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The Mat

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The Mat

A POEM BY BONNIE B. THURSTON

Down I went
through a hole in the roof,
stomach churning with fear of falling
into some worse calamity
than wasted legs and years.

“Take your mat, and go home.”

Oh, bitter charge! not abandon
the symbol of servitude,
but bear the reminder
of a wounded past,
and not to some new place,
but home where I am known
as broken beggar.

Healed and free,
He sends me back
to renew those whom,
like the mat,
I would rather leave behind.

Bonnie Thurston’s poem, “The Mat,” first appeared in *Review for Religious: A Journal of Catholic Spirituality* 66/3 (2007).

BONNIE BOWMAN THURSTON is the former William F. Orr Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has occasionally served as an adjunct professor at Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee.

