

AT THE EDGE (Mark 1: 1-8)
by Andrew King

You shuffle your feet at the water's edge,
shield your eyes with your hand
from the blaze of the sun,
take another glance at the face
of the man in the river
that long ago was the boundary

between an old life and new, and you hear
his word of summons, words
that urge repentance for preparation
for the Anointed,
and he offers the water to flow
over your skin as a sign

that your sins have been forgiven,
and he's saying there is One
coming after him to baptize
not with water but the Holy Spirit of God,
so that you think, as you stand there
at the edge of the river, how on the edge

you are of something quite powerful
that feels larger than words, than
the mightiest river, washing over and into you,
drowning your heart with something
like joy, like the goodness of a hope
you're almost afraid to believe in,

but every time you shuffle
your feet as if to leave
they grow a little wetter with the water,
until at last you take a step, and then
another, and again, until it's you
waist deep with John the Baptizer,

and the sun beating down on the flowing
surface seems to say
"Yes!" to your heart
which isn't drowning after all,
which in fact, in your chest,
has gone striding into the world,

following the sun past the river to
what comes next on the horizon,
amazed, expectant, praising.