

The choice

by [Jeanne Murray Walker](#) in the [January 9, 2013](#) issue

The organ swings into the invitation hymn,  
slinging us around the known world  
toward the apogee of surrender,  
Oh Muse of Scripture, Muse of Choice,  
Muse of the Sawdust Trail.

I look at my hand resting on this oak pew,  
shaped like Asia, a million cells teeming,  
blood pumping, going on with its normal  
irreligious, hungry life.

Things are being decided.

We are singing *Just As I Am*, the fourth verse,  
over. My right hand listens

to the soprano next to me,  
balancing on her catwalk of steep chords.

It longs to fly up to that soaring obbligato.

*Just raise your hand*, the Evangelist calls,  
if you want God to use you on the mission field.

What he means: when God wants to find you,  
He will know where to look.

My right hand twitches, tugging skyward  
on its kite string. What I have been taught:  
marks on paper, numbers, letters,  
postulates, break down.

The whole repertoire of my life  
has been practice for this moment.

I try to make myself restful and empty,  
nothing but an interval  
before the generous right hand,  
and the sinister left, decide.