

Before the rib

by [Julie L. Moore](#) in the [July 28, 2021](#) issue

Before the rib,

before the man in need of help,  
before swallows, sperm whales, & cows,

before trees made with seeds

& pollen released in the breeze,  
before honey bees & butterflies,

before lavender, azaleas, & lilies,

inkberry holly & burning bushes,  
before rain & cumulus clouds,

before the river, the earth watered itself,

underground streams  
rising to the surface, radiating

green on floors no one

but God walked upon,  
& before all that, the heavens

hung heavy with an airborne sea

waiting for the right words  
to spill from his lips, willing

to empty themselves of all they owned,

words waiting to right  
the sea-lipped, heaven-hung air,

before anyone was floored by green

but God, risen & radiant,  
surfaced from streams

within the earth, before cumulus

rivered with rain, bushes burned,

berries inked holly,  
before lilies, azaleas, & lavender,  
bee-pollinated  
in a butterfly breeze,  
released their honey like seeds from trees,  
unlike cows, sperm whales, & swallows,  
unlike man, who needed help, before the rib.