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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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The birds know something I don't know.  
Subway empathy faces in the roar of sound.  
Some day I may write again.  
Only let the words decide.  
The harsh practice that rules my life.  
I dreamed these words they must be true.

22/23 June 2011

Cuttyhunk

## LETTER TO LIBBY SHAPIRO

I'm glad to hear from you, the lyrical weirdness of time gone by catching up with itself and come again. Time comes back for a visit and brings you with it. Hello!

We're always saying hello to situations that are always trying to say goodbye. And vice versa. no? Like learning a foreign language. Or maybe singing a note a whole tone higher (lower) than you can sing. Ah, Zerbinetta, what time does for us! And we're usually so ungrateful. Families, possessions, advanced degrees, honors, interesting allergies, discussable diseases....time keeps coming back for us, I suppose that's what I'm trying to figure out. Every springtime since I was a little boy the nascent blue of hydrangeas thrills me, it's happening right now outside, between me and the sight of the sea. I saw them in Sheepshead Bay where I began, or covering the foothills of the Himalayas in the soft saturated light of the monsoon season, and here now on Cuttyhunk Island, where my mother-in-law planted a now-thriving bush for me a few years back. Blue of the sky and blue of something more. Hint of a color that lies behind all other color. But I digress. The man across the road is going surfcasting now, followed by his barefoot kid. I don't fish. You could blame me for that. You could say that I just wait for the fish to come to me.

Of course, Libby, I'd love to collaborate. I love collaboration, do it as much as I can—with other poets alive and dead, with living painters, with dead composers. I love the blending, blurring, blazing of two minds together into some single sight or sound.

From one point of view, all art (certainly all verbal art) is collaborative. Not one of these words is my own, only their array is mine. Or ours, if we collaborate. And you don't own C in alt. Even your voice is a collaboration of the body given

by your mother and your father with the way you live yourself. So we have to be cunning beggars, using what we're given.

With that understood, let's do it! How?

23 June 2011, Cuttyhunk

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It moves also through the air ghost of water.  
Lax narration impeaches family sagabank.  
Say say all around and you the mercy mercy.  
Grim arrangements who knows what lost days.  
Does rain rheum ravish old knees.  
I met them both when I was young and he's the best.

Big white shepherd dog ghost of a wolf.  
Simplicity of puberty girls in pale churches.  
Shrapnel deadly from previous ideas.  
Don't think that thought again open water vows.  
Philosophy bred in mountains dies in town comes back by the sea.  
The sea thinks nothing.

What will show its head above the waves today.  
But I want the secret parts of what you think.  
The humid thought below the conscious island.  
Will I be mainland and no enemies.  
Count by bells not clock you're free of time.  
I will not go back again but where is back.

The whole sea is one single secret.

I have withdrawn a cloud hid my voice.

Zanies on a hollow stage echo of their prattle.

Far away the sea tries to tell a shell how to answer.

Say something to the wolf its fangs will understand.

Blue o Christ cathedrals under the sea.

23 June 2011

*M/V Cuttyhunk*, Buzzards Bay

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The cost of being.

Going home is also a vacation.

Do the starlings still stir beneath the eaves.

Why is everything new again.

Marvel on the roads the long green riff.

Here the air stands still and waits for your next move.

I'll walk outside and understand again.

Leaf-scar on the mere branch itself has its story too.

I see a child and feel the mother's pain.

So long to be born to bear to give birth.

And in the twinkling on an eye another decides.

Sprawled on tidal shingle somebody has to care.

Petroglyphs of waking.

Find myself a mesolith again.

The court rules against itself and vanishes.

The Mystery of the Virtuous Police.

Ambling even now towards innocence.

Squalid motorcar parked beside the shrine.

Devious lucidity a mind on the make.  
Alone to ask the mother to receive.  
Of all the things a bird to say.  
Childless couples dance beneath the hill.  
Vast emergence of human feeling hoof on the heart.  
Decoding Baltic grammars whence all human poetry.

There's too much here to find anything.  
Bluemaker's cross meant a different agony.  
They all are real and I am not or just romantic music.  
Measure the frictional interface and feel her.  
Something like home but further away.  
Sometimes these are analects but sometimes true.

I want to wait outside and blossom through the gate.  
And if his father chanced to look down as he hung there.  
And if the passing traffic were going anywhere.  
Breeze makes us remember what never happened.  
Something dear enough to need by listening.  
The god departs the singer crumples to the stage.



Walking on the underside of other or walk on water.  
He pulled the tune's strings now all the tones are pure apart.  
The song is a shadow of your desire.  
Close to judgment day a mile away.  
From here you see the fringes of his tallith swing.  
If only all our actors had no names.

Who comes it a yachtsman every morning.  
The river mouth and no one listening.  
The Indian names we mispronounce control our lives.  
Environmental apathists use me up and wait for more.  
It *has* to be more complex than we think.  
Waiting outside a bookstore in falling snow.

Soon let the water flow back in isn't it time for music.  
To have amassed all this experience and still want.  
Don't want water uphill just want snow in August.  
Settle for the most improbable every time.  
A far cry from being natural.  
An island's built of silences and light.

I'll come in my true form and visit your dream.  
Don't think the man you see when you see me.  
I keep saying listen but I never say to what.  
It isn't me it isn't music it's probably the dining room table.  
They play cards they tell the future they eat lamb.  
Hear me the lucid incoherence of Henry James's last day.

Wet shale the color of fresh mud astonished mainland.  
Elegant arbitrage a bluefish smoked on shore.  
Apt to order a sluggish miracle or two despite.  
The journey of which you speak disappeared long ago in the sea.  
Whenever I touch the walls of it are wet.  
You are horizon but which one is you.

Approximate evidence rim of the sun.  
A mystery to come between you and the inner temple.  
The size of going is somewhere else.  
We were walking down the highway once again.  
The years didn't forget that much of me.  
Dream ballast alas the moon looks cellulite.

The measurement of the face measures me.

No god I am but seem to seem.

Velvet revers on threadbare astrakhan.

Humans wear collars to prove they know not what.

I strike the board and cry my way abroad.

The ancient dignity of protestant.

24 June 2011

Lwd / Lake Katrine

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Leave the loss to the other milkings.  
Cruelty is built into the system the sir gets all.  
In direst calamity interest keeps accruing.  
Soul in dormancy poems collect stray heartbeats.  
Meters and measures the Tongue Tower in Thonon.  
Speak your native language just for once.

If you have a language if there is.  
For you the smelters strive Minnesota.  
Arbalest handshakes I am dangerous to know.  
I come to you with all my sheep arrayed.  
Poetry stinks of human feelings reminiscing.  
Cloth of madness waited for you at the airport.

You waved to me from a window was no house.  
Interpreting vedanta by high school trig.  
I think I am a school of angry rabbis preaching.  
I wake thrilled by Nietzsche's great authentic voice.  
From a man's book we inherit his body in our own.  
The mountain climbed down his arteries into our veins.

I have so many gods but only one me.  
Day off so much not to do.  
Wending west among swans no lagoon.  
No roads in New England run west or only one one.  
Only the sun knows that way it's death to follow.  
I thought you were in love with me but I never left the sea.

Say it till the tiger lilies roar by the scholar's kitchen window.  
Then say it some more whatever you find to say.  
This instruction goes on forever think river think weather.  
Check the mail to see who slipped inside your mind.  
All the things that I forgot come at me now.  
Build a fortress in midair to hide in sheer transparency.

Apologize for linking spirit knows you best.  
In the cheese farm strange clean machines.  
What do worms do with the lust Schiller gave them.  
Ridiculous rhyme schemes evade the heart.  
Cold-hearted pricks bookland politics.  
Smile if it won't Saturday all the time.

Crow call I must be home and maybe me.  
Rain in the night there must be weather still.  
Proof is like striptease you pretend you really care.  
Or did she mean real solutions to imaginary problems.  
I have to learn the grammar crows disclose.  
A ruined little brick house way back in the woods.

Now I've forgotten how to turn the daylight on.  
The cost of a paradox is measured in reputations.  
Compose the Bill of Responsibilities to go with Rights.  
A committee of dragons and wolves can choose.  
I keep demanding more of matter.  
If you take one away not much lost like trees in woods.

*Clus* and *clar* turn by turn I don't know whom I serve.  
If it sang from a different throat would we listen.  
Mud-baths of sly potency quick you catch fire.  
The sea I study now is green and tall.  
I want to use only the simplest words.  
When you look carefully at green all colors are there.

Everything I am is a small part of you.

Thousands of mouths speaking one line each my epic.

I am with Merlin underground staring up her sky.

I don't understand me either but still it moves.

Sunlight suddenly a shadow says.

Thousands of them taking part in me.

25 June 2011

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*Aion* the cerebrospinal fluid your knees also I have grasped.  
I have knelt before you begging to read the fine print of your skin.  
Or does a man have to be his own encyclopedia.  
Catch the sun for me it's all for me to wise me up like it.  
Make me useful to the rest of you like a piano.  
And did I ever mean myself what he said.

Partial to sunspots radio gets distracted from its music.  
They call it static though it moves so fast.  
The self is a fish he says but there is no sea.  
All my livelong days to find an ocean.  
Crows laugh and say you never found the land.  
Come back and read me again when I grow up.

Lantern-slides of the Holy Land aunts brought home.  
She taught me woe and the stones of Capernaum.  
She explained the princes of the air Apollyon.  
She read me stories no one wrote.  
I understood mostly the smell of her pretty clothes.  
There is nothing inside the body it all just seems.



It all is shine there is nothing but what seems.

Psalmless David shivered in his bed.

They brought him the thought of you to keep him warm.

You have slept with her too she is the girl next door.

The birds keep waking her from her virtuous sleep.

Knock on her window to hear her speak.

26 June 2011

## DAVID

But when he put down the harp  
and listened  
what shape did the silence say  
all round him,  
shimmer in the air, shiver  
on his own skin,  
that made him think  
someone else was listening?

27 June 2011

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It came from another place  
like crow calls on a cool morning  
a sort of active waiting  
the trees were doing  
and then it was here.

The local. Place gives us birth,  
place kills. The far  
is infrequent, the local always.  
Terror and comfort of being  
anywhere at all. No enemy  
like your neighbor. No song  
like this silence in your house.

27 June 2011

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And you have come home with me my dear  
where your body has been heading all this while.  
The dictionary was your Pygmalion, you put  
the final touches on yourself syllable  
by syllable, by sighs and then you stood  
almost breathlessly naked before me with words.  
I built a door to show you.  
You became that too and came in  
inside yourself. Where I was waiting.

27 June 2011

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Weary of the seizing register the blonde assizes.  
Now you know what the Bible means.  
It's all part of the same conspiracy.  
Listeners fraught with message year for quiet skin.  
List all the things you hate and love them one by one.  
Grass you green interference with our politics.

All he ever wanted was to be somebody else.  
Strange to have feelings at all the forest the shale.  
Have you relented from religion yet or more.  
Young trees thinking towards the sky.  
Emergency birthright closet full of nos.  
I'll touch you if you let me listen.

If waiting is wanting what is being here already.  
Said fast enough it slips past sense and wakes you.  
Pale young hairs on my old arm but how.  
Looking close sees everything again.  
You cannot lose what you never heard.  
Suns find gaps in foliage to bother through.

27 June 2011