

2018

You Will Hear Each Question Only Once

Christopher T. Keaveney
Linfield College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/glcsfac_pubs



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

DigitalCommons@Linfield Citation

Keaveney, Christopher T., "You Will Hear Each Question Only Once" (2018). *Faculty Publications*. Published Version. Submission 4.

https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/glcsfac_pubs/4

This Published Version is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It is brought to you for free via open access, courtesy of DigitalCommons@Linfield, with permission from the rights-holder(s). Your use of this Published Version must comply with the [Terms of Use](#) for material posted in DigitalCommons@Linfield, or with other stated terms (such as a Creative Commons license) indicated in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, or if you have questions about permitted uses, please contact digitalcommons@linfield.edu.

Christopher Keaveney

You Will Hear Each Question Only Once

Question 19. What is the man's problem?

The man may actually have many problems
but we could focus on one for the sake of brevity,
for the sake of argument,
for the sake of the friend who he abandoned
in the woods as a child
as a sort of practical joke that he came to regret,
for the sake of the girl who
took the flowers he gave her on bended knee
only to leave them
on the hood of his Buick the following morning,
for the sake of the dog who learned tricks just to forget them,
for the sake of the planet that was discovered

in a spindly tendril of the solar system
when he was a high school student
only to be demoted five years later,
for the sake of the refugees
for whom he raised money in a walkathon
for an organization whose CEO
embezzled the money to buy a Lear jet
and who were forcibly repatriated
a year later anyway,
for the sake of bananas which suffer
from a blight called Panama Disease and which may disappear from your
breakfast table within the next decade,
for the sake of El Nino or La Nina
or perhaps the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria,
names designed to confuse,
for the sake of the whales,
for the spotted owls,
for the ravaged oceans,
for the forgotten ancestors,
for the sake of the victims of the innumerable disasters
that keep him awake at night
for the sake of our planet,
and for the sake of wonder itself
which is the tool he might have chosen

in the first place to mark
every problem,
big or small,
in the absence of a No. 2 pencil.

Christopher T. Keaveney (he, him) teaches Japanese language and East Asian culture at Linfield College in Oregon and is the author of four books about Japanese culture and East Asian cultural relations. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Columbia Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *The Minetta Review*, *Stolen Island*, *Faultline*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, and elsewhere, and he is the author of the collection *Your Eureka not Mined* (Broadstone Books, 2017).