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Elder Brother

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Elder Brother

Mike Vanden Bosch

*“Now his elder son. . .heard music and dancing. . .
but he was angry.” (Luke 15:25, 28)*

It had been a hard day hoeing on the hillside
in the hot sun, twice the work since kid brother
Jud left to booze and frolic with harlots, though I
didn't complain, having been taught not to judge.

But I was hoping for a good night of rest. Imagine
my surprise when, still a hollar from home, I
hear wild party music clear across the valley,
and, closer, see dancing wild as King David's—

neighbors wouldn't've approved. At first I think,
did I take the wrong turn? Is this a nightmare? I
hurry my step, thinking surely some honorable
guest must have come. But who? Then I can't

believe what I see: kid brother Jud so shined up
I thought, is that Jud, spiffed up in a rented tux (I
know who paid for it) and wearing Dad's ring
he wouldn't let me touch, and people standing

in line to dance with him? *Him* of all people, who last week was wallowing with *pagan whores*. I was left to do all the work when he walked out on all of us to join the godless epicureans—

“Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Well, let him die. When he left for his spree, I paid dearly. My work doubled and dad’s wealth was halved. Our good family name was dragged

through slop. How that pained dad and mom. I would rather have honored horrid Herod than this pig brother of mine, but dad? You know dad, always willing to give weaklings one more go at

goodness—cheap grace—like a cop who thinks a pat on the back will turn a heart. If my son ever sells our family honor for a year with sluts, I will make him crawl through hell before I forgive.