

Gertrude Stein (1874-1946). Lifting Belly (1915-17)

Part One

I have been heavy and had much selecting. I saw a star which was low. It was so low it twinkled. Breath was in it. Little pieces are stupid.
I want to tell about fire. Fire is that which we have when we have olive. Olive is a wood. We like linen. Linen is ordered. We are going to order linen.
All belly belly well.
Bed of coals made out of wood.
I think this one may be an expression. We can understand heating and burning composition. Heating with wood.
Sometimes we readily decide upon wind we decide that there will be stars and perhaps thunder and perhaps rain and perhaps no moon. Sometimes we decide that there will be a storm and rain. Sometimes we look at the boats. When we read about a boat we know that it has been sunk. Not by the waves but by the sails. Any one knows that rowing is dangerous. Be alright. Be careful. Be angry. Say what you think. Believe in there being the same kind of a dog. Jerk. Jerk him away. Answer that you do not care to think so.
We quarreled with him. We quarreled with him then. Do not forget that I showed you the road. Do not forget that I showed you the road. We will forget it because he does not oblige himself to thank me. Ask him to thank me.
The next time that he came we offered him something to read. There is a great difference of opinion as to whether cooking in oil is or is not healthful.
I don't pardon him. I find him objectionable.
What is it when it's upset. It isn't in the room. Moonlight and darkness. Sleep and not sleep. We sleep every night.
What was it.
I said lifting belly.
You didn't say it.
I said it I mean lifting belly.
Don't misunderstand me.
Do you.
Do you lift everybody in that way.
No.
You are to say No.
Lifting belly.
How are you.
Lifting belly how are you lifting belly.
We like a fire and we don't mind if it smokes.
Do you.
How do you do. The Englishmen are coming. Not here. No an Englishwoman. An Englishman and an Englishwoman.
What did you say lifting belly. I did not understand you correctly. It is not well said. For lifting belly. For lifting belly not to lifting belly.
Did you say, oh lifting belly.
What is my another name.
Representative.
Of what.
Of the evils of eating.
What are they then.

They are sweet and figs.
Do not send them.
Yes we will it will be very easy.

Part II.

Lifting belly. Are you. Lifting.
Oh dear I said I was tender, fierce and tender.
Do it. What a splendid example of carelessness.
It gives me a great deal of pleasure to say yes.
Why do I always smile.
I don't know.
It pleases me.
You are easily pleased.
I am very pleased.
Thank you I am scarcely sunny.
I wish the sun would come out.
Yes.
Do you lift it.
High.
Yes sir I helped to do it.
Did you.
Yes.
Do you lift it.
We cut strangely.
What.
That's it.
Address it say to it that we will never repent.
A great many people come together.
Come together.
I don't think this has anything to do with it.
What I believe in is what I mean.
Lifting belly and roses.
We get a great many roses.
I always smile.
Yes.
And I am happy.
With what.
With what I said.
This evening.
Not pretty.
Beautiful.
Yes beautiful.
Why don't you prettily bow.
Because it shows thought.
It does.
Lifting belly is so strong.
A great many things are weaknesses. You are pleased to say so. I say because I am so well
pleased. With what. With what I said.
There are a great many weaknesses.

Lifting belly.
What was it I said.
I can add that.
It's not an excuse.
I do not like bites.
How lift it.
Not so high.
What a question.
I do not understand about ducks.
Do not you.
I don't mean to close.
No of course not.
Dear me. Lifting belly.
Dear me. Lifting belly.
Oh yes.
Alright.
Sing.
Do you hear.
Yes I hear.
Lifting belly is amiss.
This is not the way.
I see.
Lifting belly is alright.
Is it a name.
Yes it's a name.
We were right.
So you weren't pleased.
I see that we are pleased.
It is a great way.
To go.
No not to go.
But to lift.
Not light.
Paint.
No not paint.
All the time we are very happy.
All loud voices are seen. By whom. By the best.
Lifting belly is so erroneous.
I don't like to be teased and worried.
Lifting belly is so accurate.
Yes indeed.
She was educated.
And pleased.
Yes indeed.
Lifting belly is so strong.
I said that to mean that I was very glad.
Why are you very glad.
Because that pleased me.
Baby love.
A great many people are in the war.

I will go there and back again.
What did you say about Lifting belly.
I said lifting belly is so strong.
Yes indeed it is and agreeable and grateful.
We have gratitude.
No one can say we haven't.
Lifting belly is so cold. Not in summer. No nor in winter either.
All of it is a joke.
Lifting belly is no joke. Not after all.
I am so discouraged about it. About lifting belly. I question.
I am so discouraged about lifting belly.
The other day there was a good deal of sunlight.
There often is.
There often is here.
We are very well satisfied at present.
So enthusiastic.
Lifting belly has charm.
Charming.
Alright.
Lifting belly is not very interesting.
To you.
To me.
Say did you see that the wind was from the east.
It usually is from the South.
We like rain.
Sneeze. This is the way to say it.
You meant a pressure.
Indeed yes.
All the time there is a chance to see me. I don't wish it to be said so.
The skirt.
And water.
You mean ocean water.
Not exactly an ocean a sea.
A success.
Was it a success.
Lifting belly is all there.
Lifting belly high.
It is not necessary to repeat the word.
How do you do I forgive you everything and there is nothing to forgive.
Lifting belly is so high.
Do you like lilies.
Do you like lilies.
Do you like lilies.
Use the word lifting belly is so high.
In place of that.
A special case to-day.
Of peaches.
Lifting belly is delightful.
Lifting belly is so high.
To-day.

Yes to-day.
Do you think that said yesterday.
Yes to-day.
Don't be silly.
In that we see that we can please me.
I don't see how you can write on the wall about roses.
Lifting belly a terminus.
What is there to please me.
Alright.
A pocket.
Lifting belly is good.
Rest.
Arrest.
Do you please me.
I do more than that.
When are you most proud of me.
Dare I ask you to be satisfied.
Dear me.
Lifting belly is anxious.
Not about Verdun.
Oh dear no.
The wind whistles that means it whistles just like any one. I thought it was a whistle.
Lifting belly together.
Do you like that there.
There are not mistakes made.
Not here at any rate.
Not here at any rate.
There are no mistakes made. Not here at any rate.
When do I see the lightning. Every night.
Lifting belly again.
It is a credit to me.
There was an instant of lifting belly.
Lifting belly is an occasion. An occasion to please me. Oh yes. Mention it.
Lifting belly is courteous.
Lifting belly is hilarious gay and favorable.
Oh yes it is.
Indeed it is not a disappointment.
Not to me.
Lifting belly is such an incident. In one's life.
Lifting belly is such an incident in one's life.
I don't mean to be reasonable.
Shall I say thin.
This makes me smile.
Lifting belly is so kind.
A great many clouds for the sun. You mean the sun on high.
Leave me.
See me.
Lifting belly is no joke.
I appreciate that.
Do not show kindness.

Why not.
Because it ruffles me.
Do not say that it is unexpected.
Lifting belly is so scarce.
Not to-day.
Lifting belly is so kind.
To me there are many exceptional cases.
What did you say. I said I had not been disturbed. Neither had we. Lifting belly is so necessary.
Lifting belly is so kind.
I can't say it too often.
Pleasing me.
Lifting belly.
Extraordinary.
Lifting belly is such exercise.
You mean altogether.
Lifting belly is so kind to me.
Lifting belly is so kind to many.
Don't say that please.
If you please.
Lifting belly is right.
And we were right.
Now I say again. I say now again.
What is a whistle.
Miracle you don't know about the miracle.
You mean a meteor.
No I don't I mean everything away.
Away where.
Away here.
Oh yes.
Lifting belly is so strong.
You said that before.
Lifting belly is so strong and willing.
Lifting belly is so strong and yet waiting.
Lifting belly is so soothing. Yes indeed.
It gives me greater pleasure.
Does it.
It gives me great pleasure.
What do you mean by St. John.
A great many churches are visited.
Lifting belly try again.
I will not say what I think about lifting belly. Oh yes you will.
Well then please have it understood that I can't be responsible for doubts. Nobody doubts.
Nobody doubts.
I have no use for lifting belly.
Do you say that to me.
No I don't.
Anybody who is wisely urged to go to Inca goes to the hill.
What hill. The hill above lifting belly.
Is it all hill.

Not very well.
Not very well hill.
Lifting belly is so strong.
And clear.
Why do you say feeding.
Lifting belly is such a windmill.
Do you stare.
Lifting belly to me.
What did he say.
He didn't say that he was waiting.
I have been adequately entertained.
Some when they sigh by accident say poor country she is betrayed.
I didn't say that to-day. No indeed you didn't.
Mixing belly is so kind.
Lifting belly is so a measure of it all.
Lifting belly is a picnic.
On a fine day.
We like the weather it is very beautiful.
Lifting belly is so able.
Lifting belly is so able to be praised.
The act.
The action.
A great many people are excitable.
Mixing belly is so strange.
Lifting belly is so satisfying.
Do not speak to me.
Of it.
Lifting belly is so sweet.
That is the way to separate yourself from the water.
Lifting belly is so kind.
Loud voices discuss pigeons.
Do loud voices discuss pigeons.
Remember me to the hill. What hill. The hill in back of Genova.
Lifting belly is so kind. So very kind.
Lifting belly is so kind.
I never mean to insist to-day.
Lifting belly is so consecutive.
With all of us.
Lifting belly is so clear.
Very clear.
And there is lots of water.
Lifting belly is so impatient.
So impatient to-day.
Lifting belly is all there.
Do I doubt it.
Lifting belly.
What are my plans.
There are some she don't mention.
There are some she doesn't mention. Some others she doesn't mention.
Lifting belly is so careful. Full of care for me. Lifting belly is mean. I see. You mean lifting

belly is all right.
Lifting belly is so simple.
Listen to me to-day.
Lifting belly is so warm.
Leave it to me.
Leave what to me.
Lifting belly is such an experiment.
We were thoroughly brilliant.
If I were a postman I would deliver letters. We call them letter carriers.
Lifting belly is so strong. And so judicious.
Lifting belly is an exercise.
Exercise is very good for me.
Lifting belly necessarily please the latter.
Lifting belly is necessary.
Do believe me.
Lifting belly quietly.
It is very exciting.
Stand.
Why do you stand.
Did you say you thought it would make any difference.
Lifting belly is not so kind.
Little places to sting.
We used to play star spangled banner.
Lifting belly is so near.
Lifting belly is so dear.
Lifting belly all around.
Lifting belly makes a sound.
Keep still.
Lifting belly is gratifying.
I can't express the hauntingness of Dugny.
I can't express either the obligation I have to say say it.
Lifting belly is so kind.
Dear me lifting belly is so kind.
Am I in it.
That doesn't affect it.
How do you mean.
Lifting belly and a resemblance.
There is no resemblance.
A plain case of misdeed.
Lifting belly is peaceable.
The Cataluna has come home.
Lifting belly is a success.
So is tenderness.
Lifting belly is kind and good and beautiful.
Lifting belly is my joy.
Do you believe in singling. Singing do you mean.
Lifting belly is a special pleasure.
Who can be convinced of this measure.
Lifting belly is perfect.
I know what you mean.

Lifting belly was very fatiguing.
Did you make a note of it of the two donkeys and the three dogs. The smaller one is the
mother of the other two.
Lifting belly.
Exactly.
Lifting belly all the time.
Do be careful of me.
Remarkably so.
Remarkably a recreation.
Lifting belly is so satisfying.
Lifting belly to me.
Large quantities of it.
Say that you see that you are praised.
Lifting belly.
See that.
You have entertained me.
Hurry up.
Hurry up with it.
Lifting belly does that astonish you.
Excuse me.
Why do you wish to hear me.
I wish to hear you because it pleases me.
Yesterday and to-day.
Yesterday and to-day we managed it altogether.
Lifting belly is so long.
It is an expression of opinion.
Conquistador. James I.
It is exceptional.
Lifting belly is current rolling. Lifting belly is so strong.
Lifting belly is so strong.
That is what I say.
I say it to please me.
Please yourself with thunder.
Lifting belly is famous.
So are many celebrations.
Lifting belly is so.
We mean lifting belly.
We mean it and do we care.
We keep all the letters.
Lifting belly is so seen.
You mean here.
Not with spy glasses.
Lifting belly is an expression.
Explain it explain it to me.
Lifting belly is cautious.
Of course these words are said.
To be strong.
Lifting belly.
Yes orchids.
Lifting belly is so adaptable.

That will amuse my baby.
Lifting belly is a way of sitting.
I don't mean to laugh.
Lifting belly is such a reason.
Lifting belly is such a reason.
Why do I say bench.
Because it is laughable.
Lifting belly is so droll.
We have met to-day with every kind of consideration.
Not very good. Of course it is very good.
Lifting belly is so kind.
Why do you say that.
Bouncing belly.
Did you say bouncing belly.
We asked here for a sister.
Lifting belly is not noisy.
We go to Barcclona to-morrow.
Lifting belly is an acquisition.
I forgot to put in a special cake. Love to be.
Very well.
Lifting belly is the understanding.
Sleepy.
Why do you wake up.
Lifting belly keep it.
We will send it off.
She should.
Nothing pleases me except dinner.
I have done as I wished and I do not feel any responsibility to you.
Are you there.
Lifting belly.
What do I say.
Pussy how pretty you are.
That goes very quickly unless you have been there too long.
I told him I would send him Mildred's book. He seemed very pleased at the prospect.
Lifting belly is so strong.
Lifting belly together.
Lifting belly oh yes.
Lifting belly.
Oh yes.
Remember what I say.
I have no occasion to deliberate.
He has no heart but that you can supply.
The fan goes alright.
Lifting belly what is carnest. Expecting an arena to be monumental.
Lifting belly is recognised to be the only spectacle present. Do you mean that.
Lifting belly is a language. It says island. Island a strata. Lifting belly is a repetition.
Lifting belly means me.
I do love roses and carnations.
A mistake. There can be no mistakes
I do not say a mother.

Lifting belly.
Lifting belly.
Cry.
Lifting belly.
Lifting belly. Splendid.
Jack Johnson Henry.
Henry is his name sir.
Jack Johnson Henry is an especially eloquent curtain.
We see a splendid force in mirrors.
Angry we are not angry.
Pleasing.
Lifting belly raining.
I am good looking.
A magazine of lifting belly. Excitement sisters.
Did we see the bird jelly I call it. I call it something religious. You mean beautiful. I do not know that I like large rocks. Sarsen land we call it. Oh yes. Lifting belly is a persuasion. You are satisfied. With it. With it and with you. I am satisfied with your behavior. I call it astonishing. Lifting belly is so exact and audible and Spanish curses. You know I prefer a bird. What bird. Why a yellow bird. I saw it first. That was an accident. You mean by accident. I mean exactly what I said. Lifting belly is a great luxury. Can you imitate a cow. Lifting belly is so kind.
And so cold.
Lifting belly is a rare instance. I am fond of it. I am attached to the accentuation.
Lifting belly is a third.
Did you say third. No I said Avila.
Listen to him sing.
She is so sweet and thrilling.
Listen to me as vet I have no color. Red white and blue all out but you.
This is the best thing I have ever said. Lifting belly and it, it is not startling. Lifting belly until to-morrow. Lifting belly to-morrow.
I would not be surprised surprised if I added that yet.
Lifting belly to me.
I am fondest of all of lifting belly.
Lifting belly careful don't say anything about lifting belly.
I did not change my mind.
Neither did you carefully.
Lifting belly and again lifting belly.
I have changed my mind about the country.
Lifting belly and action and voices and care to be taken.
Does it make any difference if you pay for paper or not.
Listen to me. Using old automobile tires as sandals is singularly interesting. It is done in Avila.
What did I tell. Lifting belly is so kind.
What kind of a noise does it make. Like the man at night. The man that calls out. We hear him.
Lifting belly is so strong. I love cherish idolise adore and worship you. You are so sweet so tender and so perfect.
Did you believe in sandals. When they are made of old automobile tire. I wish I knew the history of it.
Lifting belly is notorious.

A great many people wish to salute. The general does. So does the leader of the battalion. In Spanish. I understand that.

I understand everything.

Lifting belly is to jelly.

Holy most is in the sky.

We see it in three.

Yes we see it every night near the hills. This is so natural. Birds do it. We do not know their name.

Lifting belly or all I can never be pleased with this. Listen to me. Lifting belly is so kind.

Lifting belly is so dear.

Lifting belly is here.

Did we not hear and we were walking leave it to me and say come quickly now. He is not sleepy. At last I know why he laughs. Do you.

I will not imitate colors. From the stand point of white yellow is colored. Do you mean bushes. No I mean acacias. Lilacs do fade. What did you say for lifting belly. Extra. Extra thunder. I can so easily be fastidious.

Praise for *Lifting Belly*

“Often considered the central erotic work of Stein’s middle period, this love poem written to her longtime companion, Alice B. Toklas, reveals a vulnerability and tenderness unexpected of one so famous for caustic wit. Associative in structure, the work consists of alternately cryptic and conversational fragments detailing a shared domestic life. A very brief initial section observes the hardships of gay estrangement from society, while the body of the work applauds the decision to endure these for love’s sake. Readers will welcome an unusual view of Stein in this . . . work in which “lifting belly”—signifying sexual union—comes to imply passionate commitment to another and acceptance of oneself.” —*Publishers Weekly*