

Fall 2013

The Ruin Choir

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Recommended Citation

Phan, Kevin (2013) "The Ruin Choir," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 79 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss79/8>

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KEVIN PHAN

[THE RUIN CHOIR]

Selection from My Life with Andy Goldsworthy

*"The landscape is often perceived
as pastoral, pretty, beautiful...
But anybody who works the land
knows it's not like that."*

- *"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."
The Telegraph (24 March 2007)*

I moonlighted
as a maestro, asked Mother

Pacific: *won't you play
your liquid orchestra?*

When I heard her
ripped psalms I felt

no fear. I was a hum
& watchful set of eyes

in the night. I recited
Milarepa with a flashlight

& tended to swans
who enemies crouched

in the woods.
& Yes, I knew

soon or sooner
I'd find loss:

those ruin-choir nights &
(at dawn) more beauties

to bury. Lately, I raze
my fingernails (packed

with crud.) I rinse,
scour & repeat

& am reported missing
at the kitchen window

remembering the limp
weight swung

in a Glad bag at my right,
a splintered shovel

clutched in my left
whose edge I rocked

my weight onto
to open up

a place. Peeling back
one wing I found

two nicks
(where fangs had sunk)

& then that sound
dirt made

amassing
over plastic