

# Fastening Myself to the Page: Three Owen Merton Paintings, 1923

By **Kathleen Baker**

*“Of us all, Father was the only one who really had any kind of a faith.”  
The Seven Storey Mountain*

## I. *Untitled (Houses, Trees and Red Bank, Bermuda)*

To capture the minute lighted moment  
not in violence or transience  
but as an interface  
with a scene upon the mind  
so fleeting as to fill the river,  
grow the trees,  
spill oneself over the red bank,  
I reel myself indelibly  
upon a canvas of dryness  
bound to the page  
by the color maize.

## II. *Bastian of the Day with Assaulting Trees*



**Kathleen Baker**

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**Kathleen Baker** is an ITMS member and assistant professor in the Department of Geography at Western Michigan University, developing disease risk models for use in agriculture and the biological sciences. Her poetry has been published in *The Penwood Review* and by the UCDB Press in Campo Grande, Brazil. These poems were prompted by a visit to Christchurch, New Zealand, Owen Merton’s birthplace.

Beauty is  
in balance,  
in pattern,  
in finding  
a strong gentleness of place  
where you may fasten for a moment  
a belief in unrequited wholeness.

III. *Burning Fields and Cold Motion of Stillness*

Amidst the fire from the sky  
and the active coastline of desire,  
I set firmly my weakness  
in the pale lavender of home.  
Nothing is more truly found,  
not even in the tranquil sea.