

## Hollow Bamboo

I like hearing the tapping  
of cutlery on lunch plates  
from my neighbors up above  
She's eighty, he's eighty-three  
The rhythm of a life shared  
like my mother and father  
normal, domestic fealty

Below them  
I eat alone  
ring bells and gongs  
drum and rattle  
retrieve souls and extract 'demons'  
Rock in ecstasy with the spirits

I cannot live like them  
but I take comfort  
from the familiar sounds

Mine is the crooked path  
of bones and stones  
the hollow bamboo

Beth Beurkens  
August 2004  
Riehen, Switzerland