

The Bookshelf of the God of Infinite Space

By Jeffrey Skinner

You would expect an uncountable number,
Acres and acres of books in rows
Like wheat or gold bullion. Or that the words just
Appear in the mind, like banner headlines.
In fact there is one shelf
Holding a modest number, ten or twelve volumes.
No dust jackets, because — no dust.
Covers made of gold or skin
Or golden skin, or creosote or rain-
Soaked macadam, or some
Mix of salt & glass. You turn a page
& mountains rise, clouds drawn by children
Bubble in the sky, you are twenty
Again, trying to read a map
Dissolving in your hands. I say *You* & mean
Me, say *God* & mean *Librarian* — who after long research
Offers you a glass of water and an apple —
You, grateful to discover your name,
A footnote in that book.

Source: *Poetry* (December 2015)



Jeffrey Skinner's recent collection of poems is *Glaciology* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2013). He is a 2014 Poetry Fellowship recipient from the Guggenheim Foundation.

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