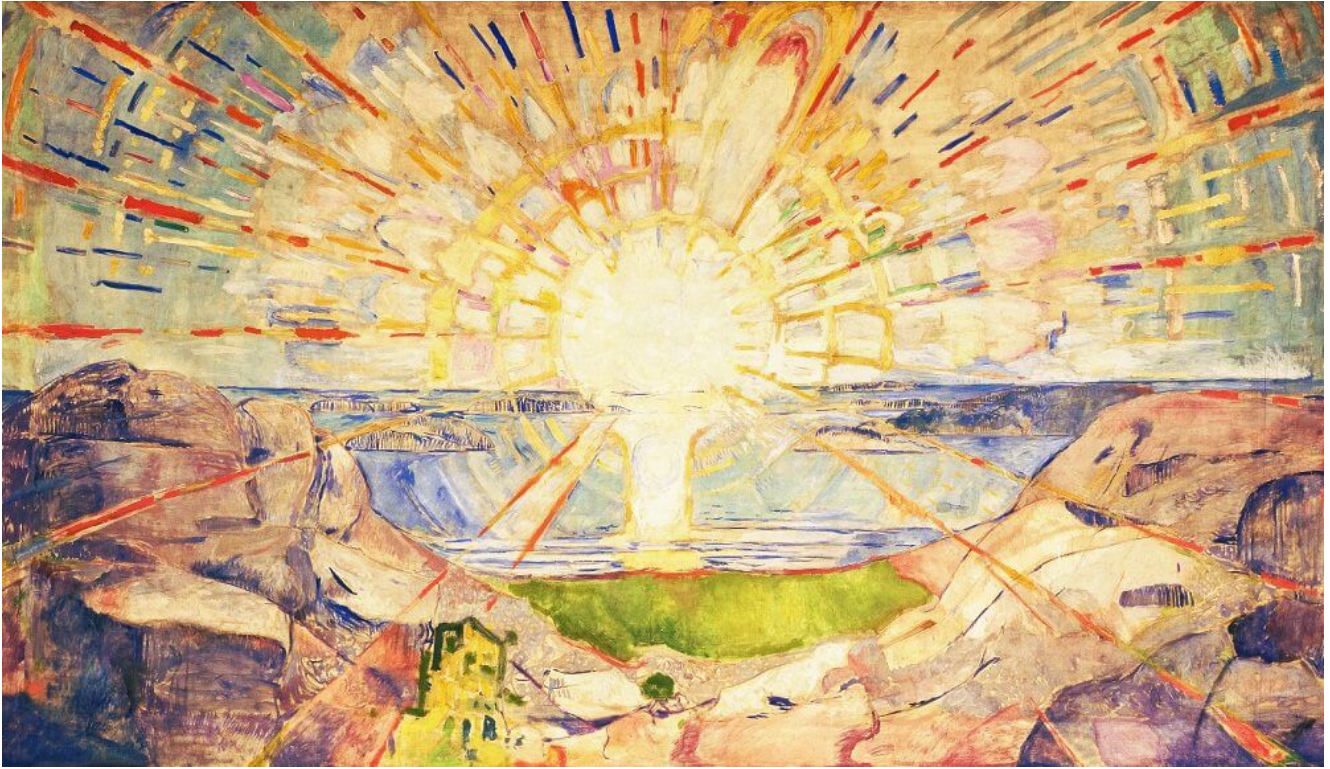


Three Poems

by [David Solway](#) (February 2021)



The Sun, Edvard Munch, 1909

Genesis

I strongly believe in the existence of God, based on intuition, observations, logic, and also scientific knowledge.

—Charles Townes, inventor of the laser

The earth was without form, and void
and darkness was on the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of Nothing.
Then God said:
Let there be a zero-point field;

and there was a zero-point field.
And God saw the zero-point field,
that it was good.
And God said:
Let there be a quantum vacuum.
Let it fluctuate in ceaseless waves
in a rippling sea of quantum radiation.
And it was so.
Then God said:
Let matter be sustained
by the underlying sea of quantum radiation
for it is a force that opposes acceleration
and gives a body to things.
Let stochastic electrodynamics be the order of the day.
Let there be inertia.
Let matter be solid.
And it was so.
Thus God created an electromagnetic spectrum
and called it light
which was not the light of the sun, moon and stars
but the light of Creation.
And indeed it was very good.



A Girl Bathing, August Riedel, 1837

Lady in Her Bath

Had I not wanted to be a fighter pilot
or a symphony conductor
or a goaltender for the Montreal Canadiens
or a rock star on a pandemonium tour
or an astronaut or a quantum physicist
or the founder of an Internet Corporation
or a hedge fund CEO like Bobby Axelrod

or an actor on the classical stage
or a poet of consummate discipline

I would have wanted to be a painter
seeing you in the bath
as if rendered by an Old Master,
hair the colour of ripe corn,
body the envy of any odalisque,
lissome and supple and glowing
as if overlaid with wash of gold,
as if paint could be the living skin.

Now that I think of it,
painter would have been my first choice



A Boy Bringing Bread, Pieter de Hooch, 1663

Book of Hours

Sometimes I know you are the ceremony I am part of,
that every day will have its fare of love
evenly distributed across the hours
the way a good housewife spreads the butter on the bread
so there is everywhere enough
and no empty patches or spotty lumps.
And sometimes I will doubt all consecrations
and every small felicity of every blessed day
as sly temptations of the ever-present fiend
to lead me to the flaw in all that is lovely and consoling

as if, when reading, one mistakes
a tiny spider for the page number
until it begins to move.
That's when I fear what went before
and dread that it may come again.
That's when I resent a retrospective infidelity
as if your past belonged to me no less than your present and
your future,
as if I were already there long before you knew me.
I suppose that means I love you timelessly,
not only sometimes.
I suppose that means I will let the spider live
as I read the story we are writing in this book of ours,
then look up from the page where all is done and said
to watch you spread the butter on the bread.

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David Solway's latest book is [Notes from a Derelict Culture](#), Black House Publishing, 2019, London. A CD of his original songs, [Partial to Cain](#), appeared in 2019.

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