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Living the Metaphor

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Living the Metaphor

Shaun Stiemsma

Sitting comfortably in the auditorium,
Sitting easily in our lives,
When we read:
“And the city and all that is within it
shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction.
Only Rahab (that prostitute)
and all who are with her in her house
shall live.”

We gloss over it,
Justifying it in the allegorical, anagogical,
And tropological senses.

So we must be purified of all evil,
Dedicating that which is sinful to destruction.

God harshly demands that we sever those ties,
Lest we bring “a thing for destruction”
And a taint on ourselves.

But when the metaphor was reality,
When the thing to be severed was a human child,
Looking up at a sword—

Or, perhaps worse, when yours is the hand that holds the sword—

Fear of the Lord meant something different.

Fear of the God who spares the traitorous whore,
And demands the slaying of the child.

Perhaps we would not be so quick to condemn,
Or so quick to explain away,
If we came to know that God,
Unglossed, stripped of the metaphor.