

My sisters hugged me to work

\Fibres in the air\ \we're breathing short\
\Percher's chalking up\ \cloth in blue\
\Mules are slam-whine\ \scrape and whir\
\roll and rattle\ \of belt on metal\
\Engine's not stopping\ \for dinner or tea\
\Hear it first hand in\ \silken lilt\
\we are the say weavers\ and the scribblers\
\and wool\ \is in our blood\ \We're Yorkstone

\earthapples left to rot\ \we finger spell\
\with spells in fingers\ \pick curry from a pot\
\we're not hiding limbs\ \but tying shuttles\
\to skates, crooked knees\ \blackthorn crutch\
\and all. True as gospel\ \we were straight\
\as loichs before. We're not\ \burdensome bobbins\
\her with sausage roll curls\ \can thread a needle\
\behind her back\ \With spin of scissor\ \on little finger

\we undo slubs\ \so as you can't tell\
\Some are stiff and starchy\ \but lively Lorna's\
\plucking brows with\ \burler's forceps in the loo\
\Roll a gofer in a piece\ \the night before\
\he's wed. Some of us\ \lost the register\
\forgot when we were born\ \Someone's saving\
\a piece or two for a sister\ \when she's worn\
\I laiked\ \a week in the infirmary once\ \Hug me

\to work.\ \They'll bury us in woollen\
\but not now.\ \We are the heckm^makers\
\and we're twisting\
\taking brickbats\
\the power loom\
\in birthday voice\
\to dine on beefsteak\
\with overlookers\

\the warp of this\
\to mill doors, tuning\
\harmonⁿising to lasses\
\Addle us enough\
\eye-to-eye\
\if we're sick

elyk – disabled

vamna – union

Poem by Becky Cherriman.

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