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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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WINDS

And out of that marinade of heat and haze and rain last night
the mistral woke.

And bad dreams even knew how to end.

Sixty-eight degrees and a breeze among the linden leaves
the big-leafed young ones, adolescents
mooning their hearts.

I am morning,
that is all I know.
All the rest
the day will tell me
stone by stone.

Hammer a nail
Into the air
Use it to hang up
A photo of the one you love.

How we talk. As if anyone
could be a picture —
you have to work
hard life after life to be a picture on the wall

and even then they can hardly hear
a word you're saying if you even ever said.

We have them here too, shifts of wind
from the Gulf then swing round from Maine,

we have our own weather, thank you,
we don't need the Franks,

it's just the names
we miss

les noms me manquent

the child runs out of ink.

2.

Birdhouse sing me your news
of who comes who goes
before I wake

 before I wise up
 and know who you are
you who are all coming and going

the single visitor of all my nights.

3.

The crow can tell me everything I know
but I want to hear
the little inaccuracies of the wren
who trots around with her tail to the sun

all the biased afternoons, the smooth
neurosis of the sky,

 I want to hear
their sensuous mistakes to rank against my own,
their blue daydreams,
 the unspeakable nightmares of birds.

I want to think I'm not the only idiot
tortured by getting what he wants

lost in the secret mazes of my fear
in the grain of marble
the runes that run the bark of any tree.

1 September 2001

Staring at them, the old names
who were my selves my slaves my mastering
Presences all over that sweet coast
from which the weird wind blew

I belonged to the meat of them the shimmer of their views
Nobody wants to hear what I knew

And I don't want to read this endless book I wrote.

1 September 2001

The car goes by they call that music
mine is a little German hand that touches wood

touché means changed, experimented with
at knife point, button wielder, a wineglass
sings your wet finger

— so here we are
the Pronoun Family safe in France
of wherever this is that words still strive
transgenderedly (can you say that?) to inscribe
color values in a blind man's heart.

2 September 2001 Full Moon

Weird small things growing green
huzzah for spindly cacti for
overactive underwatered rattle-
snake plant called Motherinlaw's
Tongue, huzzah for dying bonsai,
aloes half white with too much
something or too little, Christ,
how little we know of what we need,
sorry, they all are me, and vice
exactly is this versa, I can't tell
my heart from a hole in the ground.

Because things die. Because
love comes back to life, dumb
as autumn flowers, don't they know
what's coming, yes, last night
it was cold. Or we were cold.
When will I ever learn the difference?

2 September 2001

to escape these
local impersonations of the gods
is a good work for men

2 September 2001

Things get lost
with no one to tell them
to

the wind
won't listen
and the night
has other kinds of sex
on its mind

wouldn't you just love to know
the amorous emptiness
disguised as the dark

sometimes I pick up a word
and put it down
why bother
when she's not there to say it
to

and then again
I am what the word
picks up

I learn my lesson
I say it anyway
even if nobody's listening

it all is.

3 September 2001

SINGLES BAR

What happens after full moon
The house stays home

All our conversations leave records in the world
These memoranda in fact comprise the world

Not thought into place talked into place
Birds review their options as they fall

Old men learn why things are as they are
Only when it's too late to change

Self absorbed but not self aware a monkey hunts his fleas
Shouldn't the doctor and the patient have the same kind of chair

A wheelbarrow by the outhouse to carry them home
Welfare administrators howling at the moon

Every day the same man came into the bar
We wore bright green spring onions woven into our hair

One day the caravan was late the sun was lost
Heaven depends for its order on human arrangements

All the rest of it is chaos this is a rose
Ordered into place by seeing the eyes talk

One day he said he didn't feel sincere
She brought bunches of organic carrots and sat on the lawn

It's the bar stool not the beer that makes the bar
Chair means flesh in any language and good bye

3 September 2001

[SINGLES BAR, continued, 2]

Returning to the formal after smoking outside
Her ball gown hooped around her ears

Imagine the serious invader the svelte valley
Inappropriate signage on the pinball machine

The wrong language spoken between the hills
Every language a valley of its own

The glacier melts the circus tent blows down
Desire solidifies as mass and comes slow to life

Penetration possession gold chain around the ankle
Evident uproar of the failed rump parliament

Two fingers squirming in a narrow sign
Sweat lodge at morning drink something black

Orient acres orientate acremen west of time
Every day the same clock tower has different birds

Be careful with the rape scene the camera stick
What do you call the thing you put the money in

4 September 2001

[SINGLES BAR, continued, 3]

And now what do you have to say
Blank French notebook and a head without dreams

You lost them didn't you at the gate of ivory
The gate where the false dream called the world is born

A stillborn dream then a morning without a mother
Lost consequences a little desert town bourgade

You are the most one I expected to see
I am thrilled at your door we come in together

Sometimes you is the name I call myself sometimes one calls me
Could there be a bird without a feather

Did you say a world without weather
Or was it the painted desert where they touched last time

Hundred degrees at midnight in Nogales night glare
Sometimes neon is the truest light of all

The happiest man in America is a candle burning in your porch
Sometimes the language only seems to be speaking

Dear greek dear smooth chained hips of logic
Dear monster chained to maiden chained to rocks

5 September 2001

What we do is little
It is climbing upon a chair
the Giant Mother left there
to help us out

up the word that's like a wall
grab the rope that's like a smile
and haul the weary meat that's me
out into ordinary

life where everything is true
having no other way to be
selfless empty glad.

5 September 2001

THE SECRET

There was a wind and there usually wasn't. It was one of those days when the world seemed to be trying to tell him something. It had been trying so long, years and years, and today it was close. He was close to paying attention. The secret is released by paying attention. Releasing attention. He was trying to listen.

It had to do with a sick old carpenter who kept missing work. A carpenter with a funny little scornful but abashed smile under a ratty grey mustache. The carpenter was going to the hospital.

He saw the carpenter's face in his mind's eye. The face was the same, old, mustache, little smile. Now the secret was close. Then he saw the carpenter as a young man, brown silly mustache of a young man. Silly preoccupations of a young man, so earnest, so wrong, so young. A boy, even, going out with girls, choosing one or being chosen, getting married, living with her, an Irish girl, an Irish woman, getting old, a sick old Irish woman he lived with now, his wife in a wheelchair, the secret was very close now, the carpenter on his way to the hospital, his own body sick, he didn't know how, sick legs, kidneys, eyes, insides. The smile.

Everything was the same. That was close to the secret. A man was young and now he's old. No. that's the wrong way round. A man is old and once was young. That's closer, not right, nothing's right, the man is sick, he'll die, we all do, later or sooner, that's not the secret, that's common

knowledge. But the secret is nearby. A man's life. Someone's life, someone's life is held together. What holds it together. What is the secret, that is the secret. He thinks he knows it now, archaic Greek kouros young boy statue smile. Old carpenter. Young man becoming carpenter. Making things. Looking at them in his mind's eye before he makes them. Not bothering to come to work. A dumb smile. Dying, Irish girls, sickness, telephones, excuses, hospitals, money. All quiet now. The wood is quiet. The wind is blowing. The smile is the same.

5 September 2001

[re Douglas Messerli text]

How can you know me so well?
By writing, that is the answer.
How can you know me so well?
Certainly not by reading the words I wrote.
You can only know me by writing them yourself.
When you write them yourself
You turn into me,
 The other side of me, the other kind of me, the kind
That means what the words mean
And nothing but not,
 Not all the clamor and squaredance and bullshit of what
any I might decide to mean

But just what the words
Wriggle and spit.
That is the best me.

Outside the skin is what is left of hands.

This is the most thing you make me say I said.

+++

write with a hammer
erase with a cloud
nobody's listening
so everything's allowed

write with a jackknife
read with the moon
everything you ever
needed is gone

you're left alone
with what you desire
more frequent than stars
your lewd priorities

[5 IX 01]

The imagined sharpness women allow to stand in the stall half-hearing the water circulate through the blind network of the plumbing, how dark inside water, inside water. Like anything. And when the refusal breaks in your hands you have nothing left of that chill decorum, not even Sunday.

For lo! the week is broken, and the empire of measurement is no more.

No measurement but measure. Measure is pure.

Don't bug me with purity, a cup is a hole in the ground gone a-wandering, looking for its original clay. Earth can take care of its own only so long. So long, we say, we'll see you Sunday, in church, in hell, in boredom, in Boulder, nobody goes to church anymore, you know? You are a dictionary of moves, a flicker white-bellied through the garden twilight, take reason to mean rage, take intelligence to mean a finger on the soft of your inner arm. Amen.

But the sluices
Have to open
I read this
With my leg

Along the skinhairs
Liberty
Of interpretation

Lightning in the skin the only sky

Oily distances
she rakes with light

+++

a group is a grab, *the skin is what is left of hands* is what I meant all the while.

am here because you reach out to

Abashed but a boat one channels on
One ever in the wake of one (Desire)
One normal in the reek of out

Breathed air (Language) the carnal
Is plausible the seas all are vague
Because one has come to one

Thinking to be enough for both and is
It makes sense when together but
Waves apart one wonders and

All one's faith (smell of what one
Said to one lingers) required
Woke stumbling down the hallway

Like an animal who has found
The way to die is to live forever
One falls home into the lap of one

6 September 2001