



Image from The Spruce Eats

Robert Daseler

The Bells

Last year we were not there but somewhere else,
A place you named with words that slip the mind
(As some word do), but we moved on that spring
And now we live apart. Distant bells
Ring throughout the day, as if to remind
Parishioners of God, remembering
The tonic bells of yesteryear and peeled away
Insignia of politics and pain.
After the air is stilled, what have we left
But diluted sunlight of a day
Dissolving into night? Here again
The transmigration of our worldly gifts
Into our dreams: we shed our daylight selves
As mariachi music drifts upon
The evening air, and maybe your mood lifts

Tonight, as books awaken on their shelves
And characters from Dickens tread the dawn.

Lentil Salad

The recipe is too demanding
And difficult for me to follow
Explicitly, so I allow
Myself to vary it benignly:
Admittedly my understanding
Of kitchen craft is finally

Inelegant and unrefined,
And yet I have served rich soufflés
And savory duck prepared in ways
Preserving moisture. Sometimes I
Search the web until I find
A recipe I want to try.

That is how I came across
Description of a lentil salad,
And though in general I've had
My best results with recipes
Of few ingredients, yet those
That challenge me will sometimes tease

My fancy of myself as chef.
That difficulty fascinates
Is knowledge that inaugurates
Persistence in our artistry
And, possibly, our love of life.
I cannot claim a mastery

Of any craft or avocation,
And I pursue the difficult
Without expecting the result
To meet the standards of gourmets,
But maybe just an evocation
Of something worth a word of praise.

Even when the praise is lacking
The discipline of hands begins
To instill care and illumines
The way ingredients compose
An essay out of love, forsaking
Sad poetry for sanguine prose.

Robert Daseler is a poet and playwright presently living in
Pasadena, California.