

## Thirteen Ways To Apprehend Our Quetzal in Good Faith

*For Wallace Stevens*

GARY FRANCISCO KELLER

### I

In the beginning Xochiquetzal  
and Mixcoatl mated  
SkySerpent and QuetzalBlossom bore ire  
wind, the florid war  
our poet-god Quetzalcoatl, banished  
to the eastern sea on a raft of serpents

### II

Our quetzal is the go-between  
a god, a goddess, a guardian  
She is our conserver's cause,  
He is our uncaused causer

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Gary Francisco Keller ha sido poeta y cuentista por más de cuarenta años. En 1973, Keller fundó y actualmente dirige la Editorial Bilingüe/Bilingual Press que publica la Revista Bilingüe/Bilingual Review. Desde su fundación, la editorial ha servido como instrumento de publicación de centenares de libros de investigación y literatura creativa. En los actuales momentos, Keller esta trabajando en una novela de ficción con un fondo mexicanoamericano e internacional.

III

Our quetzal is drawing down from heaven  
his erect tailfeathers mark earth's spot  
Our quetzal is skimming the emerald cloudforest  
his fluted tailfeather foreshadows our fecund life

IV

At first our quetzal was as pure blue  
as turquoise mountain water  
But Tecún Umán fell to the conquistador  
The godbird lit upon the crimson wound  
Breast to breast, warbler to warrior  
His chestfeathers dyed with Maya blood

V

Mis movimiento poetas de Aztlán  
Why do you conjure the águila or colibrí?  
Our twin-gendered quetzal beckons you  
return to amatl and sculpted stone.

VI

A man and a woman  
Are one  
A man, a woman, a plumed serpent  
Are one

## VII

Tres quetzales roost apart in an aguacatillo tree  
 She chooses one and sets the other free  
 ¡Let it be me! ¡Let it be me!

## VIII

I was of three minds  
 In the corona of a tree  
 perched two eager machos  
 their female arbiter and me

## IX

I do not know which to prefer,  
 the indiscretion of direction  
 or the discretion of indirection  
 The resplendent male plunging from on high  
 or our feathered flower goddess proving fertility

## X

In the swaying misty cloudforest  
 the only still solidary life  
 is one carefully concealed quetzal

XI

The macho is in our nest  
Parenting the brood  
his outsized virile tailfeather  
turns upon itself

XII

It was drizzling in the cloudforest  
It was going to drizzle  
The quetzal eyed me from afar  
the tiny lizard firmly in beak  
She set forth to a higher nest  
to nourish our young

XIII

There is no thirteenth way  
The faith of bad faith  
is a feckless faith  
Cage not my quetzal  
We know no justice  
But poetic justice