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Bronze Rubbing

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Bronze Rubbing

In Warwick, a blonde knelt solemnly on stone,
 Took a crayon from her purse, unrolled a scroll
 Of paper over a bronze plaque as if a soul
 Were ready there, in its gravure, to atone
 For centuries of pious languor and the drone
 Of centuries of liturgy over it. The shoal
 Of heaven rose in leafing gold almost whole
 For fact and intimation as she seemed to hone
 Edge and demarcation for slightest bas relief.
 It is surprising how the soul, in its latency,
 Will rise to meet a godly art of golden leaf
 That appears in disciplines of golden tendency.
 Dusty, dull, the lowly bronze was immortality
 As much as then achieved, and time an immorality

If it should dull much more. See medieval young
 Cluster at a grave of stone, weeping for a friend
 Of light, that he passed away so simply, his end
 Not thought of, that he was so quickly sung
 To sleep when he, blanching into death, wrung
 A twist of sacramental cloth that could not lend
 Relief, being musty dry and less with which to fend
 For being worn from old devotions. God, who hung
 As if in samite, would know that loss and prize
 The ritual. What springs then from this gravure
 But gold and effigy? And as the spirit tries
 The centuries, it keeps its latency of lustre.
 See in the rubbing on the wall how the lure
 Of spirit moves as leafing suns there cluster,
 Haloing, beyond the pale of dimming time.

—Clinton F. Larson

Clinton F. Larson, a professor in the English Department, is poet in residence at Brigham Young University.