

For those who want to change the world

Ann Hostetler

Give up perfection for just one day.
Feel yourself a creature of flesh and bone,
walk around in the cold, wind chafing
your face, joints jarring as your worn
soles pound concrete.

Keep walking till you face
your deepest failure—not
with clenched fists, not blinded
by shame, but with a detached
curiosity that opens
to compassion. Finger

the glazed wound tenderly
as you would caress the gash
in Christ's side. Wear it lightly
as God's fingerprints. You see
one doesn't have to travel far

to know suffering, though you
may carry it to the ends of the desert
before you discover it's yours.
Before you discover the light
failure lets into the darkness

of the private soul. Polished
by forgiveness our failures
are the only possible windows
through which to truly see
another human soul.

All else is mirrors
and an endless craving
for reflections of our own worthiness.
Remember Christ was wounded
so he could be like you.

About the author

Ann Hostetler teaches English and creative writing at Goshen College. She is the author of *Empty Room with Light*, a collection of poetry to be published this fall by Pandora Press, and the editor of an anthology, *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry*, to be published by University of Iowa Press in the spring of 2003.