

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.