

How To Dismantle A Bell

by G.E. Simons

It was dismantled before I dismantled it
Disjointed and inoperable
Clotted with paint, caramelised with cloven conversation
Across brass rubbed decades

Post war provisions for bread, milk and cheese
Petrol was scarce but then so were cars

He was the only driver in the village
And chairman of the small local assembly

Near the south facing door
A cabinet full of ivory elephants
Pictures of war correspondents from The Tribune
And colonial photographs in a fruit crate
Placed on top of the detuned piano

It was originally the front door
Charred with candied globs of emulsion
Sealed with the cobweb syrup of cow's tongues
Who heaved and stank against the chicken wire fence
Trimmed with lead, curved lilac, bloodied by snapdragons

The bell wire stretched across the punctured wall
Pierced by pins for the peach tree
Its boughs were held
And cast traditional shadows
Across single cigarettes
And sweet stolen mouthfuls
Of white sugar
With evaporated milk

That wall needed a window
Languishing in fern spiced shadows
Of pungent stinging leaves
And throat scratching horseradish, crusted with horseflies
Thorax impact bruised like a beer bottle jolted on concrete

Later I tried to reassemble it
But there is no instant tradition

