

is subtly but seriously misrepresented by the term,” Jeffrey writes. “Christian theory may be Logos-centered, but it is not logocentrism.” Why? Because “Christians understand themselves as a people called to live not in a web of words but to live *imitatio Christi*. This . . . is the only pronunciation of that Word which can be regarded as authentic.” By willfully misidentifying Christian action as regressive logocentrism, Jeffrey concludes, deconstructionists like Bloom contribute to—though do not create—the phenomenon of the “hard-hearted reader.”

People of the Book, then, is equal parts historical survey, reclamation project, critique, and call to arms. Return to your roots, it pleads. Immerse yourself in the Christian literary tradition. And read and write with a broken heart:

No less than anyone else . . . our egos are susceptible to . . . rationalized self-fashioning. The corpus of our literature is severely imperfect; our ranks, too, are littered with the corpses of the fallen. Our literary history affords ample evidence of the miscreance and materialism by which instrumentality is subverted. . . . The Christian writer or critic has accordingly to recognize such misprision as the effect of sin, and to understand the personal obligation of repentance.

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Mercy

Mercy is a custard pie, the slip
Of a teardrop,

And then the freefall into the new air
That is your fear.

It's true. The problem with mercy is that honey
Never gave any

Clear answers to anybody, thus the sweet
And sour, the fate

Of Jesus Christ. Why is there nausea for
Each redeemer,

The snake in the heart? Why is each kindness weak
With a soul-ache?

Force is plain. Better the pitchfork, the thin
Belt landing on

Small legs; oh, better to sleep without bread.
Love doesn't add

Up, and for this we need what's merciful,
Christ when he fell.

—Kim Bridgford

Rapture

Sex and religion claim it: the deep swoon
That shoves reason