

# 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.

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*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! ■