

My Life in Prepositions

by John Olson

Thanks to prepositions I can be on drugs, get into music, sway under the influence and rock around the clock.

I can jump up and down, crawl into a sleeping bag, sleep under the stars, wander into dreams, and wake up feeling down.

I can drink from a bottle, sit at a computer, work on a novel, go out of my head and hover over a page like a helicopter with hair.

I can stand by, step down, step up, walk around, understand, underbid, undergo, undercut, underdress and understate.

I can go underground overdrawn in overdrive overflowing with overgrowth.

I can get over a cold, fall into love, grow to maturity, sink into despair, fly off the hammer, get back at a gnat, pull on a pullover, pass through a door, hose down a house, walk across the street, have lunch at a diner, eat with a fork, talk to a cook, come home and listen to Aftermath.

I can lean against a wall among thoughts and reflections or get in between some words and alter the course of a sentence or stand firmly behind an opinion or walk along a high wire balancing a cat a monkey and a chicken or feel throughout my body the movement of blood in circulation or aside from that write letters to Mr. Bean or by means of growing wings assume the life of a bird.

I can travel beyond our solar system and look at planet earth from a long way off and maybe encounter forms of life that have different prepositions than we do prepositions that reflect another dimension say a fourth dimension in which space is very different and is mostly acetylene laughter exotic swimsuits and weddings in semantic luminescence.

I can feel a stretch of sand made beautiful by the cold hard objects of the sea.

I can fly around over under sideways down remembering the Yardbirds on YouTube.

I can watch the newspaper fall to the floor with all of its news and photographs and come to rest and stay there until someone picks it up and puts it into the trash bin with all the other tragedies and wars and murders and weddings and obituaries and comments and editorials.

Because that's what prepositions do. They occupy space. They spur conditions. They cut the air. They humor the words of a sentence into performing ordinal acrobatics. And there's not much I can do without them. I can't go up. I can't go down. I can't understand a single thing. I can't get over my dismay. I can't stand by anything I say. Nothing unfolds. Nothing suspends. There is nothing to stand for.

