

Poem for a Piano Rebuilder

By E. D. Watson

*Throats broken, bones cracked they come
borne on stretchers, straining
the backs of heaving men,
who, like them,
grumble and creak and moan.*

*Old madams with their voices dry and rusty
old sirs silenced by neglect,
and dusty, their guts twitching 'round unlikely things
lost within: hairpins and pencils
itching against their strings*

*and how tenderly He tilts his head to listen
fingering their scars, and brings
His rolling stool, His bag of tools, a light He holds
between His teeth
He shims the fissures, removes what's gone
to rust, dabs away the crust of verdigris*

*and if He must he removes everything, a surgery
no mortal could endure: opened up for weeks
all those pins
a new heart to beat the air with
a new covering of skin
new legs if need be, new cheeks.*

*But the case, as with the soul, retains its form
and faint memories of what it was before, the hands
that graced it, songs it sang
stay buried deep within its laminations, a hushed vibration
which continues
though it be reborn.*

E. D. Watson is a poet and night clerk at a public library. Her husband, Jim Watson, is a piano rebuilder and the owner of Watson Piano Works. You can find info and links to E. D.'s other published works at edwatsonwrites.com.