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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Measuring only by what fall
an animal that lets you see it
is apple in autumn

is there anything better than a face
they use repetition instead of explanation
they wake up in strange beds

this is how we know we live in pleasure
strange word that feels you touch me
scrimshaw afternoons post coitum despair

I hear next door the clockwork of nirvana
turn around and hang it back on the tree
why won't you tell me what happened to us

why the soft allure of all my signifiers
no longer loops its call around your throat?

20 May 2001

Examine the obvious again
bluebird fencepost cow

nothing missing

2.

outside the birch trees
mist someone sobbing

selfpity is never insincere.

20 May 2001

WORLD

I don't know if I'm for the sake of you
or you for me. We dance
together. The pain
I sometimes feel is you
treading on my toes.
And God knows what I do to you.

20 May 2001

Not to castigate
or something else
a woman hurrying me
up the stairs in Germany

leading the catwalk way
above invisible stages
no one is on
the stairs stage seats struts

up into darkness
we hurry for some sake
not hers not mine
she turns back and smiles

from time to time
leading me up
it is good to follow her
she is smooth

and wears all black
arts administrators always do
nervous encouraging
the smile would work

she has no idea
where all this will lead
and I don't care
the climb is adequate

an ascension
is always adequate
I am cool in this tower
of climbing

this house of steps
nothing behind us
nothing to come
and no point in touching

this is the public
nature of art
two people lost
on a dim staircase

somewhere an audience
makes noise
on the other side
of something

we cannot get there
we can't see them we see
each other
when I look up and she

you look down
uncertain steps
and no point in not
going on forever

we go a little further into the dark.

21 May 2001

THE RHODODENDRON

is in flower
the big one, the one
we'll have to move, transplant,
propagate, like Neruda's
cactus, solitary,

have to pray for it and not know.

The big flowers open to smaller flowers.
Cool morning. Squirrel on the feeder
feeding upside down. See,
description is still possible,
the trick
is writing it down.
Mauve, and then a special flush of pink.

21 May 2001

There is a because in it
Isn't there a special twist
Strephon means twister
The moon means measure
Measure means assure
Me of myself assuming
Nothing swallow someone
Means a bird that lives
Inside a moment of wanting

Then the bird flies the dolphin
Surges from the sea and carries
Exiles to their destined beaches
Means a language-speaking
Rock ground to a powder
Means a puff of wind will bring
All anything knows of any
Thing right into the nostrils
Means the holes you live by

Entrances and deep dream.

21 May 2001

I was listening but not really hearing
the word I answered
had not been spoken yet
not even written anywhere
no dictionary imprisoned it
no pretty sixth grade teacher
chalked it on the blackboard
her back to the class her
hips juggling marvelously the definition.

22 May 2001

Second day of rain

We may get enough

At last

Rhododendron flowers

23 May 2001

A mark under an owl
means a tree

means we don't have a clue
what the old ones meant

who set the marks at play
to mask a world
hidden from us in plain sight

23 May 2001

But what if the bridge
ran only to the sky

not across or beyond it
just there

to end in brightness?

23 May 2001

for Rilke

Don't forget the animals are baffled too
It's not just scholars and mothers
Who can't figure out the world, the torpor
The iniquity, the sudden lilacs of it.

23 May 2001

Messiah's is always
The next voice you hear
Not speaking to you
Speaking to you.

23 May 2001

Mourning dove and chipmunk
Browse the same square yard
Of fallen seed. Are they
Thinking lyrically about me?

23 May 2001

As if we were going to be there
A rifle shot far away in woods
We know no good
Comes of such noises

The choices are straightforward
Music kills
This is all there is
And all the rest is what is not

You die to get there

There is no there there

Only here again but worse
The birds are still singing
People still making out in movies
You are reborn

You are asphalt a part
Of the road, soft
In summersun, glistening in rain,
You are here for a very long time

And you let them move.

24 May 2001

everything has to be eleven

because the frame of what we need who we are
waits or is always waiting for a gardenia
dropped by your mother after the garden fête
fluttered out of sight off the table without its scent
for one moment being lost, we are what we do,

don't worry, have some coffee now, the cogwheels
of Descartes are still turning, a little squeaky,
but what a strange oil it turns out they need to bathe in
and how to get hold of it now that you've gone

miracle after miracle you left your shadow in my lap.

24 May 2001

OVERHEARING

She said she was hungry
hungry as green glass

shape? A maple in May.
Science? Intermittent rain.

24 May 2001

When we look at us in the mirror
I don't say ourselves
I just say us, when we look
At us in the mirror
we are restored to animal nature

not just that I look like a lion
(you look like a pig
I hear you say, or a bear or a brute
never a lion)
 but all of us
just as we are
are other than we are

and this Other is animal.
We meet face to face
fierce gentle every
time we say somebody loves somebody
whether we mean it or not.

25 May 2001

Let the moon be a map
of someplace else
just as you see it
mottled blue or vacant yellow
every marking tells the truth
but who?

25 May 2001

As if it were something I could do
a piano Fats Waller's busy playing
Chopin as it happens the way they do
one letter in each shoe box
and truth waiting in the locked closet
o my you're fine
 thanks for the touch you
bring the darkest circumstance
M^{lle} Élué the lawn and roads are bridal white
with rain-felled acacia flowers

the smell of them unlike any other opening.

25 May 2001

ABLAUT

We trust our bodies so much
we let the slightest
willow of breath
take meaning and bring it
to all the other parts of flesh
I sing you sang and now you have been sung.

25 May 2001