

Poem

A Great Beauty

CYRUS CASSELLS

A Great Beauty

--in homage to Kathe Kollwitz

And when her son never returned
from the meant-to-crush-him camps,

the crucible of Poland,
always hard-at-work Isa slept

for endless hours,
and once, under her lids, she was led,

by diligent female Virgils,
to a vast meadow

where an emboldened Isa embraced,
one by one,

countless women who remained
in mourning for their cherished sons.

Gallant and stricken,
together the myriad bereaved

but defiant women formed
an ever-widening circle,

prodigal with bitter tears,
and then, suddenly,

like a jackdaw darting
from eave to sun-drenched eave,

something flew between the throats
of the grieving,

heart-gutted mothers,
and a great beauty arose: