[of their] vulnerability to conflicting social messages about femininity and maturity. (213)

It was precisely for these reasons, however, that Julian, as a female mystic, was

... historically important, ... [for her] visions reflected some of the deepest spiritual currents of the life of ... [her] day and made ... [her a] respected interpreter of the ideals to which medieval secular society gave at least lip service. (Labarge 115)

"The term was generally applied to a wide spectrum of pious women living quasi-religious lives in a way adapted to their circumstances and location" (Labarge 115).

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References


CAITHLEEN BRADY

For St. Catherine
(and intrepid women everywhere)

Thin wings expand and rise
on scented air
forced flight
in autumn chestnut skies.

The dream passes from
day’s glow to night’s desire
with a single breath.

And St. Catherine’s head
leaves its Siena box
to join finger, femur, breast bone—
with a thousand, thousand confessions—
to come together and
colour the dreaming once again.

Somewhere Philosophy lies sleeping
hushed by drone and drum
of the coming millennium—
on underbelly fastened
to St. Catherine’s wheel
—an old trick.

But wheel and woman
once parted, keep company.
And while wheel’s groan
Philosophy’s comfort sweetens
its revolutions
summon her
from fragmented resting
to resist the blinded forward roll
of another generation.