

*Three poems by Shannon Amidon*

## Why Sarah Left the Fold

God can't take you if you don't let him.  
The year wisteria overran the kudzu  
no one could decide between relief and worry,  
the spidery green vines  
threw webbed shadows  
over pavement and pond water,  
and greenhouses and cows.  
Under the amethyst snow  
of falling petals we walked all season. That summer  
when my father went under  
water without me, I helped him  
by holding my breath, but refused to pray  
with the rest of them. His white gown  
did not make him an angel,  
and the preacher's hands did not seem strong enough  
to lift his dead weight from the pool  
when he was born again.  
All I could think of was my friend's father  
found a week past in Nine Pine Cemetery on top  
of a baby grave, shot twice at close range  
through his face—his eyes gone, his teeth scattered  
like deer corn. All I could do was refuse to kneel.  
These people did not care about that death.  
They said such hurtful things that even now I close  
my ears to their noise. They cared only that the wrong sort  
weren't saved. My small rebellion wasn't noticed  
by anyone but my friend, and he pulled my sleeve,  
begging me to conform. As I refused,  
my father bobbed up, eyes wide. I did not rejoice,  
but felt the burden of his new life for our family:  
how far we would travel to answer his prayer.

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