

2018

## Blood of the Father

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### Recommended Citation

Albergotti, Dan (2018) "Blood of the Father," *Birmingham Poetry Review*. Vol. 45, Article 15.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr/vol45/iss2018/15>

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*Dan Albergotti*

## Blood of the Father

When the whole congregation rose, he stood  
with them, awakened from a bland daydream.  
They sang a hymn called “Nothing but the Blood.”

They moved their mouths like cattle chewing cud  
and made a sound that dulled the stained-glass beam  
of light falling through dust to where he stood.

He mouthed the words, pretending that he could  
believe them, as if he stood in the gleam  
of divine glory and could feel the blood

stirring in his veins, beginning to flood  
his hollowed chest. To strangers, it might seem  
that he was wholly there, right where he stood

in the church of his dead father (*A good  
man*, friends called him—that racist, unredeemed).  
He felt the bastard coursing through his blood.

As he left, the Elders told him they would  
hope he’d help carry on his father’s dream,  
move home to sustain this church where time stood  
still. He smiled, turned, pushed through the borders of those doors,

leaving forever everything but the blood.