



CLAY

*Beauty is the vocation
of the earth.*

—William Bryant Logan

**God's breath on a compound of silica,
alumina, and various oxides—
primarily iron—gave Adam life.
There is a primal, almost mystical
connection between humankind and clay,
from the footed, bellied first receptacles
to frescoed Renaissance cathedral walls.
To Carver's eye, the muddy creek banks say
*Here to be dug up, strained, and painted on,
is loveliness the poorest can afford:
azures, ochres . . .* Scraps of discarded board
are landscapes. Cabins undistinguished brown
bloom like slaves freed to struggle toward self-worth.
Beauty is commonplace, as cheap as dirt.**

Marilyn Nelson

Broadside

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