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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SAY

is about poetry (always) and architecture and music,  
yes. How like  
and how they use us  
to make us become ourselves.

What i really wanted to say  
is that poiesis and music make time pass  
and architecture makes space pass.

Space and place, are they the same?  
Place happens in space,  
is architecture in a place or is it the place  
itself happening to space.  
The way music happens to time.

So there is usually a street and sometimes a fountain  
—a thing that moves up and up while the eye reaches out and out—  
and there's a girl walking by and another eating lunch on a bench  
when a place is a plaza.

What i really wanted to say  
is that the poem stretches on and on  
like an avenue of mysterious buildings  
who on earth lives in all those houses  
apartments single rooms

who climbs down the stairs or stumbles at midnight,  
who opens the brass letter boxes o my god  
who are all these people  
eating their lunch in the middle of the poem  
and looking at each other and wondering what it all means  
and then they come to the end of a line and decide  
well enough of this it's time to go home  
home to their room

What i really wanted to say  
was that the word 'room' really means 'space'—  
the German word for space is *Raum*, room, *Lebensraum*, room for living,  
is there room for ling  
in this poem you're writing  
o poet and o composer  
are you leaving space in your music  
for someone to live in, really and truly  
be alive *inside* your music,  
not just some background noise,  
not just some sad background-life while you drone on?

I know it's not polite to ask  
but we sort of know what architecture does  
rough and ready we inhabit it  
and when we're lucky it changes us,  
guides our footsteps and the way we feel  
about doing whatever we're doing that brings us there,

**swinking or swiving, a building holds all.**

**So what i really wanted to say  
was that these arts do something to time as it goes by  
not just make it pass  
as Beckett had his losers say, the time will pass by itself all right,  
it knows how to do that,  
or that is all it knows.**

**And do we know more  
than what music tells us as it flows past?  
We sit in the plaza on a marble bench and read poems to one another  
whispering or waving our arms and why not,  
somebody has to make things move,  
  
make the shadows dance in and out of the shadows of great buildings.**

**But does time ever really pass?  
Isn't time just a superstition, a flaw in our attention to the permanent?  
And if it passes  
can we learn how to stop it  
and make it pool out around us  
so that we stand or sit in the shallow water of moveless time,  
this static stream,  
  
or is it a salmon-leap of time up and out into space,  
into room,**

so that when we see a building we know that time is safe there,  
an artist's hour hammered into place  
and we can be, just be.  
Has he turned time into space?

What i really wanted to say  
was there and back again,  
the swell of music  
held in the mouth of the poem  
spoken to the girl eating her lunch  
in the great nest of plazas  
of many levels Steven Holl  
built in China, a city in a city,  
a poem someone is reciting,  
annoying the poor girl eating her lunch,  
my god how can I look at that plaza  
and now start writing a poem,  
a poem with musics and levels and fountains and food,

it's hard work to eat  
chewing and swallowing  
all the inward mysteries thereafter,  
hard work  
the poem and and the song,  
Hegel famously remarked a building is a frozen song,  
well yes, but everything is,  
what i really wanted to say

was that everything approximates music  
but a building is exact,  
demands space move its hips and shoulders  
this way and not that,

or is architecture also a chanceful music,  
turning space into space  
so that we can get lost for a long time  
in corridors and pentagons and Mooish geometries,  
the way Cage's 4'33" turns time into time,  
our dear Christless fundamentalist,  
our sweet raw Pythagoras,

turning common time into pure time-  
*time transmuted by attention—*  
we'll never be sure if he was the great Alchemist or the Wizard of Oz,  
but the time changed. and stays changed,  
he moved on to the next town  
and left us with an empty room full of pure time.

We shake our heads and say Next time we'll do better,  
we'll be ready for him, and dance to his tune.  
But what does "next time" mean?

Can there be another time  
after this time?  
That's where poetry comes in,

**and if quoting myself I should say again**

*time transmuted by attention*

**a measured , noticed time**

**is as much music as Biber is,**

**the glorious whine of whose strings**

**won't leave you alone for a second,**

**she looks up from her paper plate**

**and hears the time singing round her ears**

**spoken by the shapes and shades of great buildings**

**and now she knows, and now she's only now.**

**Can a poem, though,**

**such as I'm trying to make or bend your way now,**

**can a man outlast time?**

**Can it get where it's going before I get there?**

**When I was a child the greatest thrill**

**was riding on the escalator**

**Macy's Gimbel's Wanamaker's**

**floor to floor and always rising**

**and no one to stop you going up**

**and watching the people**

**on the way down, clutching bags**

**neat brown packages, content,**

**descending into ordinary space**

**while I rose up, finally reaching**

the dim cool floor where furs were sold  
and I turned back from the fear of dead animals,  
what could it mean to live in a world  
where animals die and their skins  
rest on lovely women of a certain age,  
that' why we hurry down again  
to the ordinary floors, the street,  
the paper plates littering the gutter,  
the half-eaten sandwich, the poem  
read halfway through and never finished.

but something was always going up,  
even if we didn't have the wit or will to endure its beauty,  
like James Tenney's electronic *For Anne, Rising*,  
where the sound goes up and up and never stops that climb  
but is always present, or Joan Tower's wonderful *Platinum Spirals*,  
violin conquering time by rising always in one place,

of when the thunder walks through the valley  
and everybody and everything knows itself  
suddenly walked into by that sound,

invaded, persuaded, frightened, spared—

What i really wanted to say  
was that I'm tired of poetry being a blueprint not a house  
I'm tired of music being something that comes and goes



**I want the word to be a house  
and the tune to be something you climb on and travel  
but how can I say that?**

**How can words make you hear  
or make a place you can actually walk across  
reaching a wall you can lean against  
warm in sunlight and close your eyes?**

**What i really wanted to say  
was that poetry wants to close your eyes  
and open them suddenly anew,  
the way doors and windows too,  
o envy of all poets these architect folk  
who can build an opening wherever they choose**

**when how can I break open even a single  
word to make you see?**

**1 August 2013**

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**I live in a dream  
no place else to go  
faces appear before me  
then you're gone**

**the names linger  
what did they mean  
in themselves  
what did they give me**

**as they flickered by?  
and all the love and anger  
they begot in me, all  
that's gone too.**

**1 August 2013**

## A Tract for the Old Calendrist

**Moon moonth month**

**no other measure should we need**

**the sun is for kings and commissars**

**the moon is for us**

**the roots of the matter (the mater):**

**M N in Egypt: M was owl**

**N was waves of the sea—**

***mn* = man mind mens meminisco humanus**

**humans are the animals with mind**

**animals that measure**

**animals that clock the moon's passage**

**animals that reckon by moon**

**Once in France I walked along the stream not far from Cavaillon**

**where the best melons come from, pale round sweet ones**

**and along the river bank some earth had subsided**

**exposing some bones tumbled down, and a skull regarding me;**

**word was that they were old, Gaulish or such,**

**I know they were white, white as the moon of course**

**for God's sake let us count by moons.**

**As the brain in the skull  
the soma in the moon—  
in the Vedas the moon  
was the chalice of semen,**

**SMN the juice of MNS  
the sap of mind**

**and some mind in the moon  
measures us.**

**To the moon the waters of earth rise,  
the seas, yes, but not just sea—**

**the sap in trees, the lymph in me—  
the tide speaks all the waters of our bodies**

**by moon they rise and fall.**

**So: the sun's business is with the earth,  
and their transactions  
make the seasons, the wind  
and the electromagnetic waves pouring down—  
they affect us, burn us,  
would kill us if we got enough of it.**

**The moon is mild, is ours,  
consoles the lover, lights the pilgrim's way,  
illuminates the backdoor for the burglar.  
The moon is for us.**

**So what is this Gregorian and Julian business of counting by the sun?  
-Doesn't day-and-night tell us enough, tell us sun is all or nothing, Manichean,  
lord of duality, patriarchy, government and salary?**

**Abstain from sun worship!**

**Every day a Sabbath!**

**Every night the moon sings a different song a different sign.**

**This is a simple-minded plea for a lunar calendar.**

**Begin it with the autumn solstice like the Jews and Greeks, or the spring  
solstice like the Persians, just watch the moon and name it through the  
seasons. Through your seasons, where you live. So we could have Lilac  
Month and Rose of Sharon Month and Owl Month and Blizzard. We are the  
authorities here.**

**You can go to the books and find dozens of lists of what American Indian tribes  
called the moons of the year. The lists to my mind seem fanciful and  
whitemanized. Here and there a name sticks out: Wolf Moon, Green Corn**

**Moon, Dead Water Moon. I don't trust the lists. We don't have to. Read them, but make up your own.**

**We are the measurers. The moon made us. The moon wants us to know. So call the year anything you want, count from the building of Rome or the Birth of the Redeemer or the Flight to Medina or the Storming of the Bastille—it doesn't matter.**

*The year doesn't matter.*

**Only the moon is matter, material to us, materially mothers or masters us—remember that the moon is a woman in some parts of the world, a man in others, or man in some seasons, lady in others.**

**And o, keep record of the nights,  
the night is when the moon discourseth,**

**a dream has eyes  
find them looking at you**

**then looking in you,  
and when you wake walk around  
seeing the world with those dream-eyes**

**recall that dreams are as real as waking**

**day we share with many if not all**

**night is shared with the fewest**

**the dream is unshared waking**

**only you and the moon know the stuff of your dream**

**the streets you move along and who you meet there**

**beating the dream-drum to feed the moon.**

**Our soma feeds the moon, our dreams feed the moon.**

**Hence the magistry of art, and its great burden:**

**to share the dream with all, and master it.**

**2 August 2013**

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**Danger of neglect  
formulary of the rose**

**I live  
the chance to speak.**

**2 August 2013**



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**Finding by self  
another noose  
around the ankle  
hop to heaven  
by leaving  
and believing.**

**One asks: “Where are you bound, friend?”  
Other answers, misunderstanding  
all too well: “I am bound in my body,  
my ankles yoked to earth, my fingers  
clench of their own accord, sir,  
I seem to be one spasm only.”**

**The asker sorry he asked  
sad at the answer  
dares to ask again:  
“Where are you going, then,  
on this road we share?”**

**“I’m nowhere but here,” the bound man says.**

**2 August 2013**

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**The water of life (*aion*)  
is the quietest stream**

**of all the visibles  
water most connects us to the world around  
(you can't see oxygen, can seldom see air)**

**and water is too pure to have a smell.**

**u**

**3 August 2013**

# M

*for Larry Chernicoff*

Our M began life as an Owl  
outline of an owl M  
curved wings  
think of the pointy ears,  
once was Egypt  
hieroglyph, demotic  
alphabet, meant *m*.  
Owl, bird of wisdom.  
mmm, keeping mum,  
keeping secrets, knowing  
gnosis, mind  
of Athena, mum  
of mommy, mother,  
murder, mortal,  
*la mamma morta*,  
Mary Eddy's dread  
of 'mortal mind.'  
The owl  
we fear as harbinger  
of death, that wise  
and final answer.  
Spooky owl noises

midnight scares us  
families moan,  
the owl comes  
the mother dies,  
*mors*, m, m  
that means me  
too, do you mind,  
my mother died  
in August,  
leaves me  
only myself  
she gave me,  
mother dies  
survives in  
mm, mm my mind  
means the M house  
we come from  
we come back,  
night before last  
an owl cried—  
sign of fall  
impending, my season  
to get born,  
what does one do  
without a cry,  
the mortal melody  
cartoon of us all

rising and falling  
babying and olding  
and tottering and  
maple leaves  
mottle  
soon the damp ground.  
I saw my mother  
on her deathbed,  
didn't see her die  
that night, a hundred  
miles away they thought  
she would survive,  
but dead on her bed  
quietly when no one stirred,  
feast of the Assumption,  
Mary, Mother of God,  
vanished from earth  
in her body into heaven  
when she fell asleep,  
the Dormition, far away,  
Asia Minor, all the way  
to heaven we know  
is mind, memory,  
poor motherless children  
are we.

The owl  
has come

**and flown away,  
now you too are an orphan,  
a mother's last gift  
the sad liberty  
of orphandom,  
a lone lad in the sad  
indifferent world  
maybe. Morning  
morning, mirror  
mirror—and there  
you are *I am*,  
finally just you.**

**3 August 2013**