

From *Crossings* (Seamus Heaney)

On St. Brigid's Day the new life could be entered  
By going through her girdle of straw rope  
The proper way for men was right leg first  
Then right arm and right shoulder, head, then left  
Shoulder, arm and leg.  
Women drew it down  
Over the body and stepped out of it  
The open they came into by these moves  
Stood opener, hoops came off the world  
They could feel the February air  
Still soft above their heads and imagine  
The limp rope fray and flare like wind-born gleanings  
Or an unhindered goldfinch over ploughland.