

At Hagia Irene

by [Jen Stewart Fueston](#) in the [May 8, 2019](#) issue

This is the place they made the creeds.
Which I suppose is like the place
they split the atom. Light from light,
true God from true God,
hydrogen and helium
both begotten, not made.

I feel like there should be a crater
in this old Byzantine clay,
but there are only pigeons
roosting in the bougainvillea. A trio
of grey wings among the leaves,
dusty and mottled until they split the sun,
are iridescent underneath the dust.

There's a reason they called the test sites Trinity,
a fission of wholenesses, a dazzling darkness as
attempts to dissect mystery result in fire and
annihilation. Try to peer at all things
visible and invisible and nature cleaves
like a Godhead made both of matter
and of flame. This is the place they split
the atom. Which I suppose is like
the place they made the creeds.

I envy the pigeons chattering
in the eaves of Saint Irene,
that they can nest in cool tiled hallways
dark-bright from the sunlight off the sea,
how they don't try to outwit the matter
that holds them, how they've learned
to live at angles to the light

that scatters off their wings.