

Tixall Gatehouse Angel

Here, Everlasting Spring.
Here Queens Low, Weeping Cross,
Raw Bones Meadow.

Here I watched a shepherd's child
kneel and blow
the crown from a wet-the-bed.

Here a queen wept, called herself a beggar
though her cloak was thick
and coddled with furs.

Nothing new beneath this sky,
nothing new in the lapping of water
or the creak of bedsprings,

in the chirr of crickets
when the fields are gauzy
and alight at dusk.

So many years have I seen,
my only mantle shadow and birdsong,
frost pearling at my throat.

Even the wind cannot hide
from me, the mizzle
with its tiny dancing fingers.

Though my eyes are heavenwards,
my wings are earthbound
and dare you look closer -

like the poor boy peeping in the elm
who lost his footing -

I am gazing back

at you, at all who pass through:
sweethearts, plotters, babes with hair
like bleached august grass,

all your foibles, plans,
grand dreams you build
then abandon to ruin.

I am watching, when the sun rises
slant from the mouth of the cut
and blackbirds are whistling.

So go quietly traveller,
quickly. Seize your joy.
For we move towards a light that is not day.

Liz Berry