

Laura Forwood

It ends like:

Cold hands, cold-feet. Shivering in the entranceway.
You always were late. Now I'm waiting
at the door. At the door.

Then,
The waiting room of a church hall
When I approach the pulpit,
With a voice like a swallowed sword, or an inch thick
layer of ice.

The congregation wails like a haunting,
Words pass through like blank noise, retching echoes louder.

If we live, we live for the lord-

We live like the mother, who places her neck in the mouth of the daughter.
And waits to be consumed, like spiderlings devour their starving mothers after hatching.
(What does it mean be a daughter besides to consume and consume and consume.)
Like the sister, who punctures her fingers on the thorns of the flower, smells the white lilies.
and says nothing at all.
Like the father, who stands boneless and taut. Again, and again, and again.

We live gagging on memories, bleeding them out of every open pore.
Love congealing, scabbing, and itching.

-It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself.

What is the account that we are each able to give?
That turning people into poems won't make them speak.
A body is a body, a corpse is a corpse.

That I'd kept my arms outstretched. But you never arrive.
You said you were coming.
When are you coming?