

Those Magi

by [Kathleen O'Toole](#) in the [January 30, 2019](#) issue

—hijacked into foil-gilded greeting cards, sung into libretti over organ chords. Sultans or astrologers? They trekked into the unknown on a hunch, launched out from some far land of distress or empty comforts looking for a shred of truth, or inspiration, through an aperture of prophecy. Did they seek liberation, or simply a moment to see into the ultimate? No matter they tumbled into a tyrant's path, beneath a comet's tail, stumbled into more misery: an outcast couple and infant sheltered in a cattle-scented shed. Yet these Magi still show up at the center of the story, coax us out of the mire of our own luxury. They bucked the pressure to simply save their skins, discovered a light, not just a star streaking through ancient skies. Whatever stirred in the slim incense of cow breath—a revelation in sheep-swaddled straw—bid them leave their treasure behind. Might have been his mother's eyes, or the silence of her still-mystified spouse that bid them leave by another route, hearts changed.