

# On a Denver Bus

*Anita Tanner*

Out of the cold Christmas streets  
we climb to an old woman  
raising her scarfed face to us,  
scarred and hollow-nosed,  
lowered at the shock in our eyes.  
“What happened to her face?”  
over and over from my daughter.  
I ponder birth, burning,  
frostbite, and the ice in a city street  
crackling under the burden of rubber,  
and hear someone’s words  
that ice splits starwise,  
then utter the cry:  
Make us whole  
from the confusion of this face,  
the face reflected  
in every bus window.

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*ANITA TANNER has a perpetual interest in poetry and literature and resides in Cortez, Colorado, with her husband and six children.*