

My Presbyterian father

by [Duncan D. Newcomer](#) in the [May 4, 2004](#) issue

He would sit
Sunday mornings
in his big steeped chair
the cross hung
gold and unswayed overhead
a man in a robe.
I had seen him dress
sitting on the side of his bed
he wore ribbed gauzy undershirts
and white boxer shorts
and my father's legs
had no hair where socks go.
As the organist played a meditation
he would span his forehead with his hand
and seem to suffer
but then leaning back
his bright eyes would go
fishing for me in the dark congregation
and I waited

and waited until
he caught me and smiled.
During most of the service
I stared at unmoving
biblical men in stained glass.
I loved to have him
see me in church
and after the sermon
I stood in line
and went through
shaking his hand

like we didn't know
each other
and I told him I enjoyed it
and he put his other hand
on top of mine.