

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