was designed for hung-over party-goers and other assorted sinners.

Before that, he'd been a devoted member of our church. Not only did he never miss Sunday mass, but he also faithfully attended mid-week services: novenas to the Blessed Virgin; communion on first Fridays; meetings of the Knights of Columbus. Once dialysis began, and he was confined mostly to the house, someone from the parish would arrive with Communion each Sunday morning. That, and his own private prayers, became the only form of worship left to him.

At that time, the early 1970s, I was in my twenties and I had already left the church, though that perhaps is too dramatic a way of stating it. It wasn't so much that I *left*—there was no formal declaration or repudiation—as that I gradually drifted away. The formality of doctrine and precept had come to feel unnecessary, replaced by my graduate studies in literature, my first teaching job, and the turmoil of my marriage coming apart. Prayer seemed impractical, too passive an endeavor in a world that demanded action, a world clogged with so many *practical* things.

What I did instead was to take turns—with my younger brother and my mother—ferrying my father from the Bronx to the Manhattan hospital where he was being treated, making an effort to keep his spirits up, to keep hope alive for both of us. To that end I sometimes brought along my dog—a four-month-old puppy that I'd gotten to fill the emptiness of my post-divorce apartment—but he was too ill by then to enjoy a puppy's antics, its ever-optimistic efforts to get attention by leaning from the back seat and licking my father's neck.

When he became too weak to make the thrice-weekly trips



into Manhattan, I would visit him in the hospital. My mother and brother came during the day; the night shift was mine. At first, I would come during visiting hours, 7-9 p.m., help him with his dinner, get him ice water, read him the *Daily News* account of the previous night's Yankee game. With his head propped on the pillows, the skin of his face already yellowing from the poisons, he'd listen with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, as if he'd caught sight of something there he had to figure out. He'd lost interest in watching the games on TV, but for some reason he enjoyed hearing me read about them. The greater the suffering of those we love, it seems, the smaller the things we're able to do for them.

When visiting hours ended, I hated leaving him. He told me he had trouble sleeping, that the nights were long. It was easy to imagine how quiet the floor got once we visitors had left, how the hours would accumulate weight as night and its burdens edged along. It wasn't until the nurse had come in three or four times, her tone less forgiving with each appearance, that I resigned myself to saying good-bye, winking at him the way *he* used to do to cheer *me* up, taking his hand and holding it before turning my back to the tubes and machines that kept him alive.

So I altered the timing of my visits. I came *later*, closer to midnight, after I'd finished grading papers or come out of a movie—my most dependable form of distraction those days. Thief-like, I'd enter the lobby, avoid the reception desk and move quickly to the rear staircase where I'd climb to the seventh floor and walk directly to my father's room. If the nurses spotted me, they'd let me pass. At that point, they could justify it: a special dispensation for the terminally ill.

A faint yellow light cast its glow over one corner of his bed, his sallow face half in light, half in shadow. Never did he seem surprised at my presence; he knew I'd appear sometime in the night, newspaper tucked under my arm, ready to read to him. Always the gentleman—he was a man who tipped his hat to ladies on the street, held the car door open for my mother, showed respect to everyone, even the strangers who passed through his life—the first thing he would do was make sure *I* was comfortable. Was the chair all right? Did I need a cushion? Did I have enough light?

Sometimes we'd exchange small talk; sometimes we'd sit in silence. If he closed his eyes and I thought he'd drifted off to sleep, I'd listen to the sounds of the night shift: the ever-present hum of the cooling system, the beep and click of machines, the occasional moan or cry for help in other rooms. Or I'd stand by the window, watch the cars traveling in silence north and south on the FDR Drive. Beyond that the East River heaved darkly in its chains,

that narrow channel between Manhattan and Randall's Island, and farther off the pearled lights of the Tri-Boro rose and fell in the direction of the outer boroughs.

With death so near I wondered what my father was thinking, *feeling*, yet I could never bring myself to ask. In those days the end of life was rarely addressed directly, a taboo subject, as if discussing death would hasten its approach, jinx those who dared bring it up. Instead I settled for inquiring about his physical rather than his spiritual pain.

One night, though, he raised a question neither of us could answer. From the white desolation of his pillow he turned his face toward me, his eyes—I hadn't been able to put it into words before—both lonely *and* startled, because death had sneaked up from behind, taken him by surprise. "I lived a good life," he said. "I followed the rules, I was a good Christian. Why did this happen to me?"

I knew what he was asking. He was too young to die. He'd been in perfect health until he picked up an infection, as innocuous at first as a cold, that had finally brought him to this. It wasn't fair. It was a fate undeserved.

He watched me, waiting.

"I don't know," was the only thing I could offer.

The obvious reply would have been that this was God's will. That we might not understand it, but we had to trust Him. That was what we'd both been taught. That was something he might have been able to accept.

What I said again was, "I don't know," as comfortless a statement the second time as it was the first.

To fill the room's unforgiving silence, I told him I didn't think there was a logical answer to his question. The world was a random place, without rhyme or reason. Things happened. That's all there was to it.

I held his hand for a while. Until he closed his eyes in fitful sleep.

By the window I tried to find a comfort of my own in the slow, mesmerizing drift of lights moving up and down the FDR. Drivers with somewhere to go, a future to get to.

It was nearly three when I left, and even then I didn't want to go, but I had students to attend to in the morning. And I wasn't feeling well myself. My head hurt, my stomach felt vaguely nauseated. Like my father *I* wasn't sleeping well, either. Sympathetic pains, most likely. Night's remaining hours promised only a sleep of fits and starts.

Leaving the hospital, I decided to walk before getting on the subway. That might relieve some tension, I told myself, but in

retrospect I think that I needed more time to work something out. I was still troubled by my father's question—*Why did this happen to me?*—and my response to it.

The night was damp, the air warm and heavy even by July standards, and after several blocks it began to rain: a drizzle at first, but one that held the promise of a steadier downpour to come. I pulled my jacket collar tighter around my neck and leaned forward, the streets around me mostly deserted, what traffic there was—taxis mostly, wipers clacking, tires hissing—moving slowly along Lexington Ave.

I wished I could take back my empty *I don't know*s, my paltry assessment of this world's randomness, though what I might have said still hadn't come to me. When I reached the subway entrance I stopped and did the only thing that seemed to make sense at that moment.

I wished my father a few moments peace—that in the wake of his question he would find something from his faith to console him in these hours before dawn—then I moved down the steps into the tunnel.

*Abigail Carroll*

**Benediction**

May you hold  
the candle of our coming together  
in the tabernacle

of your heart  
like a small treasure of fire.  
May its light

live in you  
like music. Work that is good:  
may it borrow

your hands—  
Sweet be the fruit of your labors.  
Let your making

and your doing  
twin the beauty of your being.  
May you become

your calling  
even as, for a moment, here,  
you have become

an offering.  
Words that nourish bones—  
be yours,

yours, a love  
that shelters and holds. Go—  
gift the bread

of friendship,  
spill the wine of sacrifice. Evening  
approaches

The table  
is set. There are many ways  
to wash feet.

---

*Benjamin Myers***The Communion of Saints:  
An Aubade**

A flatbed truck hunkers under heavy wet hay,  
slowing traffic to a nervous, lurching creep,

and a donkey, tall among a flock of pigmy goats,  
turns his shaggy, chewing head to watch me pass.

I've left the bed where we were moored in sleep, your body  
knocking all night against mine like a little boat

against the dock, and now I drive the two-lane  
highway past gape-mouthed mailboxes.

I've seen a hundred times the way you trail  
the sheet behind you rising from our bed naked

and think this morning, light and clear, that Holiness  
must trail just so behind us both. When I drove down Main,

a cowboy, arms heaped with a mess of clothes,  
was striding into the store-front laundry. Then past

the edge of town: trailers with dogs chained up outside  
and air units sticking their asses out low windows. Holy.

The flatbed truck slows into a turn, one side leaning  
low, like a heifer shifting her weight, the driver's

hand rising to a cup of coffee balanced on the dash.  
He's at his cattle gate now and traffic can move on.

Soon I'm plunging like a falling stone out of Lincoln Co.,  
along a barbed wire fence stretched across a pond,

past a dun horse running through tall grass. I drive up a little  
hill like a fist in the earth. The plains spread out in front of me,

the fist relaxing after pleasure into an opened palm.

# Windhover

A Journal of Christian Literature

Volume 19 • Spring 2015

## CONTRIBUTORS

Timothy Bartel	Christopher Fahy	Suzanne McGowen
Jeffrey Bilbro	Malaika Favorite	Benjamin Myers
Aaron Brown	Jeffrey Galbraith	Stella Nesanovich
Chris Boldt	Maryanne Hannan	Brent Newsom
Abigail Carroll	Liz Windhorst Harmer	Miho Nonaka
Neil Carpathios	Max Harris	Michael Olin-Hitt
Philip Cioffari	Dave Harrity	Edward Rice
Jennifer Clark	David Hopes	Michael Riley
William Coker	Anita Huffington	Nathaniel A. Schmidt
Richard Cole	Tom C. Hunley	Yvonne R. Schultz
Toby F. Coley	David James	Anjanette Shake
Chet Corey	Marci Rae Johnson	Richard Spilman
Joe R. Christopher	Michael H. Lythgoe	Peter Venable
Frank Desiderio	Robbie Maakestad	April Vázquez
Liz Dolan	D.S. Martin	David Wright
John Estes	Anne McCrady	