

# Graven Images

*by* Jodi Barnes

Mother hated a crucifix. *Graven*, she said. Evidence that Catholics weren't saved, just stuck in ceremony. Jesus had risen and anyone who had to pray in Latin, count beads or confess to robed men who took orders from a monarch didn't know heaven from heathen. Plus they were drunks.

In late spring of my seventh-grade year, Susan Dooley invited me to my first girl-boy party. She lived near the golf course. Her sister would get plenty of beer. Twelve of us girls, forgotten supper, swallowing Pabst like water, allowing boys — some in eighth grade — to pin our innocence to the green, their tongues imparting salacious prayers, their hands fumbling at our wide white belts. Kim and I threw up before Sue's sister switched on the porch light. We lined up, entered with wobbling reverence. The Dooley's dark hallway went on for miles; I imagined purgatory. Would Mother find out? My eyes began to adapt. Above my head, just out of reach, Jesus dripped from a cross.

