

Keith Moul

### ALTERED TOUCH ANIMATES LOVE

Sunlight screwballs into the bedroom  
adding riotous heat to already passion.  
But the intended act, thus exposed,  
turns comic. My final caress  
of real flesh by thumb  
and three fingers (no pinkie)  
makes me a Saturday cartoon,  
rather than your lover, animated.

You are my daylight embrace on which  
three fingers may work volcanic magic  
on the marriage bed. Three may raise  
my red banner to full staff. Three  
may be calloused by the keenest love work—  
but insidiously in the Disneyland of life  
the symbol of three fingers

alters my well-aimed touch  
to Mickey Mouse.

## FURTHER READINGS IN HISTORY

Over time, many will master events;  
many will leverage a moment for effect;  
most, like deer at a salt lick  
will risk their ends to unreckoned threat.

Of these few will wrangle footnotes  
in the unabridged revised—for most  
accounts are hogged by the truly great.

Yet, Man's failed opportunities;  
Man's untold, thereby unknown events;  
Man's days wrongly spent, or days wasted  
in unchronicled pursuits without consequence;  
while reading history, *these*  
lives are counted worthless.

Yet, the agonies of fruitless hours  
through which I squirm shake me  
to explore more closely any gap  
in history's final print:  
to dive into another's empty time  
as though it were the bottom  
of an unplumbed lake;  
the abandoned reaches of a still ore-rich,  
but left to superstition, mine;  
or sing proof for sine  
of the arc To Be.

No doubt there is a trick to saving time,  
creating history, in fact, that  
once learned can lure  
the elemental mind to face off  
with another mind, or thing,  
or mountainous thought; no doubt  
some men's hours are filled  
with magic acts in which the mouse  
chases the cat, eyes out-quick the hands,  
or sands are catalogued—two by two by two by two.

I delude myself.

Reading history, I take  
its abridgement in stride; I worry  
its false mathematics into consequence; I swim  
so I will not sink too pedantically  
in ink and time.

If not inspiration, diligence  
may raise the rabbit from the hat.

## LINES

Now and as I foresee,  
I revere fine, straight lines—  
such as those too uncanny  
for a map, mind-lines  
taking me from here to there,  
now to then—  
until this instant that I breathe,  
this cadence that I walk to,  
that is,  
because *there* and *then*,  
if birds,  
would be birds of prey  
and ravenous.

What should be simple routes  
returning to here and now  
are marred by wingbeats,  
scarred by talons  
clicking across them awkwardly.

Sometimes I know  
that birds of prey,  
hungry for flesh,  
will even eat a line  
conceived utterly as meat of the mind.