

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,