

Bell-ringing at Evening

In the sleeping cathedral town, an avalanche
of bells swept heavily down.
Iron boulders formed instantly
out of mid-air, and fell mercilessly upon the backs
of burghers. Only birds got swung
to safety overhead, on taut ropes
fraying in the palms of steeples. At the marketplace,
loose drainpipes beat themselves penitently
against the walls of taverns; and flies on their monuments
of dung rose and rattled like railings
in the blackened air. Even horsemeat
at the butcher's was properly spooked, and quivered
uncontrollably on slippery sirloin hooves.
So sudden the sound through our open window,
my grandmother's chicken soup clutched
at its noodles. But my stone-deaf grandfather sucked,
imperturbably gumless, at his pickled eggs.
In the entire town, only his apparently
unimportant adam's apple, bobbing
undeterred in a submarine motion, kept
the quiet and steady rhythm of the starry
universe, until the giant bells' swollen
metal tongues lolled exhausted
in their towers; and an evening rain fell
promptly, like a beneficent release of saliva,
as the last and greatest pickled egg
of all slid silently, and as duly
appointed, behind the surrounding bearded hills.

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