

*Verna George*

## **IN HEROES' CIRCLE**



Gaunt saints laid out on slabs, they sleep  
in the nine o'clock sun. The benches  
are coffin-narrow, made to keep  
the homeless flock away. The stench  
of loneliness ascends from their heap  
of cast-offs -- styrofoam-boxed lunches,  
cardboard sheets, cane trash, relics of hope:  
a battered bag, dead coals, an empty cup.

I avert my eyes  
from the sun-struck show of shame  
as they rise like the dead and stretch  
and turn as if at home  
in the warmth of a love multiplied  
by intimates in a private room,  
or our new Jerusalem.

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