



The Woman Priest: A Translation of Sylvain Maréchal's Novella, *La femme abbé*

Sylvain Maréchal

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My God! Pardon me if I have dared to make sacred things serve a profane love; but it is you who have put passion into our hearts; they are not crimes-I feel this in the purity of my intentions. -Agatha, writing to Zoé

In pre-revolutionary Paris, a young woman falls for a handsome young priest. To be near him, she dresses as a man, enters his seminary, and is invited to become a fully ordained Catholic priest, a career forbidden to women then as now. Sylvain Maréchal's epistolary novella offers a biting rebuke to religious institutions and a hypocritical society; its views on love, marriage, class and virtue remain relevant today. The book ends in la Nouvelle France, which had become part of Canada during Maréchal's lifetime. With thorough notes and introduction by Sheila Delany, this first translation of Maréchal's novella, *La femme abbé*, brings a little-known but revelatory text to the attention of readers interested in French history and literature, history of the novel, women's studies and religious studies.

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