

Burial by Finnian Sawyer

I do not now know whether
these teeth jutting out of damp
leaves were ever inscribed. Infant,
infant, one month, two months, well
beloved and poor, and poor, and poor.
Generations of hardtack and darning
and hymns sung, hands working dough
in the smoky morning before echoes
effervesced into the dimples and hollows
of the land, hard and soft and hard again.

Hands clasped in eternal supplication
man and wife, man and wife, man
beds pulled close together, sleeping
chastity, pennied eyes eternal hollows
grits and okra and biscuits and hymns,
they make a marriage. What do we make
with our soft and soft and soft
and will our beds be recognized or will
the juttred teeth betray letters enough
only to hiss the devotion of friends.

