

A Peal of Bells. [1862]

Christina Rossetti (English, 1830-1894)

Strike the bells wantonly,  
    Tinkle tinkle well;  
Bring me wine, bring me flowers,  
    Ring the silver bell.  
All my lamps burn scented oil,  
    Hung on laden orange trees,  
Whose shadowed foliage is the foil  
    To golden lamps and oranges.  
Heap my golden plates with fruit,  
    Golden fruit, fresh-plucked and ripe;  
    Strike the bells and breathe the pipe;  
Shut out showers from summer hours ---  
Silence that complaining lute---  
    Shut out thinking, shut out pain,  
    From hours that cannot come again.

Strike the bells solemnly,  
    Ding dong deep:  
My friend is passing to his bed,  
    Fast asleep;  
There's plaited linen round his head,  
    While foremost go his feet---  
His feet that cannot carry him.  
My feast's a show, my lights are dim;  
    Be still, your music is not sweet,---  
There is no music more for him:  
    His lights are out, his feast is done;  
His bowl that sparkled to the brim  
Is drained, is broken, cannot hold;  
My blood is chill, his blood is cold;  
    His death is full, and mine begun.