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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Determining the outer edge of the idea
by numbers he turned his back on landscape
left all round the motion mattered. Later
he looked out and found himself in the middle
of an utter desert. Nothing but horizons
anywhere. But at least he had found
himself. At least he was in the middle.

7 April 2009

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Everything has to keep short
because of the weather—
the asthmatic light of northern lands
darkens coming and going
every day different, clouds
toying with the sun – how could
a long breath prosper, candle-
flicker, nervous cough, robins
yattering outside. A word
has to be enough. And then another.

7 April 2009

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Was there left there
enough to start a dance even?
A whistle for you and a bassoon for me
and the room full of cheeses?

Who knows
who lives in clothes?
What is a ravigator?

I think though I hear music.

You think you hear music?
That too, I think I hear music.

But anything you hear is music
so dance to the noises in your head
hallucinate a fox-trot, a furry
yipping creature (soft, sharp)
to trot with and then
a waltz from Stalingrad.

Now: whose feet are those at yesterday of your legs?
Whose bones does your shadow flicker from?

A dancer must suppose he is alone

the woman in his arms is weather
and ditto for her, this nervous lump
with his tentacles around her is
for one terrifying atavistic moment
the whole world. Run away from me
who runs away from you.
Be alone – that's where music lives.

7 April 2009

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Allie and Louie by the limestone kilns
are walking with their wolfy dog
away from us, smile back over their
shoulders, at us, what do they know
about the dark from which I try
to speak to them? As much as I do.
The nice dog could tell them if more
information was required. But I could see
it in their eyes, they knew already
the whole story they were born to be,

7 April 2009

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Bright mood on the wolf path
thick with peace. Creepers
round hemlocks high-
winding. Woodpeckers.
It is when we go
that the old comes back—
wooden woods we heard
the soul say, softly,
language as evidence.

8 April 2009

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Sometimes we get too close to what we know
then it is Sanskrit. Or sandstorm,
that's what he meant, the dead leaves whirling
all round our feet but there are no leaves.

Our eyes muffled in our scarves. They always are—
we use whatever comes to hand to muffle them,
perilous witnesses! We will protect them
from their worst enemy, the world.

8 April 2009

VICTORY

Relax, you are part of the problem.
And cute, like a spotted panther
yoked to a golden chariot wherein
the Queen of Elsewhere rides
through the triumphal arch built
right in your own city. Your yard
sprouts her laurel tree. Relax
like a wheel spinning, an all-nighter
full of disjointed conversation
fueled by the alkaloids of god knows.
Relax like an ambulance, I mean,
how much worse could it get, relax
like a man studying Sanskrit
for what he thinks are religious reasons.
Relax like the high desert, sunset
turns joshua trees to dull flames.
Relax, your chickens are safe
in their coop, your only fox far away.
Relax like an unwelcome love letter
tossed on the fire this chilly night.

8 April 2009

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Clouds come
to show us the way.
The fewer the differences
the shorter the song.
Start singing now
before the storm.
Be my lightning again.

8 April 2009

THE ALPHABET

Bearing the burden, become.

Caring the cardiac, cause.

Daring the doubtful, do.

Fishing the firths, froth.

Haring through harvest, have.

Maring the mule, mate.

Paring the pump, plunge.

Raring the river, row.

Tearing the treaty, tell.

Weaving the weft, want.

Yearning the young, yell.

The alphabet is a history of your sins.

9 April 2009

BY THE WAY,

if there were a baker in time for the bread, a broker in touch with the money, a brother in town for the wedding, a dignified bearer in tow of the expedition, oh things are hard when you live in the country, and every single suppose you want to acquire is a big if, a big old if if the truth be known. So they sing about it all the time, drivel guitar and glum adversity, all there is is snatch and not getting any, no way.

9 April 2009

PERCEIVING SHORN OF JUDGMENT PARADISE NEARS

Start over again,
humble at whose feet?
A throne around us
we see some shoes
and sense – no more –
a presence overhead.
Lack humility my
self-defeating arrogance
pauses at the sight
pines around a lake
or I relent and let it
free of commentary
about what want wants
be a man and a tree
alone, ask nothing.
Simplicity also
is pride, to smile
at something that is
because I am.

9 April 2009

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Pretend everything was born in the bed
and had meaning and meant things
just there. Pretend there is no meaning
anywhere but there, and is no else or other
to confound the intimate absurdity of this
kiss. I mean I was born here and you too
but that, or those, just doesn't mean.

There is no logic to it though we strive,
river roll and walk around and take the bus
to meet on the bridge. All that's obvious
and anyone. But that things mean things
or a thing means things, there should be
Latin names perhaps for this disease.

For logic has its own pathologies. All
the places I was born. All the hearts that
beat soft now beneath your breasts.
These are miracles if not mistakes.

Sometimes I think they really do come
from a far country to harry us or marry us
the way I get headaches from sunlight
and they come in and come in and at night
force us upward to see their stars till

their logic mingles with our sense impressions—
this is alchemy, that things have meanings,
you have green eyes and somehow this
by itself is wonderful. Who taught us
that, or teaches us that even now?

9 April 2009

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A day to do
nothing but be.
Could it be?

9.IV.09

QUESTIONS OF TRUTH

1.

Try to be fond of these: a looking glass
a thought out of season
a tie fallen on the closet floor,
writing love letters on inrolling wave
a pleasant anxiety of your very own
will you come to the dance?

I won't be there but come anyway
truth is an animal and must run
truth is saying things about what flows
and trying to stop it just one moment
and make the moment last
truth is just an obstacle to going on.

2.

No wonder Botticelli showed her naked
a disconcertingly skinny woman
bothering a convention of dishonest men
her arm uplifted her hand pointing up
as if to appeal to something or someone
even higher than herself, what could that be
that power truer than the truth?

3.

Things don't come back by themselves
car doors slam you look up hopeful
it is the neighbor going off to work
not the one you think of coming back.

Not by themselves yet alone when they come
moved by some principle you think you know
you call it prayer and pray with it eyes shut
to see better your imagination of the return.

Maybe it works maybe you really are
part of the energy by which they return
the ones who do come back. Things do
come back because there is a back to come to

a person with eyes closed stands at a window
listening to cars come along and pause and go.

9 April 2009

LEVITICUS

Things on the way to other things
is also a Bible – those parts
where little laws get laid down,
mildew on an old house wall,
the long thigh sinews of a bull—
those are best, full of useful
nowness in a haze of then,
and no God cluttering the sky.
Just some soft smelly greenish
stuff on a white wall
dusty to the fingertips,
sweet a little to the taste
as if it too had in its day known love.

10 April 2009

Good Friday

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I have to hear what you have to tell me
an orchard full of veiled women
hurrying through heavy-laden trees
rarely reach up to pluck
pears for their journey—

I taste this too — I hurry
because they do, I need to know
where they are hurrying and why.
Why do I need this information?

Because it's in your mouth
as you lie back talking
almost as if I weren't here
or as if I could hear you almost
as well as you hear yourself—

you are naked and telling about apple trees,
Normandy, another life, this one,
your hands gentle on your skin
as if you were new to yourself,
you are saying All my life I have wanted this
to be one of those who not lose
focus no matter what happens,
who do not lose intensity no matter

how deep the chasms of love, the long
shipwrecks of autumn afternoons.

You mean Atlantis, I cried, I come
to life again in you. You seemed
to disagree a little, almost as if
you were surprised to find me still here.

10 April 2009

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Each of us has his own relationship
with the hours of the day.

Tell me your three o'clock I'll sing you my noon.

10 April 2009