

What She Said When I First Came to the Community

In this place the bare trees of winter learn to sing.
In this place is the psalm of God.

I was born in the light of spring,
in the rain, and from that moment on
I have been evaporating.

In this place are warring tongues
and men with guns, our people
who lost themselves to belief,

but the fields continue to give grass
and the goats still jump the fence
and we learn our bodies in the old bus by the gully,

dust from the chicken coop in our lungs.
Don't choke on chicken shit.
Cover your mouth or lose something.

Remember to go every once in a while
a little further down the gully where
the water escapes and never stops running
deeper and deeper into the valley of God.

And what if we were naked,
two children alone in a creek-bed,
and we were far from this place
so I asked what it was you thought you were
and I kept asking until you had no answer

and we kept praying, kept slipping away
like a stream over red clay and sandstone
deeper and deeper into the Ozarks
where the water changes direction.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Damien Uriah is a stone mason, tutor, and library reference assistant. His work has also appeared in *Indiana Voice Journal* and *Three Line Poetry*.

