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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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The rain on the parade  
moistens the melons  
from Cavaillon  
the cross on the flag  
remembers somebody  
I asked the policeman  
what is that flag there  
he said the red is blood  
the yellow is gold  
it is the flag of Faucigny  
what does that mean  
I thought whose  
blood is red whose  
gold is yellow as a new  
minted two-euro coin  
whose sky is blue  
who died on the what  
and for whom  
what is happening here  
where from the earth  
to the moon on one  
moonless night one woman.

15 August 2004

## **DRAGON**

A lady from North Wales  
was parking her car  
what else is there to do  
sun intense on Morzine  
her accent so dark  
I hardly understood  
her voice so throat  
I talked to her I wanted  
to know why she had come  
following the football  
she was and after  
the world cup where  
was there to go  
but here the mountains  
south of anywhere  
she was so throat  
I hardly knew  
I thought I saw a dragon  
hide behind the hill  
it was a traveler upset  
with something at lunch  
or she had just recalled  
from long ago an affront  
or disappointment a failure  
we all fail or a man  
or something else  
falling from the sky.

15 August 2004, La Borne

## FROM THE MEADOW A CRY

Permit the diligence of the enquirer  
to intercept the wordlessness of the question  
my hand on your arm  
and the horse neighs.

The neigh  
prolonged over the limestone foothills  
gets louder as he strikes the hills with his hooves  
louder, becomes a scream  
and the man dies. They all hear it.  
They are neighbors

who live within the sound of a scream.

The scream of an animal  
laughter of a prison guard  
hospital laughter, gannets  
chuckling on the winter beach

wasps dancing on plum cake in the baker's showcase  
even before dawn the baker lies  
outstretched before the oven  
praying to the gods of such things  
heat wheat yeast money sugar

and the man dies. The god of sugar  
can't keep him alive. I walk by and read it  
soccer fans screaming in the internet café  
and the words that made his name  
sat on my screen serene  
a Mozart sonata some vaguely beautiful thing

has a menace of its own  
a man's name written on the subject line  
is news enough and I fell to mourning

to see the name means that the man is dead.  
The pool tables are empty and bright and green  
as the fields beyond Taninges  
where in the old Carthusian cloister  
we watched the silent art hung in the portico  
huge black faces of orphan children  
as if they grew there, paintings  
by Alexandre Suberville and I wanted  
to whisper to the crumbling walls  
and the cool intelligent floors  
that had listened to so much so many  
years that Leon Golub had just died.

15 August 2004, La Borne

## **JOUR DE FETE**

All the pretty ones are taken  
have kids already  
wheel them up and down the hill  
thinking sad pink thoughts one thinks

and it is the kind of day when  
people come walking up out of the ground  
and at first they look like phlox or begonias  
and then they have faces  
colors and right away they're people  
just people, with pronouns of their own  
to worry about and money in their pants

it's pleasant, the man with a loudspeaker  
is hailing in a language I don't understand  
don't have to, it's pleasant  
to know nothing,  
to gasp with easy bewilderment, mouth open  
among the hovering wasps.

15 August 2004, La Borne

## ARTESIAN

Artesian wells go deep inside the earth  
I've heard about them all my life  
and still don't know what they really are

artesian wells are deep inside the earth  
these people come from down there  
and some of them never go back home

some of them bring pieces of me with them  
from down there  
a petal or a bone I lost a million years ago

what do they want with me down there  
do they remember  
when I was water, when I was oil?

15 August 2004, La Borne

## READING GRAFFITI IN THE CHURCH OF LA MOUSSIÈRE

red stuff scratched into the plaster  
in the galilee, flowers and torsos, nothing vulgar,  
names written so long ago, last year,  
last century. their archaic alphabets are lost

and down the hill the accordion strikes  
late Sunday sunshine on the fête.  
Today Mary went to heaven.  
All the Marys, me's, thee's, insolvent  
merchants of so few green hours

love me love me the accordion insists  
love me because I am sad  
and being sad is my great gift to you  
you who lost your feelings in the lottery  
or Mary took them with her to the sky.

15 August 2004, La Borne



## SOUNDS OF FRANCE

Downhill the accordion at the fête.

In sunshine I wave up here

a wasp away. It tacks

against an empty glass,

tink of crystal.

\*

Walking with Charlotte

up the road towards La Grande Terche, sitting

at the turn above the church

that view of the whole valley north

at evening, at evening, at evening

beautiful as the end of Gounod's *Faust*.

15 August 2004, La Moussière

*'grenier'*

as if a word were  
attic opening means  
yard sale the old  
stowings come  
down to the light  
Ebenezer's underwear  
and your old cat

everything alive up there  
and a woman waiting

to be wonderful  
Sunday or taste blood

thirty years no wine.

16 August 2004, La Borne

*'fête'*

to cancel myself out  
of these celebrations  
and leave pure celebration  
like a blind man listening to Strauss

16 August 2004, La Borne

## **DE LA FIN DU MONDE**

Rapture ready,  
a boat of Baptists.

le 16 août 04, La Borne

## **FRENCH CHURCHES**

This is where it is.  
The meaning or sense  
of what it meant  
to hold all that  
in the head. The stone  
knows the church  
forgets. You feel  
the certainty  
bare handed the wall.  
Take off your shoes  
let the stones explain.

16 August 2004, La Borne

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After so much  
so little said.  
Morzine in rain  
then up the curling  
rimless road  
to Lindarets.  
The rain the goats  
the green lake  
round which  
we always come

I always come back.  
Know when.  
Know why.  
The how  
is embedded  
in the who.

Olympian argument.  
If you love me  
feed my goats.

16 August 2004, Montriond

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As with or less so  
a link of pirate  
alpenhorn?  
    one flower  
among many  
wrestled from the west  
where language was  
waiting for the Barbaras  
who would in turn  
turn into us, girl  
mothering mandarins,  
mother tongue.

Or found it in a book,  
a chamois-like animal  
leaping from a rock

featly  
    and the rock was old  
a citizen of time  
I was, supposing  
all we have to suppose  
to be.

17 August 2004, La Borne

## IN THE SALON DE THE IN SAINT-JEAN

Accordions not.

Your blue eyes, Eve,  
in so much dark  
of time, time's closet  
who knows who  
's in there when the door  
closes itself when your eye  
finally opens

+

mother? Magdalene?  
Crawl into the light?  
Am I, a shell  
around something else?

+

Soon the page will run out of space  
and the words run off on their own  
like foxes in the woods  
hiding from those who have no  
business reading.

+



Yellow raincoat  
pain coat pain cote  
your hard rib  
for a man to lose

an eternity  
staring him in the face  
with eyes only a little  
like his own.

17 August 2004, St Jean d'Aulps

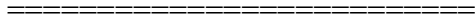
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What fish is called Blue Tongue?

What do the perch in lake Uganda feed on?

If we eat them will they tell us in our dreams?

17 VIII 04, St Jean



Wherever you are  
you have come too far  
to be here.

17 VIII 04, St Jean

## LA CARTE

I carry with me at all times  
the map of an unknown city

All the streets are named, the parks  
hospitals libraries playgrounds  
stadiums cathedral. But the name  
of the city has been torn off.  
I've never been there.

But how pure it is there, the air  
so accurate, the wind  
refreshing and cleansing and inspiring,  
a city made all of words and lines and colors.

Every so often I unfold it from my pocket  
and study it. Weeping  
comes easy then, all the people  
I do not see there, all the people.  
But I fight against it, they wouldn't like it.  
A city abolishes all grief.

17 August 2004, St Jean

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When the rain forgets itself  
the sky revises.  
It makes us think different  
-ly. It makes me realize  
a thought is no deeper than the weather.  
Spinoza also  
had moments of pure sorrow,  
purer than number itself.

17 August 2004

## **CORNEMUSE**

Wherever my people sauntered  
--Turkey, Balkans, Alps, Bretagne  
and all the western islands

they left behind this bag of wind  
the body has to make it breathe,  
the lips speak some meaning, melos,  
but the wind itself does all the chanting.

My people, indeed... fools of Philistia,  
Galatia, the lower Nile, Severn, Shannon.  
The bagpipe is not an instrument,  
it is our answer.  
It is a thing like walking in the rain.  
Like waking up in the woods  
and knowing nothing,  
not even why you're crying.

17 August 2004, St Jean

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The Alpine guides come in red vans for coffee.  
Red enamel and blue overalls  
and nylon chaps with zippers  
that go up and up. Description  
is nine-tenths of travel,  
the slope of her nose,  
the cant of her hough, mountain.

I don't know what they're saying,  
they're drinking coffee and eating bread,  
planning their day.  
I think they are going  
to climb one more mountain  
yet again. Maybe this time  
they will step from the pinnacle  
right onto the slim young moon  
and stay there like any good lover  
and stay and stay. I think  
that's what one of them is planning  
at least, the one who's holding  
the rod of bread so tight in his hand.

17 August 2004, St Jean

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What does yeast mean?  
Yes. And what does wheat?  
West. And who decides?  
Wait. Nobody's sure,  
bonjour. Why not?  
Les supplices de la Sainte Croix  
so few remember under MTV  
the interminable music  
called 'background'  
as if it were by now as  
much at home in the world as the stars.

17 August 2004



## **FACTEUSE**

The baker gives a brioche to the mail lady  
on her way back smiling to her little yellow car.  
Something to eat along the road  
of giving everything that she has away.

17 August 2004, St Jean