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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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**So there I am
convalescing from life
and a nice shimmer of cloud
to keep hot sun at bay
and a snarling weedwacker outside
to give me something to focus on
so the mind sees nothing,
hears nothing but what it hears
and in the quiet of a single sound
I heal in peace.**

6 June 2013

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IN A CICADA FREE ZONE

**Seventeen years ago
I crept out of my snug retreat
in Annandale over the water**

**in a cicada year, a year
all about buzzing wonders
with hot red eyes**

**that hummed like wind in phone wires
clirred (is that even an English word?)
like all the summer nights at once**

**and I emerged in America
a quiet backyard in Kingston
warm and friendly and everybody**

**there about the cicadas. Mikhail
was there, the standup tragedian
poet of the folk before the folk**

**and the beautiful ballerina
Wilhelmina I remember
and many another lost**

**then in the night shimmer
now from my memory
and the cicadas were there too**

**loud as Jericho.
Louder than my tinnitus
that lets me hear jungle all year long.**

**2.
But not tonight.**

**I haven't heard a cicada
yet this year, let alone seen one.**

**The island where I am
has a different religion,
we have birds and winds**

**though at twilight Charlotte
saw a cardinal with a big
bug in its beak. Who knows?**

**You people over there
fourteen miles west in America,
you've got them now,**

**your nonstop heavymetal
allnight dubstep entomology.
Be glad. All that free music
has to be something like the soul.**

6 June 2013

1.

Liturgical responses

wind and rain —

let an island be a proposition

in Euclid. Parse the rapture.

Words that need to be said over and over

no measure

(if you can't count them are they really there?)

Who is the enemy in the epic?

Is it the king or the thought of the king?

Cold knees

brooms for breakfast.

(7 June 2013, Cuttyhunk)

2.

**There was an analyst who worked free
nobody believed him
so he had nothing on his conscience.
It might be a father a lover one's own lost self —
be kind to anyone you visualize
say: this is a conversation in my head with someone who isn't there
stop this. Say what you like but only out loud.
Things can only happen once,
in the mind or out there. Out here.
Don't use up the event by imagining.
Things like this are what he must have said.**

3.

All professions are full of grief
the west wind
sometimes is cold enough
to be at peace
nail half an orange to the rail
finches love it
and walk downhill
sarabande of rainy morning
slogan old Scottish battlecry
rain on the windowpane
tiny boxing gloves from rearview mirror slung
married young and still at sea.

4.

**Trying to avoid thinking he counted instead
ample precedence for this mistake
soft answers
theologians distinguish the qualities of the unknowable
divided nation
richest supported fiercely by the poorest
oligarch ugliest when masked as democrat
tribal values clan corn stalks ratty barns
all the way to the horizon
this is the day of wheat the day of chaff
in the shrine one candle burning
salt shaker shattered on glass top table.**

5.

Headlines from harmony — are you awake?

Bulletin for a coward

chisel made of rhodium

blissman Africa

a conga-line of suburban merrymakers

old movies tell new truths

fold into fable

the feasts of Magdalen

on your white napkin I wipe my bloody lips

downstairs curtains in the rain

the sound of wet wood

hypothetical distances.

6.

**Empty wineglass in the hand
haven't felt this free in weeks
yellow fruit really purple finches
legitimate inferences from the sciences
how little we kiss!
Could you build a car from scratch
a jet engine even a radio?
We have so much and know so little
it's all just put in our hands
no wonder a devil
hide in the attic
archaic paperweight family Bible.**

7.

**Liturgy enough for aftermath
aftermath enough for anybody
am radio
she stood before us
made of color horns of her hips
broken plaster would you wall?
Even everything after all
I learned to listen to her bones
the foreign woman but not so far
so pale the ruler of this house
frantic elsewhere sand in the shoe
we move by swimming through the air.**

8.

**O it's obvious enough
the way things are
oil burner rumbles on
chilly premises of northern philosophy
what is the matter with the English?
Why can't they decide
the mind knows nothing about the mind
on every table cut flowers in a cooking pot
remember every day and night
the promises you made to the sky
our everlasting witness
the house around our house.**

9.

Catch what we can or clutch
cheesemaker up to her elbows in whey
the curds form by themselves!
We gather we gather
Pyrenees lacking here
hill but no sheep
psychiatrist but no peace
it would be easier if we had souls
but nothing measures nothing means
parse the situation with wet lips
reach out once in a while
out from the clock.

10.

**Because you have to believe something
without punctuation
hard to get the hang of a day
of time the unrememberer the lost brother
the girl who went back below the hill
chilly now and ardent then
a heart is the lung of the sea
suddenly the horizon rushes in
a multiple blue person enters my body
this brings me to shore
the mist is not moving
the land we love does not stay still.**

11.

**Narrative happens in a reader's mind
nothing else is going on
anemometer twirls round and round
measuring the wind
numbers down below
this cave mouth to our city come
sink into the bliss of ordinary streets
thighing around ordinary houses
you live here so I do too
mute connectedness of ball and bat
web of Indra plight with jewels
simple in his complexity.**

12.

Remarkable for dawn

Latin promise all fulfilled

heartbreak and doctorate

call the birds to witness

this man sits still

imagine the sea moves

imagines women and their men come from the sea

imagine the invaders are just like me

when even you aren't

a shoelace lying on the beach a flipflop lost

follow the grain of wood and enter in

blazing tachometer dashboard made of tropic wood.

13.

**I need a machine at this point
three women swimming in the pool
white one-piece mind
a parade to honor Wittgenstein
to turn away from what is most one's own
the story breaks here the hero heard
goats digging their hooves in hill
sometimes long after she vanished
you hear her voice come out of the hill
a throat but another language
each part of the body a tarot trump in a lost game
do you remember what to call me?**

14.

**Fields of Russia white with images
a Repin canvas of a peasant shack
but o the shutters and the cries of birds
girls in the meadow pretending to be boys
so much is lost before you learn to feel
cast a number in bronze
nail it to that rock and call it measure
one day at lunch with A.J. Ayer
there is nothing left to say about the mind
that's where poetry comes in
the art of making everything happen again
and be new the art of meaning something.**

7 June 2013, Cuttyhunk

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[Continuation from 1 June]

3.

Among colors seated
like oils on swirling water
you begin to speak,
you preach to emptiness
the warm dark of the room
(Melville's desk, view
of Mount Greylock
the window gives so little
light, the window is
the eyes' escape and
only where), your words
slip through the dimness
you slap the belt on the desktop
the pulpit the table
to keep time with silence.

4.

You understand the colors.
You explain red. You tell
blue severely. You put
yellow in its place. My place.
You indicate that green

is always between.
See (you say) I have turned
light inside out.
Earth and every earth
in us is brown, amber
remembers, purple
is an adolescent always,
orange is a bird
flying too close.
Scares me. White
is all the mistakes
we ever made, glowing
all together. Touch me.

5.

A hair drifts into your eye
you swipe it away
and are silent now
as if there were no more color in the world.

6.

But the wall is made of crystals I remember
things like jewels or pieces of color all by itself
and the crystals crackle
sound like short-wave radio broadcast coming in
the monsoons are late the army is on fire

**all the messages rattle in my head
confuse me till I am simple,
simple-minded, can't stop,
can't stop thinking about you.
You hear my voice you can't identify
you never know it's me that's talking,
you are ivory often and I remember
can't stop feeling, feeling
the way the light along your skin**

**or anyone, but who is talking?
Doesn't it take two to make a dream,
make it mean? The words
are waiting for us every morning,
made out of breath and color alone.**

7 June 2013, Cuttyhunk