

These Are the Hours

Dixie Partridge

when birds disappear taking strips of light
 folded in feathers
night insects ready themselves
 for meals from leaves of rose and raspberry
the hollow by the lane
 pools with evening like water
no moonrise cool radiance
 but night itself complete
the old barns slumped in the dusk
 can straighten and mend
motes of dust through slats
 awaiting new light

the past trailing footnotes
 has a life of its own
not left behind but present day
 alongside all those undones
breathing toward futures
 the collapsed or unmades with regrets
but huge as the presence of mountains
 unseen in the dark
where trees line the ridge
 a procession
like dark gentled cattle
 knowing toward the salt lick
again and again . . .
 some with bells
that will mellow the morning
 and any harsh news