

“The Mouse in the Piano”

Hers (or is it his?) is a new
and remarkable music,
played out in the morning darkness
in the darker piano,
waking us up at two and then three
with those tentative notes
struck with mallets of straw
or the stems of leaves,
but not upon the strings themselves,
oh, no-upon the wooden case,
releasing the intimate chords
from the grain, a music
kept hidden there in secret
for more than a hundred years,
played now with perfect
concentration, but with little respect
for the old piano itself,
as if it were little more
than an apple barrel
or a bin for flour
through which the silvery strings-
a great abstraction
dumb and human-
fall all night like moonbeams
through the lifting dust.