

Comparisons, and: Instructions, and: From the
Book of Rope, and: One of Those Days, and:
Aunts, and: In the Neighborhood.

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Comparisons, and: Instructions, and: From the Book of Rope, and: One of Those Days, and: Aunts, and: In the Neighborhood

Robert King

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

COMPARISONS/RoterfKing In the middle of a river, I listen to the businessman comparing business to an orchestra, each instrument properly contributing, each part a part of the whole. The orchestra, however, compares itself to a river— flutes of light, cellos bubbling along in the push and flow of adagio, crescendo, allegro—in rushes and deep swirling. But this current river compares itself placidly to a business, all its appropriate liquid departments working in unison toward singular goals, closing up shop here, opening

there, reorganizing itself now through a downturn of driftwood, so the two of us stop humming our various tunes and backpaddle furiously in order not to go bankrupt, get flat, or wet. The Missouri Review · 55

JNSTRUCnONS/Robert King Someone knows how to do everything. I mean someone knows how to do some one thing, and draw a diagram, such as making a bomb, etc., but in this case to cut flower stems with a knife underwater, what this picture means. I could be in Russia with these daffodils and know to cut them underwater with a knife. So someone knew that, and someone knows how to cultivate varieties of daffodils. First, someone knows there are different names. No, each person knows one name apiece, so it takes a lot of them to run the daffodil company, and one to know it comes from the Latin asphodelus, the asphodel, flowers akin to Narcissus said to cover the Elysian Fields although no one remembers that species. I run the water, cut with a knife, someone else knowing why water runs, knives cut, only you knowing what you'll think of them when you arrive down the one street someone built and home into the marriage we have made, both of us, in this case, knowing it, following the instructions we momentarily concoct, giving it whole varieties of beautiful names. 56 · The Missouri Review

FROM THE BOOK OF ROPE/Robert King First, there is love. Secondly, the square knot, a perfect binding of two equal loops, useful for fastening gifts to each other or, in the extreme, for closing bandages over wounds, expected or not. The sheet bend hooks unequal partners, originally a rope to the twisted end of a sail, something fastened against wind. The bowline's loop won't close, good for saving yourself in mountain climbing, or, in general, being lifted up, lowered. Hitches bind us to things, thwarting our drift, boat to tree, a horse to any rail—two half hitches, hundreds of half hitches. In the book of rope, three tests for every knot—is it easy to tie? Will it stay tied firmly in use, and will it be, finally, easy to untie? Which knot have we chosen? And what else sadly should we know? The Missouri Review · 57

ONE OF THOSE DAYS/Robert King Each day I am in love with something, in full wonder at what's given. Yesterday, it was partly some sparkling Mozart but mostly, five minutes earlier, the announcer's remark: "Mozart's coming up in five minutes." Today it's the beginning of a sentence in a book about Tu Fu—"In the spring of 761. . ."—regarding several short songs, an ancient fresh breath. I realize the museum next door is chock-full of bones and the perpetual birthdays of rock, that millennia shift only a few pebbles, and that mostly everything is utterly forgotten, but I'm enthralled with the spring of 761, hold it in my arms all night. Although Mozart dies young and Tu Fu's hopes turn out false always, I can't resist singing to myself the knowledge of unknowable springs, musical as arpeggios of cherry, those immortal blossoms, and, above, those particular clouds passing away. 58 · The Missouri Review

AUNTS/Robert King I remember one aunt with long red hair who laughed, at least that one afternoon. The other, subject to some frailty I wasn't told, kept pillows on the phones to soften any potential intrusion. So who's to say I don't remember the aunt who shot clay pigeons from horse back in Cody's show, grit flying up, the smock-smock of the rifle? Or that...

COMPARISONS/*Robert King*

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