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## Follow the Drinking Gourd

Robert Creeley

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*Robert Creeley*

“Follow the Drinking Gourd . . .”

*Present again  
present present  
again present  
present again*

leaves falling,  
knives, a windspout  
of nostalgic faces,  
into the air.

Car glides forward.  
Drive from Bloomington,  
Indiana to Lexington,  
Ky. Here the walls

of fall, the stone,  
the hill, the trucks  
in front with  
the unseen drivers.

Stoney Lonesome. Gnaw-  
bone. A house  
sits back from  
the road.

*A Christmas  
present—all  
present and ac-  
counted for? Sir?*

Passage of time.  
The sun shone level  
from the left-  
hand side of

the land—a flat-  
seeming distance,  
left, east? South?  
Sun shines.

*Go on. Tell  
me, them, him,  
her, their  
apparent forms.*

The “present dented,”  
call it “long  
distance,” come  
here home. Then

a scarecrow there, here a  
snowman. Where in  
the world then an-  
other place?

*Drive on  
what seems an  
exceptionally smooth  
and even surface,*

the forward cars  
way up there glint  
in that sun of  
a universe of mine.

And for twenty-eight  
dollars—all this.  
All in the mind  
in time, in place—

what it costs to rent  
agency? Give  
me a present, your  
hand to help

me understand this.  
So far, so long,  
so anywhere a  
place if not this

one—driving,  
screaming a lovely  
song perhaps, or  
a cigar smoke—

“When they were  
young in Kentucky  
a man to freedom  
took them in a cave. . . .”

A famous song,  
to drive to,  
sing along the  
passing way—

or *done* or  
*right* or  
*wrong* or  
wander on.