

Virus Vigil

**Poetry by Jim Blackburn
Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman**



Bats

This hymn is devoted to the wonderful bat
That roosts in places that are hard to get at,
Unfortunately, the bat often gets a bad rap,
And I'm here to denounce that bit of claptrap.

Bats are reputed to be from hell,
Making a good Halloween story to tell,
Bats in the belfry means you can't relate,
And batshit crazy is not a good state.

But in Texas our bats provide biological control
Devouring crop-eating bugs on their nightly patrol,
They are known worldwide for pollinating crops,
The tequila agave plant is one of its stops.

.
And my, can they fly, as they leap to the sky,
The column like smoke vanishing up high,
And at dawn they return to hide from the sun,
Deep in the shadows, tucked into home.

They have a radar that helps them avoid
A brutal collision – a life form destroyed,
They all come back and pack in so tight,
As they turn our day into their night.

But being a bat is not all cheer and good will,
For predator hawks are a threat to kill
One of the many departing life forms,
But life can't be lived without some harms.

There's no doubt the bat's a critical member

Of the Earth Church family, and we must remember
To protect their roosts 'neath bridges and caves,
And act to ensure that humans behave.

And in the early evening in the summertime,
Look to the sky for an experience sublime,
And hope to see a bat dashing your way
To welcome its presence – to ask it to stay.

So welcome to Earth Church
Pull yourself up a pew
Where we honor the bat
With an appreciative salute.