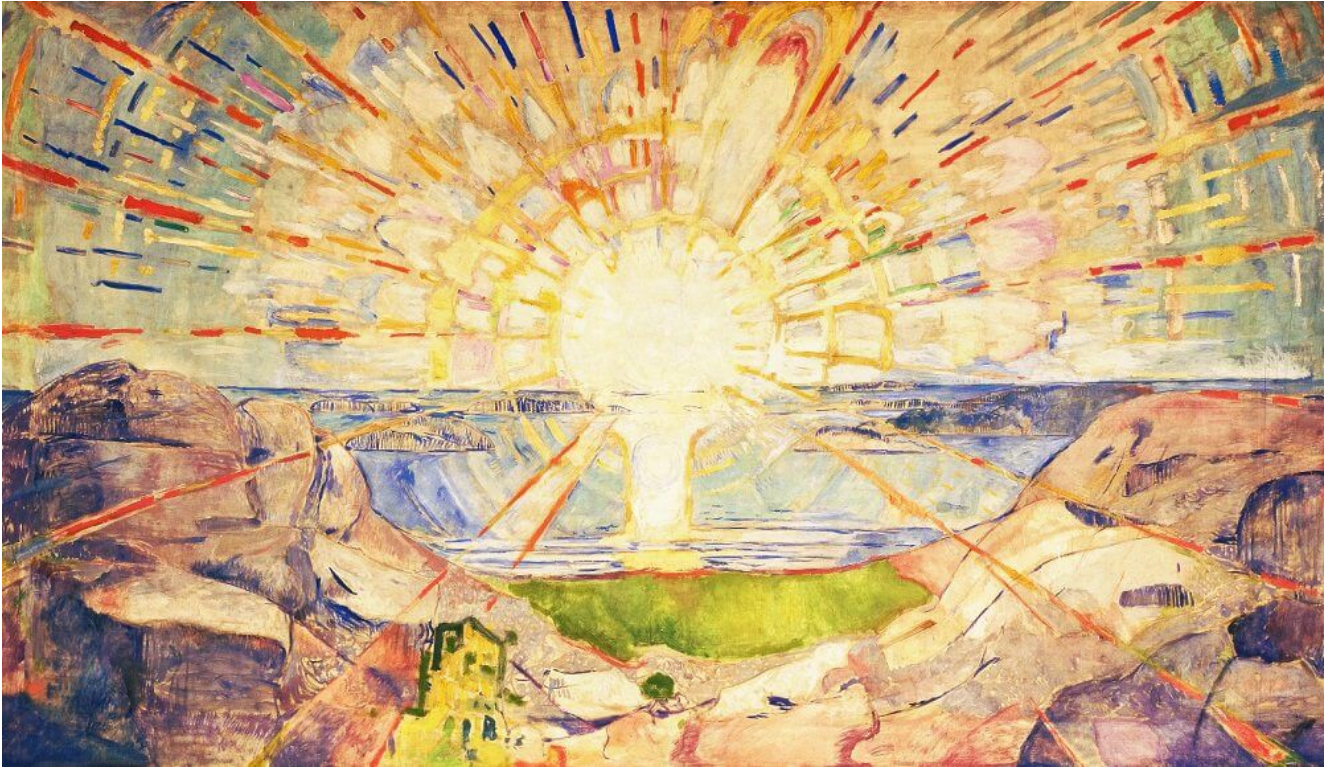


# Three Poems

by [David Solway](#) (February 2021)



*The Sun*, Edvard Munch, 1909

## *Genesis*

*I strongly believe in the existence of God, based on intuition, observations, logic, and also scientific knowledge.*

*—Charles Townes, inventor of the laser*

The earth was without form, and void  
and darkness was on the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of Nothing.  
Then God said:  
Let there be a zero-point field;

and there was a zero-point field.  
And God saw the zero-point field,  
that it was good.  
And God said:  
Let there be a quantum vacuum.  
Let it fluctuate in ceaseless waves  
in a rippling sea of quantum radiation.  
And it was so.  
Then God said:  
Let matter be sustained  
by the underlying sea of quantum radiation  
for it is a force that opposes acceleration  
and gives a body to things.  
Let stochastic electrodynamics be the order of the day.  
Let there be inertia.  
Let matter be solid.  
And it was so.  
Thus God created an electromagnetic spectrum  
and called it light  
which was not the light of the sun, moon and stars  
but the light of Creation.  
And indeed it was very good.



*A Girl Bathing*, August Riedel, 1837

### *Lady in Her Bath*

Had I not wanted to be a fighter pilot  
or a symphony conductor  
or a goaltender for the Montreal Canadiens  
or a rock star on a pandemonium tour  
or an astronaut or a quantum physicist  
or the founder of an Internet Corporation  
or a hedge fund CEO like Bobby Axelrod

or an actor on the classical stage  
or a poet of consummate discipline

I would have wanted to be a painter  
seeing you in the bath  
as if rendered by an Old Master,  
hair the colour of ripe corn,  
body the envy of any odalisque,  
lissome and supple and glowing  
as if overlaid with wash of gold,  
as if paint could be the living skin.

Now that I think of it,  
painter would have been my first choice





*A Boy Bringing Bread*, Pieter de Hooch, 1663

## *Book of Hours*

Sometimes I know you are the ceremony I am part of,  
that every day will have its fare of love  
evenly distributed across the hours  
the way a good housewife spreads the butter on the bread  
so there is everywhere enough  
and no empty patches or spotty lumps.  
And sometimes I will doubt all consecrations  
and every small felicity of every blessed day  
as sly temptations of the ever-present fiend  
to lead me to the flaw in all that is lovely and consoling

as if, when reading, one mistakes  
a tiny spider for the page number  
until it begins to move.  
That's when I fear what went before  
and dread that it may come again.  
That's when I resent a retrospective infidelity  
as if your past belonged to me no less than your present and  
your future,  
as if I were already there long before you knew me.  
I suppose that means I love you timelessly,  
not only sometimes.  
I suppose that means I will let the spider live  
as I read the story we are writing in this book of ours,  
then look up from the page where all is done and said  
to watch you spread the butter on the bread.

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David Solway's latest book is [Notes from a Derelict Culture](#), Black House Publishing, 2019, London. A CD of his original songs, [Partial to Cain](#), appeared in 2019.

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