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## How to Praise

Mike Vanden Bosch  
*Dordt College*

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## How to Praise

by Mike Vanden Bosch

“I would like to have you for my teacher forever.”

The words have bounced like pool balls  
against the cushions of my heart  
since my Chinese student first said them—  
words I'd never thought to say,  
not even to classroom giants.

I'd been teaching her how to speak English;  
she taught me how to say thanks.

Had she called me Emperor, I'd have laughed;  
Chairman Maok, I'd have winced;  
Rabbi? She couldn't have known Rabbi—  
not the word, not the man.

Rabbi—once I stood before assembled saints  
and said I'd follow one.

I was too green to mean

“I would like to have Him for my teacher forever,”  
but now I see how to praise.

One who had not heard the Word  
by grace found words beyond my heartless reach  
to move my Rabbi's heart with praise.