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How to Make Your Own Hell

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Then, I heard what sounded like two hollow pieces of metal clinking together, then the sound of her purse resting against the floor again. The metal clinked softly, on and off while she continued.

"I had tried to figure out exactly what I came here for. I wasn't sure about my reasons. I just knew I needed to come. Now I think I know." She revealed.

"Have you not come here for absolution?" I searched.

"No. I mean, well, I thought I had. But I already felt that burden fly from me a moment ago. I may not know where my baby is, but I do know his name and that he's alright. Don't ask me how, I just know. I guess that's all that matters to me. Ain't no use wondering whether I'm right with God. I figured a while back that I ain't got it in me to aspire to something so complex. In fact, I can tell you surely that when I last left here, I never thought I'd see this place again."

AT FIRST I TRIED TO PLACATE HER WITH WORDS. IT WAS NO USE. SO, I LEFT HER ALONE.

It was then that I wondered if the woman had grown up in this church, until at last she finished her story.

"Early that morning before the sun came up, I had started to feel my baby coming. And I got so scared I didn't know what to do. I just got off the bus and started walking, and walking. Then, when I thought I couldn't go anymore, I saw the cross on the backside of the steeple. And I stumbled up onto the back steps of this building.

I tried to be quiet, but I could not hold my screams. I was in agony. A Sister had heard me and came out to see. She talked about calling for help, but I told her I would leave if she told even a single other soul. She made a cross on her chest. I knew then that she was well with God.

How to Make Your Own Hell

NICHOLAS McLEAN

"From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire"
Robert Frost, *Fire and Ice*

The Fire always burns away
The sins committed without measure,
Churning, burning night and day

The strange feeling that you get,
Too much pain and too much pleasure,
The fire always burns away.

Excess knows no bounds but the ones behind it,
Leaping off the ledge and diving into the abyss,
Churning, burning, night and day.

So far from the sheets of lace
Down below in the blackest darkness,
The Fire always burns away.

And in this lonely, hollow place
The heart builds itself a pyre,
Churning, burning night and day

Secrets this heart might betray,
Lost in the tongues of desire,
Sins the Fire always burns away,
Churning, burning, night and day.