

**LET'S GET OUT OF ALEXANDRIA**

Someone, he may have been called Paphnutius,  
Taking a worn-out codex and ensuring  
A weekly supply of seven small dry loaves,  
Withdrew into the desert forty miles  
To an oasis the caravans by-passed—

To read the codex without the over-helpful  
Confusing annotations of the scholars,  
Letting the words carry their full load,  
Letting them enter his mind as living things  
To articulate themselves in their own good time.

Good time it was, while words in themselves simple  
Assembled into sayings and miracle-stories,  
Testimonies took on their full resonance,  
And a single voice became audible speaking through  
The multiple voices of the scripted tradition.

It was as though long-scattered tesserae,  
Chips of stone of various colours and gold,  
Were being picked over by an expert hand  
And arched high over the floor of the desert  
Into the deep and sombre glory of the Logos.

Word and spirit became interchangeable,  
The glory of Christ shone through the simple text  
And brighter in the negations of the night,  
The world loved but forgotten, the Logos was,  
Was what he is for all of us and for ever.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

