

Three Roberts

From heart to heart
from brain to brain
from Robert to Robert

Robert Zend phones Robert
Sward. Ring, ring.
"Robert, this is Robert."

"Is this Robert?" "This
is Robert, Robert." "Yes,
Robert?" I say, "This

is Robert, too." "Ah,
excuse me, I need
to find a match,"

says Robert Zend putting
down the telephone
and rummaging for matches,

granting me, a non-smoker,
the status of accessory
to his addiction.

All this occurring a few
seconds in to an otherwise
scintillating conversation.

"I had a very pleasant afternoon
while reading your poems,"
Margaret Trudeau once remarked

about Zend's book, *From Zero to One*,
and I can fully understand
her saying that.

Zend translates serious things
into funny things
and funny things

into serious things
he also translates himself
into other people, and

other people into himself –
and where does one of us end
and the other begin?

And where does Zend begin
and where do I zend?
I mean, end?

And what about Robert Priest?
Is he a visible man,
an invisible man?

or the man who broke out of the Letter X
Is he a spaceman in disguise?
A blue pyramid? A golden trumpet?

A chocolate lawnmower?
An inexhaustible flower?
Or a reader who escaped

from some interstellar library?
Rock Musician in residence
at the University of the Moon?

And meanwhile Robert Zend
looks into his mirror
and sees not Zend

but Chicago-bom Uncle Dog;
Half a Life's History;
Mr. Amnesia; Mr. Movies: Left to Right;

Mr. Transmigration of the Soul;
The poet as wanderer;
a forty-nine-year-old human violin . . .

Robert Zend the Nomad
gazing in like an acrobat
at the window in the sky.

Ring, ring. "Robert, this
is Robert." "Is this Robert?"
"This is Robert, Robert."

"Yes, Robert," I say speaking
to my friend Robert One,
"This is Robert T w o . "

Roberts . . .

Robertness . . .

Three Knights of a Roberthood

By Robert Sward, published in *The Three Roberts: Premiere Performance*
(Scarborough: HMS Press, 1984), p. 28. Copyright © Robert Sward, 1984.
All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of the author.

