

Ringings

These are bells.
These are candles, & hands
play their part, hands from the library,
hands from the garden.
They have much work, much work:
a laying on.

Something's to be rung, lit.
Something's to be kneaded, consoled:
a flesh summons.

What is it they want?
For nothing have they come?

I have seen them in brass, in ivory slopes.
I have seen them painted & in close up, unnamed.
Saints have so many transformations
from which light emanates, ready to show
a white potato to someone who's been flogged.

Out of darkness, roots, the febrile streams,
they dig ditches, brew tea, make beds.
They are dignified as wood.

What circle are they joining?
What songfest on the lawn?
Are they tending to a ritual, cutting swathes,
winding sheets?

There's a sort of bird catching up to them,
a sort of dragon wheeling over, baring sound,
winds of wings 'til the pitch is overwhelming
& they reel in a fury of radiant slow motion.

Look up. Look up.
The terror of it, the glory.