

SAMPLER

*Bodyservant*

ALSO BY KIT FRYATT

turn push / turn pull

Rain Down Can

The Co. Durham Miner's Granddaughter's Farewell  
to the Harlan County Miner's Grandson.

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## bodyservant

I sleep at the foot of the stair

the rough nights

of the bed

I know his sleeping breath and its feint

perhaps he knows mine

his lungs are congested

he is close to sixty

and I am past

this year

the middle of life

the fair hair he cut

the night before we started

a four years' pelt

for Cairo

that would not shame the Magdalen

is gone as he said

a stringy tonsure

it would be

when an attack wakes him I bring milk & ale

we have both killed men that

he might live to this pass

their grey shades stand between us

so he seems

insubstantial

he suffers as tall men do worst with his knees

his back

in the mornings he is agile like an anvil

as the mounting block he refuses

he and his wife had eleven children

and some of them live

far away  
he misses  
her hand beneath his head  
he says  
to put my hand under his head  
would be worth the ransom of the son of the king of Cairo  
but I've never been lucky  
there was a lady  
the guest of many important men  
he visited her when she stayed with them  
then I watched till dawn  
I knew her name but never her face  
she was a grey shape in thought  
like a place where a painter meant  
to fill in one of the three Marys  
a grey form lying on  
the body I know better than my own  
its scar furrows  
turn and turn about  
the body to which I attribute  
every scar on my own  
lying on a grey form  
until I called out  
my fine friend  
here comes the dawn  
chief glory  
glorious lord  
here comes the  
dawn



## Bülbülüm altın kafeste

The prescription is a reed pipe and a concertina in my pocket, I shred bus tickets too, paper doilies, all the roses this year were dipped in glitter, glue first, the singer's voice fills my headphones with Turkish, the empty jute shopper at my calf has ladybirds on it, must be funny if your job is dipping Valentine roses in glue (peculiar), it was supposed to be Atatürk's favourite song, but I'd say he just said the first thing that came into his head, like 'the small town of no importance' he made his capital. I have to say one thing this Primark spring range makes modest dress affordable for once, yay, the lamps they use to set gel nails might be carcinogenic, I take out my Galaxy phone in its indigo rubber skin and think of false nails prodding touchscreens, crusty with jewels, these are my friends, but I don't change the song, which is sad, check messages or want to go for coffee and cake. Two kids on BMXs get in my way he hisses back at his sister, she says a gaping sorry and so does he, I smile and say it's all right, I must've been looking stern, the song is so sad it's a cliché, but even naïve art is chock full (especially) of meta (my love is sick, don't sing) further up the hill the children pass me she slouches in the saddle, he stands up to shout a dare, she hares ahead their estate tilts, the sky is violet night

the riders of the twilight of this world  
sport pennants, decals and spokesters,  
alto burrs. The little strip mall is a bizarre  
caravanserai. Women's voices break  
and they have Adam's apples in fact  
the nightingale jars out of a place  
railed around and hedged in. It is  
goserelin, which looks to me like a Turkish  
word—I wonder what the pharmacist  
thinks—

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## I find

I'm on my way to you, tutelar  
shabby and locked, if there's single malt  
in your nostrils you don't need it  
in your mouth

last time I got laid  
someone else's bacon was frying  
up the stair combined  
with spermicide it smelled like olives  
steeping in brine

I would say Turkey  
but others would say Greece  
and be no less wrong. One day this whole  
mentor/pupil thing will have to end  
in the sack

or throwing delft  
but not yet, my good sweet  
honey lord, not yet. I want to be  
your rawboned hauffin loon  
so we can be

Davy and Alan  
staging a bit of hurt/comfort to cadge  
a boat, I want to shuck you like an eel,  
box you like a hare, put you in my mouth  
like a Jew's harp

I can turn meat to fruit  
call it a superpower. You've been  
my Hays Code through most of *Twentieth  
Century*, one boat-long foot  
on the floor at all times

but in the middle of the bed  
the river runs deep, you've managed to  
raincheck joy compleat once again forever  
I am a narroweyed freightjumping  
Appalachian urchin

with tattooed knuckles  
a knackered paperback of *A Good Man  
Is Hard To Find and Other Stories*  
splayed open on my shoulder  
bleeding

into my panties  
as kids have done since before  
there were panties and I am riding riding  
riding riding riding this boxcar away  
from you, tutelar.

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