

On “The Phonological Basis of Sound Change” (after Hopkins)

Andrew Garrett

Laulelevi virsiänsä, laulelevi, taitellevi
— Kalevala 3.5–6

I taught last April spring’s companion, Ling
 230’s thriller, thickly theory-thought Chapter, in its writing
 On diffusion level-ordered short-*a* tensing claims, and gliding
By there, how it does for all the data an answer bring
In analogy! then off, at once it’s a-swing
 Onto sound change brought forth in perception: structural tiding
 Preserved in such shifts. My heart in hiding
Stirs for a word, — the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!
Brute beauty and daring and thought, the pattern of sound’s here
 Lexical! AND it’s grammar guiding speech when, if alien
Forms seem optimal, more simplified, they will appear!
 No wonder of it: shéer plód may scan a zillion
Lines of Finnish song, but in that mere
 Paul trawls alone, and finds gold in prillion.

[Falling paeonic rhythm, sprung and outriding]