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Edward the Saint

Elena G. Mailander  
*Gettysburg College, mailel01@cnav.gettysburg.edu*  
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Author Bio
Elena Mailander hails from the far-off land of Reno, Nevada. She likes to write, draw, listen to music, and daydream. She is studying Japanese and studio art, and is currently pursuing a career as a comic book artist.

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In 1887, the “safety bicycle” hit the shelves: with its two identical owl-eye wheels, it promised that, New York or Alabama, dirt or asphalt, if, or inevitably when, you fell from its height, you wouldn’t hurt yourself. Well...all that badly. But falling from a bicycle is much different from falling into life. Into someone’s waiting hands. Both can be catastrophic, if you make them, when you emphasize the flaws - the rocks - the yellow curtains - the passing motorcar - a pressed flower album And growing up is no easy chore, for then you’ve got the added risk of others on the road. Passing the landmarks: your father’s store, your clapboard school, the cemetery, the church, the ocean. The tree you splattered the perfect snowball against. The blue gingham dress of the girl you kissed behind the fence, who gave you her ribbon and died of pneumonia in the fall. If you look closely enough in the dirt, you can still see the footprints from your graduation march or the tire tracks of that “safety bicycle” that you rode outside of Paris, on leave from the war. The ripples of water from your arms when you fell into the stream with a bullet in your back. The string of diamonds that trailed from your mouth up through the water and exploded on the quicksilver surface. To be a saint is to revel in life and to catch the patterned scarves it trails off in its winding path. It has nothing to do with piety or holiness