

The Wedding Day

brother Daniel

There is no staircase to heaven
except it be through earth's loveliness.
—Michelangelo

You ask me: "What was it like
the day when Juanita and Jim
got married?"

I remember the rainbow's colorful scales
fallen over the canopy of the forest—
it was early autumn in Vermont
and the multicolored scales quivered
on outstretched wings of maple trees
—The best men?—
who stood behind fluttering golden poplars.
—The bridesmaids?—

The fall was really falling on our woods,
and the afternoon was gazing at us
with her leafy scarlet eyes caressing
the pale blue face of the sky above.
Down below, the land's still green breasts
nursed the soil with playful streams
and bubbling springs.



That afternoon the hermit thrush
had already sung its last good-bye,
leaving the forest skies to jays and crows.
I recall the meadow, below the trees,
filled with marimba songs and Irish flutes
that accompanied the crickets' chanting
from the undergrowth, and the roaring flight
of the dragonfly.

I still remember a psalm in exultant praise
lending us the words to exclaim:
"The earth is filled with God's glory!"
as we smelled the sweet scent of autumn
from variegated mountains,
revealing the embroidered riot
once concealed in pollen filled honeycombs.
Yes, the harvest was in and the land at rest.

"Today, if you listen to God's voice..."
God's Creation had some wisdom to share:
and we hearkened to silent nuptial sutras
recited by the tumultuous voice
of the Milky Way hanging from the dome of the sky,
in harmony with cascading voices of frozen apples still clinging
to twisted branches in the oldest tree.

This poetic reflection is occasioned by the wedding of James Conroy and Juanita Cabrera-Lopez, the daughter of Felipe and Elena Ixcot of the Maya indigenous family from Guatemala who were received in Sanctuary at Weston Priory in 1984.

I tell you, we delighted in the playful riddle
deciphered by Irenaeus of old:
"The Glory of God is the human being fully alive!"
Fully in love!
—Juanita and Jim pronounced their vows,
pledged their love,
exchanged the blessed rings,
and cried with joy!

And there was dancing in the autumn afternoon
when the buckeye trees swayed along the rhythms
of a swirling cornfield clad in a festive Maya dress;
at times they syncopated the motion,
other times they chased each other in a round,
and finally...
a blanket woven with the colors of the woods
hovered over them as the land's tender embrace!

The land is still... at prayer,
in blessing and thanksgiving to God.
The Tree of Life is still planted
in the middle of the garden
rooted in wisdom within,
within Jim,
within Juanita,
and within all of us.
And we all live our prayer in God's time,
on God's good earth!

O Holy Wisdom, heart of our life,
heart of the sky, heart of our love,
heart of the earth, heart of our heart:
Live in our heart! Sing in our heart!
Love in our heart!

Let us offer this prayer for Jim and Juanita,
a brand new couple living in love,
proclaiming in this world so graced by the fall
that Paradise is not lost! ■