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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## **ARCANE**

Measurements confer a certain peace  
versts of woodland and an almond of eggs  
my legs are weary from a nightless sleep  
the kind that says Rise up! Rise up!  
every third image will be thy face  
then morning slaps along the building's flank  
its hand of gold, could I really be  
who you think I am, Saint Dream,  
Saint Semaphore?

Because I woke without a face  
in a house with no mirrors, no sun  
sifts through the leaves in this deep woods,  
the little path runs up through Magadha  
two thousand years to walk those dozen yards,

Jerusalem is nothing but our skin.

You are one of the very few who knew,  
and knew that in your body. Only  
where body is fulfilled can soul exist —

a monkish body full of lust is spirit rich,  
we are Jerusalem,

our touches  
cantilevering together build the temple,  
our cautions and anxieties are the beasts  
we sacrifice, priests in the vast noontime  
where desire's music blueprints heaven here,  
the smoke of our offerings going up  
building identity in the empty sky.

1 July 2003

## GAZEBO

In the southeast corner  
or Florida of my domain  
but on a hillock leveled  
by Bobcat, in deep shade  
eight-sided, screened in,  
airy: a house, and me in it  
writing, waiting for you.

I am on the edge of what I own  
or what is own, and where else  
could language leave me or begin  
except at the furthest edge of what I am,

land of rapture,  
the laugh in the woods  
where the dark is also waiting,  
green-hearted blackness  
also waiting, the orchestra  
tuning up forever, never  
the motif announced,  
translation without original,  
variation without theme,

and for all the heat of afternoon  
the painters sweating on their ladders,  
satellites cruise in the southwest  
screaming messages at us,  
the frenzy called communication,

but here I would be quiet into language  
listening for you.

2 July 2003

## TWO

two people in a dark room  
sitting across from each other  
in a lightless room

if one of them

had in hand for one  
second a powerful light  
what would they see  
what would they show?

2 July 2003

## FOR YOU

for you  
listening  
a barrier a bar  
a man sings  
your name  
whatever he  
may be thinking

star map  
she holds  
overhead arrow  
points north  
to orientate  
your self beneath  
space space  
find east

blue anger  
I must be  
asleep too a nap  
an urn  
napery mildewed  
around the buried  
nape

stone wine  
headland  
stone wind

you must be tired  
of me now  
the cool face the stare  
at someone else  
always  
forgive me to find  
my way  
an idiom.

2 July 2003



## CATHEDRALS

1.

Where you sit down. Where you by sitting down insist. Where you sit. And by sitting still you speak. You look around.

A cathedral means a place for a chair. The chair. There is a place for everything in this world and this is the place for the chair. The chair is the place for you. You are sitting in the chair. When you sit down, you speak.

The bishop's chair is called his throne, bishop means overseer. He is an episcopo, a man who looks around. When you sit down you look around. This looking gives you authority to see, this sitting gives you authority to speak. Speak what you see. Look around outside inside. What gives you authority is sitting on a chair. Only you can do it. Only you can bend in the middle.

The middle is where the real is kept. The middle of you. You bend in the middle to sit down, you sit down and sit still and look around. Only you can do this. Only you have the authority. Anyone can be you in the cathedral. A cathedral is where someone sits down and becomes you. You sit down and what you say by sitting takes on the form of law. Even judges must sit down to speak their verdict. Verdict is truth telling, isn't it. Only you can tell the truth. You tell the truth by bending in the middle and sitting down. Bending the in the middle squeezes the middle where the truth abounds, the truth is compelled to speak. You tell the truth by sitting down.

Whatever you say in a cathedral becomes the truth.

2.

The best cathedrals have no roofs. They lost their roofs long ago. They took them off, the way an old man takes off his hat to mop his brow on a hot day. To feel the air. Without their roofs, cathedrals can have open discussions with the sky.

You go inside and sit down and look up. Sitting down and looking up is what is called thinking. Sitting there a while is talking. Talking begins in that sitting quietly, especially in an old church with no roof on it. Just the sky. But a very special sky: a sky shaped by this building that people built. What were they thinking? What did they know or understand, that they were able to shape the whole sky?

Whatever it was, it lasts so long that even when the roof is gone you can hear it. And you can begin to speak.

3.

Your body talks. Only a human body can sit down. When you tell a dog to sit, Sit, you are telling him to be a human. He can try. But the front of him is always on the ground, his paws rest on stone even in the cathedral. Even in a cathedral no dog can sit the way you or I can sit. Not even a fox can. And most other people in the world can't sit at all. Think of a fish for example, a fish sitting down. That is why you can talk and later read and later write, reading comes first, because you were able once long ago to sit down and look around. Bend your body in the middle, you're not a candle or the moon, not stiff, not round, though you are bright, you bend in the middle and begin to think, and this thinking of yours begins to speak.

Your thinking takes the form of pointed windows full of light and air. They shape what comes to you. They shape the air arriving and the thought of all the ones you love, the ones who are out there in the world beyond the walls, the ones who love you, the ones for whom walls are only shadows across the bright simple road of longing. The ones who come to you in mind, right now, always, they are part of what your mind has built. They are a part of your language.

Glassless, the best old windows do not interfere at all with that they let pass. Shape the information, a window holds light in its hands, prayer hands, but the light is bigger than any prayer. The light is the same size as you. Allow the untranslated light.

Wise Chinese distrust those who speak standing up. Their classic sermons always begin: *the Master sat down*. This sitting down was the way to tell us. He was speaking. If a man is sitting there and talking, why then he's talking to us. He's not standing on a wall shouting at heaven, like some anxious Greek, he's not bellowing down the nave of a church like some unctuous parson. He's sitting there talking. You sit there in the ruined church, you are aware of the sky above you, the shape of human thinking all round you: walls, arches, groynes, squinches, windows, columns, all the ways you think.

Hasty logicians surmise that any place you sit down is a cathedral. There is something true about that, you and only you. You and only you.

3 July 2003

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Robins run on new sown ground  
I notice how little they have to say  
I dreamed a dictionary came in the mail  
And I learned to write clearly again  
Careful and unhurried like a little child.

3 July 2003

## **SUICIDE**

If I could

I would be Scardanelli

But not yet

So much Bordeaux yet to do

Columbus and a sailor.

3 July 2003

## **BEING SURE**

about the last one out of the boat  
the law of putting candles out  
never by blowing them out  
never use your breath to limit light

but the boat is empty  
and the snuffed candle waved out by your hand  
smokes its acrid paraffin  
over the lake a little

then that too is gone.  
Spent candle quiet lake  
who knows who lives.

2.

And inside, where morning  
is being welded and enameled blue  
where no one lives  
whose name you'd dare repeat in public

being so unsure of what you know  
or just unsure in general  
the way the night gets to be  
whose gradations are invisible to us

—how can we know  
one time of darkness from another—  
until it doubts  
and lets the light in

insidious wanderer  
always wavering at the edges  
of peace you think  
thick with your night thought

and then the sentence  
suddenly ends  
and you know once again  
you were just babbling in the dark.

3.

Or is it time  
the wine you  
tried to buy  
but who'd sell it?

4.

Having an idea  
about where to stow the hose  
he moved the house

the hard things  
are always easiest  
to find, a hose



is impossible  
things tie themselves  
in knots

hoping to control  
all the others,  
be squires

and ask the neighbors in  
to rule them  
as far as food

and comfort can,  
the bossy push  
of public am.

5.

It takes a little while  
to say everything

count on it, wheels  
within wheels they say

going everywhere at once  
voices in the neighbor's yard

dog there crow here  
we choose our gods

6.

But only the biggest god  
has the smallest voice

you hear at the edge  
of your not listening

a word flickering small  
in the corner of the mind.

4 July 2003

## QUIET ROAD

Taking the quiet road  
the fluent one  
under rock  
till the ground  
falls past it  
it rises  
and flows to join  
always to join

water rises

as you would do  
becoming able  
spreading flour on the earth  
in patterns

offerings *vévés*  
I sift the shapes of things  
I borrow  
from the sky

2.

Imagine obvious  
a falcon  
anchor winged  
today over bridge

it too must nest  
where the lightning lives  
where brick walls  
hang down from the moon

some saplings *palos*  
to be a roof for you  
and hold the stars off  
your angry sisters.

5 July 2003

## ATTACK OF THE PRONOUNS

I would touch you if I could  
but that's all I ever does  
willing and iffing and youing  
moon anchor cracked sky

there has to be  
somebody here but me  
or is it nobody  
like a pineapple

danger love so rough sweet  
the skin is only evidence  
read it to weep  
time's dismal luster or

a fish caught in the surf  
gulls wait  
or leaves  
and leave them scraps

to scale and fillet  
the dues you owe  
for being separate  
for having images

held before you in mind  
for carving a personal sky  
and living underneath it  
for being you so thoroughly

out of reach  
a woman or something  
standing on a beach  
doing something to the light.

5 July 2003

