

Covens and Convents

by [Walt Garlington](#) (March 2023)



Witches Flight, Francisco Goya, 1797–98

What a gloomy garden grows
In New England ground,
Yankees trudging
Haltingly along,
Cultivated
By a curious cast
Of women—Anne Hutchinson
The headstrong heretic;
Ann Lee, the Shaker queen;
Beth Stanton, suffragette;
Mary Baker Eddy,
Modern Gnostic.

The Son, shaded
By their wild demeanor,
Can only bring forth
A yield of souls
Stunted and deformed.

Darkness! Darkness!
Witches and the devil
Prowling round the land!

Waken! Waken!
The memory
Of Mother Ethelburga,
Barking's first abbess
At your ancient home
In Essex county.

What a host of saints
And wonders sprouted there—
Heavenly Light brighter
Than the sun's rays;
A woman's sight restored

Through prayer before the relics
Of the holy ascetics
Buried in the soil;
St. Ethelburga's shining soul
Itself seen in Tortgith's vision
Ascending into Heaven,
Drawn thither by the golden
Cords of her many virtues.

Has your legacy
As a witch's land
Clung to you long enough?
Mother Ethelburga
Will gladly guide you
Into the Christian Faith,
And change your dour and dismal coven
To a bright and cheerful convent.

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Walt Garlington was born and raised in that part of Dixieland called Louisiana. A chemical engineer by training, he has spent the last several years writing full-time. He has written essays and poems for *The Hayride*, *New English Review*, *The Tenth Amendment Center*, *The Abbeville Institute*, *Reckonin'*, *Katehon*, *Geopolitica*, and *USA Really*. He writes regularly at his own web site, [Confiteri: A Southern Perspective](#).

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