

GO

A small word with no end to it and a wind
that continues into another country.
A word that takes on a different meaning
after someone dies, a word that has a strange
engine that says, "Continue," but then continues
not to move as if burdened with its own
command, a breath which is all exhale. Once
in dream I was sent to the country of GO
with a message for the king who was dying
but seemed to understand, except that he was
unable to reply, then it turned out he
wasn't really a king after all, just a man,
and all the time I was hoping he would say
something like GO FORTH, which sounds kind of
cheery before you start to think about it. The
question now's not so much how to reconstruct
our lives, but how to stop the word that almost gets
to God before it's really gone. The word has
a hollow noise, an otherness beyond. So
what do we do? Does one simply
say, "Now, now," like firing blanks into eternity.

Mark Irwin

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PASSING

It is now this late evening in April
among first irises and bees I realize
they were opening doors Mary Robert
and William I want to say of clouds sunlight
rain now Didn't we notice the arrows
of hearts hands leaping toward an unmapped
when No age no place though all of one
light Somewhere beneath that cloud
in a little town a white door is opening
maybe for nothing but wind but we will all
one day be there I mean when opening is finally enough

Mark Irwin
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POEM

Rolling off our tongues and eyes, does the present
really exist? --as minutes swell into hours, days--
and that dream balloon, years later, rolls leadenly past.
Meanwhile your body's a long road on which I get lost.
I think of you often, but remember most when you
handed me the eraser and empty vase, a potential
emptiness I loved, for what we promise lies somewhat
mysteriously in the past. --Well, you know, as we're all
promised death in the slight wind of a word. When,
when, when, its breeze teases our faces toward a light
we can never quite have, as now, you hand me
this glass of water. Why does its glow seem longer
in evening? The future's a bore where those two
lovers are skeletons whose past was once cells dividing.
Therefore, let me pick thee some long-stemmed dandelions
where we will loiter and marry beneath that beautifully
bloated gold star we call the sun in evening.

Mark Irwin

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