

marlene pearson

***The Preacher Meant What He Said/
I Saw The Spit Fly Out His Mouth***

1.

The year I got saved
I was in the 3rd grade
we lived in LA
a small house with ice plant
dripping over the fence

on saturday my mother with shears
trimmed the juicy plant
my father watching the lizard scamper out
stabbed it with a shovel/its head and front legs
ran away from its body
I asked why/he said they're no good
they don't belong here

at night mother listened
I said my prayer: "now I lay me down to sleep"
mother added
lines and I said them: 'God bless mommy and daddy
and make Marlene a good girl'

on sunday at Bethel Temple
I saw spit fly out the preacher's mouth
his waving hands/red eyes

he explained how Jesus died for me
he told how many nails they used
how long/how wide/how blunt
how Jesus longed to cry
but he was dying for me
because of my sins
what did I do wrong?

someone stabbed his belly with a 6 inch spear
Jesus nearly bit off his tongue
from the pain
his father made him do it
and he wanted to

so I wouldn't have to die
when the preacher called come down/confess
accept salvation/I ran to the altar

a fat woman followed/she smelled
of deodorant and gardenia/she wrapped
her arm around me/waved another in the air
and halleluahed for 15 minutes/! couldn't
stop crying all the way home in the car until
mother tucked me in bed and kissed
me good night/when I closed my eyes
to sleep I knew I was good enough.