

## Living Alone with Jesus—

Can it be

I am the only Jew residing in Danville, Kentucky, looking for matzoh in the Safeway and the A & P? The Sears, Roebuck salesman wrapping my potato masher advises me to accept Christ as my personal savior or else when I die I'll drop straight down to hell, but the ladies who come knocking with their pamphlets say as long as I believe in God that makes us sisters in Christ. I thank them kindly.

In the county there are thirty-seven churches and no butcher shop. This could be taken as a matter of all form and no content.

On the other hand, form can be seen as an extension of content, I have read that, up here in the sealed-off wing where my three rooms are threaded by outdoor steps to the downstairs world. In the open risers walnut trees are growing. Sparrows dipped in raspberry juice come to my one window sill. Cardinals

are blood spots before my eyes.  
My bed is a narrow canoe with a fringy throw.  
Whenever I type it takes to the open sea  
and comes back wrong end to.  
Every morning the pillows produce tapioca.  
I gather it up for a future banquet.

I am leading a meatless life. I keep  
my garbage in the refrigerator. Eggshells  
potato peels and the rinds of cheeses nest  
in the empty sockets of my daily grapefruit.  
Every afternoon at five I am comforted  
by the carillons of the Baptist church next door.  
I let the rock of ages cleave for me on Monday.  
Tuesday I am washed in the blood of the lamb.  
Bringing in the sheaves on Wednesday keeps me busy.  
Thursday's the day on Christ the solid rock I stand.  
The Lord lifts me up to higher ground on Friday so that  
Saturday I put my hands in the nail-scarred hands.  
Nevertheless, I stay put on the Sabbath. I let  
the whiskey bottle say something scurrilous.

Jesus, if you are in all thirty-seven churches,  
are you not also here with me  
making it alone in my back rooms like a flagpole sitter  
slipping my peanut shells and prune pits into the Kelvinator?  
Are you not here at nightfall  
ticking in the box of the electric blanket?  
Lamb, lamb, let me give you honey on your grapefruit  
and toast for the birds to eat  
out of your damaged hands.

**Maxine Kumin**