

## 9. Sunday in Gouda

The advent of the day is tolled by bells, chasing  
the steeples, cowing the birds to swallow their call.

Behind skips the trill of the carillon. Dies out, and nature  
resumes its course, the birds their tremulous song.

Time to get up, not the usual tug to let in  
the day, but a revelatory draw to light up and lift.

The sunlight splashes the tiles, glitters the stiles,  
strokes a cat in reflection, silvers its whiskers.

The faithful walk in droves to the church, in a huddle,  
skulked in hats and bonnets they tip to each other.

Turtled in collars, they peer out and wrinkle their faces,  
in sight of a youthful mob, bundled for the beach.