

Tuesday digest

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

September 13, 2011

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New today from the *Century*:

- Sharyn Dowd [reviews Katherine Clay Bassard](#): "When the first thing one finds upon opening a book about the use of scripture by African-American women writers is the claim that the biblical tropes most illuminating of the topic are the story of Balaam's ass and the voice of the female speaker in the Song of Songs, one is forced to keep reading."
- Benjamin Dueholm [meets a praying mantis](#): "It was small and perched on the smooth, domed top of one of the playground's structural pillars. . . . Naturally, I thought of St. Simeon Stylites."
- I look at [the new poverty numbers and the jobs bill](#): "Obama's bill only seems like liberal red meat because the bars have been moved so far: Democrats don't do much standing up for the poor and the unemployed anymore; they're too busy trying to defend the notion that the government can ever do anything useful at all."
- Clay Oglesbee's [lectionary column for Sunday, September 25](#): "A man once bought himself a cemetery plot and a lawn chair, and then took a week of vacation to sit on the chair at his plot. I don't think he sat there because the view was pleasant or because he was proud of his new property. He did it because he wanted to see his life from the point of view of his death and his death from the point of view of his life." (subscription required)

Links from elsewhere:

- [Obama has cut more taxes](#) than Bush did in his first term.
- [Some trouble with the law](#) for a group of Old Order Amish men.
- Does the church need to be more like [a Fortune 500 company?](#)
- It's impossible to intentionally [be authentic](#).