

Ananias of Damascus

by [Tania Runyan](#) in the [October 3, 2012](#) issue

Saul, you thug who once dragged  
believers through the streets,

flinging them from their beds so hard  
their arms popped from their sockets,

how like a dying child you look,  
your stomach caved in from fasting,

lips blistered with fevered prayer.  
You reach into the darkness, trembling

from the exhaustion of reliving  
the scene: *The light shot out of the sky—*

*no, it flared from the stones—no,  
Jesus, your hair was on fire—*

God spoke to me, too, which is why  
I stand at your bedside now and beseech

the Spirit to enter. He loves to appear  
in the lonely, dank rooms of the faithful:

Noah, Mary, Abraham, all sweating out  
their dreams of God. You will learn

how hard belief can be. You will sing  
while the guards whip you to the bone,

touch an enemy's shoulder with grace  
while the avenging knife burns at your hip.

One day you will wish for your sickbed again,  
this woolen blanket of blindness.

But I do as I am told. I lay my fingertips  
on your lids, and your eyes rumble

like stones rolling from the grave. Your lids  
creak open, and the light burns through.

This healing is not easy. Something silver  
is falling from your eyes. Brother, something

like the scales of a struggling fish  
is scattering at my feet.