

'Mother'
Catherine Graham

after The Bedroom, Pendlebury by L. S. Lowry

While she sleeps, I paint.

In the early hours, fourteen plus
clocks to keep me company,

clocks and Bellini.

No-one else
is allowed to see her like this, bedridden,
longing still for a daughter

instead of this 'clumsy boy.'

I alone am allowed to nurse her,
spoon-feed her
the crumbs of the day.

In time, I shall paint the scene; capture
the emptiness when she is gone:

the dead white sheets
and the old blanket-box,
the solitary chair against the wall.

For now, a bloodshot portrait
as knuckles of coal fall to the hearth.