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LOCAL MIND

thinking about Victor Erice's *El Sol del Membrillo*.

for Russell.

Being willing to change
One thing is another
Look at it a long time
That's all the local mind can do
With you remember
And be me

An adequate philosophy
Of cinema, ¡mira!
That it all moves
And you hold still

To take the motion out
And analyze the obvious
Until you see it
And in the same instant
Seeing (seeing it)
You're nobody again
The pure good way you were
The night before you were you

2.

There is no darkness only
The coquetry of light
Nobody ever loves you as much as you require
That is the rule

It has you think
To be the right way
The light comes by you
Not raining not remembering too much

3.

You fall asleep as you watch
The way a fruit ripens then gets sweet then rots
Then something else more or less happens
You wake up you make something
And where is the yellow thing you once beheld?

11 July 2002

*A WEDDING TRIPTYCH FOR JENNIFER AXINN,
WHO MAKES THE PUREST TRIPTYCHS OF OUR DAY*

For the groom: an assignment

My friend Brigitte
was born on a hillside
under the church of Santa Margherita
among the vineyards
where a famous wine is grown

we walked around the church
together in the night
looking down at the valley
and hearing the wind
walk with us among the grape leaves

but I never went into the church
I guess I was tired of churches
so I don't know anything
about that saint,
who she was or what she did
or why they built the old church
falling to pieces in plaster and white.

So that's up to you.
You have to go into the church.
You have to go in daylight and in dark
and look around and spread your arms
and hold the emptiness of space the
fullness of wood and stone and bronze,

you have to ask the darkness who she is,

learn which of all the saints, what her story is,
you have to hold her story in your arms
and be astonished, you have to understand
this is the hugest woman in the world
big as the sky and holding everything
and you hold her

and you have to take care of her
as if she were a tiny newborn baby fox.

For the bride: a history

When girls are little they play in the woods
if they're lucky enough to have woods to play in

and in the woods they find a stone or two
if the woods are lucky enough to have a stone

the stones are likely to come in different sizes
and the little girl is likely to pick a big one

a boulder really or what the books call a *xenolith*
a rock that is a stranger coming from a far place

just like herself
brought from god knows where by time or ice

and nobody knows where anybody comes from

and why she's here, that's hard to figure out,

but she is here and the rock is here
and the rock is big and doesn't move any more.

Wherever it came from it's here now and forever,
big and hard, she stands on it she sits on it

she hides under the outswelling curve of it
on sunny days and holds its shade,

mixes its shadow with her own.
A stone supports and shelters her at once.

How can something be over and under,
a house and a dance floor, a book and a voice?

Because every rock has a voice.
And a good man is a stone who came to life.

For the couple, a gilded finial

If you lived in a tent it would come to a point
If you lived in a cave it would lead somewhere
If you lived in a house it would fit in the sky

On top of everything there's something else
Underneath anything is what you meant in the first place
The first place is the last place you finally find.

With affection and admiration, these words to bless you both. Robert Kelly, July 2002

To cast something at the feet
is to wake up a religion
from its sleep inside a stone

it comes out like a greenback
hummingbird it annoys the flower
productively, small as it is

it is a stream gushing over a weir
or turning a turbine
it is a seagull alone in the sky

11 July 2002

SOME RESPONSIBILITIES

I will not think about the other
just this, the responsible
inlet in a savage coast
it wants to believe in itself
the way things do
not as an other but as a self
the way a metamorphic rock
personally arrives

a person then
articles with formulas
namable but not sayable
just like you.

2.

Lick the stamp
no more they
stick themselves
to what you say
send or get

the old
almost distinguished
thing a
paper in your hand

2b.

that sense of what is to be done
with a loose label
remember the old ones
with red edges and ink
would claim the middle
inscribing
at the center of things
a name, framed

the last of all our
arts identity.

3.

so leaves one
to that messy feeling
they call thinking

where rules at best
direct the fervent
traffic of the heart

neat blacktop
parking lots with
spaces marked

vague in white against
the permanent continuum
dark down below

3b.

so that kind of weather
my prince so sleep
snug as you can or
dawn will make you

rainless morning and an army
changed into trees
so many enemies
asleep around you

green or your dreams
I dream of you again
in and out the doors I go
and you see me I don't
see you you are
a little boy
all the toys you bring
I give you

you watch me change
inside all the giving
something known
held clear
as if we belonged
and a process needs us
unimaginable temperature
when a thing just is
you are my son.

4.

but that's another story
not another's
the centuries of calm

the folded stepladder leaning against the shed
represents the power of historians to transform experience
the dead branch fallen from the living linden
symbolizes arrogance in mathematical reasoning
the slats of wood set out to dry on the oil tank top
express the triumph of time over consciousness
hornets build their nests in the tool shed door
ponder with me the absence of the personal

as if I were you
child again and no one died
pour this vessel
into that
the contents hardly
matter the flash
is all, the gush
from mouth to mouth

into the flask of necessity
pour the wine of identity

put this bottle into that
until nobody's home
it's almost now.

12 July 2002

to violate the precincts
charted for my heart to keep
a red song in a green hour
at last formally investigate

that's all, that's poetry
that's what I was born
to break, remake, insist upon

like a crabby young wife making a scene in the supermarket.

12 July 2002

POETRY

A natural thing?
Only investigated.

The rest is foam
cute and even
tingling round the hocks of bathers

rusty skinnydippers in the dark of moon.

12 July 2002

SIXTY

There is a secret here
locked in hexagesimals.

Babylon the circle and the sun.
But that was then.

What happens now's a shocking thing
an unpredicted liberty —

all your old fussy gravitas
is still there but right beside it

a gorgeous new kind of responsibility
such that you don't care,

Duncan lived here, people love you,
all your talk won't hold back the dawn

but suddenly it doesn't matter
things spill themselves from glasses

from rivers from mouths
it's all a chemical you understand

and all you have to do is listen
it forms itself under your hands

the way rocks in fact are relatives of air
or a balanced stone just the bottom of the sky.

13 July 2002

for George's sixtieth birthday: the next day