

## Matriarchal Blessing

*Kyle Bond*

Your hands were on my head first.

No formal ceremony.

I was an infant  
and shouting clouds trundled and thundered,  
atmospheric pressure strangled my stubborn ears refusing airflow.  
The blue chair in the living room rocked,  
my cries received the blessing of your priesthood.

I was initiated.  
Your family was my first ordained tribe.  
Still, the anchor and chain slung over my back  
are your lessons, to me, about the meaning of Zion:  
memories of your collectivism.

We walked  
each Christmas  
together to the hospital,  
like the Israelites to Canaan  
with an offering of chocolate for the sick:  
trimming 40 years  
from Individualism's priestcraft  
and capital's oblivion  
with your sugar sweet vision.

I ran  
up and down fields  
with you watching from the sidelines;  
your blessing meant your time,  
your attention, your trophy of importance.

I returned  
 home a different man  
 and you asked, “What did they do to you?”  
 I tried to tell you, but I think you knew  
 because you saw me hurt  
 and you hurt:  
 you lost me.  
 I had lost myself.  
 And then I lost you.

Though you are gone,  
 it is your blessing that remains within me.  
 All others are only external.

The nine  
 —φημί—  
 it is your voice that my memory resurrects  
 when the syncline canyon breathes on my face  
 —ψυχή—  
 and the ghosts of my salience swirl  
 —γίγνομαι—  
 as did the sea when the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters  
 —ποίησι—  
 like Red-shouldered Hawks spiraling above the pine-laced crags  
 of Timpanogos’ Prominent  
 and the snake’s ribbons in the dirt of Provo’s Canyons.  
 Οὐν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι—  
 yet not final.

You return  
 in these images,  
 with the lessons you sang:  
 before you formed me in the belly you knew me;  
 to be an egalitarian is to know God,  
 of whom I am only a part.

You showed  
receipts on those holidays  
in the same spirit of your blessing,  
making sure we knew that at least in your eyes  
we mattered  
alike  
by the labor of your hands and the sweat of your brow.  
With you, covenants were an unspoken spiritual contract  
for the wellbeing of the broken,  
laced with the strength of compassionate indignation.

You warred  
when our neighbor came over dressed in frantic burning tears  
telling us that her son was locked in the bathroom  
and the water was filling  
and she didn't know what to do.  
You didn't ask questions  
or  
follow procedures  
or  
cast judgements—  
you flew over the fence,  
kicked in the basement window  
and pulled him to safety  
just before his head went under.

Mother, again, rejoined with child.

That was what mattered.

Never mind the puddle of blood you were standing in,  
a three-inch laceration on your ankle,  
which you refused to be treated,  
though you had a sister as a nurse,  
and a hospital in your backyard.  
Instead, you superglued it shut yourself.

. . .superglued. . .

The scar, a silent evidence of your blessing's meaning—  
that a single, even *vulnerable* life  
is worth saving,  
and for that, scars are worth having.

Years later,  
in meditation,  
your blessing is slowly teaching me something long forgotten:  
there is no such thing as being worthy.

There is only being.

And worth.

Because, to talk about worthiness means placing value on others,  
and value is not ours to place,  
only to foster.

In this blessing,  
like the Judgement of Solomon,  
it wouldn't have mattered if our neighbor was your enemy;  
you would have still saved her child,  
because he too was your child.  
You'd have taken her scar;  
not because he was a child,  
but because within the paradox of not placing value  
it was people whom you counted—that counted.  
Simply put, Zion could only be built again on the altar of sacrifice.

You understood this.

But, within my slow crystallizations of your understanding, I am  
forced to wonder  
if it was actually Eve who built the altar where Adam prayed.