

# Praise prepositions

by [Jeanne Murray Walker](#) in the [November 16, 2004](#) issue

Going down the list: *after against among*  
*around*, I think how trivial they are,  
how low their self-esteem,  
how like safety pins they merely connect.  
Prepositions are the paid help we're not allowed  
to talk to, the maids in black uniforms  
who pass hors d'oeuvres at parties.  
Or rather, if we could laugh together,  
they would be the forbidden joy  
leaping like sparks between us.  
Who can survive without connection?  
All winter, green waits for the sun  
to wake it from its nap and so we say  
sunlight lies on the grass.  
Even the simplest jar connects—jar  
under moonlight, on counter, jar in water.  
Imagine prepositions in the Valley of Dry Bones  
stitching the femur to the heel,  
the heel to the foot bone. And afterwards,  
they got up to dance. *Between, beside, within*  
may yet keep the chins and breasts  
from tumbling off Picasso's women.  
If I could, I would make prepositions the stars  
of a book, like the luminary traveling the navy sky  
the night sweet Jesus lay in his cradle,  
pulling the nameless, devious kings  
toward Bethlehem, and us behind them,