

OFFERING

C. W. EMERSON

*Now earth to earth in convent walls
To earth in churchyard sod.
I was not good enough for man
And so am given to God.
—Anonymous Medieval Song*

She kneels beneath the eaves
where the earth yields easy,
pine needles under bruised knees,
working her spade into clotted dirt,
cradling a bundle in the lap of her skirt.

She knows that Christ is watching,
that no earthly power is needed
for a sacrament of light
to push itself into the world
and do its work, as she has done.

And now the damp earth
takes back her trouble. She slips
a crust of bread into the bundle.
How expertly she practices
the husbandry of loss.