

Christian Scientist

In Youngstown, Ohio where tragedies
happen at least twice a day
it's 7AM and workers belt bourbons
and beer before work and smoke cracks

over the light, the bottles,
the men rocked sobbing, hands stitched
to tissues, and pants shut tight.

In the alley we sought distraction
and the gap-toothed hag's arms shook,
ready to take flight. Everyday she tells
Scott and Josh about the night she ate
popsicles and fell into a coma.

No medicine could save her. Like Lindbergh
she left her bloated life and floated,
without modern instruments, towards Paris

to have coffee with God. I can't go forward,
I can't go back. They argued about Elvis,
the Irish, the Pyramids, and arm-wrestled
to see who would pay for the danish.

Help me, I'm tired. God never loses.

(cont)

("Christian Scientist," cont., no break)

He grandly pointed to his Rolex:

"Seed, Divide, and Don't Take Any Shit."

In twenty minutes the EKG's straight line started to zig-zag like a whore's whip.

Finally put back together she yelled

for network coverage, L. Ron Hubbard, and cream pies. They discharged her and told her to lay off booze and sweets.

She joined a circus of preachers as a minimum-wage clown/healer, short-order cook, and reliable plant in the hostile small-town crowds.

She married a blind, bald man, reared Koreans, bathed in barbed wire, and got sacked over a cotton candy scandal. She came home.

She works the corners near here now, threatening Josh's father with crossed eyes and fingers pointed deep in pockets,

(Con .)

("Christian," p. 3, cont., with break)

or following Scott's father to K-Mart
on Sundays, mocking his selections
of screw eyes and generic vice grips.

Weather and play become dull and damp
and Faith spreads with the morning,
leaning on the young, puffing
and scratching, day in day out,

dreaming of rabid sharks and wine,
hits of mescaline, her future lovers,
because so on the loud whistle's noon

alarms another fleshy heaven
that stains her thighs' second shift.