

Lizzie's Death

The door to Mother's sewing room drifts open.
Here, in a corner, my first easel stood.

At age seven I fashioned it from branches
Father gleaned from the back hedge.

Hunched on chairs draped with afternoon light
Alice and I stitch our last sister's shroud.

Two old maids among nine children
we coddle the dead. Creation busies our hands —

soft linen yielding to thread,
gleaming needles joining panels of absence.