

Awed to Heaven,  
Rooted in Earth

Prayers of Walter Brueggemann



Edited by Edwin Searcy

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## And then you

We arrange our lives as best we can,  
to keep your holiness at bay,  
with our pieties,  
our doctrines,  
our liturgies,  
our moralities,  
our secret ideologies,

Safe, virtuous, settled.

And then you —  
you and your dreams,  
you and your visions,  
you and your purposes,  
you and your commands,  
you and our neighbors.

We find your holiness not at bay,  
but probing, pervading,  
insisting, demanding.

And we yield, sometimes gladly,  
sometimes resentfully,  
sometimes late . . . or soon.

We yield because you, beyond us, are our God.

We are your creatures met by your holiness,  
by your holiness made our true selves.

And we yield. Amen.

*Old Testament theology / October 15, 1998*

## At the dawn

Our first glimpse of reality this day — everyday — is your fidelity.

We are dazzled by the ways you remain constant among us,

in season, out of season,

for better, for worse,

in sickness and in health.

You are there in watchfulness as we fall asleep;

You are there in alertness when we awaken . . . and we are glad.

Before the day ends, we will have occasion

to flag your absence in indifference . . .

but not now, not at the dawn.

Before the day ends, we will think more than once

that we need a better deal from you . . .

but not now, not at the dawn.

Before the day ends, we will look away from you and

relish our own fidelity and our virtue in mercy . . .

but not now, not at the dawn.

Now, at the dawn, our eyes are fixed on you in gladness.

We ask only that your faithfulness

permeate every troubled place we are able to name,

that your mercy

move against the hurts to make new,

that your steadfastness

hold firmly what is too fragile on its own.

And we begin the day in joy, in hope, and in deep gladness. Amen.

*Old Testament theology class, on God's defining adjectives / July 18, 2000*

## You live at the hinge

You brood in the night in its fearfulness,  
You dawn the day in its energy,  
    You move at the edge of night  
        into the margin of day.  
    You live at the hinge between fear and energy.  
You take the feeble night and give us strong day,  
    You take our fatigue and bestow courage,  
    You take our drowsy reluctance and fashion full-blooded zeal.  
What shall we say?  
    You, only you, you  
    You at the hinge — and then the day.  
You — and then us,  
    from you in faithfulness,  
    us for the day,  
    us in the freedom and courage and energy,  
    and then back to you — in trust and gratitude.  
Amen.

*Allegheny College / August 17, 1989*

## Stunned by the morning

The night of defeat is long and still and unbearable.

We know the nights.

And our sisters and brothers

    who are cold,

    and hungry,

    and brutalized know them better than do we.

And you also know the night in Ashdod and in a trillion other times.

How it is with you in the night we do not know.

Perhaps it is like it is with us.

We, with the Philistines, are stunned by the morning.

    stunned to find our pet projects toppled.

    stunned to find our favorite gods failed.

    stunned to find our managed hopes defeated.

Then you in the morning.

You only.

You in splendor.

You in glory.

You in power.

This day we dazzle at your glory in the midst of our long night.

Move in your glory this day in the midst of our many nights.

Bring us to your day.

To your new day.

Your third day. Amen.

*On Reading 1 Samuel 5 / March 2, 2000*