

1982

Baptism

Becky Hinshaw
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hinshaw, Becky (1982) "Baptism," *Exile*: Vol. 29 : No. 1 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol29/iss1/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

The Baptism

Mr. Crossway held a holy finger
to the window
asking me if today was it,
if Jesus came through that window
would I be saved.

Every Sunday Jesus snarled
through a brown beard
floating outside our sanctuary,
and we trembled with fear poking our bladders.

So we ran down the aisle
holding our souls in our mouths
like pennies
we could spit in the palm of the preacher
and Mr. Crossway
shrouded with age,
clutched me with rope-veined hands,
pressed against me praising God.

That night
I was nine and naked
under a white robe,
up to my belly in cold water.
And Mr. Crossway pulled me back into the well,
soaking me with eternal protection,
my robe floating up on the water,
revealing my naked body—
closing my eyes,
hoping He wouldn't see,
I cried.

Numb with shame, with helplessness,
sobs jerking my body
like the final small kicks
of a deer,

Sealing my youth with confusion
and dreams of Mr. Crossway
coming through that window
seeing my girl body.

Becky Hinshaw