

Contemporary Reading: *Letter to Noah's Wife* by
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You are never mentioned on Ararat
or elsewhere, but I know a woman's hand
in salvation when I see it. Lately,
I'm torn between despair and ignorance.
I'm not a vegetarian, shop plastic,
use an air conditioner. Is this what happens
before it all goes fluvial? Do the selfish
grow self-conscious by the withering
begonias? Lately, I worry every black dress
will have to be worn to a funeral.
New York a bouillon, eroded filigree.
Anything but illness, I beg the plagues,
but shiny crows or nuclear rain.
Not a drop in London May through June.
I bask in the wilt by golden hour light.
Lately, only lately, it is late. Tucking
our families into the safeties of the past.
My children, will they exist by the time
it's irreversible? Will they live
astonished at the thought of ice
not pulled from the mouth of a machine?

Which parent will be the one to break the myth; the Arctic wasn't Sisyphus's snowy hill. Noah's wife, I am wringing my hands not knowing how to know and move forward. Was it you who gathered flowers once the earth had dried? How did you explain the light to all the animals?

For wisdom in contemporary poetry,

We give thanks.

New Testament: A reading from Revelations 12:1-9, 13-17a

Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, with twelve stars on her head for a crown. She was pregnant and in labor, crying out in pain as she was about to give birth.

Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and each of the seven heads with a crown. Its tail swept a third of the stars from the sky and hurled them down to the earth.

The dragon stood before the woman about to deliver, to devour her child the moment she gave birth. The woman gave birth to a male child, a son, who is to rule the world with an iron rod. But the child was snatched straight up to God and God's throne. The woman fled into the desert, to a place prepared for her by God, where she will be kept safe for 1,260 days.

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and the angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they were defeated and driven out of heaven. The great dragon, the primeval serpent who is called the Devil or Satan, who had deceived the whole world, was hurled down to the earth, and its angels were banished with it.

...

When the dragon saw that it had been hurled to the earth, it pursued the woman who gave birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so she could fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she was looked after for three and a half years, out of the serpent's reach. So the serpent vomited a river of water from its mouth to sweep the woman away in the current. But the earth came to the woman's

rescue by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had vomited up.

Then the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to wage war with the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

For visions of challenge and comfort.

We give thanks.