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As Is Death

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AS IS DEATH

I

“How defenseless we all are,”  
Anna said quietly. This  
was the hardest time,  
right after supper, when,  
sitting on benches, we could  
hear a nearby church bell  
strike seven: *God is  
a beam of light, as is  
death.* At home, too,  
the balance of power shifted.

II

We follow the pigeons’  
circlings, asking God  
to strip us of our bodies,  
quietly, that we unravel  
into empty sound, black  
stillness, the coolnesses  
of spirals and stories  
with corners and foreign  
words, the language of  
a silent bell, of dust and  
the dark purrs of pigeons.  
How defenseless we all are.

Ed Madden