



4-1-2002

Moroni

Michael Hicks

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Recommended Citation

Hicks, Michael (2002) "Moroni," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 41 : Iss. 2 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol41/iss2/10>

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Moroni

If you bury a good book
 will it come back to life
 like a perennial?
 Crack this book open
 and watch the words fall out,
 sowing themselves in your heart.

He has a different heart now,
 different from the one
 that cut its trails through his body
 as if he were a prairie to be crossed,
 different from the one that beat its toms
 into the river of his people's blood.

He is a writer now. He wraps his words
 in metal, scraping them through
 his father's voice like a golden plow,
 planting them in an empty nation.

If you hide a book will it
 jump out and scare you?
 He is a different man every day,
 looking up from the hole where
 he left himself and seeing no one.
 He will walk who knows how long,
 looking for soldiers on the horizon
 as if for letters in a margin, until
 a gust of loneliness cuts him
 like a hollow tree into which
 his bones will spill, white as pages.

And when he comes back an angel,
 he will be a different man again,
 but still good at hiding things.

—Michael Hicks

This poem won honorable mention in the
BYU Studies 2001 poetry contest.