

**Public Radio,  
Sunday Morning**

by [Marda Messick](#) in the [April 2023](#) issue

“Sunday Baroque” on the radio,  
making pancakes with the last  
of last summer’s berries, we stop,  
silent, as Allegri’s *Miserere* fills the house  
with the accompanying hot light  
of this eleventh September.

*Miserere mei, Deus: secundum  
magnam misericordiam tuam.*

Nine unaccompanied voices  
sang the first *Miserere* for Tenebrae  
in the Sistine Chapel, Holy Week, 1638,  
the year John Milton came to Rome  
after meeting blind Galileo.

Did he listen in the dark on Good Friday,  
*The Creation of Adam* on the ceiling above  
a century after Michelangelo swayed  
on the scaffold, and did he ponder  
the optic glass pointed at the moon,  
paradise lost and the falling angel?

Back and back in the human past,  
the plea for mercy; in all present tribulation,  
the plea for mercy.

*Have mercy upon me, O God:  
after Thy great goodness.*

The earth revolves around the sun.  
Sweet purple stains our plates, crumbs  
in honey, the yellow butter.