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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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What does one love
when one 'loves' music?

What is it exactly
when one says I love Bartok,

I love Strauss?
What is it in music

that fits the heart?
The fits the I?

11 October 2007

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Wordless today, the gaunt
apology. I love all these
people. Who are they?
I don't know. My love
leaves no room for identity.

11 October 2007

POINSETTIAS

A. Do you know how the poinsettia happens to be on the other side of the deck today?

B. I didn't move it.

A. Didn't say you did, but it didn't get there by itself.

B. The restless poinsettia! Sleepwalking houseplants – you've come up with a new concept for horror movies.

A. I still want to know.

B. Want to test it for footprints?

A. Seriously, it's strange. Yesterday it was over there, under the rail.

B. Are you sure?

A. Well, the day before yesterday, just before it rained, because I watered it to make sure.

B. It rained two days ago.

A. OK, so three days ago it was there. And now it's here.

B. A lot can happen in three days.

A. Evidently. But how did this happen?

B. Don't look at me.

11 October 2007

There are poems that can only exist as dialogues from broken plays, 'dumbshows' in words, word mimes. They arise like waves, and fall back, and the ocean is not changed. Such discourses are the opposites of drama, which (I think) always has words entrain action, action entrain resolution.

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But is there always
or isn't there always

something else, a blue rose
in which the distant glow

of ancient television shows
is crystallized and still gives light

a rose unhanded by its thorns,
a rose in name only.

11 October 2007

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Not to know
even the shape of the house
one lives in all those years—

but no, the shape
is always slowly changing,
maybe the knowing
is changing too—

and one day the two will meet.
And the empty house will
suddenly fill up with you.

11 October 2007

[DREAM DATA 12 X 07]

(Dream:)

Carrying shlock by camelback from afar,
the tiny country where all the things are.

Far, far, the other man I love you for*.

(Right after waking immediate understanding of dream:)

The asterisk was in the dream. It meant: *implication: whenever you love someone, that someone is a personation (or impersonation) of *another*, earlier, further away, lost or at least not found, gone or at least not here, forgotten or at least not consciously claimed. We love another when we love someone.

12 October 2007

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Too big too sloppy a wolf
is a very fierce animal isn't it
can be. In Chicago Navy Pier a wheel
or Prater. Where you are. Names
lead only to other names. When we stare
deep into each other's eyes we see
other eyes and other eyes all the way
back to the soft yellow eyes of the wolf
looking in at us from the harmless woods.

12 October 2007

GENEROSITY

The devil will give you
Everything you ask for
If what you ask is a thing
The devil can give.

If not, the angels
For their amusement
And your enlightenment
Will give you something

Else, where else is
The other side of the mind,
The other side of anything,
The dark face of the Sun.

12 October 2007

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What are these things waiting for us

like Uncle Joe's thick old reading glasses
smudgy in their old clamshell case
ready in all their feebleness still to show
him a new word or a new world out there

so maybe even the holy sun itself above
is just the dimmest instrument
waiting for us to use the light
instead of letting it just lie there

dusty light left on the piano lid all day long.

13 October 2007

MY ELEPHANT

All the surprises are waiting for me
packed on the back of an elephant,
a blue velvety carpet protects his back
from bales and boxes of stuff coming to me.

Slow and sure such an animal advances,
swaying almost prettily for all his size,
how daintily settles down each massive foot
with a soft splaying of blunt toes as he treads.

And all of it for me! I can walk like that too,
or try to, bringing things to people,
in my arms if not on my back, armloads
of books, green eyes full of innuendos,

my lips parted to say something intelligent
something that will please you, something
you can actually use. What could that be?
I'm afraid to say the wrong thing, or nothing at all.

So instead I'll tell you all about my elephant.

13 October 2007

[DREAM DATA 14 X 07]

Heard into waking:

Gunshots at dawn.

Bad dreams.

I have come to a new city
and am not welcomed there.

I am an alchemist at last,
far from home.

Continued when awake:

But this place is your home.
Yes, every place is.

Which is why the tepid welcome
of the named people, the dog and so on,
counts so much, hurts so much.

To know all the names
and still be nowhere.

14 October 2007

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I seem to like something a lot these days,
black leather sofa, red leather chair,

something is always up to something
that's what I like about it

green damask armchair, cherrywood table
climate of Portugal, wine on the floor,

something is plenty for me, something
is always enough, scroll on the doorpost,

animals bleating, something lives
also in the sky, a flutter of light waves

a shimmer of recorded music
testing my patience, o something is always

and something is close, something
knows me and I put up with searching,

something analyzes me, I can't help it
I clutch something in my hands

but something's always in control, blue
satin gown, pullcord of the ceiling fan.

14 October 2007

PORPENTINE

Lives not here.
But over there
across the river
in a book or up
a hemlock tree
is yes. Furious
as a word always
is. How not.
Especially seldom
in any mouth.
Prickles of it,
the dog howls
and runs away.
The mind stays.

14 October 2007

ALPINE SYMPHONY

It is the nature of everything to be far away,
as far as it can, any kind of weather, even now.
Keats heard it, of course without going there
or staying long. Another country
is usually mountain range enough for us.
Sky travel used to be harder before planes
but not unknown, the witches
with their creamy thighs, Frenchmen
a-dangle from their slim balloons. But now.
Now it's all music, all here and there,
phone pressed to the ear we advance
covering one ear with the message, letting
the other ear listen to the glacier. Scree
is a pretty word, crevasse another. Dawn
over the Matterborn. That's not quite right,
that's me you mean, a poltroon of fact
miserer my lexicon. That's right, that's who.
Thunder. Music knows so much, young
as it is, and rock for all those years so innocent.
Do you know how to listen to a rock, do you
in fact know what you're raving on about?
If I did, there'd be no need to say it, talk
is always an investigation, no? Or *hein*,
as the French books say, and Canadians
denasalize and keep as their pet *eh*?
Where did that come from? You can't have
mountains without tourists up and down 'em,
can't have a sky without a sun in it,
every natural thing there is has a way
to hurt you if you let it. Here a Tyrolean
fell to his death, I saw his body in the town,
his face a study in surprise. Yes, things.
Confronting the glacier I was quiet a minute
and let the wind do my lying for me.
Listen, you said again, but I'm done with that.

14 October 2007

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But it always could be something else
all the while I thought it was this,
the heart too can make spelling mistakes,

I wrote what I wanted on the face
of the sky and the earth brought it to me
and I was wrong. But it was right,
it always is, at least the contrary
is not often permitted to be claimed.
Thunderbolts, gaping chasms suddenly,
the punishments of hubris. Hubris
means entitlement. No, I was right
but it had changed, or I gave up
wanting and took up welcoming
and then what happened. Everything.

14 October 2007

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The email you sent me is in code.
Mountain means your mind.
Or mine. Moonrise is running away.

A glass of water in your hand
means wine, spilled wine,
the harvest spoiled, but happy
peasants drunk on last year's wine.

But what does it say
when it says your knee
sore a little from the climbing,
Christians all round you and genuflection?

What power does it mean
when you say I may
stay here till November?

The ancient Celtic year begins.
There are ancient people where you are.

I have changed my body,
now I sprout iron wings,
I danced with them last night.
I was sober. A rock
rolled down the hill
hungry for something it could not speak.

14 October 2007

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But for the rest of it
there is always a tunnel
running sideways through the ear
from what you hear to what you want

and there I rest,
my sword slishing back and forth along a branch,
a man forever waiting for you
and you never have to come

the sound's enough, the marble
hallway we imagine is just the moon
but in our hearts we know better,
we know we have always been together

no coming and no going and everything a door.

14 October 2007

TROMBA

I hear you again
sea trumpet
the old nuns
strummed you
with their thumbs

the groan of wood the groan of iron
people make the very things cry out

their fictive 'instruments'
that make noises in the heart but do no work

no codfish are brought home, no irish moss
sweet as elk milk brought home from the shore—

it was a bowstring
waxed and ready
strung on a harp frame
and with their hands
they could make a sound
heard far at sea

here is a house
it said in starless night
here is what you seek.

14 October 2007

HYACINTHS

Everything is where it should have been.
A sonata by Hyacinthe Jadin,
the young maple by the dining room window,
the mole on one's temple. Change
must all be inside. The sensuous
potency of those who will die young –
three years packed into each one. He died
at thirty-one, old enough to see it coming—
which is mostly what it means to be old.
Sometimes if you put your ear to such
young skin – above the hip bone,
nape of the neck, deep of the ribcage –
you can hear the reverberations of the interior,
of the future itself echoing inside,
a little scary, like an old Methodist
pumping the harmonium. So lick
the skin and forget what you heard.
You could live a long time on the taste of this.

15 October 2007

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Open the door
a bat flits out.
Open a number
and the silence
thrills. Inside
any number
is everyone.

15 October 2007