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 unmadens 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