

Christ Carrying the Cross

—a painting by Stanley Spencer, 1920

By Richard Robbins

And we saw someone passing below,  
we who jammed the sash of each high window  
like twins sprouted from a common waist.  
And it was the quiet work below

we noticed first, something no one called  
suffering, though it seemed what we'd been called  
to bear. We watched ladders, crooked hands, heard  
talk proceed as always, saw through old

remarkable eyes. Why, then, be startled  
to find ourselves wingèd, some changed world  
in the making along ivy and brick?  
Someone pulled that slow cross to a hill.