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Baptists

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David Bottoms

Baptists

At Canton First Baptist no one ever spoke of mythologies
or metaphor. No one in the pulpit, huffing

red-faced to catch a breath,
ever asked why the prophets had long ago drifted into dust and silence.

Desert was simply a wilderness of sand. Blood was blood,
water was wine,

and wine (grape juice) was sometimes blood.

Most Sundays my mind was someplace else entirely, racing
the engine of my father's Impala, or breaking

a curveball over home plate, or casting

a lure over choir loft and organ, over stained-glass disciples
and net-draped fishing boats, struggling

to hook a thought, to reel it to the surface, clean, untangled,
without snagging the pulpit or the back of a pew.