

Prayers

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (January 2023)



Woodland Prayer, Egon Schiele, 1915

On Waking

Darkness disperses as a dune
Of tiny crabs is parted by
The shadow of a little girl.

I thank You, Merciful, Eternal King,

Who's given back my soul to me, with love.
May I maintain unbent awareness of
My purpose, and appreciate the shrewd,
Humane, vitality-delivering,
Divine regard beneath which it's pursued.

A Father's Psalm

Voice #1:

A father's psalm. Some hungers sting appallingly. O listen,
lad: When sorrows find inside the fun a burning grove of
sandalwood ... when Love arrives like contraband, discreetly
wrapped, its seal embossed ... do listen, for, at eventide, the
heavens say: "When Mercy's just, and Justice kind, I'm
present. Turn to Me. I must be Him."

Voice #2:

O what a fearful thing
It is to witness the
Formation of a bad
Relationship with your
Beloved eldest son:
That constellation of
Contingencies & good
Intentions, of indulged
Parental instincts and
Advice acquired at
Extensive-seeming cost,
Securing his contempt—
The spite that shall abide
The balance of his days.

Your present moment must
Bizarrely constitute
The boy's eternity.

Polyphony

[*A father's psalm.*] O what a fearful thing
It is to witness the [*Some hungers sting*
Appallingly.] formation of a bad
Relationship with your [*O listen, lad:*
When Sorrows find] beloved eldest son:
That constellation of [*inside the fun*
A burning grove] contingencies & good
Intentions, of indulged [*of sandalwood,*
When Love arrives] parental instincts and
Advice acquired at [*like contraband,*
Discreetly wrapped,] extensive-seeming cost,
Securing his contempt—[*its seal embossed,*
Do listen, for,] the spite that shall abide
The balance of his days. [*at eventide,*
The heavens say:] Your present moment must
Bizarrely constitute [*"When Mercy's just,*
And Justice kind, I'm present. Turn to Me.
I must be Him."] the boy's eternity.

Table of Contents

Jeffrey Burghauser is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are

forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*, *Iceview*, *Lehrhaus*, and *New English Review*. Jeffrey's book-length collections are available on [Amazon](#), and his website is www.jeffreyburghauser.com.

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