

Women's Blessing

Melonie Cannon

It wasn't a surprise
when they wrapped their hands
around my body like
chestnut leaves,
linen bindings,
tatted antimacassar lovingly draped,
I was never so finely adorned.

What did surprise me
was the voices of the women,
chiming small and wide,
back and forth,
as if inside
the tower of a Cathedral
and the bells
resounded over me,
my entire body vibrating
to previously unheard chords.

Decades I've walked the earth
and not once known love like this—
encircled by
praying women
washing my parched feet,
anointing my hands,
heads bent as bowing grain,
pleading heaven to come down
on my behalf,
murmuring voices
dripping warm honey
into the wounds.