

Unholy Sonnet 1

By Mark Jarman

Dear God, Our Heavenly Father, Gracious Lord,
Mother Love and Maker, Light Divine,
Atomic Fingertip, Cosmic Design,
First Letter of the Alphabet, Last Word,
Mutual Satisfaction, Cash Award,
Auditor Who Approves Our Bottom Line,
Examiner Who Says That We Are Fine,
Oasis That All Sands Are Running Toward.

I can say almost anything about you,
O Big Idea, and with each epithet,
Create new reasons to believe or doubt you,
Black Hole, White Hole, Presidential Jet.
But what's the anything I must leave out? You
Solve nothing but the problems that I set.

Mark Jarman, Sonnet 1 from *Unholy Sonnets*. Copyright © 2000 by Mark Jarman. Reprinted with the permission of Story Line Press.

Source: *Unholy Sonnets* (Story Line Press, 2003)



Mark Jarman's childhood—spent in Southern California with a father who was a minister—greatly influenced his poetry. Much of Jarman's earlier work depicts surfer culture while his later work struggles with religious faith. Believing that narrative poetry welcomes a general audience, Jarman co-founded the *Reaper*, a magazine which advocates a return to traditional form and narrative verse.