

2021

Catholic Guilt

Kylie Walsh
Dominican University of California

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Walsh, Kylie (2021) "Catholic Guilt," *The Tuxedo Archives*: Vol. 2015 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholar.dominican.edu/tuxedolit/vol2015/iss2/16>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Liberal Arts and Education at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Tuxedo Archives by an authorized editor of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.

Catholic Guilt

Kylie Walsh

I do not remember the first time I kissed a boy.
I remember I thought I was going to hell.
I remember his name,
Connor.

I must have been thirteen.
He had dark eyes and darker hair,
I was scared of his older sister,
his mother's tongue was thick with vowels
but I tried my best to understand
when she called me 'love'
like it was a commandment, not a calling.
If only she knew how well I would.

We were supposed to get married.
Because when you're thirteen you believe
that you will always love the same boy
who never made fun of your glasses
and knew all his prayers
while Sister Carlotta whacks your knuckles
for laughing at dirty jokes
and kissing in the lunch line.
When I was twelve, we were no longer allowed
to hold hands during the Our Father
so we could keep our minds on God.

The first time I kissed a girl
I was twenty.
Her name was Maria
with dark eyes and darker hair
that covered her breasts in gentle waves.
We were tipsy off mimosas and vodka shots,
her hand on my waist, I turned.

Her mouth on mine, lips parting like the Red Sea,
our tongues like the tide, ebbing slowly,
refusing to dart serpent-like down throats.
We will always be softer than sin.
Determined to memorize these bodies before we crumble
like the pillars of salt we are destined to become.
Her hand resting on the curve of my back
like a priest lowering me into baptismal waters.
Mine tangled up in her hair
like Adam with Eve when he took her from God.

“Come out” Maria declared
like Moses drawing water from the rock.
Neither had asked God for permission.
Moses was banned from the Holy Land,
punishment for independence.
How far must I wander for mine?

Our Father, who art in heaven,
can you hear me call your name?
Father, I have sinned,
have loved both beings you created.
Father, you formed me from a rib,
blew your breath into my lungs,
do not leave me now.

I’m not asking for your permission to love her,
just a promise that you’ll still love me
if I do.

