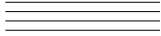


T H E P R O B L E M O F T I M E



E D M U N D K E E L E Y

It isn't the life-long problem
of never being quite on time
that most of us carry with us
out of some kind of need
from vanity preparation
to last-minute caring
for pets or children or the aging
or others with no sense of time
unless you happen to have served
in the army, navy, or marines
or some bureaucratic job
calling for a slavish schedule
and a failing of the adventurous spirit
that puts time in its proper place
so we don't really give a damn
until it turns out we have to
as we reach that certain age.
This is when the problem
takes hold in unforgiving ways
by speeding up mysteriously
and haunting our possibilities
both of us knowing that time
can be mercilessly in command
so that we ask ourselves quietly
will there still be time for the gardens
in some English town we choose
or a walk in Paris by the river
say the flea market in the Plaka
and O those white islands

a castle with its convenient wall
time to hold hands in some chapel
with the steep gorge below
and the boundless sea beyond
so we can plan for the unknown
say a trip farther east
or the west rim of Ireland
anywhere that says we're able
with what time we still have left
to cruise in the world out there
and the world of our private longing
to roam the green fields
singing our song of pleasure
and so challenge the knowledge
that only time will tell.