

Under Brick and Stone

Crypt of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame, IN

Below the splendor of the Lady Chapel,
off the path of pilgrim-tourist feet,
a congregation leaves its daily scrabble
for pews well-worn and scarred by buttons, keys.
They lift their praises under lowered ceilings:
no frescoes and no baldacchino here.
No gilded columns elevate their feelings
and no one gathers photos, souvenirs.
Yet all who bring the burdens that they carry
with battle-weary steps and aching bones
are heard by Joseph and the Virgin Mary
who advocate in humble honey tones
for those who join them here, beneath the prairie
to bury worry under brick and stone.