

Sassy Ross

REVERENCE

Were it written at your birth
Jacqueline, Jean, Mona, Sessenne
or any appellation besides,
we would have, eventually,
dubbed you, "Winnie."
But your godmother met you first—
my grandmother called her a seer—
and she, seeing, robbed us
of that game of words, bestowing
at the baptismal font
of a Roman Catholic church
the name you later earned
on harsh playgrounds of our youth.

Winnie, they must lengthen
their thesaurus, revise posthumous
dictionaries to include
the vibrating verb of you
who, giving, gave all your love outright.
Winnie, they must amend
their tome of sacred texts
for Lord know s there's a m ass
of black saints missing.