

Old Bethel Church

Through these seventy years she remains:
limestone foundation, weathered bricks
reaching steeple, unlocked door
stiff maple pews, scarred oak floor
and organ pipes at attention
behind the pulpit.

She baptized and catechized me
convicted and forgave me
confirmed and married me
buried my grandparents
buried Mom and Dad
and my six-year-old cousin.

I taste unleavened bread
and hear laughter from the basement.
Holy, Holy, Holy echoes
through the stale hymnals
as our family pew beckons me
to sit where we sat
every Sunday morning--
in the light of the naked cross.

By Arlin Buyert