

**But for I Am a Woman Should I Therefore  
Live That I Should Not Tell of the Goodness**

*Julian of Norwich, 1342–1416*

*THERE is an anchoress.* There is a horn  
whose song is ink (rainwater, crushed  
oak apples, old iron nail for age). An anchoress.  
A writing desk. A woman declared dead  
for her life's last half—

a woman who had herself  
declared dead so she could write.

Ceremony: the Bishop  
walked her to her grave and pointed. The grave, soft mouth

of ground, beneath the window of the room  
where she would live. *Enclosure.* Anchored to a space without a door—

only windows—  
they built her in. The sound. Of each limestone moment  
stacking up upon the last. Inside, she watched the hands of men

wrestle in each brick, wrists  
rotating stone to find the slot, the right-well fit. Dust ground up  
between the teeth of each Caen stone filled knuckled cracks in skin.

What was the sound of the last stone as it was chiseled in?

Cloud-roar cross high skies. A mare's huffed maternal breath.  
Field of grain heads, moving for once in one direction—

What was the sound after?