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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## **THE NIGHTINGALE**

**in the little scented garden in Yvoire  
sings for the blind.**

**The lake beyond  
soothes us on the way to Switzerland—  
old ferryboats are best**

**old, with shiny engines on view  
the great pistons moving,  
part of our journey to admire them  
gleaming red and brass and all the lake  
sparkle. But the blind  
see only the nightingale,  
see the smell of lavender, bee balm,  
clean motor oil, the gull cries,  
the ghost of Pontius Pilate  
explaining history in yet another different way.**

**22 January 2013**

=====

**In this place I lost my memory  
please give it back when you find it**

**I was gazing at the bare belly of the waitress  
trying to understand the menu she was reciting**

**then I blinked and found myself alone  
on a park bench in Seattle**

**everywhere I looked were mountains  
and seas all mixed together.**

**It is never easy to believe the senses,  
we're smart enough to doubt the clearest thing—**

**I heard a cow lowing on the meadow  
behind me improbably. And I saw**

**a great and beautiful lady  
walking through the clouds en dishabille.**

**It is not easy to be me, granted,  
but I should be able to tell past from future**

**at least, easy as telling front from back**

**but it just isn't so. In fact**

**nothing is so. So there I sat**

**a mere amateur of the weather**

**wondering whether whatever it is**

**has happened already, and here I am?**

**22 January 2013**

=====

**Give the wind a name  
the way the Romans did  
it will help you to rule all space  
the way the Romans did**

**all your roads will get there  
your temples will have real  
gods in them, shimmering  
in the civilized atmosphere—**

**all power from the names!  
Piano on the radio, unfamiliar,  
I guess Schumann, feel it  
happy and far away and sad,**

**did you ever wake up knowing  
this is still the Roman Empire  
after all, nothing changes,  
only money from hand to hand,**

**the hidden emperor lost  
in imagery, turns out to be Schubert  
and I know nothing of the roads  
but all of them still take us home.**

**22 January 2013**



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**I see my own shadow  
running up the road  
while I sit here.  
It's hard to be a heathen  
in this Abrahamic land  
all super-ego and big cars.  
Maybe it wasn't my shadow  
that tastes of maple syrup,  
maybe it was a yearling deer  
came for our cracked corn,  
ate some and pleased and fled.**

**22 January 2013**

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**Pause between  
movements of the concerto  
the clarinetist breathes  
a few seconds like an ordinary  
woman and it seems the whole  
orld breathes with her too.**

**22 January 2013**



## **FRAGMENTS OF PAGAN HYMNODY**

**1.**

**Let the Mondays of the meek  
use Tues's anger to repel  
the form of norm. The  
norm of form. Spring  
thirsty through each dry day  
until the need for new  
be sated never.**

**2.**

**Let the so-called week  
hurtle forward never back  
no week no vici no vicar  
no wheel.**

**Lo!**

**it is tomorrow before it is today.**

**3.**

**Weeks are wimps.  
Months at least  
happen in the sky, Hi,**

**Luna! Khaire**

**Selanna!**

**And years**

**come around us**

**uncontrollable**

**we do what we can**

**to master it by abstractions**

**Kant Fichte Hegel, you know the tune,**

**open any book and find their traces.**

**Aiee, my children,**

**good grammar is as close**

**as I'll ever come to morality!**

**4.**

**Could**

**they be hymns whom**

**the gods gave to sing**

**this me?**

**And when it is to praise**

**am I praising them,**

**those psyches of lightning of cedar of honey of waterfall**

**or praising me**

**by not so subtle**

**confusion of self with deity**

**since no one else is there?**

**5.**

**O yes I mean it  
how I mean it  
this common book of prayer  
I lift above my head  
to shield me from the ordinary  
sun so I can see the one  
hidden in her eyes.**

**6.**

**Soon we will be able  
to listen  
to what the stone says**

**it is a northern country  
where everything talks  
except for human men**

**who nurse their silence  
while the wind speaks  
ice cracks jokes beneath their feet.**

7.

Rabbit tracks in snow  
fox tracks and once  
mountain lion by the stream—  
o gods of earth and heaven  
what wonders you teach  
us to read when we  
dare to look down.

8.

Away from that kindly despot in the sky  
the golden girl the one who thinks  
she is the only one there is...

9.

I was just getting started  
when the breath went home  
I follow it now  
down into the ground

10.

winter trees in sunlight  
thick brown bed they rise from

**a hundred years of their own leaves  
and every one of them  
written with your name,  
all of your names  
written so clearly  
in the original alphabet  
the one we read best with closed eyes.**

**11.**

**The harp was an easy idea  
so we made a lot of them  
taught all our children to play them  
those who could carry a tune  
and those others, tone-blind ones,  
they are worth music too,  
have thumbs to strum, fingers to pluck  
and you have made us smart enough  
o gods of wind and water to hear  
all that sound as beauty, a word we  
are just beginning to comprehend.**

12.

**Chestnut slippery shells**

**hot from the fire smooth as glass**

**how did we learn to eat things**

**make things build things**

**is it all by ourselves we did it**

**in a usable world or did you**

**Pramantha twirl your fire-stick**

**until we finally got the idea,**

**friction, pressure, heat and sweat**

**and things leap into form**

**then learn to leave things alone?**

13.

**We listen**

**as hard as we can**

*hard heard*

**we slowly learn**

**all your names**

**more slowly still**

**learn to say them**

**quietly out loud**

**on top of the hill.**

**14.**

**There is only one mountain  
the one we build  
from logs and bricks**

**our effort is the god of it  
and talks to the other gods  
up there and all around**

**and the crows fly away  
laughing at us  
the way they do**

**kindly knowing  
even we might  
one day get it right.**

**23 January 2013**

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*(answering Alana)*

**If I am your soul  
you have no alone  
Only no one ever is**

**23.I.13**



=====

**The waking body  
in which the shy  
 pornosophists  
 are content to dream**

**is somehow actual.  
This is weird, that is,  
is fate, the Wyrd  
of your becoming,**

**what will come,  
what will become of you  
when only dream  
is left behind to tell.**

**24 January 2013**

## VENCE

**Maniple a sleeve  
on a sleeve. Alb  
a white you take off  
and put back on.**

**A chasuble  
a house of silk.**

**Matisse made them  
for his chapel,  
too heavy for the priests  
to wear, replicated  
in rayon later,  
the walls are still his  
walls, the light  
comes through  
his windows still  
unmediated by  
the weakness of  
who we are.**

**Once there were giants  
among men, even priests  
who could bear the weight,  
spiderwebs on their shoulders  
all those passionate colors.  
And long before them**

**men could stand naked  
as Francis or Milarepa  
and lift a cup of thanks  
up to mindfulness alone.**

**24 January 2013**

**DIX-NEUVIEME***a notation*

**Arrondissement and century  
the great Nineteenth.  
Schumann and the Buttes-Chaumont  
Wagner, Hummel, Raff,  
Schubert, Beethoven.  
Beethoven. This is my  
arrondissement, beauty  
heaped high out of spoiled  
emotions, sickness, syphilis.  
Buttes-Chaumont were built  
on the hugest garbage dump  
in northeast Paris—  
these hills, this music, these  
stone-log steps, duckpond,  
Gounod, Chopin,  
symphony, Liszt, Bruckner,  
all this music is  
the outer voice of alchemy—  
the science Paris bred  
all through the century,  
Nerval, Eliphas Lévi, down**

**through Huysmans, Mallarmé,  
stages of the work,  
the one Great Work,  
turning the filth of the emotions  
into purer happening.  
Climb this city mountain  
now, children skittering  
on the ancientest science.**

**24 January 2013**