

Marie of the Trinity

a 19th nun of the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux

Sarah Law

Whenever she wept
she was to use the shell:

hold its sleek curve
under her brimming eye,

a small boat hosting
her body's hot sea.

She, once dubbed
le titi Parisien,

had slipped away
for a last fairground ride

before her enclosure
in Carmel's garden.

Now she pours herself
into its hidden nacre;

her world made as little
as God in a crib,

each spilled-out day
caught by cupped grace.

Sarah Law, originally from Norwich, lives in London where she is a tutor for the Open University and elsewhere. She has published five collections of poetry. The two poems included here are from her forthcoming collection *Thérèse: Poems* (Paraclete Press, 2020). She also edits the online Amethyst Review dedicated to new writing engaged with the sacred. Her essay 'Thomas Merton's Poetry and Prayer' was included in *Poetry and Prayer—The Power of the Word II* (Ashgate Publishing, 2015).

Gisant: La Chapelle de la Chase, Lisieux

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She lives in others' dreams
in the long years since her death

and here to house
her ribs' frail rigging,

the skull, neck, pelvis,
bones of leg and arm,

Céline has commissioned
a wax Thérèse, who lies

like a queen on her bed
with shining, shut-eyed face,

hands artfully releasing
a static gush of roses

that never reach the ground.
Marble angels shield her

like sugar statues, ready
to melt in adoration. She's

robed in rich cloth here –
silk, gold thread, fine linen,

a Sleeping Beauty, waiting
to be woken from this fake

assumption, by her Prince
for whom she gave her breath –

a breath that's flown beyond
the dreamer, the glass box,

leaving the hollow doll,
and the quiet bones inside.