

The Spiral

Britta Adams

They said that shape held meaning,
the men in starched shirts: some symbol of eternity
or devotion. The spiral. I don't mind
those messages, but they don't fit a religion so linear
with a single path, an iron rod, a right
to choose, a steeple adorning
rectangular buildings. No room
for circles there.

Only circles tracked in brains:
the rabbit holes down which we tumble,
floating and falling between
right and wrong. Slide down
the banister into compulsion
to ensure salvation. It is the only way
so pray morning and night, and tie
your apron just so. No, like *this*. Grasp
bread and then water in your right
hand only, and offer your naked palm
to shake the hand of the apparition
just to be certain. These spirals exist
surely. In fact, the structure sustains
them with raised arms at least twice
a year. Even in that, though, there are squares.

They put spirals in temples,
and that's part of the significance.
Plenty of symbols in the temple that appear
nowhere else. As if the Protestant

scaffolding was chucked out the window
just before they placed the stained glass
in the celestial room. Liturgy litters the walls,
curtains, even the auditorium-style seats
come equipped with springs. Circles abound,
if you have eyes to see: the stars,
elaborate rings round
woodwork roses, patterned
swirls in carpet and crown
molding, polygamous
marriages, time-tunnels
in perpendicular mirrors,
the path one walks from start to finish.
And, of course, the spiral staircases
leading to some untouchable thing:
a second anointing or a vestibule,
embodying an outstretched hand.

BRITTA ADAMS is a poet living in Utah with a master's degree in English literature. She has previously published work in *Exponent II*, *Soft Union New Literature*, *Boats Against the Current Magazine*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and *wildscape. literary journal*. In addition to writing, she has a passion for bingeing documentaries, playing video games, and taking long walks.