

They Have Closed the Church My Father Helped Build

Anita Tanner

where he sawed through his finger
now perpetually stiff,
paid three assessments

where the dedicatory prayer droned on
past limits of steeple, lighthouse green,
and the subflooring I played on

where he sat on the rostrum.
jaw-bone moving in his temples,
stood to conduct

where I slipped leftover sacrament bread
into my purse
with the taste of perfume

where our teen pew got giggles
we couldn't control
during prayer or a farmer sermon

where a mural of Christ
and fishermen with bulging nets hung,
our white church full, empty,

the Lainhart boy's casket
muffling the aisle,
the congregation wondering

where it all led.