

BAPTISM

I do not really know you, distant cousin,
nor why I cannot escape the signs
of your becoming. I bow, it is over to you.

I tip a shell-full of water, the light catches it,
silver on your forehead. All from a shell –
it is a shallow measure,

compared with the fire it prefigures,
and the shelter of the dove's wings.
The scurrying blackbird is witness –

already the axe has been put to the root.
I am not the poet, but I do know
that when I lived in the wilderness,

out on a limb, so to speak,
the bees brought me their honey,
and the beasts, their hair for my coat.

How much more will there be found
for you, a place by quiet waters,
Lamb of God.

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