

from Juked #5, Spring 2008

KRISTEN ELIASON

THE USER'S GUIDE TO ONOMATOPOETIC ELEGIES

*And should we die before our journey's through,
Happy day! All is well!*

William Clayton

it's viewings, not funerals I won't attend anymore
and what bothers me is not the trail of people who
have to touch a clammy hand to satisfy this head knell
but it is this: my eight-year-old brother still blonde

with finger-length curls started meowing
at me when I should have been terrified of the boxed body
across the room. (and not in any normal fashion) he mewed
with clarity and volume against shuffling masses
reading the audience card in whispers, "he was a good man,"
and piercing, like god, so only I could hear it, and maybe my
mother
who only shifted in her floral-print whatever it was.
my brother, now a small cat padding across the room in full
march, *come*,
come ye saints, the actual tune equated to meow mix, he
leaned his head on my knee and at my reddening only meowed
softer, approximating a kitten gondolier for the dead, *come*,
come ye,
paced a warbling line between the bodied room and a row
of folding chairs, *no toil nor labor fear*, he looked at me coyly
and started verse three, with his back toward my now
shushing mother, and so quietly again to the chair, to my

legs, to the ground and the underground and the hell under,
he meowed, *happy day, all is well*, the part for parts left to
beetles, cockroaches, companions of crypts is this too much
here too much to say, that i hope they clicked their little
antennae in time, they mulched in the dirge of earth, rhythmically
praising the newly blessed place and company