

Famine and Scarcity

Robert A. Rees

My grandson, age seven,
head bent over his crustless peanut-
butter and honey sandwich,
small bowl of grapes,
and orange juice,
says these very words:
“Heavenly Father,
bless that there will be no famine
or scarcity in the land.”
And I wonder where this
pocket prophet, this junior Jeremiah,
has heard such biblical phrases
and how in his sabbath of years
he seems to understand them.

On the evening news I see

wasted plains
barren trees
bone piles of the vultures of war
and under a tangled bush in Africa
a mother holding her ghost of a child
its body a collapsed puppet.

At night when I pray my usual clichés
for the hungry and hopeless,
the bereaved and brutalized,
the wrecked and wretched of the world,
I add a few words for him
and for all those like him who
open their hearts
into their small clasped hands.