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# A Snapshot of the Auxiliary

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## A SNAPSHOT OF THE AUXILIARY

In this photo, circa 1934,  
you see the women of the St. James Lutheran  
Womens Auxiliary. It is easy  
to see they are German, short, squat,  
with big noses, the sadness of the Dakotas  
in their sullen mouths. These are exceptions:  
Mrs. Kyte, English, who hated me.  
I hated her and her husband.  
Mrs. Norain, Russian, kind. She saved me once  
from a certain whipping. Mrs. Hillborn,  
Swedish I think. Cheerful. Her husband  
was a cop. None of them seem young. Perhaps  
the way the picture was taken. Thinking back  
I never recall a young face, a pretty one.  
My eyes were like this photo. Old.

This one is Grandmother. This my Aunt Sara,  
still living. That one—I forget her name—  
the one with maladjusted sons. That gray  
in the photo was actually their faces.  
On gray days we reflected weather color.  
Lutherans did that. It made us children of God.  
That one sang so loud and bad, I blushed.  
She believed she believed the words.  
She turned me forever off hymns. Even  
the good ones, the ones they founded jazz on.

Many of them have gone the way wind recommends  
or, if you're religious, God. Mrs. Norain,  
thank the wind, is alive. The church  
is brick now, not the drab board frame  
you see in the background. Once I was alone  
in there and the bells, the bells started to ring.  
They terrified me home. This next one in the album  
is our annual picnic. We are all having fun.