



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Gleeson Library |
Geschke Center

Ontario Review

Volume 39 *Fall/Winter* 1993–94

Article 11

July 2014

Bible Studies, By Huron

John R. Reed

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.usfca.edu/ontarioreview>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Reed, John R. (2014) "Bible Studies, By Huron," *Ontario Review*: Vol. 39, Article 11.

Available at: <http://repository.usfca.edu/ontarioreview/vol39/iss1/11>

For more information, please contact southern@usfca.edu.

Two Poems

JOHN R. REED

Bible Studies

Stephanie and I are eating paste
while God barely adheres to his heaven
of stiff construction paper. One cloud
has fallen away though the Garden of Eden
is not half done, still lacking its Adam and Eve.
This is the Bethel Bible School
before tomorrow has become a matter of choice
where kids from Christian churches come
to learn the stories the Good Book has to tell.

Our teachers are all pale and thin with skin
like waxed paper and watery eyes.
Their voices tremble with kindness answering our
bad conduct with charity and patience.
They cover one hand with another on
their knee to let us see how calm
and Christlike they can be but we only notice
the fume of old furniture they share.

We know the pictures on the wall by heart:
Christ's polished, shining face;
God in a posture of sublimity
or wrath, with whom we associate
the man upstairs we never see to whom
our fees are paid; a precipio shows
modest Mary in her shed with Joseph
and papier-mâché shepherds looking on
while off behind the Wise Men are being led
by the bright bijoux of their star to here.

Today we've acted out The Loaves and Fishes.
Mrs. Miller opened her mouth
in stage amazement every time another
cracker dropped from her sleeve into
the magical basket. The fish were licorice.
We learn that God will feed the needy
if they will come to him. The Bethel can show
old men on benches in a room
downstairs to prove that this is true. We too
may be like Christ and suffer and give our due.

On these small stools at these small desks we've sketched
young Moses in his stream. I've painted
the walls of Jericho falling and a man
with a trumpet raised to the sky and a hand
on the sun. Boys build their Babel with wooden blocks
while the girls pin and sew Queen Sheba's
dress. Each day we put our palms together,
offering thanks to be alive and to know Jesus.

Here is the picture of Hell with its devils and flames
like the open hearth at U.S. Steel
my Dad has described or the pictures of London burning.
Here are the dead the last trump calls
from their tombs like soldiers let out from their cages and cells
in European or Asian settings
I've seen in the movies on Saturday afternoons—
my cheap reward for giving my mornings
to the Lord and learning how peace and mercy
will prevail, and the meek shall inherit the earth.

By Huron

What was the happiness today
gone like a feather
from a moulting bird?

What already have we lost
that clung for a moment
like a burr to the sleeve?

Insistent waves come thrusting in
so much alike
you cannot tell them apart

though they have held you in their arms
and let you go
for other arms to embrace.

Stand out of the shade so the sun may run
his thrilling hands
over your willing sides.

Time enough when the night bell chimes
to curl in your chair
and warm your blood by the fire.

Time enough when the night sky rules
to climb the stair
and lie in your chilly bed.