

# Pray

Hollie M. Goodwin Teltoe

I saw Mary rocking baby Jesus,  
swaddled in a hag's dirty bathrobe,  
near the drugstore where I had stopped  
to suck marshmallows  
out of a double Rocky Road.  
It was cold.  
Joseph stood in the street wearing his face,  
that question flickering just below wet lashes.  
One hand limp, thick,  
dangled wasted.  
The other bore his shield-  
Will Work For Food.  
I hate nuts  
so I spit them out on the ground.  
Mary paced in half circles,  
stoop shouldered, lead breasted,  
crooning comforts and lies  
to baby Jesus  
who dreamt of God.  
Chocolate oozed from the tip of my cone  
out of control  
and dripped all over my shoes.  
I wiped it off  
but there was really nothing I could do.  
So I threw it away  
and went home.