

Psalm 79

Benjamin Davis

“Is there a nation founded on love—
I mean, on the love of foreigners?” the mystic
Simone Weil once asked.

This nation acknowledges you, God
it calls on your name every goddamn day
more worried about taking the Lord’s name in vain,
the new Costco opening in town
than the poison in the condemned’s veins
—thou shall not kill but the State shall—
and the border’s closing.

Help us, God, to remember
your name is not on a flag but a cross
not high in the wind but low on the ground
not banging the gavel
but in the yard—barbed wire, dust, gravel.

Then we will praise you, God
we will pledge our allegiance to the meek.
We will sing not our anthem but your songs.