

Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium

Volume 8

Article 4

12-1-2014

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Catholic Theological Union

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Recommended Citation

Brown, Joseph S.J. (2014) "“To See What the End Will Be”," *Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium*: Vol. 8, Article 4.

Available at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/jbcts/vol8/iss1/4>

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“To See What the End Will Be”

(In honor of Sr. Eva Regina Martin, SSF, 1939-2014)

By Fr. Joseph Brown, S.J.

I.

No

They told the first one

and then

year after year another no until
the house was built the clothes were
stitched the old castaways and the invisible
babies were fed and soothed

and then

there were enough faces to form
a choir of hope healing their own hearts they
twisted scorn into praise

and then

dispossessed into the wilderness
they planted harvested and shared among
the restless wandering spirits
a little light a little music and
little by little

the world found them

and then they all said yes

II.

it was how

she walked up the path

mother prayers

grandmother secrets the dreams
of babies had been rolled up carefully
in remnants from the quilts packed
into the satchel

she dragged along

III.

Teaching

touching holding more
 tightly the very ones most afraid the world
 became a festival of heroes where not
 even dreams could root

But when the lightning flashed that summer morning
 And the corrupted sermon that had long silenced
 The mother-wisdom and ways of her house
 came hurtling back the air

she screamed
 her loss

another old woman (placed there
 I know by the one who refused English to ever
 touch her teeth) said, "But you learned it all
 any way you could"

IV.

The satchel

once again went away and came back
 overflowing for our feast

Was she conjure woman?

Yes.
 No one knew how deep her eyes
 could see

the yes that was merely static
 in the streets

spoke loudly in
 iron stone remnants beads and feathers
 and whispers never failed to satisfy

and now it is our no that we know

fallen to the floor
we demanded the miracle
that exhausted her
at the last

And no was prayed and sung and caressed
In the vigil of those weeping before the tomb
was readied

Until

the first one
flung the light
and dissolved the shadowed room

reaching

her hand she said *now*
and the gentle sister of us all

said

yes

yes

--*Luke*

9 April 2014



Clarion Herald photo by Frank J. Methé

Sr. Mary Eva Regina Martin, SSF. *Born in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, in 1939. Entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family on September 8, 1959, professed First Vows on August 15, 1962, and Perpetual Vows August 15, 1967. Masters in Black Theology from Xavier University. Doctorate in African American Studies from Temple University (1994). Educator and Administrator of Catholic schools in Louisiana and Texas. Curator, Archivist, Consultant. Sr. Eva Regina was elected to leadership in her Community and served as a General Councilor, Vicar General, and succumbed to death, April 7, 2014, while presiding in office as Congregational Leader.*



Sr. Eva Regina with Dr. C. Vanessa White¹

¹ Photo by Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, D.Min.