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## Sacrament of Grace

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# Sacrament of Grace

Mary Dengler

I climbed the Rocky Mount, North Carolina, mulberry tree alone,  
in the white softness of my summer dress,  
my hair catching twigs along the way.  
Perched on a branch among the birds and tiny bugs,  
while my father preached at the Rocky Mount Baptist Church,  
I feasted happily on the sweet red berries,  
losing consciousness  
that I'd been strictly forbidden  
to participate un-baptized in the sacrament  
or climb to pick the wild fruit.  
Scratched and spattered with the sweet red juice,  
I descended to the cooling darkness  
as the Communion cups clinked from hand to pew.  
Walking home in the Sunday evening summer dusk,  
I passed "Amazing Grace"  
As it floated over me from the open stained-glass windows.  
I knew I would be punished  
and those berries would never lose their power.

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