

Holy Places

Maria Mortensen Davis

“The world, this palpable world, which we were wont to treat with the boredom and disrespect with which we habitually regard places with no sacred association for us, is in truth a holy place, and we did not know it. Venite, adoremus.”

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

No Celestial room has ever compared
to the stalk of yellow bluestem held in my son's teeth
three-quarters of a mile into a Sunday afternoon walk,
feathered seeds dancing with every step.

Sometimes I think the worst thing we ever did
was divorce the earth from holiness—
there is no greed beyond this treading down what is free
in our eagerness for exclusivity.

Thirty-five years since I was in my mother, always *of* her:
there is no parent I would rather claim than this world.
I will not number creation *one, two, one, two, you are sacred, you are not.*

How could I ask for a holier blessing than this August washing
of feet by January's melted snowstorms, come down
over forty-nine thousand feet of tumbled stone for me?
Don't offer me my own family, forever (I have them now)
if you cannot throw in peachy five-o'clock light.

Raise me red-tailed hawks, chanterelles, pinyon pine—I might listen.
I don't want a world too wonderful to imagine: I want this one.
What sacraments have I passed up
on the straight and narrow freeway to salvation?

I once asked my father-in-law the name of the delicate silver-blue
plants
that mound into the Idaho distance, so lovely I ached.
Nothing but sagebrush.
Show me, then, the border of Eden.

MARIA MORTENSEN DAVIS {maria.mortensen.davis@gmail.com} is a poet and mother of four living among the mountains and Mormonism of northern Utah, where she draws inspiration from both.