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VIEW

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WINTER 2013

CALIFORNIOS

A Review from the Ends of the Earth

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Californios, which takes its name from the Spanish word for the historical residents of California, is a quarterly, online review that seeks to promote quality writing about California and by Californios. We hope to do this by providing a forum for new writing imbued with verve, care, and California mythos.

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The Ends of the Earth Editorial

“There are other places,” T.S. Eliot wrote, “which are also the world’s end.”¹ Annie Dillard, in her masterful prose-poem *Holy the Firm*, has this to say about looking at the westernmost mountains of the Washington coast from the vantage point of Puget Sound: “When I first came here I watched the mountains, thinking, These are Ultima Thule, the final westering, the last serrate margin of time. Since they are, incredibly, east, I must be no place at all.”² The west coast of America has this effect—you feel you have come to the end of the world. To board a vessel and sail west would take you back to the Old World, back to the beginning.

But that’s all a matter of perspective, isn’t it? Other places are the world’s end, depending on where you’re coming from, and where you’re going. My friends from Texas feel terribly on the margins when they’re in California. I feel strangely east when I’m in Dallas.

Despite all this relativity of positioning, the subtitle of *Californios* is “A Review from the Ends of the Earth.” But California is only the ends of the earth if the beginnings of the earth is, longitudinally speaking, the Middle East. Curiously, it is from the literature of the Middle East that we get the most famous use of the phrase “the ends of the earth.” In the first-century Acts of the

¹ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 50.

² Annie Dillard, *Holy The Firm* (New York: Perennial, 2003), 20.

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Apostles, by St Luke, Jesus tells his disciples: “You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” From that famed commission Christ gave on Mount Tabor, the Christian religion spread both east and west. We are familiar, no doubt, with Christianity’s spread westward, over all the Latin-speaking world, until it came with Spanish missionaries to the New World, to which the west coast missions still stand as a tortured testament. Less well known is the story of Christianity’s spread eastward through India and Russia. At the same time that Roman Catholic missionaries made their farthest advances up the west coast of North America, Russian missionaries were making their farthest advances southward down that same coast. They met near present-day San Francisco in the late eighteenth century. In that meeting of evangelists from the east and evangelists from the west, Christianity had indeed made its way to the ends of the earth, relatively speaking.

It would be heartwarming to say that the Russians and Spaniards embraced one another as brothers. But they didn’t. With few exceptions they distrusted and, at least once, killed one another. Though neither Orthodox Russia nor Catholic Spain ended up in possession of California—The United States, through muscle and espionage, did that—the tension between religious traditions of wildly different flavors still looms in the California atmosphere.³

Thus California is, simply put, the far east of one Christian tradition, and the far west of another. It is the complex and contradictory ends of the earth at which Christ’s disciples met, sat

³ For a good, succinct overview of this chapter in California history, see Kevin Starr’s *California: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2007), chapters 2 and 3.

down, and glared at one another. True, each camp has its saints and pseudo-saints—the controversial Fr Junipero Serra in the Roman Catholic Tradition and the equally controversial St Peter the Aleut in the Orthodox tradition—but each camp has passed on to we who live here, whether we’re religious or not, a frustrated legacy.

We did it, after all. We circumnavigated the globe from the Fertile Crescent to Figueroa Street, and what do we have to show for it? It is our contention here at *Californios* that if all we have to show for it is ideological confusion, cultural amnesia, and capital debt, then it is our job, as *Californios*, first of all to remember, to remember our history in all its blood and exploitation, all its charity and joy, and to make of our memories and of our state something beautiful, something careful, something that’s not just an end, but also a beginning.

THE EDITOR

clarion

Anton Frost

on the table
my voice
a cold ring of water

delivery

Anton Frost

for three days after birth

i was unnamed in the St. Lawrence delivery wing,
lying with my namelessness

like an old man

at the edge of something,
a few motions and no words.

my mother looked down at me, held there by her,
and called me by different names,
questioningly.

i closed my eyes.

i understood, and i didn't understand.
she was holding ice chips tightly in her palms,
letting them melt onto my face. i closed my eyes.

every time she tried different names on me,
i shook and tried to fall out of her arms,
tried to fall to the floor, to gather dust,
to heap together. nameless,
a cherry seed spit into the dirt.

trying to melt into the earth,
without knowing what any of it meant.
a circle of acquaintances stood, looking on,
several hours a day.

i touched my fingers to my belly,
to my severed mess.
name this,
not me.

finally my mother sent the people away.
the last one out turned off the light,
as she had asked him to.
in the half-dark, she touched my wrist
where my pulse was strongest.

this is your name, she said,
and she cried out
as if i were being born all over again.

i gave a wild salute with my arms
and kicked the way i had
before,
when i was just a pang
and a lonesomeness.

she let go of my wrist
and said
for now,
this is a world of fallen-together things.
never-mind what it means.

no one came running when she was screaming,
or after.

sometimes things unfold just so,
the way life slips,
leaves blood-shapes.

we were left alone.

no music reached the room,
no more people came to form circles
or to speak quietly, in half-words,
strange directions.

she touched my face and i slept,
slipping into a notion:

to be born, finally.
it's taken this long,

finally now,

finally.

Light

Holly Ordway

The word had spread, and many came to hear
The prophet preach. That burning, shining light
Stood in the darkness of the desert night,
And told them all their Savior had drawn near,
Was soon to come among them. Some with fear
And others hope took in his words: the bright
And blazing Sun would rise, to set things right,
And every hidden work would be made clear.

We use our power now to blur the line
Between the dark and light. Our faces glow
From our own private screens; the day's preserved
Into the dusk and dawn by our design;
What we can't see, we do not care to know.
Beware: the Daystar rises unobserved.

California Prophets

Marilyn Leider

*Be drunken always.
Nothing else matters:
That is the only question.
-Baudelaire*

Once in the county we had a prophet.

Like many prophets, or maybe the real ones, he was a man in love. You should have seen him, staggering Bambi-eyed about the street-corner. You could have seen how love-drunk he was a good mile away. He looked like a drunk hobo—in the liquor sense—but we knew what his fires really were. We didn't say so, but we knew he was drunk with *us*, with what he saw through our faces.

And like all peoples to their prophets, we couldn't allow him to stay. At the very end we 'packed him off' and kissed him on the cheek. Goodbye. We shall not see you anymore.

Our stones were the smiles we made when he stumbled into town, and our clubs were our heads turned away when he stared at us and recited ancient rhymes in his asphalt voice. We heard him speak, but we did not heed him. He was calling us to his street-corners, usually the one in front of Albertson's.

Early in the year he had come to us. He swept in through the tides, they said, he staggered onto the sand. Salt, salt of the Pacific, salt of the blessed sea, crusted his eyes and the arches of his eyebrows. His beard was drizzling.

Then he came forth, up the sand cliffs, through the pampas grass, stumbling and dripping until he got to the row of cafés lined up on the 101, which formed our main street. For years and years now, the cafés have looked like middle-age white-trash, differing only in the number of Om signs hung in the windows.

We—a good ten of us, locals, post-college frat-boys, jobless or part-time in this recession—we had just picked up our ritual morning lattes, and he came in, and everyone sort of stopped what we were doing and he wouldn’t shut up. Only the spell broke when a chair screeched across the floor, and we all jumped a bit and remembered what we were going to do, which was head down to the shore and catch waves for a couple hours.

We left him babbling in there and walked out of the café in a daze. Drunk. We staggered down the cliffs with our boards crooked under our arms, but we were so drunk we hardly felt their weight. I don’t remember the words that he said, except the way his road-like voice shaped syllables and broke up sounds and scattered them like pebbles that fell into our shoes and we couldn’t find them.

He stuck around. He wouldn’t take our money. What do I need a damn five for, he said. Can’t pay me to shut up. If you feel so bad, go feed babies and folks in cardboard. And you wouldn’t really hear his words, because of his voice and also because you’d notice that he just had these magnificent sagging creases pulling down his eyes, and

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they had that Look of Knowledge. Hell makes some people, their eyes, so beautiful. Asphalt voice and saints' eyes, and hardly a sentence he said that we remember, just some bits, and some images.

After the first week he quit speaking poetry, or rhyming his words.

You have so much damn time, he once said. Your point? we said. So much time, damn it. You're unemployed, he cried, men without work. You have time, but you don't see, you don't think about the stuff you swim in. The mountains! he cried. We ignored him and darted forward to the spilling Deep. We burst into the gray mouth that days before had spat him out. To the south, Children's Beach glinted many miles off.

In the afternoon we'd come back and he'd be on the corner of Albertson's, talking: see that mountain stations, that mountain there lady have you seen even your mutt knows, damn it! Stations of the

The man got his crowds for a bit, but every time something would break up his voice-road, and when that broke up, so did everyone. Weird vibes, they said. He's crazy, don't listen to him, that just encourages him. And yet for all his public inebriation, all his jibes and interrupting and hobo-appearance, we didn't report him for a while.

I heard one of my boys later call him the King Hobo of the town, even though the other homeless guys had nothing to do with him. He found out: I ain't your king, says the old man, I'm your prophet and you better hear the words I tell. But didn't he know that

it was his voice that reached into the silence, that it was the shape of his syllables that curled and cracked around our thoughts? To hell with his words. They mostly just evaporated.

About a month later one of the local newspapers—the *Tribune*—had a really slow day and wanted an article, but he wouldn’t be interviewed. They published a blurb in spite of it, and his crowds got a little bigger. Where are you from? he began asking. You’re not my people.

Some preacher came to talk to him, but the prophet said that he had no business with the preacher: What you want with me? You have your work, go back to it. And then he turned to us with eyes of angry love, and he said, You don’t have your work. See those mountains? But the first is better, for men must have their work.

We don’t know where he slept. Never saw him eat. When summer crowds quickened the pace of the street and sprawled over our favorite breaks, he slipped off. I glimpsed him wandering the rail line, but when I ran after him, he staggered down into some impenetrable lagoon hole. Strange it was—so accustomed were we to hearing the gravel of his tongue—and though the boys saw him elsewhere, we thought he wouldn’t come back.

Months later, he was back with the rust-colored leaves and the gray shore.

You’re a fresh cigarette that fell in the birdbath, was the first thing he said to me when I approached him at the weedy corner of Albertson’s. I don’t know why I’m telling you that—I never wanted to remember it—but it got stuck in my ear. He didn’t get that unlike most of the other boys, I don’t need checks. I said, shut up, Man.

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Mother, Father: Scripps surgeons. Specialty: cardiovascular surgery. I went to college, I said, did my thing. Not your business nobody asked for your help. If you love work so much, why don't you just go work at the library or Trader Joe's and quit wasting your work-words on people who don't remember them an hour later. Who sent you, anyway?

You did.

came his grit-road words. All right, so I remembered those words. But they mean nothing to me. We didn't send you geezer man. Who would send for some idiot to preach on corners, when he just vomits words ?

Once in the county we had our prophet, but we lost him shortly after his arrival.

We all knew he was just drunk when he began drooling and shouting that he saw a god walking down the mountains—god in the mountains, something—those mountains were hills, by the way, and they were some three-quarter-hour off in Pendleton—but the cop couldn't take any more filed complaints and got a shrink to sign papers.

Winter morning, just after sunrise. At the parking lot of Encinitas Beauty Church and Kmart, butt-up to the 101, oh mother mainstreet. Gravel in the parking lot. A car passes, straddled with a holiday tree on top, and though the tree is swaddled in ropes and

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netting, its green burns and burns with the sun glinting off the needles.

The shrink and nurse stand with the cop and the Man. Us ten were there. His only students. The old hobo-seer waited; cuffed up, courtesy of the cop. Though I did hear the cop bought the hobo some donuts free of charge. The bus was late.

I've got a question, I said. He stood still, facing the south. You could see some brown-green hills from here, even with all the buildings, but you couldn't see any mountains. I wondered if he was seeing Mt. Soledad or the mountains on the Mexican side of the border, in his head. I said, This crazy town, the people here. How come you thought so much of us? How come you stuck to us? What'd we ever do, to attract you, pull you, make you burn. We didn't care a shit about you. We didn't change a thing we did.

He wasn't listening to my words. His head gave just the slightest spasm—I could not tell if it was nodding or shaking or accident. Then the bus came and the nurse escorted the Man to his seat. He had no luggage. Goodbye, goodbye.

I asked the cop where he was being taken. Treatment center in Irvine. Some folks think he's their papa gone missing because of dementia, they'll claim him there.

In my head I see the bus making its way on the freeway, the free-way. It is the death of the year when in the death of the year, the wool-brown saints burn Blue and Green, and the drunk god peers behind them, or maybe he's the god works without a word. And the bus rattles on, at the feet of the saints, and the saints and the god do not intercede, and I see that the Man cries out

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Because he has left a pebble of gravel in my shoe. How could something so small I have turned it inside out, and I hear it rattling and I still get blisters, it's still in there, but I haven't found the mountain that he left in my shoe.

Falling

Leilani Brim

Falling, I was taught, should be avoided.
It results in scraped knees,
torn jeans, blood,
and the occasional broken bone.

Labels, I'm told, like "clumsy" or "awkward"
are stuck on the stumbler
who misplaced her legs,
arms, and occasionally her heart.

Perhaps, I concede, misplaced hearts are the
real charge against the fall.
And—chancing stumbling
into a pothole of overused words—
Sometimes falling is the best,
the very best, of all.

Solo

Jenny Fengler

I'm happily anonymous at Koo Koo Roo for lunch today, next to the window, with my notebook. From the two dozen brief moments of eye contact I've had with the usual crowd of muscledudes, firefighters and junior suits, I consider an essay on the social acceptability of staring openly at unaccompanied diners in Southern California. *We can't all have an entourage*, comes the jaded thought as I fork-poke at my single chicken breast.

A glance outside, at sunny people laughing around umbrella-shaded tables, brings familiarity. Lucy.

Lucy is my favorite checker at the drug store in the strip mall. Slight and mousy, probably mid- to late forties, observably crazy in an "I'm trying desperately to hold it all together, but it's kinda leaking out of me" way. She always mutters, laughs nervously. No eye contact. She announces the prices of things as she scans them:

"Dollar fifty—that's a great price. Two nineteen on sale this week, not bad. Seven ninety-nine, not bad, not bad. Not *good*...."

We chat about dogs sometimes, too. Lucy loves them. Aside from the prices, it's her only subject.

The roommate and I have each, on separate occasions, seen her walking in our neighborhood or waiting at a bus stop at the bottom of the hill. It's more than tempting to offer her a ride somewhere, or just to follow her in stealth to satisfy our curiosity about her dwelling place and

its proximity to ours. House? Apartment? Cardboard box on the bluff? Of course, our better judgment has ruled that doing either of those things would only fuel her skittishness, so we've refrained. But we talk about her as if someday, someday....

I always see Lucy alone, and I take poetic license, private liberty with her life, but there are always more questions than theories. I wonder if she's lonely. If she has friends, or sisters. If she's ever been in love. If she works at the drug store because she gets a good discount on her meds. Does she know what she's missing, or for that matter, whether she's missing anything at all?

I have elaborate fantasies about befriending her, though I can never bring myself to do it.

Once, at a very crowded coffee house, I spied her standing in line to order as I was waiting for my overpriced latte. A businessman two customers ahead of her answered his cell phone. Her anger bubbled up. She began espousing her thoughts, full-volume to everyone and yet to no one in particular, on how rude it is to talk on a cell phone in public. How rude, how intrusive, how distasteful, how disrespectful.

How very semi-controlled she was, with little tributaries of the angry river just under her skin breaking through to the surface and dripping out of her. She fretted over to my corner, where I was half-praying for a quick "here's your latte" and a hasty retreat, and half-curiously-hoping she would address me and somehow sense who I was, sense our connection.

She stood uncomfortably close to me. There was little room anyplace else. And without looking me in the eye, she continued her rant, seemingly expecting me to chime in and agree, though I couldn't possibly have inserted a single word into the stream of her opinion. Finally, someone distracted her just as the barista called my name, and I fled. The whole

time, I had been wondering what she would have done had I said, “Isn’t your name Lucy? You’re my favorite checker at Sav-On; I always choose your checkstand no matter how long the line is.”

She would have freaked out and killed me with a knife, I’m almost sure of it.

But there she is again today, looking different. Almost normal. She must just be out running errands, because she’s dressed up in a long beige-and-white plaid skirt and a nice sweater, instead of the telltale blue smock and smudgy name badge. Her hair looks freshly combed. Could it be she’s with other people for once? She’s standing there talking to someone, even happily. Smiling, though still somehow with that slight dullness behind her darting eyes. Who’s she talking to?

Some... *guys*... toned and tan Hollywood hunk-types. I am riveted; a bite of chicken hangs from the fork in mid-air as I rejoice, chuckling—the grinning voyeur safe behind restaurant glass. *Go, Lucy! Who knew?*

It’s then I see that the hunks have an equally handsome German Shepherd Dog on a leash next to their umbrella-shaded table, and it all makes unfortunate sense. I had been caught up rooting for her, genuinely hoping Lucy had some good-looking actor friends, perhaps admirers. But she’s talking to the dog. Smiling at *him*. Looking him in the eye. Gently stroking his head.

I fold up the notebook and go home to make phone calls, talk to the roommate, write heartfelt letters, *anything*, doing my best not to weep and mutter along the way.

Edwin Markham's *The Man with the Hoe* Review

The San Francisco Bay area has seen its share of incendiary poetry readings. The most famous of these readings is Allen Ginsberg's reading of "Howl" at Six Gallery on October 7, 1955, which, in time, helped spawn not only the beat revolution, but also a messy court battle over obscenity in literature. But this was not the first time that a controversial poem had been prominently read—and then vehemently debated—among the literary circles in the Bay area.

On New Year's Eve, 1898, the prominent San Francisco newspaperman Carol Carrington threw a lavish party at his Bay area mansion. He had invited many artists and writers and asked each to share something, and it finally came time for Edwin Markham to read; Markham was known as a mild school principal who had published some minor, pastoral verse here and there in American magazines. But what he read was neither mild nor pastoral, and would, over the next year, create one of the biggest controversies (and bestselling poems) in American literary history. What Markham read was a poem called "The Man with the Hoe," an ekphrastic poem based on Jean-François Millet's famous painting of the same name, which excoriated the state of contemporary labor the world over. Over the next few months, "The Man with the Hoe" was published in major newspapers across the country (starting, of course, with those owned by Carrington). But this was not enough. "For a solid year," Gustav Arlt writes, "all the San Francisco papers ran daily full columns of

letters about it. Then, for another six months, the *Examiner* expanded its column to a daily full page with the heading ‘The Persistent Discussion of the Man With the Hoe.’”⁴

“The Man with the Hoe” made Markham a literary celebrity, but it also made him enemies. Markham’s former chum Ambrose Bierce quipped that Markham “should be taken out at dawn and shot for writing such a poem,”⁵ and claimed, in a somewhat hostile letter to Markham, that the poet was promoting “a doctrine of hate.” Markham retorted, “I wish to arouse but one hatred—the hatred of injustice.”⁶

If one wishes to understand where Markham was coming from—whether he only stood against injustice, or did indeed promote class hatred—one must ultimately look beyond “The Man with the Hoe” to the collection of the same name, published in 1899. A quick read of the book will most likely leave the reader with the impression that “The Man with the Hoe” is the best thing that Markham wrote. And it is true that the collection is uneven. Markham is at his flattest in his pastoral verse:

Let the dry heart fill its cup,
Like the poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown,
Like the poppy looking down
When its heart is filled with dew
And its life begins anew.⁷

⁴ Gustav Arlt, “Edwin Markham, Poet Laureate,” *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (September 1952), 208.

⁵ Jesse Sidney Goldstein, “Edwin Markham, Ambrose Bierce, and *The Man with a Hoe*, *Modern Language Notes* 53, no. 3 (March 1943): 168–169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁷ Edwin Markham, *The Man with the Hoe: and Other Poems* (New York, NY: Doubleday and McClure), 28.

Compare these lines to those in “The Desire of Nations”:

Yea, [Christ] will lay on souls the power of peace
And send on kingdoms torn the sense of Home—
More than the fire of Joy that burned on Greece,
More than the light of Law that rose on Rome.⁸

If in his pastoral verse Markham sounds like a less imaginative Wordsworth, in his prophetic mode he prefigures the alliterative thunder of Chesterton.

The fact that Markham’s poems of prophecy and apocalypse are much more thrilling than are his poems of meadows and flowers should not be surprising, given his whole conception of a poet. In “To High-Born Poets” Markham writes that the poet is “holden with a vow” to “be a dauntless voice, a bugle-cry”:

In darkening battle when the winds are high—
A clear sane cry wherein the God is heard
To speak to men the one redeeming word.
No peace for thee, no peace,
Till blind oppression cease;
The stones cry from the walls,
Till the gray injustice falls
Till strong men come to build in freedom-fate
The pillars of the new Fraternal State.

⁸ Ibid., 38.

Blow battles into men—call down the fire
The daring, the long purpose, the desire;
Descend with faith into the Human Deep,
And ringing to the troops of right a cheer.
Make known the Truth of Man in holy fear
Send forth thy spirit in a storm of song,
A tempest flinging fire upon the wrong.⁹

If the poet is indeed to have “no peace,” and to fling “fire upon the wrong,” then it should be no surprise that his attempts at peaceful, pastoral verse pale so much in comparison to his prophecies.

What, however, of Ambrose Bierce’s worry that Markham had become the voice of communist class hatred? It is true that Markham frequented socialist meetings and actively supported labor movements in America, even calling for the public ownership of all means of production. He was particularly vocal about reforming labor laws involving children, and even published a book arguing against child labor called *Children in Bondage* in 1914.

The trouble one runs into when trying to articulate how deep into Markham’s heart the communist cause went is the plain fact of Markham’s Christianity. Though he often speaks in his poems of “the flag of brotherhood”¹⁰ and the “new Fraternal State,”¹¹ his vision of a socialist utopia is one where Christ rules as king. In “The Desire of Nations” he calls this utopia “the Comrade Kingdom,” which will be established

When the wise King out of the nearing heaven comes

⁹ Ibid., 110–111.

¹⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹¹ Ibid., 110.

To break the spell of long millenniums—
To build with song again
The broken hope of men—
To hush and heroize the world,
Beneath the flag of Brotherhood unfurled.¹²

This is far from the dialectical materialism or historical determinism of Marxism, though one might argue that it is also a bit askew from traditional Christian articulations of Christ's second coming.

Whatever our estimation of his faith or his politics, Edwin Markham stands as one of the California incendiaries—poets who, through the public performance of their work as well as their publishing of it, brought striking visions of the pain of contemporary life into the public eye at a time when that eye was determinedly focused on something else. While it is true that poetry is not reducible to political statement or humanitarian outrage, it is important to remember that poetry can embody these themes powerfully and effectively, and that a poem can, at various times and in various places, flame up with the fire of prophecy, even in the mild coastal climes of this, our Golden State.

THE EDITOR

¹² Ibid., 33.

Contributors

Leilani Brim, a California native, enjoys writing, coffee, books, and Downton Abbey. She also loves her job at Torrey Academy, where her students keep life interesting. Also, she currently practices falling and finds it to her liking. Along with teaching, she plans to work on her MFA in creative writing, and live happily in Southern California for as long as God permits.

Jenny Fengler is a product of both central and southern California; a UCLA theater grad; a volunteer guide dog puppy raiser; a happily married woman; and a current resident of Pennsylvania who is excited to have a basement but prefers earthquakes to hurricanes, thank you very much. She chronicles her puppy adventures at LabradorRodeo.com and is writing her first novel, because it's just too cold to go outside right now.

Anton Frost has appeared in *ditch*, *Verdad*, *Otoliths*, and *Midwest Literary Review*, among others. He lives in California.

Marilyn Leider is a native of Carlsbad, CA; currently, she is a senior English major at UC Irvine, and her chief (academic) loves include Dante, T.S. Eliot, the medieval and modernist imagination, and dance. She would like to pursue graduate school to write further about Eliot and his use of medieval literature. Though she does love Anglo-American (or East-Coast American!) literature, her love for California was what shaped her first. The brown chaparral, the lagoons, and yes, the mountains—these things formed her bones. She hopes that readers will see these mysteries Transfigured in her writing, and upon reading, find themselves transformed.

Dr. Holly Ordway is a poet, academic, and Christian apologist on the faculty of Houston Baptist University. She holds a PhD in English from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, an MA in English from UNC Chapel Hill, and an MA in apologetics from Biola University. She is also a regular speaker on imaginative and literary apologetics, with special attention to the work of C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams. She blogs on literature, culture, and apologetics at Hieropraxis.com, and considers a really good cup of coffee to be one of life's simple pleasures.