

Sonnet Scroll

The Skeptic

By Jean L. Kreiling

"I suppose God is just a noise we make to contain something about what it is we long for." —poet Pádraig Ó Tuama, on NPR's Book of the Day

That *noise* itself can fill the soul—the names
for the Omnipotent, devoutly prayed
and sung. The skeptic knows this, never claims
that *God* does not exist or hasn't played
a vital role in goodness and in grace.
But he might say that *God's* a metaphor,
a way to meet our best hopes face to face
or nearly so, with rituals that open up a door
to what might otherwise be far beyond
our reach. The skeptic means no disrespect.
His unchurched ethics may not correspond
to dogma's details, but they intersect
with kindred values. He just does without
a *God*. For him, the name stirs only doubt.