

Foot washing

by [Eliza Griswold](#) in the [November 13, 2013](#) issue

The congregation of pilled sweaters gathers.

The least of them my brethren, their terrible feet unpeel  
from comfortable shoes. They come to be healed by my father  
through my father who kneels before them with a bowl a monk threw  
on a potter's wheel near the rocks of the Dry Salvages.

Among the fusty velvet pews, timelessness collides  
with time incarnate in human weakness, raw skin, yellow corns.

Here, among us, there are so few strong among us,  
so many reeking needs, such fervent despair,

I long to bare my baby teeth, to lunge at the wretched.

God save us from those who wish to be saved in this suburban church,  
its reenactment intended to puncture time  
while the hollow chime of tennis balls from the next door courts  
rings with the sacrilege of a Sunday plough.