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SHEILAH ROBERTS

The Library

Deep in the tall stacks
several rows away
they gather,
books in arms
flicking long hair,
clutched together.

They share secrets,
while stands of ancient
volumes
gorged with knowledge
gaze down upon them in
mild contempt.

Rustling air,
their whispers shadow the
halls.
I want to join in but I am
new.
The sibilant 'sh' of she floats
down towards me.

Sheilah Roberts is the mother of two adult children and a senior dog. She lives in St. Philips, Newfoundland. In addition to poetry, she has published a book and is about to publish her first short story.

MARGO SWISS

Mother God

*Thus God is our mother...and He wills that we know this,
for He will have all our love fastened to Him.*

—Julian of Norwich, *A Shewing of God's Love*

On hands and knees before you, God, I fall,
bear with grief this wretched beggar love.
Face down dead I lay
the once soft heart You worked in me,
turned now so sickly hard,
that hardening harder still
is doomed to kill
my light and life.

The sin I bring is like a serpent's tooth
devouring rest, that eats and burns within
yet wears itself without
by such disguise as otherwise
seems meet and right.

How shall I find You now, O Saviour God,
in this all parching heat?
A desert land extends no hand to spare
what further shame I fear:
your mighty rod that reigns
to break the back of my desire
to be your constant child –

Become, dear Christ, instead my Mother God.
Exchange this brutal love that bends
for one that raises up,
that You, once soiled for me,
shall call this breach a necessary sin
to lead me home
and by my own
poor nakedness in You
redress your glory, Lord.

*Margo Swiss teaches English and Creative Writing at York University. She edited an anthology, *Poetry as Liturgy: An Anthology of Canadian Poets* (The St. Thomas Poetry Series, 2007), which received an Alcuin Society Award for book design and a special award from the Word Guild of Canada.*