

Psalm 1

by [Jane Simpson](#) in the [July 17, 2019](#) issue

³And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

We go on a Sunday to the old church,
one parent gone in mind, the other weak
in body, though they swap places at will.
It's homecoming—when the Baptists round up
the past or the young who mow lawns, play golf.
My parents sit close, cloaked in habit, hope.
When they slump their round shoulders and chins down
they both look like they're sleeping—I can't tell.
When they stand, they rock, tremble the hymnal
that neither reads, that sways their gravity.
I hear the breathy vocals of lungs, lips—
musty, empty as hot water bottles.
They seem content, at home, here in this place
they know—this place on and above the earth.