

A M E N

BY COURTNEY E. MARTIN

Momma was looking for God in beautiful brick buildings
someone told her he rested there
but after six years of my restless Mary Janes hitting the Bible stands
and my mother forced to tear
my sleeping angel brother and I from
Sunday morning heaven
to uncomfoting wooden pew child hell
well
she just decided watching her babies slumber
with sweet half moon eyes
was closer to God than listening to some old man categorize
the saved from the sinners

I guess that makes me a sinner
blood thick and moral thinner
with the freedom to see my own divinity
stereotypical God is an invisibility
to me
the ignorant one
blind bliss you might call it
when the preacher asked have you seen God
I responded well call me blind and soulless
but at least my inadequacy is honest
I see god almost exclusively in the smallest
overlooked of things
like a microcosmic spirituality
I don't let the reality
of big churches with big money
turn my 20/20 vision
into a mad scramble for eternal life on commission
like the more cash I throw in the collection plate
the more likely I am to earn a heavenly fate
call it heretical mister preacher man
but I find heaven in the last grain of sand found between my toes on the ride home from the beach
not in Sunday commitments or expensive club dues
I find god in warm bread, in a new pen, in a passionate speech

it's like my spirituality is not the big stain glass in the church walls
but the light coming through them
the way it falls
on the tip of his smallest eyelash and makes me think of love
light and love
and something not necessarily above
but more in between
the space in between he and I
between beauty and my eye
between the microphone and my lips
between the beat and my hips
between these words and your understanding of them
that is god
just the attempt to listen to someone's story
to feel divine glory
in a simple human connection
understanding
maybe
is the most witnessable resurrection

of this ephemeral projection
of what god really is

god is the smile of a stranger

my version of god is like the blind I guess
the way they always confess to
seeing this constant rainbow of colors in their dark worlds
brilliant blues and greens
though they don't have the names for them
it seems
that's like my god
a brilliant dash of light under my eyelids that I can't label
it's like an ineffable force
that I'm unable
to fit into just one religion
one conviction
that has rules or regulations
the light is bright and free of trepidation
uncharacterized by religions that instill fear
the light is the opposite of fear
it is more near
a naked little girl in a back yard sprinkler
Rodin's thinker
the way my cheeks get pinker
when I kiss
the light, my god
it is endless
and made of something even thicker than hope

and god's not one man
not for me
maybe my god is big-handed momma
maybe just something as small as the comma
that separates his compliments
sweet comma strong
and clearly there are an army of people who'd be happy to tell me I'm wrong
but maybe god is the army I find lives inside me waiting to deliver salvation
when there is no one else to save me
maybe
god is
butter pecan ice cream and sidewalk chalk
snowballs and waterfalls
and middle of the night calls
painful things too
maybe god abounds in cancer cells
and nursing home smells
and death
and birth
and birth
maybe god lives in the children I will one day bear

the truth for me
god is in the in between
in between the fear and the execution
the question and the solution
the need to express
and the poem that manifests
god is the time it takes between me saying the last word of this poem and for you hearing it