Bronze Rubbing

Clinton F. Larson
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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

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