Crooked Spire Chesterfield Parish Church England

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Crooked Spire
Chesterfield Parish Church
England

Donna Pucciani
for Melegyn and, Joyce

Lucifer, flying low over Vespers,
Sniffed sweet holy incense,
Angrily sneezed,
Twisted the spire.

Some say unseasoned beams,
Too young to take the pressure,
Buckled in August heat; perhaps
A sudden slump of snow-shawled timbers
One medieval midnight, or

A gradual groaning some leaf-strewn October eve,
Waking the honest from their slumbers
To peer from breath-fogged windows in their nightdresses,
Candles in hand,
Listening for the agony.

The steeple leaned over the marketplace,
Staggered armless,
Reeled eyeless,
Lurched into history,
Listing like a lost ship,
Broken masted, time-salted,
Tilting, taking on water,
Precarious in a sea of cloud.

Still, it stays
Suspended, ungainly, homely
Propped against a changing sky
For village motorists hunched in traffic.

Eternally lopsided,
Dignity its only buttress
Its mystery not cowardice,
its crown,
The courage to remain.