

Peter Hammill

"The Lie (bernini's St Theresa)"

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Genuflection / erection in church.
Sacristy cloth / moth-eaten shroud.
Secret silence / sacred secrets
accumulate dust, aggravate the eye.
Incautious laughter after confession.
Benediction ----- fictional fear
Hidden faces ... Grace is a name,
like Chastity, like Lucifer, like mine.
You took me through the window-stain,
drowned in image, incense, choir-refrain
and slow ecstasy -----
I'd embrace you if I only knew your name...
The silent corner haunts my shadow prayers :
ice-cold statue -- rapture divine,
unconscious eyes,
the open mouth,
the wound of love,
the Lie.
You took me, gave me reasons for
saints and missals, vigils, all the more
holy martyrs -----
I'd embrace you and walk through
the one-way door...
I'd embrace you, but it would be
just another lie -----
(* which is to say that the statue is the inspiration, but
not the Lie)

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