

from "If I Could Sleep Deeply Enough: poems by Vassar Miller". Liveright Press, NY

**Enlightened Selfishness** (A second confession at a Friends' Meeting)  
**by Vassar Miller**

A nail is driving me down  
into my own silence.  
This can't be how it's done.

Chairs scrape. Guts growl. Here, of course,  
Nobody sings bad hymns.  
But what if someone...? Oh, well,

some meadowlark, outside, carols  
making do for Bach,  
who was, by the way, extremely

prolific, with children and music,  
theology  
so much better than mandrakes.

My silence tingles, murks up  
its pristine waters,  
all of which only proves

it's scary, to say the least,  
riding hobby horses  
to death --friendly gray ones even.