

Man is without excuse

by [Tania Runyan](#) in the [April 18, 2012](#) issue

Perhaps you could say that in Rome, Paul,
where the olive trees of the Seven Hills

strung their pearls of rain against the sky.
And yes, as I hike Glacier Park

with a well-stocked pack, I can welcome
God's ambassadors of fireweed and paintbrush,

the psalmic rhythm of lake hitting shore.
But as the refugee trudges

from Mogadishu to Dabaab, is she to catch
a glimpse of antelope bone in the thicket

and intuit the sufferings of the Son of Man?
She wears her own nails and crown.

An Eden of lizards surges at her heels,
but she wonders at nothing

but the sore-studded daughter she left to die
on the road, and now, the baby

strapped to her back: six pounds
at one year old. He no longer cries

but flutters small breaths on her neck
like the golden wings of moths

she counts with worshipful attention.