

CLOCK

Paul J. Willis¹

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My grandsons point to the face of my wristwatch
and say *clock*. Yes, I say, I am wearing a clock
on my arm. But why would anyone do that?

Gulliver's captors thought the round,
crystalline thing in his fob pocket
must be a god that he worshiped.

But we are much more advanced. What we
worship is our cell phones. Me, though?
I bow down to the outworn creed of a wristwatch.

Three years ago, my wife and I inherited
a grandfather clock. Imagine wearing that
on your arm—or maybe bearing it on your back.

It would bend you double, like a cross.
You would need help carrying it
on your way to that bare skull outside of town.

No clock in the forest, Shakespeare says.
A wristwatch will separate your hand from the rest
of your body from now until the end of time.

1. Paul J. Willis is an emeritus professor of English at Westmount College and a former Poet Laureate of Santa Barbara, California. He has authored many poetry collections, including the forthcoming *Seven Falls* (Poiema; Cascade, 2026).

PARABLE

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Live oak and poison oak
growing together, intermingled—

the tree of life, the tree
of the knowledge of good and evil.

DECEMBER

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Ginko leaves
on sodden ground—
yellow fanfare
without sound.

Live oak branches
pale with light,
juncos shivering
in flight.

Solstice now
the time of year
to wait and warm:
the Savior's near.