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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Determined to be colorless he reads the kite
over the hill out loud to his nephews
who adore him because he brings doughnuts
every time plus what he calls crullers
no holes twisty otherwise the same
sticky hand in hand through the galleria
but none for him he's too old to eat
anyhow they think since the first loss
of adulthood is appetite. So what *is*
adultery they wonder that they heard he did
and never would they do such a thing
just not their kind of sin. Adults make
such subtle distinctions they lose all
taste for substance color speed and touch
they live their lives on a blackboard
lost in a muddle of bored words.
Fidelity. Responsibility. Square root of minus 1.
It is ridiculous to be older than nine.

24 May 2002

My driver is always waiting.
Sometimes a golf cart sometimes an old Lada
sometimes she's in the new Lexus --
I like L's. Thirty years she's been with me
and she's still nineteen. Remarkable
how time not even time is reliable.
It just doesn't work on some people
even their skin. She tells anyone who asks
she's from a different planet slower
where she's not even twelve yet --
no wonder she never wants to get married.
Sometimes I wonder what I want
but want's another unreliable animal
desire pig's snout weary from the trough.

25 May 2002

I know where you're coming from.

I know why you're here.

Sometimes I get frightened at your persistence,
other times you're a great rhythm I can drowse in

till my own animal wakes up.

You have no animal.

I have to do everything for you
so sometimes you let me come inside you a little while

and understand the strange story you're always telling yourself
and any fool, me, who listens.

To be inside you. What then.

What comes after pleasure, what comes after pain.

...

<25 May 2002>

TYPOGRAPHICUM

Nearness recency space space

begin a new skyline.

The terror is nowhere

to move the biomass.

Penis

erect shoved into the sky

coming out of what had been

deleted obelisk hole in the ground.

What does a city dream of

space space the terrorist

answers the dreamer

stone shoulders dead stars

26 May 2002

CAPRICCIO

In Strauss's opera music means
a woman chooses relaxes
in unchoosing. A city is
whatever fits under the sky.

In the new skyline does your body fit?
Can you wait till I give you the answer ...
all the dirty delis shout for joy

because his own dream was stained
he built the repressed shapely
homosexual effrontery of the twin towers
and on the 11th that λ day
the scandalized patriarchal heteros rebuked --

two men of the same size standing side by side
when will we ever see the same anew?

26 May 2002

the man in the street
remains in the street

we go inside the fane
the nave of art

where all things are true

and the fringes of thought dissolve
the delicate cinctures of sad women.

26 May 2002

=====

they don't put seals on letters any more
where do they put them
in the Bible on the heart or on the lips
but who reads that any more
~~bends forward over the receiving desk~~
~~and someone comes from behind~~
~~with hurt in hand to press in~~
~~welcome savagery embed in meat~~
~~this is the seal~~ this is the seal
darling this is the bible in your bone
you know this you need this ~~hand in you~~
there is a festival of doing right
that starts up when a touches b
this is the soul sealed by a single touch

26 May 2002

Your belt frazzles
like a squirrel leaping
or something else

broken shadow
a bus on strike

Your English lessons do you no good here.
Nothing is spoken so nothing helps you
and you're all right you've always
relied on nothing

but sometimes someone
waits for you after the show and goes home with you
whose place doesn't matter
holds you while you cry all night
and both of you get some comfort from the transaction
(half rainforest half Viennese)

which is also a precious transmission
body to body from the beginning.
It is our inheritance but we get it from strangers.

27 May 2002 Boston

To know something or to be something
an animal knows better neither
too busy turning away

there was a raft

we rode exclusively on
guilty poet speculation
blue sky daisy forget-me-not
and then we did

and she remembered
everything I worship the curve of her remembering
the slopes of sapience the river of remark
fluent from the shoulder season
before we actually woke up
acute in a midwestern morning
speaking a kind of Latin

from Poland gooseberries
smeared on your white plate.

28 May 2002

Boston

To be eternally part
of history and the number system
as a date is the unique
operator 28.5.2002

28 May 2002 Boston

NOMINALISTS

One feels a certain superiority towards those who bear as first names one's own unemployed middle name but pure even arrogant superiority towards those who bear one's own last name as their first.

28 May 2002

Boston

FORGET-ME-NOT

1.

So small look down. But when you fall into the yellow-pale heart of the sky blue flower
small as it is small small all size turns into scale size vanishes all of you falls
into the littlest and you pass into color. Color's scale is distance and sound. Sound varies
with the square of the distance. Distance is color. Color is the square root of time. Forget
me not.

Save some for me I said meaning you. Ruler of road work sole of a moccasin
Maori lips contagious hips Marx's grave in Highgate moonset over Ponck Hockie
home at last. My Punjab to your Nahatala my Luxembourg to your Smokies. Havergal
Brian's symphonies a violin sonata by Ruud Långgard. Answer me for once limitless
lady. Binocular sandwich my golf cart you left on the moon when you were too bottled in
May Wine to drive down the sky woodmistress cancel my subscription to sunshine
I'm on your side wet on the gravel and lost in the birches

I smell the white bark like an enemy's aftershave soap of the temple harlot plenty of
those when I was a kid bird no fooling bird in my pocket my hands are full of sky
I rub all over you say thank you to the nice man love is a pinball machine all lights
and no action steel balls otter pelts you grew under ground ivy seeing is a disease
of the eyes transport union a man who works for himself has the whole world for a
boss save some for me save me from statues I fell in love with a Venus a billboard a
poster a movie a website a candystripe nurse in trouble. And there on the steps of the train
platform a little boy without a balloon outrageously empty his little hand held onto the air.

2.

Over the hill over the hill and then under the hill under that the aspens aren't fully leafing
yet o darling the poor dead snakes the two of them as slain by some bad Tiresias probably a
cat or a fisherman at dawn o darling the aspens. And the paulownia is still in flower who
brought it back from Japan there's a story a princess there a bridesmaid here tell me
again a flowering tree inn the graveyard purple flowers simultaneously with pecan-

shaped seed capsules always empty when I touch them always empty each like a glans
penis meatus agape I really love you in a strange little way the way you love me
there's nobody like us and we're not even us

A packet comes from Franck André Jamme to tell me more a poet named for the James
gang Jesse's brother o get it right this time Clio it all comes out of you the thin
glairy ooze of history all that clatter in the attic that hissing scratching in the cellar no
wonder we can't sleep in our houses we need to travel can't sleep at night
Evander snooze all afternoon

Evader the despoiler close at hand did O consent to her ravishment ring in her
gluteus tug her home o war? It is so many years since I read a book a book was a
bounded thing a bonded thing had borders and covers had The End you knew
where you were when you were in it and when not not. Now there is no end of
weaving the never-ending text suits me just fine rose of Sharon blood in the moon
are you home yet are you ever?

In ferny pastures dew drops down into the sly heart of the forget-me-not flower blue as a
dream clap of sunshine smoothing along the wall painted white the one house on the
island that is not shingled.

How do you come to give me such permissions? I mean you're not even a railroad or a
mockingbird something with a big name and Wobblies on strike around the plant you
can't get in I can't get out and yet someone is someone's mistress how? Is it energy or
sassafras or that same old history book yes book god damn it the one that flaunts
beginning and flashes the end and says the whole thing middle by middle makes sense I
don't believe a word of it a book is mostly paper anyhow you can take it on your
tongue I often have a miracle that anything at all comes through signals on paper
o my poor sweet lost sailor in the deepest woods horns on your head hearts at your feet
night is coming now and not just the island only only you still can see the curve of
rump a bear is it or an angel or your shadow ransacking the fog christ is that how
lilacs smell?

28 May 2002, Cuttyhunk

DE BENIGNITATE PHILOSOPHORUM

Mist liberty
Sea transience
Sand presence
Shell dwelling
Stone identity

The whole of Heidegger's philosophy arises in an attempt to describe a week on the Baltic he promised himself as a young man but never spent.

I am absence.

You are the best seven nights there are. If I could live on the coast of your Friday forever, for example.

But what if there's a place, Val, where the words are always going? And another place they don't want me to know of, let alone reach, what then? What shall I do about those secret places hidden in the very prospects the words shift to reveal? How shall the words' faithful follower learn to herd them instead, towards a pasture I don't know at all and they seek to keep me from knowing? Early in the morning I think of this, then I think of you lying in bed asleep deep asleep and think: maybe you're there already. Show me your wound again. Let me touch it.

I can see something now. I must be me.

Tricycles. Skinny handles in fat hands. What can it mean?

Wait, I'm getting there now. The radio, the mirror, the steps up to the attic, wait, the garage, the car passing at midnight on no road, wait, the two buses jammed together, Punjab, personal memories aren't worth the paper they're printed on, saltimbanques, an Arab singing

to his girlfriend on the crumbling steps of the old Roman arena, closer, not personal, I have no clue to what he sang or who she was, his arm around her, her face hidden in his chest, friend or wife, what did he croon, not personal, closer, a memory that intersects the nowish mind. I hear him still.

I never saw her face. Shawl, his shoulders, his arms. He crooned to her but we could hear. Maybe Berber, not Arabic at all. Nothing is clear but what I don't know and can't go.

Would *a robin on a lawn* be a sufficiently anonymous image? No. Too many robins, too many lawns, too many countries -- yet the image says America or Euroland, it does not say India, Japan, Brazil. How about *the moon, three days past full*? No, gibbous, haunted, only in Germany, only in Japan. The moon by itself lives in China, and sometimes spends a day or two in Spain. The moon belongs to Andalusia, I'm trying to tell you, nothing belongs to everything, there is no universal integer, not even the sun.

There is no common image.

What about Lucy, you ask, that girl in Venice? She carries the moon in her hands, and the sun, and our means of knowing them, you say. True and not true. She carries more than the light. And you didn't even ask her last name, content with her strange gifts, long sleep, silver mask. Dumb as you were, she helped you see.

But what did I see? Can I say what I saw and have it be something seen, seen by you and you, not a poetic image freighted with will and festering with personal identity, me? I see a house. I know it's white. My language makes these things appear to be so. I don't have a clue who lives in it, and neither do you. We're finally even.

We can thus together *imagine reciprocal irrealities* -- this IRI is a technique for being happy with whoever you happen to be stuck with for a night, a weekend, a few years.

The other is the only thing of any use.

When I was a kid I liked older women; when I got older, younger. This seems rational, healthy, if socially problematic. (Society is bad for your health.)

But the other isn't a thing, see?

The other is a man or in your case a woman, sitting over there, by the velvet curtains in the doorway, just out of reach. Talk to the nice lady, Bobby.

Grass under mist, that's all. That's all I've got. That's all I've got to tell you. At least that much.

Self-absorbed pomposities are my specialty. Just like everybody who is anybody, a name stuffed with cheap ideas.

29 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

A SPEECH FROM AN UNBORN PLAY

“Meeting you was like an empty house
being entered by its true family.

Two trees who can let full grown
their branches tangling
cast one network of shadows
on the patient ground.

 If we lived
together there would have to be
an academy of mandarins to read
our shadows, read our actions,
interpret our tremulous touches,
two not at all one but casting one shade.
How can you be so big so right
so full of places to grow inside?”

29 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

among the rocks
on a fallen eight-by-eight
he watches the tide
turn slow and creep back in

birdless the stripped shore
the moving hands of fog
slow too, as if he
could finally see the air.

29 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

MAYBE IT MEANS SOMETHING NEW

A beginning maybe or maybe not.
A star with a tee shirt hanging from one ray
A basket full of dandelion greens and all
Little balsawood airplane wrecked in a yew tree
Sun snagged in fog. A man sweating.
Everybody else is cold. A coffin full of rice.
This day used to be a memory, now it's now.
There was an old stovepipe a bird lived in it
Who knows what kind, you just hear fluttering.
He thinks of all the things he can put in you
A lens from sunglasses lying on the beach.
Everything sees everything remembers.
Whose parade is it with my fingers
Marching up your thigh, cookies get soft
On damp plates, was that a story or
Do people really go naked in Tierra del Fuego
Warmed by nothing but the grease
From sooty seabirds, who knows what kind.
Obsessions are so inconvenient. Kiss
The nape of the neck, that's all, a green
Ball tossing on the sea, that's all, suppose
The sea is playing tennis with you, skeptic
Would you still go on reading your newspaper
Hoping a clue to the market's direction
Down there where your feet in sandals stir
Annoyed by small sand flies who own this land.
Bitter morons waiting for the evening bus.
Stop thinking about what you did to yourself
Suppose every word you hear is really
Meant for you and every speech is part

Of the selfsame text forever. What then
Is that hibiscus you had in dream
How long does a thought last he wanted
Beer drinkers in a city graveyard
It was just yesterday why is it gone
Why are they all finished with us already
We all have tattoos only yours are on the skin
Little tree by neighbor's door how small
A child wants to know if the moon's
In Canada then where does the bird
Come from to be here and what is the sun
He finds its footprints on the beach
Wants to be in her condo moving
Subtly with the sea now that he has
Sacked her again deleting street by street
The avenues by which others might
Come to know her. Montague Terrace
In rain lost paradise of conversation
Lost for the sake of so-called radical
Opinion walk conversation freedom
Stymied by the rigidity of politics little
Boy don't ever grow up you were right
You really were right back then disdain
Anything less than a kiss despise opinions
Study the sidewalk is for kissing
The heights are for looking at the sea.

30 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

Ak'abal

Let me at least say the name of the day
the day is Darkness in the Cup of Dawn
brighter than any day of the week
in terms of sun not my best friend
or maybe she is we're always quarreling

31 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

TO THE LATTER DAY SAINT WHO PICKS ME UP

What do you care, reader ten thousand years from now,
about my love affairs or my desperations?

You care about the weather, the permanent
the stuff around me that's also around you,
you just want to be startled with a long neighborly
homecoming sort of surprise and think that he,
that boring old senator in the Second Middle Ages,
he knew about this too! That priest
watched lovers on the beach! That dead man
had roses on bushes and a whole moon in the sky!

31 May 2002

Cuttyhunk

I know you are daytime but I also know
your secret name is night, I'm sorry
but I always want to treat you that way,
coming in backwards, ruby tail lights,
your lips smeared with rain, *tu sais?*

31 May 2002

POSTCARD 1

Watching a thunderstorm at night.
I wish you were the lightning
And I was the sea. Wishing you
Were the ground and I was the rain.
Stormy weather keeps us together.

31 May 2002

POSTCARD 2

Quiet dabbling rain then harder.
Darkness breaks suddenly
As if there were someone there.
The whole sea. Then just alone
This handful of light I'm in.
Light on and off. The reef.

31 May 2002

Cuttythunk

POSTCARD 3

Out of the dark a beach leaps when lightning lets it.

Wave curl white mustache.

It is doing what it always is.

This means ontology. This means you. I wish you were me.

31 May 2002

Cuttyhunk