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Loaf-Shapes in Tucson

Jeri Schelhaas
Dordt College

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Loaf-Shapes in Tucson

Jeri Schelhaas

A bread loaf of stone
Mounded and hollowed
On a desert hillside along the highway,
A Mary statue squeezed inside
Looking out on the desolate chaparral,
Silently passing out blessing.

And then, candles in glass holders
In the old mission's loaf-shaped chapel annex
Warm as an oven,
Each candle begging a blessing
From the cool blue-draped missionary
Pictured on its sleeve.

And then, packed-clay fireplaces
Lit against the desert cool
Rounded like bread loaves in the corners of De Grazia's studio,
Marking the turns of his stations of the cross.
I look long at the one of a blue-robed mother
Enfolding her son in her rounding, warming arms.

And then, the Lord's Supper service with family,
Four of us in a line
Delicately dipping the grainy bread,
Pulled from one loaf, into the juice,
Nourished by the covenant promise,
That "broken for you" includes each of us.

Loaf after loaf after loaf.

And then, honestly, after loaves of homemade bread
And wine with friends,
We sing with St. Olaf's choir "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem."
House of Bread.
So much irony. Should I expect
Rearranging, reshaping, refilling, redistribution,
A St. Loaf here, a St. Loaf there, a St. Loaf everywhere?