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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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But how could even less of it
split evenly like a wand of dry pine
just because we this ink?
So there must be magic
deep inside the world a man
sometimes gets to hear, then listen to,
then hearken and obsess and spend
all his nights imaging what he hears
is more than he hears,
more than him hearing it,
an airplane overhead bearing
businessmen to buy and trash
the land below. The land
he stands on. This holy land,
the only dirt and stone that speak.
Or he can hear. No one on earth
more vulnerable than the magician,
a child trapped inside an old man's will.
This is about danger. It is a kind
of confession, a kind of boast,
a seduction reaching out for you.
If it is really you over there,
the sound so loud that I can't see.

12 August 2008

= = = = =

The everlastingness
is like a pear
we bite the thick
end first the juice

runs everywhere
our modest bosoms
soaked with it
the little stem end

though we hold for
dear life forever
nibbling what's left
in beautiful lips,

this is the game
God plays with us
ripe sweet unending
disappearingness.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

The workmen know
a thing or two
about things

what the pillowcase
knows about my dreams

we live each other
forever there is no other
other, a hammer

after all these years
a piece of wood.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

After climbing these stairs for forty years
I looked down at the treads last night
and thought: this is oak. The grain.
The fortitude. My gratitude.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

for T. M.

“Take a book off the self”
I read and tried to do.

I have to prepare myself
for my next life,

the book in question, is it the one
I should carry with me

to read on whatever passes
in that country for a train?

Or a book to discard, sell, give
to a friend so that no one, later,

inheriting, inhabiting
my house will find it and think:

he read this book,
it taught him to be gone?

13 August 2008

= = = = =

The things that happen in the night
teach me names to say as I go to sleep
again after fitful waking. Names
I almost pray to. And a mower outside
too early for the grass and then it's gone,
the morning goes the way dreams go away,
I'm out of bed and it's nine a.m. already
and who am I? Whose names did I pronounce
so confidently, like a trumpet solo in Handel,
name, name, name and sleep again
like silence anywhere, who is it that sleeps?

14 August 2008

= = = = =

The flowers thrown out yesterday
but under a book on the table
one petal from that pack of lilies
lingers. I finger it: softness
fading, dry, feels like paper now,
as if everything suffers from
the touch of word. And language
is contagious, my poor flower.

14 August 2008

= = = = =

And what, you may ask, is a grown man
doing writing about flowers? Haven't we
torn up that contract long ago

that let us feel a thing we had not made,
or turned the mere perception of something there
into reverence and instrument and music?

14 August 2008

DOXOLOGY, 1

maybe the sequences are off and the blue
star got here before the dragon slept
so it comes dreamless to our atmosphere
a great blank gleam to cheer the mind
with sheer absolute focus and nothing seen

just the point in light in which the point
in us sees light the way hand washes hand
until no stain is left anywhere even the sky
is pure of inferences and the despots of
opinion gnash their teeth at all our silences

14 August 2008

FERNS & YEW

As if to choose
eternity
that grows
from outside in

no core
but what happens
and be green
all the time

and greener others
unfurling death's
singular flower
lively among me.

15 August 2008

THE ROOF BEAM RAISED

1.

Think of it. Lodgepole.
They go out and build
a house in the forest
and no one lets them
but the wood. The cut,
trimmed, braced, held
up from the earth, roofed
over and moved in,
with windows, with a door.
The unthinkable difference,
that a house can stand.

2.

Habitants snug, dreaming
of their kind. Unsleeping
in their midst
the mitochondria, our own
cows who milk the air for us.
A little learning. A road
with no intentions, Lord,
a house in the woods.

3.

But am instead your Lady
answered from the above
leaf house and cloud portage
and look down, I do,
but also look up inside you,
the very you.

 No name you know,
I am the secret pronoun

in your language, mask
myself as I or you
but I am really only
who the forest thinks
and the air recalls
you hear me yet?

15 August 2008

BONES

A.

Why do things hurt?
And naught fits.
Aces and bones, soft
reconnaissance—
just enough to go on.

B.

Why can't I hear you?
You seem to be talking,
I hear the word, I even
guess their meaning
but I don't hear you.

A.

Is that psychology you're talking
or rhetoric? In me
a tmesis and an enthymeme.
the thing left out in the cut
out middle is me—
is that what you mean?

B.

Somebody is asking me a question
but I don't know who.

A.

Isn't that a fault not mine,
I hesitate to say yours, but yours?

B.

The questioning keeps going on – who
are you who pesters me with these sounds?

A.

We could ask each other questions all night long...

B.
That gives me a clue at last.

A.
Thank you.

B.
But I think nothing of it,
a clue means a thread,
did you know that,
sticks out of the tangle,
leads you or you
can tease out of the mass,
a clue is one end of everything
you have to untangle.

A.
You've lost me.

B.
That's what I was saying,
stand still and let me find you
by the little tip that leads to the middle.

A.
You said I had no middle
or where my middle is
a silence.

B.
I like silence well enough.
We could be friends.

A.
Who are you for that matter?

B.
Don't you know even yet?
I'm the girl on the cigar box
your father smoked.

A.
No you're not,
my father never smoked a girl,
it was me who gazed at the box,
the pale señorita offered me a leaf—
this leaf I took
became my life.
You say you're she?

B.
I don't look anything like her but I'm me.

A.
I suppose that has to be good enough.

B.
They say you can't smoke in the dark,
they say that blind men don't like cigarettes.

A.
Does that make us all blind?

B.
Or men?

A.
I'm the one doing the asking.

B.
That's what you've been saying
all along but I still don't know who.

A.
Don't people have to stay with each other
sometimes a long time to find out?

B.
Find out what?

A.
Who the other is.

B.
Or themselves.

A.
At first they thought they could talk but they can't.

B.
I hear
your bones.

A.
You do?

B.
You, too?

A.
No, I can't hear what is my own.
What do I sound like in there?

B.
Where?

A.
Where the bones live.

B.
I hear them running away from you
fast as they can, like stars
in some cosmology lesson, expanding cosmos,
they hate your ignorance, your insolence.

A.
Why?

B.

Because you're always asking questions.

What good is a question to a bone?

Don't you know that asking question is aggression?

A.

I know nothing.

B.

But I like what you said

at the beginning.

A.

What was that?

B.

You called them things

and that's their name,

you said they hurt

and so they do.

A.

Don't sing to me!

B.

Now we're getting somewhere—

A.

Where?

B.

Now you went and spoiled it.

15 August 2008

dl

'strife' or 'struggle,' or land of Lud
could be Lydia, where
the gold rolls down the water street and

and nothing more is known. *Complete success.*
Wolves running from a forest fire. Vikings
are skeptics when it comes to arrows. Blood,

though, everybody believes blood. Sift
for it, it's always running through your fingers,
try to squeeze. Forgive my ancient knife.

The government sends you *a lot of money*
and your *name is frequent* in the magazines
so I want to play a game with you,

a game of cards where you are the cards.
I think I know the card you turn up next
but to my surprise it turns out to be me.

15 August 2008

XV.

À la fois rêve et reflet—miroir recouvert d'un récit fugace
Constellation de gestes errants

Histoire à dire, à redire et à réciter.
Une petite fille assise par terre tournée vers moi

Prononçant chaque lettre de mon prénom
Dans cette langue tissée à l'image de son monde.

Chant hébraïque qu'elle ne cesse de parcourir
En inscrivant le long du sol chaque lettre avec sa main—

Empreinte d'une mélodie avouée, murmure d'un pantomime.

XV.

At once dream and reflection— mirror misted with a quick fading tale
Constellation of wandering gestures

A story to tell and keep telling, and to recite.
A little girl sits on the ground turned towards me

Pronouncing each letter of my first name
In this language woven in the image of her world.

Hebrew song she never stops rehearsing
Inscribing in the dirt each letter with her hand—

Imprint of a melody confessed, murmur of mime.

16 August 2008