

Claire Crowther
Requisition At Abinger

*By ponds damming the Tillingbourne
he strikes a bell with his hammer.*

By ponds damming the Tillingbourne
hammer men make chains and hooks

on this common land, disparted
to give wood for the mills. My love

(whose need I am going to supply)
is in the first stages of sainthood –

God is giving him things... I'm such
a thing, a bunch of watercress,

more stalk than leaf. The painted smith
opens the clock to sound me out.

He strikes a bell with his hammer.

A note on form:

This poem is part of a long elegy and is an example of the *fatras*, a fourteenth-century Northern French form that originated in the *fatrasie*, a thirteenth-century nonsense poem. Both *fatrasie* and *fatras* have eleven lines and the *fatras* includes an initial couplet comprised of first and last lines of the eleven. Medieval examples also offer rhyme schemes and syllabic rules that I haven't used in this poem.