

Mark McKain

Francis after Hurricane Frances

Snakes swim in the chapel, our robes stink, the cistern polluted...

When the eyewall hit, light poles bent like tulips.
The roof flew off like a crowd of crows mobbing an eagle.
Leaves, shredded into confetti, clouded our stained glass.
Wind battered hearts hour after hour,
broke limbs, snapped trunks; roots now grasp the sky.

Is it these trials I love?
These displays of power: shingles, signs, aluminum siding,
barbecue pits flung into a helical rage,
leaving us wanting nothing but forgiveness – do I love
trees, rivers, rocks, armadillos more than humans?

Do I love these waves, sweeping over the seawall,
reshaping the beach, more than Psalms;
this deluge more than Genesis;
this scarred landscape
more than his side pierced by a spear, his feet by a nail?