

1987

Catechism

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Recommended Citation

Dawes, Jennie (1987) "Catechism," *Exile*: Vol. 34 : No. 2 , Article 21.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol34/iss2/21>

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Catechism

I remember the colorless hallways,
Parochial back-country schoolyards,
My small hands blackened
With the cheap printing ink of missalettes.
This was the world, all of it, to them.
Your people only existed in books,
They were the ones who killed Christ,
The fair-skinned, blue-eyed Saviour
Of my delicate farmtown childhood.
They would not even have allowed us
To play together.
I can laugh now at what I was taught.
They would tell us we should not love
— Or, so it is written.
The white-haired, knuckle-cracking nun
Who ruled my adolescent conscience
Would never have thought, at all,
That we would settle our differences in peace
Under the ancient stars.

Jennie Dawes