

Dancing in the cathedral

by [Luci Shaw](#) in the [October 3, 2012](#) issue

The bell-ringers rise and
fall with the weight of their bells,
holding on for dear life to the pulls,
the ropes rough in their hands,
the young ones lifted up, up
from the belfry floor like
adolescent angels treading air,
as if so caught up in those
peals of sound—each of them in turn
answering the plea of ponderous metal—
they feel like feathers in a wind.

Consecrated, cassocked, gathered
for this task of intricate rhythm-ing,
they learn to weave their way through
the ring-patterns like pigeons to
the dovecote over the cadences
of distance. Even a mile away we
ourselves sway like bells, snared