

sawcc-ccfsa.ca/bulletin/bulletin-october-2008>.

Statistics Canada. "Births and Birth Rates, by Province and Territory 2004-2009. Updated 23 December 2009. Online: <<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo04a-eng.htm?sdi=birth%20rate>>.

Thompson, Allan. *Toronto Star* Tuesday, October 17, 1995: A8.

Vallières, Pierre. *White Niggers of America*. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1971.

## 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.*