

Compline

by [Julie L. Moore](#) in the [June 7, 2017](#) issue

—*St. Meinrad Archabbey*

Forgive me my faults, my faults, my grievous faults,
she recites with the Benedictines preparing
for evening's darkening shroud—

her husband's figure standing erect
in her memory, his finger pointing at her,
threatening her, his once-sure vows

now dead, their hazy specters
prowling the hallways of her heart,
their long fingernails raking its walls.

While she chants—words, just words,
& barely sung—the Lord's Prayer
stumbles onto her tongue: *forgive us our trespasses,*

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Not even an hour, nor is it sweet,
this prayer that arrests her,

exorcising the ghosts of promises past,
their furious, furious haunting.