

Last Bell

by Mark Reep

A clever man would devise some means— great magnets, maybe, positioned just so— whereby the bell be drawn, released by weight of the tides or shine of the bright moon's face. The intervals seem insufficient, but a glassmaker might grind lenses fine enough. Opposing mirrors, multiplied energies, that sort of thing. Vague notions, no more. In dreams he frees rustbound machineries, ancient fires smolder at their hearts. Calmer nights, the smell of the sea still makes his balls ache, and he longs for her deeps. Coward, cuckold, she taunts: So be it. He's not a young man anymore, nor as clever as he once was, or thought. But somebody ought to keep a lamp burning, ring the old bell sometimes, just in case.

