

Relinquishing the Eleventh Hour

Ruth Bowen Thornton

. . . for the elect's sake those days
shall be shortened. Matt. 24:22

With solemn tenderness
You apportioned our times and seasons
(While Eden embroidered itself with emeralds),
And marble campanile chimed a day
Into a thousand years.

Seraphimed through bone gates,
We grew and, remembering your word, withdrew
Into our own keeping,
Poised in spirit's perfect self-suspension.

But light, too painfully loved, flickers
And narrows, as a twig sheathed
In a membrane of transparent ice,
Winter after winter, flows from itself needlethin.

Elohim, did the bright green of
Now-cindered star once feast on secret seed,
Venom-spored in summer sun,
Feast and whisper silent lies to your children?

And now, for our own,
Not for ourselves, we seek
A Father's blessing, to quicken our telestial labor
When days, stillborn in winter's grieving,
Linger as a thousand years.

RUTH B. THORNTON retires this summer after sixteen years with California State University, Fresno. She was on the staff of the vice president for academic affairs during this time as public affairs assistant, and editor of the CSUF General Catalog. She is presently completing a B.A. in English at CSU, Fresno.

