

# Prayers

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (January 2023)



*Woodland Prayer*, Egon Schiele, 1915

## On Waking

Darkness disperses as a dune  
Of tiny crabs is parted by  
The shadow of a little girl.

I thank You, Merciful, Eternal King,

Who's given back my soul to me, with love.  
May I maintain unbent awareness of  
My purpose, and appreciate the shrewd,  
Humane, vitality-delivering,  
Divine regard beneath which it's pursued.

## A Father's Psalm

### **Voice #1:**

A father's psalm. Some hungers sting appallingly. O listen,  
lad: When sorrows find inside the fun a burning grove of  
sandalwood ... when Love arrives like contraband, discreetly  
wrapped, its seal embossed ... do listen, for, at eventide, the  
heavens say: "When Mercy's just, and Justice kind, I'm  
present. Turn to Me. I must be Him."

### **Voice #2:**

O what a fearful thing  
It is to witness the  
Formation of a bad  
Relationship with your  
Beloved eldest son:  
That constellation of  
Contingencies & good  
Intentions, of indulged  
Parental instincts and  
Advice acquired at  
Extensive-seeming cost,  
Securing his contempt—  
The spite that shall abide  
The balance of his days.

Your present moment must  
Bizarrely constitute  
The boy's eternity.

## Polyphony

[A father's psalm.] O what a fearful thing  
It is to witness the [Some hungers sting  
Appallingly.] formation of a bad  
Relationship with your [O listen, lad:  
When Sorrows find] beloved eldest son:  
That constellation of [inside the fun  
A burning grove] contingencies & good  
Intentions, of indulged [of sandalwood,  
When Love arrives] parental instincts and  
Advice acquired at [like contraband,  
Discreetly wrapped,] extensive-seeming cost,  
Securing his contempt-[its seal embossed,  
Do listen, for,] the spite that shall abide  
The balance of his days. [at eventide,  
The heavens say:] Your present moment must  
Bizarrely constitute ["When Mercy's just,  
And Justice kind, I'm present. Turn to Me.  
I must be Him."] the boy's eternity.

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Jeffrey Burghauer is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are

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