

Poetry Series

**Larry Kimmel**  
**- poems -**

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## Larry Kimmel(1940)

Larry Kimmel was born in 1940, in Johnstown, PA. He holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and Pittsburgh University, and has worked at everything from steel mills to libraries. Now self-employed, he lives with his wife in the hills of western Massachusetts.

# A Thought Dwelt On

A thought dwelt on  
can only grow—

and a weed is a bad thought  
where a flower should be.

A thought dwelt on  
is a thought given water,

but a weed deprived of water  
withers away.

Larry Kimmel

# After Reading An Epic Fantasy

Quite suddenly, full blown,  
out of the chubby cheeks of an infant wind,  
a leaf landed on a mud-puddle,  
like a strange, crude vessel launched  
on a fathomless cafe au lait sea.  
It tacked eastward for seven ticks of time  
then lost its course in a birthday candle blow.

Later, by the sun-shrunken mud-puddle  
that had beached the curled brown leaf,  
an ant swam a minuscule cove.  
But it was a gigantic monster,  
and I saw the horrific peril of yet another episode  
in the epic from which I'd been excluded,  
too huge to be viewed  
even as a comprehensible god.

Larry Kimmel

# Branch After Branch

Slats of clear gold sunlight  
and snow like fur on every branch  
and every branch after branch after branch  
as far as thought can reach...

I go to see if our road's been plowed.  
The many small birds melt  
before my boots and frosty breath.

Branch after branch, vast in its snowy hush,  
the universe is as big as you think it is -

and maybe one or two trees more.

Larry Kimmel

# Each Stone

What they left behind them  
are the stone fences.

Each stone,  
now covered by a patina of lichen;  
Each stone,  
grayish-green, here,  
in the clean November sunlight;  
Each stone,  
once held between two palms.

These stone fences  
are their Stonehenge  
to us:  
miles and miles of hand felt care  
falling back into time  
through the clear November air.

Larry Kimmel

# Enlightenment

A disc the yellow of old ivory, and then,  
for the first time in a life oblivious,

it comes into focus, the face of the man  
in the moon. Not just a disease of pock

and shadow, but the full faced caricature,  
the same as seen by you, unknown illustrator

of my Mother Goose, fellow artist  
once maligned - now vindicated.

Larry Kimmel

# Feeding Chickadees In Winter

Already accustomed to the procedure,  
it isn't long till one  
flutters down from the sky to clutch  
the edge of my hand;

a moment more to twitch and eye  
the seed in my palm, select  
two or three, and flit away—

—such delicate talons!

the sensation lingers, engendering  
a tenuous ache  
—a millet of love.

Larry Kimmel



# Good Neighbors

We did what we could  
read their letters, figured their taxes  
good neighbors they—  
now just a cellar hole  
and the lilacs in spring.

Larry Kimmel

# I Step Out On My Porch Near Midnight

Snow,  
flecked by moon made mica.

Cold, windless air—even  
the roar of the woods  
is faint tonight;

And faint, too,  
the creak  
of my leather jacket—faint

As the rigging of a galleon  
heard across the seas of time....

While overhead  
Orion faintly flickers.

Larry Kimmel

# Learning To Float On Your Back

You believe  
it can be done, yes,

that the water  
will support you, certainly,

but  
there is a moment

when you must finally relax  
and let it happen—

this is called  
Knowing.

Larry Kimmel

# Night Journey

Unable to sleep

I stand at the northeast window. A pond  
of snow-melt,

back dropped by five spruces  
with a streetlight just beyond,

swamps the lawn—is a lake  
where moonlight,

shredded by the ragged top  
of a midnight forest,

paves,

with golden cobble stone,

a pathway from glacial shores into the dark  
of myth and mystery,

into the very Land of Færy.

Larry Kimmel

# One Tree Island

holding my eye  
she undoes her blouse  
my strict attention  
□  
an arch smile  
then photons clothe her

wavelets lapping toes  
the forest lake  
there to receive her

wading out  
till her breasts float  
voices

diving under  
a flash of bare bottom

she waves  
from the one tree island  
an exaltation of larks

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in a shade of pines along the lake's edge  
I clothe her  
in a bikini of kisses

Larry Kimmel

# The Class Ring

I hold in my hand a ring. Moxium High.  
Class of '58. The initials my own.  
Within weeks, I'd left it by a public sink.  
Loss noted and steps retraced—both

immediate, but... c'est la vie. Seven  
years later it returned, having found  
its way to the alma mater with its  
postal pedigree, some half-dozen

other Moxiums. A worthy scholarship,  
the particulars of that seven year odyssey,  
which remains mute within the zero of  
this prodigal trinket of youth, inanimate

wanderer, whose encircled secret rests  
upon my palm, yet forever beyond my grasp.

Larry Kimmel

# The Latch

With its miniature rock gardens, grape arbor, and roses (roses everywhere, like a child's experiment with rouge): with its neatly trimmed grass along the flagstone walks; with its birdbath (strategically placed, as was its willow tree) —the backyard had all the aura of a formal garden.

In that lawn (just large enough to frame a family portrait) , hemmed in by a wire fence disguised with honeysuckle vines and marigolds, one somehow achieved a sense of privacy; even a sense of seclusion from the nearby neighbors. While outside, a narrow broken alley ran between two rows of other backyard lawns.

All this (after all these years) , like the fragments of a dream at noontime. Except for the latch. Substantial as a candy stuck in the throat, the latch remains in mind, as if I'd just stepped out of that microcosmic Eden into the narrow alleyway this early morning, closing the gate behind me with a click! ; closing the gate behind me with all that is before time began locked! in a single syllable, for all time.

in a shaded spot  
the ruins  
of a sundial

Larry Kimmel

# View From A North Window

For a moment, the sun  
on a red barn, dying,  
on dry fields still as a gold death-mask  
warmed yellow only to the eye  
beneath the winter-propheying sky,  
before night's shadow gathers the last straws  
of afternoon to its scrawny breast;  
the sun on a red barn, dying,  
resurrects a lone child, playing.

Larry Kimmel



# Waiting And Then Not Waiting For A Green Light In Greenfield, Massuchetts

The red pulse of three turn signals and the click of my own  
—a serial music, more for the eye than the ear.

Images of unseen birds sweep the rear window of the car ahead,  
like a school of neon tetras through an aquarium glass,  
but swif' swift—each concise image pulled awry,  
as the flock, itself, is warped, is bulged—is gone.

An hour ago: Gray whispery wisp of a man standing  
a little less than the librarian on duty:  
'... I have always been very sensitive,  
very creative —yes-yes— have been all my life,  
very sensitive, very creative... ' and on the street  
outside the library, a drunk grabbed a parking meter,  
stiffened—heaved  
—well there you have it,  
a hot lunch. And now it is—the awaited shift from red  
to green—the tachometer needle jumps.

(When you redline  
on fear you redline, and everybody has a battlefield,  
and it doesn't matter where or what the battlefield  
when you redline) .

I still have 20 minutes on a meter  
in Brattleboro—but that's another town, another state.  
'REDLINE MY HEART 3-PERSONED GOD! ' I'm coming home,  
home to meat and potatoes and look at that! —  
old apple tree? or bonsai and me incredibly shrunk?

All these years, I have been wasting, wasting, wasting the poem.

Larry Kimmel

# Woman Playing Guitar

Her breast  
fit  
like a fruit

in the curve  
of the small guitar,

and I  
would have been  
her Picasso,

some  
Spanish afternoon.

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