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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

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

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.

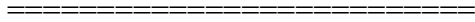
17 August 2004, St Jean d'Aulps

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

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

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

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