

PENTECOST SUNDAY

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:1

Today we celebrate the birth of the Church, in these vivid and familiar stories. And the Church gave birth to the Bible. Not the other way around. It was our Christian forebears who decided what was in and what was out of the canon.

That's right. It was human wisdom, human discernment, human *choice*, that determined what most faithfully representing our spiritual heritage and salvation history as they comprehended it.

Why do I stress this? Because it's critical to understand, and to remember, in the face of Biblical fundamentalism and the conviction that the Bible is the literal word of God.

As I was meditating several weeks ago on this subject, I began a book of poetry called *Reverse Rapture*: a strange, challenging book that often makes my brain hurt as I read. But the "Prologue" struck me as a lovely, mysterious way of expressing something about what Scripture sets down: something about our ancient spiritual ancestors.

I invite you to listen, perhaps with your eyes closed, and pay attention to whatever lines or images you find most helpful.

Prologue

a stick, a cup, a bowl, a comb

These were some of their laws:
These were a few of the miles they cruised:
Here is where their beds went down:
With this their fate was sealed:
These are some of the things they shared:
These were with what they were comforted:
In this manner were they made to be cared for:
In these ways were they shaped to be seen:
Among these things were what they could bear:
In this time here is what they will be shown:
With this will they be remembered:
These were some of their customs:
These were with what they kept to themselves:
Here is a place they questioned:
In this way were they asked to provide:
These were what they provided:
In these instances thus were they praised:
It was with this were they wondering:
These were with what they marked themselves:
With this will they never be forgotten:
These were some of their means:
Here is an example of one of their methods:
With this did they solace themselves:

With this did they adorn themselves
In these ways did they keep their provisions:
This is what they did with what they were fond of:
By this practice did they shore up their magnificence:
These were what they were asked to furnish:
They caused these things to be memorized:
These were their most common rituals:
Among these these were considered unnecessary:
And in these were they in surplus:
These things they misused:
And prized:
And forfeited:
And pitied:
By these means did they resist their discovery:
These were some of the choices they made:
With these did they choose to be represented:
With these did they divine:
And with these were they occupied:
With these things did they labor:
For these things did they hope:
For these did they say they would die for:
These were the bargains they struck:
This is what they were given in exchange:
This is how they recognized one another:
By these means was love aroused:
Here are the fragments of what they worshipped:
Among these things they passed their days:

Here is what they were willing to sacrifice:
In the traces of these things they were known by:
This is what they have left:
Here is where they left without a trace:
These were some of their gifts.

~Dana Wier, *Reverse Rapture*

Alleluia, Alleluia! Amen