

## POETRY DESK

## St. Gregory Nazianzen

## John McGuckin

contrary to the manual

for a sensible monk;

master of the maybe;

anxious they might take you up all wrong;

shaking your fist at an Emperor,

(once he had turned the corner

out of sight);

every foray into speech

a costed regret.

Your heart was like a spider's silk swinging wildly at the slightest breeze, too tender for this tumbling world of mountebanks, and quacks and gobs, but tuned to hear the distant voices of the singing stars

and marvel at the mercy of it all.

- April 1999



The Very Rev. Dr. *John A. McGuckin* is the Nielsen Professor of Early Church History at Union Theological Seminary and a professor of Byzantine Christian studies at Columbia University. He is the author of over 25 books on the early Christian Church, including *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (2001). *The Path of Christianity, a* history of the first millennium of the Church, will be published in March 2017. Three volumes of his *Collected Studies* in New Testament, patristic, and mystical theology will appear in April 2017. Fr. John is president of the Sophia Institute, a research foundation dedicated to Orthodox culture and history. He is the rector of St. Gregory's Orthodox parish in New York City.