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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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EVERY CONFESSION IS A BOAST OF SORTS

If you draw dotted lines between all the “I”s in all my writing, and solid lines connecting all the “you”s, you’ll see all at once a huge Byzantine-Venetian basilica floating like an insolent mirage over an ocean of sweet water, good to drink. Drink this image.

But it is not a mirage. Please go on in, and let the building say its piece all around you. And your own word will sound, resound, inside it too, complex echoes like a Gabrieli canzone for brass racketing around the mosaic curves and squinches.

I am trying to help us both understand my geology, of which human architecture is nothing but a desperate digest. What we have always been striving to build are new and human mountains, mountains to conceal the caves we really want to come home to. We are born in earth, and yearn for that shadow world inside.

But I want more. What I am trying to do in all my work is to turn the cave inside out. The paintings on the wall, the smoke of all our fires, the gouges of all our urgent scratching, all this turn inside out. The cave turned inside out turns into the sky.

Origin of the sky. People were born before the sky. Once there was only darkness and insideness—then we made the spacious firmament on high.

Made it by turning our natures inside out. And every word we speak
sustains the sky.

10 August 2009

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These memoranda
remember me—
what is a date for
except to say exactly when
you (or someone just like you)
happened to the world.
The so-called deeds
of humans are dates.
Not done but given.

10 August 2009

THE FLY

The project of annoyance rules the world
and that we will not read each other's mind
which we could really do if we let up
the terrible curtain of our own anxieties.

The fly on the table
cannot hear me—
it flies close to me
will not go away
there is nothing here
for him except
bothering me,
we persist
at those who do not want us.
She fly. She won't
leave me alone.

Anxiety closes in—by nature
constricts, keeps
the breath from being expansive
to reach everyone

because it is the breath
that finds words, makes words
of what I feel—

no breath no Odyssey.

Restlessness of books on my table
or go outside there every blade of grass
has means of its own, casts
its own shadow.

Size doesn't matter.

And things are tired of waiting for me.

For the fly every surface seems the same—
with all her eyes, can't she see?

She wants me to pay attention,
that's all, attention to her,
my hand waving her away
proud proof of her importance.

11 August 2009

A PROBLEM IN IDENTITY

But somewhere there should be
someone who knows me
I have an elephant's nose
and a dragon's wings
all iron elbowed
and soup drips out of my eyes
I sleep wailing on a mattress of forests.

I don't have a name.
I make a noise like triple trailers
going fast after midnight on Wyoming roads,

I smell like someone trying to make it on time.
If I get there it will be the way some women smile,
not taking anything in of what you say
just shelling a little bit out of who they are.

11 August 2009

THE GREAT LEARNING

So many molecules suddenly known
into being, by simple replacement
recruitment avails, spermatic vesicles
engorged with ovum-seeking sirs
and hey presto armies happen—
club of the policeman wielded—why
is there always so much more yet
so little leaving? It is all the arrivers.
Only half of legendary human cunning achieved—
learned how to start fire but still not to put it out.

12 August 2009

= = = = =

God be with you, how are you?

We're having a great time

on our vacation days!

she said in Irish and something

happened to my head—

a door to the cellar opened

a draft of fresh cool air a little damp

sweet-smelling of onions and milk

came up, and after that the sound:

someone coming up the stairs

someone wise and kind and young and old

barefoot, soft on stone steps.

We rise out of language and never are gone.

12 August 2009
for Barbara

= = = = =

You people think I'm old—
on the planet I come from
I am of the youngest.
When you die here you are born there
and sometimes come back.
I am one of those,
or as if I never left, and the tree
and the stone and the bone and the skin
grew old around me
but I paid no heed to all that changing,
no more than water does,
a bright accommodation everywhere.

(9.VIII.09)

12 August 2009

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Let the words
become things
and as they are spoken
or murmured
or just held loud silently in mind

may they become the things
they mean
and those things themselves
rise up
as offerings

and let it be that way every time I speak.

(10.VIII.09)

12 August 2009

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That I should still be so young
as to need a name?
Shouldn't I be on the other side
of names by now?
Where the limestone cliffs of Rosendale
maybe break out in dense green
through the leaves the old ovens show
room-sized caves where nothing much
lives now or goes on—a bone like that
is where the names are stored—
till then or yet again
I do my work with nobody's hands.

12 August 2009

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To be around though
waiting for that. To be brief
impossible. To go on
is too much pain. Ergo
smash the tomato on the sidewalk
like an angry farmer from the Midi
let the color soak back into the light—

that's what happens to red,
it wants to go back to the sun
and leave a ghost behind,
dead brown or thick black.
Red, that's why it's so important,
the skin! To hold red in.
To keep the blood inside,
never let it out
or it takes all your light out too.

But everything is the ghost of something else—
as night is of day, or day is of dawn
(wake early) when the red first
comes over the counterpane and opens your eyes.

12 August 2009

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Paint this on a little urn:

What are objects for?

Outposts of being

in a silent world.

12 August 2009

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In my story she doesn't cook
she is indifferent to time
though she lets weather think for her,
the vestal spaces of her mind
unstained by contingency.

In her story I am the end of the world.

13 August 2009

μ |ντεοιρ

Moon chore is teach her
talmud, us to be her colors
starting with white. So few her blue.

So after saying the moon is a book
I say I can read you like the moon—
speed variable, most nights
comes to our parties sometimes
lurks behind curtainings.

Shy we are too
sometimes—have you ever hurried
by wolflight through an empty field
midnight and you still see green?

The moon is a task in the sky, for her
and for us, something to do, a string
round my finger to remind.

The moon is something to do.

What
does the moon make me do or think?
What am I forgetting this night or all nights?

The moon gibbous tonight, a polite
way of saying hunched like Kierkegaard

or Richard Plantagenet at Market Bosworth
hobbling flatfoot among the snorting horses.

On the top of the hill in Cuttyhunk come May
the scotch broom blossoms fragrant
remembering him, you smell it all the way
up the hill when the wind has a mind to it
and the moon lets you go.

13 August 2009

ANIMA MEA

Strong lodger in a weak house
teach me to mend my wall
keep the weather off another winter.
The door has grown accustomed to the wolf.

13 August 2009

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To be the one who needs the sound
of another language to know my own—
as to be Zukofsky who did not sweat
the meanings and made American
mourn Hebrew threnody, or Pound's
orichalc precise noise of sunrise
over a Greek island, the babble brook
of Finnish conversation, o how you do
go on, o how prejudiced our ears are
by the sound of hours through childhood
trying to make sense of all we hear,
none too soon, not yet, or no word
yet ever stops the murmuring mind.

13 August 2009

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Then someone jogs past my window
and I'm on Earth again,
the *blue self-consciousness*, pure
contingency in a determined sky.

Didn't notice if man or woman, with
or without dog. Too low
to notice from where I sit, porch level,
set back, on Friday easing towards Virgo.

The place called now. Where he or she
is running, towards a there that is here
already by the time I write it down.
Travelers on the blue Earth. Home.

The only place you can enter and leave.
So much here and so much now
and empty roads and you can never tell.
Shoes are stirring in the closet even now.

14 August 2009

RELIGION

1.

But also as if they had been waiting—
a religion begins in the middle of a conversation
and hurries perpendicular to heaven (say)
to see if there's some answering resonance—

that God does hear. Then the city comes next,
hairy people standing on street corners
testing new vocabulary, people shudder,
go home have dream come back, belong.

Not long before some real estate
in a distinctive style rears up
to join the steeples and the water towers
and all the prayers that heaven must endure.

2.

But what about the conversation
from which such faith arose?
Knees beneath the table do their sluggish dance
of hidden propinquity, mosquito
inquisitors nattering round their heads,
pale drink and solid food, odd behavior
of the family dog, visions of the recent dead—

all of these are signs. And what else
do people ever talk about but signs?
And who doesn't love whom anymore.
Somehow from all this jive ascends
a momentary mind of total clarity
that leaves only some hazy word behind.

3.

That's what comes of trusting experience,
least reliable of all our fantasies.

To tell someone the truth is sweet,
like tossing pennies in a wishing well—

who knows? Nobody knows
and that's the one we pray too, hoping

that what nobody knows will come true,
our fate not trapped in the meshes of the noonday sun,

lost in someone's data bank, so just keep talking.
Maybe another god will rise up

out of all your nervous conversation,
wine and water and what you really want.

14 August 2009