

Blessed thistle

by [Joseph Bathanti](#) in the [May 22, 2019](#) issue

Late spring it sidles from the spermy loam  
lost for a spate among the dripping tares—  
wild flowers scroll strangled in dross and roam—  
sprouting bristly heads of purple hairs

clear to the warped planks spanning Linville Creek.  
Choirs of milk thistle congregate the swales.  
They've come from Vilas to raise a church: *The meek . . .  
shall inherit the earth.* Come the solstice,

its flowers shrive and dry—a praise dowry;  
come haying: spiked canes, sacrifice, the snare;  
late August, it takes vows of poverty,  
chastity and obedience. White hair

flares from its wimple. Fireflies torch the night—  
the thousand thousand thuribles of light.