

Terminal

Months ahead of time Mother begged you, "God, warn me at least two weeks before I die so I can eat whatever I want." And by the end, she ate like crazy. Did you nod?

I want my manna freeze-dried. I would store it for a thousand instant crises. Why won't you stock it that way? Why not bend, try something new? No one thunders anymore.

This pew's too tight a fit. I squat, can't kneel straight, lest I bulge into the hymnal rack. Expensive incense. Beeswax. A red stole. The pipes sound far away. I float. I feel your body in my throat. The wine bites back. Blessed are the, blessed are the ... the cold.

■ Louie Crew

To Canterbury in March

We beat Chaucerian pilgrims by two months,
traveling past sheep in snow, yet crisped in Jags
and Fords. Forsythian flashes, like bright flags
along the road, performed some yellow stunts
through our steamed glass. There, we had a hot lunch,
then stood beneath the weathered, nuded crags
where once had stood stone saints in glory. Nags
ushered dull husbands inside, where one bunch
of U.S.C.s, rapt by a Cockney guide,
saw Becket murdered fresh beneath the Queen
of Spades and pondered skimpy thighs and hide
medieval under a marble maxi. Lean
and watching, a tired English matron said,
“Well, one cathedral’s like another, dead.”

■ Louie Crew