

## Ode to the street system

By Garrison Keillor

When you are beset by doubt,  
Take Lyndale Avenue due south  
Where you can put your mind at rest,  
Knowing all streets run east and west  
And all are perfectly numbered.  
(There is, of course, no Twenty-third.  
It was logically omitted to make  
Thirtieth come out as Lake  
Instead of an odd Thirty-first or -second.)  
For years, successful men have reckoned  
By this system, trained the self  
To follow Lyndale and hang a ralph  
At Fiftieth, into a neighborhood  
Where homes are stable, children good,  
Earnings are high and soundly invested  
In products Consumer Reports has tested,  
Where life is not paranoid, moody or radical,  
But Republican, Lutheran and Alphabetical.

Aldrich, Bryant, Colfax, Dupont:  
You can put your trust upon't  
When lights are few and times are hard:  
Emerson, Fremont and Girard.  
Humboldt, Irving, James and Knox:  
This our foundation, these our bedrocks.  
Logan, Morgan, Newton, Oliver, Penn:  
Justify the ways of man to men.  
There is order in the promise  
Of Queen, Russell, Sheridan, Thomas.  
O do not stop or make a turn  
At Upton, Vincent or Washburn,  
Knowing by then the system meaneth,  
Past Xerxes, York, we'll reach our Zenith.

Be thankful this is not St. Paul.  
There is no sense to it at all.  
Where the Church, for all its spiritual and temporal  
powers,  
Permits a jungle of streets named after trees and flowers.  
Where a Minneapolis person can only look up to the  
heavens  
As, driving on Eighth Street, he is on Ninth and then on  
Seventh.

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*Garrison Keillor is a free-lance writer.*