

CHRISTOPHER JANE CORKERY

Teaching “To the Lighthouse”

How hard they work at finding out
What was meant when X was said.

The young women are in love
With Mrs. Ramsay, are in love

With some slight ghost of what might happen.
But only some of the young men

Are thus seduced, as was young Tansley,
Whose neck was red where he had scrubbed

Too hard, whose collar's dirty,
Rose observed, shrinking.

O Rose, you silent fruit arranger,
You shadow girl, of mother's jewels

The chooser and the changer!
How girls love the dear setting out,

Inventing style, coaxing color, fanning
Into parabola the curls on Mother's neck,

A shape both ancient and suggestive
And one that Mrs. Ramsay would not admit

To having seen in a common magazine.
It's rather like arranging here

What's dear, and lost, or there
In a pale classroom, making clear

The presence of a past not analogue,
Of the ghosts of men cut down along the Somme

Who chant in every reader's dream, and Rose's,
The sustenance of truly chosen things.

CHRISTOPHER JANE CORKERY'S collection *Blessing*, (Princeton University Press) is back in print. Winner of a Pushcart Prize and an Ingram Merrill Foundation fellowship, she has published in journals such as *The Atlantic*, *Agni*, *Kenyon Review* and *Southwest Review*, and in *The Book of Irish American Poetry*.