

# the HARLEQUIN

*Lorna Crozier*

**Work: A study of solitude**

The village bells toll so loud and long it must be Sunday.  
Otherwise she wouldn't have known. The days  
seep, one into the other, as though painted  
on home-made paper improperly dried. It means  
she has no meaningful work to do, no clock waiting.  
It means she can continue her amateur study of solitude,  
the fine distinctions between it and loneliness  
though loneliness is getting close enough for her to feel  
its chill—no, not a chill, more a displacement in the air  
as when water in a pond thickens and inches higher  
because an unseen animal, bigger than an otter, lowers into it.  
She notes this presence without fear, with a practiced  
almost fierce indifference. She is trying to live  
like the old dancer in Japan. He told his son,  
old now, too, he wanted to dance the way  
the lotus did, calmly, without any flashy display.  
When she takes the trouble to pull on shoes  
and step into the private silence of a Sunday  
after bells, she is trying to walk like a dead body  
risking its life by planting its feet firmly on the ground.

Thank you for reading! Find more at [www.theharlequin.org](http://www.theharlequin.org)