

Cap Meets the Prophet Brigham

Derk M. Koldewyn

On the third day he stopped for a deserved rest, though not intentionally. The bishop, she explained, was hunting pheasants and wouldn't be back for hours. So he collapsed into a straw bed and slept, fitfully, until the bishop, a red-faced Welshman, woke him and sent him on his way, tithing him a horse and a meal. The next rest he got was on a hard pine bench outside the Office, a dour clerk frowning at his sweat-stains, the shit and straw on his boots. Then he was inside, a slick leather chair under his saddlesores, his hat twisted in his hands. He looked earnestly into the eyes of God's own voice, and stammered—but Cap spoke it, and the smile left, and then the prophet went pale, and stood.

*I'll never forget it, how he looked, how he spoke—
like Joseph in Liberty Jail, I expect, royal, majestic.
And me sitting there squirming, blisters all over
my behind. He stood me up, turned me around,
and sent me back the way I came.*

He went faster back, sharing the message along the way. The Welshman was home this time, and tithed his best horse. And when Cap finally reined in his latest rented horse, and stood before President Haight, he knew it from the man's eyes before he even heard the words—

Too late! Ah, God, Cap—too late!