

# Deity

*Anita Tanner*

Who is he from the Sunday pulpit  
acquiring the air of sins  
with his lecture,  
hell's woes never hidden  
in the muscles of his jaws,  
fraternal words (all-knowing,  
all-powerful) accentuated  
with his fist.  
(I cannot see the face.)

Even though I kneel to him,  
she is God.  
She is nurse of my mortal wounds,  
cradler of my conscience.  
I bathed in her womb-baptism,  
uncurled, breathing perspiration  
through the pores of her temples.  
We are one.

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*ANITA TANNER has an unquenchable thirst for reading and writing. She is the mother of six children, serves as state young women's president, and loves working with teenagers.*

I acknowledge him,  
his voice deigning  
from where he leans  
into a makeshift throne  
every week,  
the dominion of his words  
falling on the sorrow of ears.

When I am racked  
in confinement, she washes  
and anoints me. Her voice,  
atrophied in the gloom,  
whispers kindred peace  
to all my nerves, to the white moons  
of my nails, graying roots  
of her hair mingling with my own.