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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Writing under the stone

the stream churns through the millrace
turns the stone

the human senses underneath
crushed into words

the mill
of all we can know
it is one endless singular flow
around and through us

no difference.
And if it after all is a forest
then a bear is walking there,
a wolf at ease.

 All the friends
 who have eaten us
since the beginning
or even before
 angels and after,
virgins of snow, sun glare, sleet.

25 March 2008

RESTAURANT

A glass of milk
is carried into the room.
A Syrian woman is singing
sadly Arabic, a flute
is her only friend.
Then the drum begins
the kind a man would
hold between his knees.
And beat. The glass
sits beside the waiter
as he reads. The room
is mostly empty.
Only us. Only the song.

25 March 2008
Arlington

ACTUAL

Press against the wall.
The wall has feelings.
Each groove or gouge
in every brick is
a lawyer for a lost
cause suddenly one.
A thing rescues us
from what we meant.

25 March 2008
Arlington

VOCATION

Can I read in the place the morning is
does the stone give light the tree explain

the cork from last night's wine rolls on my palm
I do not drink it this light for me

hard to be here hard to be anywhere else
this business of reading what no one wrote

this business of writing down what nobody said.

26 March 2008

= = = = =

Listen to the spine religion
so much work to stand upright
let alone stand up straight
your back cold against the wall
waiting for the Mass to end it never does.

26 March 2008

THE ELM

The elm out there is dying
we tried to save it
it needs new sap

its bark is falling, will
this spring still sift its seeds
those curious pale flat floaters

down on our deck again?
If you close your eyes to narrow slits
you can see how fast everything goes by.

26 March 2008

= = = = =

I like things that always work
the Subaru that starts at dawn
not the Mercedes sulking in the garage.

26 III 08

ISLINGTON

Towards the take-out place
fish and sneers from all
the locals I

dare. Haddock worth it.
Hunger is a Homer
all its own,

describe me, I am a foreigner
blind to your customs
feed me your grease

I eat with my fingers
but walk with your street
I touch with my eyes.

26 March 2008

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Wash your sweater
it is part of being old.
Listen to a woodwind quintet
because granite is grey
and banks are made of stone.
Bronze doors. Listen
to birds because mother did.
Forgive your enemies
because it says to. Pray
you have enemies to forgive.
You are the man in the sweater,
you know a few things
and nothing more. Wash
what you know and leave it
at the door. Open. The primal
scene is waiting for you at last.

26 March 2008

= = = = =

Would a song say anything different?
A bone is a bone, a prance
is a queen off her throne,
bonfire in the palm of her hand

o all those rubies are just music
movie ice, diamond gossip, roses,
am I you yet, amber,
or at least am I where you are

maybe waiting? O the cat cries
and the fire smolders, sane
turns to go and lawyers sleep
because we are surrounded, darlink,

with the instruments of sense
doesn't mean the dog comes back to life
doesn't mean King Edwin's sparrow
doesn't mean a big bass drum

rousing lovers to get back to sin.
Doesn't mean sin. Means dawn.
A day is an omen, night is revenge,
I spill my brownest leaves for you

you strumpet, you saint, you street.

27 March 2008

= = = = =

Where can a poor mathematician
find a blue difference?

Why
don't numbers come in colors
the way words do?

Or do they
only I am blind?

You never know
what you're not seeing.
What the dragon sees. Or the cat
who looks right through me
at nothing in this world.

27 March 2008

= = = = =

Of course what she said got lost
she was talking only to the wind
that impatient animal
with so many masters

of course the pine trees listened
and even remembered that whole afternoon
the troubles on her mind
that made her speak

words that went right through me
and left no trace except now I'm the one who's crying.

27 March 2008

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When I looked at him
my skin crept away from my skull
and walked in among the trees
late winter early spring who can tell
come back come back
it's snowing my bone
is so alone my eyes
bare globes my teeth
astonish children

but my skin is a bird on its own
is gone
I shuffle solo down the streets of your music.

27 March 2008

THE PORTRAIT

falls from the wall
but leaves the face

right there
where it has always been

a man in love
with distances alone

his fine young eyes
fixed on emptiness.

27 March 2008

= = = = =

Maybe the picture of the place
is as good as the place or better
maybe nobody dies there

maybe the houses stand in the sunlight
strong as the mind and remember
everything for us, warless and glorious

the Golden Horn. The girl on the bridge
over the Arno. The cross carved on the sky.
Maybe every picture is hidden inside

or maybe is the same as the sky.

27 March 2008

ETUDES

1.

No one on the phone.
Some saint went to heaven on this day
and can't come back
any more than moonlight can
but the rain, the rain
the rain can fall and rise and rain again.

2.

They call them études, our word's
'studies,' comes from Latin *studium*
which means 'eagerness.'
You hear it in the fingers
sometimes. But what is it?
What does 'it' mean?
Is it the same as when we say it's raining?

3.

Because a saint is somewhere else
even if very near us,
because a saint goes fast, its speed
is such we don't notice it near us,
in orbit round our brains mayhap,
any more than we notice the speed
of this earth they claim we stand on always moving.
Speed like sanctity is confusing.
For one thing it is always somewhere else.

28 March 2008

(listening to Piers Lane playing the collected études of Saint-Saens)

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You have so many fingers.
As we left the café after lunch
you stole a whole bunch of forks,
tried to wedge them in the hip pockets
of your snug black pants.
Why? We hadn't seen each other
in years. What did you want
with so many forks?
Is there something I have not told you?

28 March 2008

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Something I don't expect
is what I'm waiting for.
Bells under water, faces
in flame – old hat, those
movie images, car chases,
flying men. I wait
for something no one thinks.
I wait to see what
seeing doesn't know.
No know-how. No see.
And then it will really be.
Then for a change I'll
hide myself from it
and let the invisible
see what it's like
to wait, to be hungry
in the eyes so long
and no one comes.

28 March 2008

VESPERS

Late in the day
is light
still the monks
come white
along their
cloister shuffling
a school bus
revs outside,

the whole world
is a broken tool
to do a job
nobody remembers

their chants
reminds us of
something like this.

28 March 2008
(Abtei Heiligenkreuz im Wienerwald)

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Or all-remembering fetal dread
I crept out to love you better,

my leg, my leg, your lap, the cry.
Being born itself is Oedipus.

28 March 2008