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Making It Through

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Making It Through

Jeri Schelhaas

I'll confess.
At 14, I bought a Scofield Bible.
I didn't know that I should avoid that,
that I could be led astray by
footnotes, evidently overpowering both
Word and Spirit at once.
It was such supple leather, could almost
fold in half like Billy Graham's did
in the passion of his preaching.

While we're at it, I've got to tell you
I listened to Billy Graham religiously, even while,
I learned later, Grand Rapids churches
debated whether we shared enough of his
theology to support him with workers when he came to their town.
Oh, I would have volunteered,
prayed with kids to have the courage to make a claim and
let people know. I would have proudly carried
my Bible, soft leather, and, sorry,
Scofield lurking inside.

And then, let's keep going here, at 14
I didn't know Bach from Brahms,
sang gospel music with a girl's trio,
and preferred, dare I say it, Longfellow to Elliot
because my mom did and I trusted her love of
meadow larks, and baby irises, October's bright blue skies,
unlayered sentiments, and, okay, here we go,
rhyme.

A lot has changed, but let this be enough to ask:
Before the fire burns most of me away,
should that 14 year old be forgotten
when the choice is made what of "me" makes it through?
She should not be lost in the complexity of personal development.
To enter into the final explosion of the Kingdom,
it will be fine with me to become like that little child
not because she knew what she was supposed to know,
but because she was, in the best sort of way,
simple.