

James Kugel

"And the Staring Ladies Darken in the Window"

(And because Purpose is most often set aback amongst the young
where there be least Cause, when you see him, offer him this song:)

Pay no heed to the Staring Ladies,
Brave Kohemoth of the youthful arms,
Shine about in a blond umbrella
And do not hear their ominous song.

Their incanting, sheer electric,
Cannot sway the steadfast eye,
They are old, and dark in purple
Shuffling aimlessly through the houses . . .

(And here you are to tuck him by the elbow, and whisper: "Your age
is smooth as February barley-fields; why think of the past? It has
been so brief . . .")

Chances are a dried-oak fire
To the slice of flame in a coward's eye
Enterprise fulfills its promises,
You on whom the stars have shined!
Stride ahead in a blond umbrella
And if you see the Staring Ladies
Pay no mind.

Wedding Song

The best had gone off with the worst.
The best and the worst were the same.
So many years have been lost
To a traveling confidence-game,
A jumble of speeches and pointing
That seemed to make sense at the time
About turnpikes and airports and subways,
New wheels for the halt and the blind

We all got tired of traveling
Time passed by
Still they went on singing
Here Comes the Bride.

The Bride, someone kept singing,
But disaster lumbers on
The people with the proper means
Conceived of a different song,
As usual the virtuous
Had all refused a fight
And just when you most need him
Eliyahu's gone from sight

We all sat around waiting
Time passed by
And still they went on singing
Here Comes the Bride.