

Gail White

Sunday in a Russian Church

Sometimes I need a fix, a liturgy
sung in a language I don't understand,
just ninety minutes of pure sanctity,
when Beauty from the icons takes my hand

and whispers of some heavenly reprieve.
But if I understood the words, I'd say
there's too much here that I just can't believe,
too much third-century thought. There's just no way

for me to go pre-modern. So I'm here:
Too old for youthful struggles between doubt
and faith, too old to waste another year
on love relationships that don't work out,

too old to still be waiting for a sign.
You tell me your dream and I'll tell you mine.

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Sonnet for Some of Us

Blessed are those who take what they can get.
Who marry someone who is not the greatest
beauty or athlete that they've ever met.
Blessed are those who do not have the latest
technology at command. Who do not speak
three languages. Who cry when something hurts.
Blessed are those whose drive to win is weak,
stock market failures, poets, introverts.
Blessed are those who choose to live alone,
with dogs or cats, rather than make a speech,
who never go exploring on their own
or try for anything beyond their reach.
Blessed, who know they'd fail so shun the test
and settle down, settling for second best.