

Three Bells

i

There is no method here.
In Singapore, pass votive gifts
to mount stairs to increasing

stillness of displays until
you reach a relic—
a tooth of the Buddha.

Last floor from the sky
is a garden with a tower
and a bell to toll a prayer.

ii

You take a pletna
over Lake Bled
for engineless access

onto an island,
a perfect setting
for contemplation

until you pull a rope
to sound your wish.
Done three times,

according to some Pope,
it will come true.

iii

No such promise here,
in earthbound Alciston.

Shaped to contain
the bell invites you:

*strike me and I will
resonate for you.*

The counting of sheep...

...is a serious business.

Universal, it has cultural variants: 1960s
outback Australia saw human walls
hold the mob as dogs yapped it through
an eyelet where one man would call tens,
another hundreds; Cumbrians took romantic
trysts or solitary treks to holler
yan, tan, tethera; years after monks
had quit the isle, Ionian crofters sprycanned
digits onto fleece, numbers matching
ewe to lambs. All the while
a good shepherd, whose flock
knew who he was and that he
knew each of them, did not consider
tally so important as identity,
and simply called them by name.

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