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Underway with Steam

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Underway With Steam

I.

Though the tongue laughs
machine in us won't never last.
Blueprint and draft lost in ash
lines cast off from land
yet machine clicks rarely late,
heart a function of blood flow
mind a neural tangle:
straighten it if you can
or as my captain said,
the lowest of goods in the lowest hold

straight is the angle of ships shaft,
its music divested of emotive matter
snow on steel yardarms,
wherein true fancy lies

put these characters in shape
the job of the captain
scissors and glue, lots of glue
machine the only game
and Bucky is convinced of survival
because the universe is limited
and man the shortest distance

II.

Covey of redwinged blackbirds
75 or hundred at evening
machine in two over wheatfield
broken by fossil-fueled explosive motion.
The road breaks in two the wheatfield
a line of direction
controlled by forgotten expedients
like the cathedrals of europe
or the dance of seed-splitting blackbirds

III.

The tongue waves goodbye
machine dependent on machine.
A teaspoon of sand in the reduction gear
a noise bigger than motion:
and no roadsigns at sea

Dennis Kennedy