2002

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Kevin Griffith

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Drunks in a Midnight Choir

Kevin Griffith

The flasks clink under our red silk robes.
Oh God, forgive us for the off-key notes,
the harmonies so far from kilter they punch holes
in the midnight sky, your endless dark coat.

Oh, God, forgive us for the off-key notes.
It's hard to fight the shakes, the bitter cold
in the midnight sky, your endless dark coat.
We should be sent packing, truth be told,

but it's hard to fight the shakes, the bitter cold.
We mangle the words: mudder and chile.
We should be sent packing, truth be told,
But it's the season to forgive what's vile.

We mangle the words: mudder and chile.
The whisky dulls us. A grindstone gone bad.
But it's the season to forgive what's vile.
Even wise men praise the humble and make glad.

And so, in spite of our breath, our trembling hands,
the harmonies so far from kilter they punch holes
in the night, we offer our songs. Our music stands.
And the flasks clink under our red silk robes.
The Etiology of Eschatology

Kevin Griffith

Or vice-versa. What comes around goes around and so it goes. Everyone knows that when the last night's bright trumpet sounds for the final time,

such great darkness is only a prelude to the longest dawn, a clock strike that begets a new round of blinding light, of oceans stretching beyond the scope of the mind's iris,

gardens rich with trees so heavy with burst fruit that all the newly handmade animals will grow fat waiting for caretakers to slap a name on them.

And then, when one lousy mistake gets made, as they always do in their own passive-voiced way, the world will begin its great downhill slide once again, and all the dark-robed cryptologists who haven't yet gone mad with trying, will fret over the end of everything once again, decoding the frail pages of books heavy with nothing more than what they intended. Yes, once everyone has solved the great conundrum of the world's possible last song and dance, time will have already smacked them with its grand goodnight kiss, the stars will have given their last call, the universe will have locked the door on its way out, and the big man will hit rewind.

Kevin Griffith is professor of English at Capital University.