

The Worst Thing

The worst thing we ever did
was put God in the sky
out of reach pulling the divinity
from the leaf,

Sifting out the holy from our bones,
insisting God isn't bursting dazzlement
through everything we've made
a hard commitment to see as ordinary,
stripping the sacred from everywhere
to put in a cloud man elsewhere,
prying closeness from your heart.

The worst thing we ever did
was take the dance and the song
out of prayer
made it sit up straight
and cross its legs
removed it of rejoicing wiped clean its hip sway,
its questions,
its ecstatic yowl,
its tears.

The worst thing we ever did is pretend
God isn't the easiest thing
in this Universe
available to every soul
in every breath.

Chelan Harkin ¹

¹ [Selected Poems - Chelan Harkin](#), (assessed September 14, 2023).

Storytelling in a small group or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next question and so forth. A person can pass.

1. Share what you learned about God in your childhood.

(i.e., Father, Mother, Creator, loves you, judges you, active in the world now or not present in the world now, lives in heaven just above the clouds and sits on a throne, knows about everything you do, punishes you if you do bad things, etc.)

2. Share about how you learned to pray in childhood and how you pray today. Do you pray sitting up straight and legs crossed or both legs planted on the ground? Or do you pray with dancing, song, and rejoicing? Or a little of both?

3. Share about what you think Chelan Harkin was saying in her words, “The worst thing we ever did is pretend God isn’t the easiest thing in this Universe available to every soul in every breath.”

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