

Communion

by [Lawrence Kessenich](#)

During Lent, season of discipline,
I drag myself early out of bed, ride
to Mass with Mom and Mrs. Crivello,
warm in the front seat between their
woolen coats, soothed by familiar perfume.

Headlights carve the ebony darkness.
The women talk in low tones
about people I don't know, the thrum
of their voices reassuring. I doze
for seconds that seem like minutes.

In the half-acre lot, we park among
a small band of cars huddled near
the entrance of St. Monica's. Inside,
stained glass windows, a feast of color
in daylight, are black. The church is barn-cold.

Candles burn, bells ring, prayers are murmured,
songs sung. The church warms slowly. I sit,
stand, kneel between the two women,
rituals washing over me like soft waves
on Lake Michigan in August.

Later, I carry the sacred mood
out on my route, dispensing papers
like Communion to my neighbors.

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