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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Guess me again
I am grass
Comber from no China

Sea is just a pronoun that you said
Built of leather
As I would bring hard to the backside of the Sun

So that she flees into space and lets us see
At last what all that light
Is meant to hide

Even if it finally turns out to be
Only a madman like me
Scribbling on a broken piece of slate.

6 September 2000

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I leave my money to the Velcro plant
To propagate a nobler sacrament
Marriage firm to hold and easy sundered

I leave my money to the frightened ants
Who trace new alphabets
As they scurry single-minded appetites.

6 September 2000

HERACLITUS

But can I measure it
The lunacy of stars
The disasters of the moon

Each thing dies each other's life
My friend said, scuffing
His Birkenstocks through wet sand,
And he said *if ocean could make us clean*
Eels would be angels

Ah, he was a man named for a woman,
A dog in the pay of owls

Sleep, master, sleep
The sun comes soon enough
Too soon, too soon
And you shall have no shoes

Or new shoes was it
To meet the inarticulate light?

6 September 2000

prayer as rhizome
stolon seeking one
pointed in the dark dark
earth of mind
to mean

through that grit we call our thinking
guided one day by desire
next by nothing
the image of the stare of affairs
we conspire with all life to utter
outward in the actual

o make this woman safe from grief

or prayer is mycelium
ever and variously probing
through the dark mind
to find an intersection to make real
what the will or tender wish intends

that this house rebuff the wind
this well spill forever
and her heart come home.

6 September 2000

Day books

She was stiff with shadow but
She traveled
In a violin

The passengers were always outside the vessel
Only the source of light
Was in its cabin fast asleep

The journey never
But frequently
If ever

Shadow stiff along her skin
I went home disappointed
With myself again

I never say it
As often as I say it
Never speak I talk so much

I wanted to go right now
And say it to her
But my collar was tight the clock ticked

Why was I afraid
It's all just weather
These are my students my ashen leaves

Choosing to stay with me
Because the wind and all that wine
The local blue of space

6 September 2000

how near we are to far
off kilter like a star
bathed in a southern ocean

last night the Pleiades
so bright the cold
sky but lost

in water
multiplied divided
banausic
the handwork of light

we bathe in dust
of light
like sparrows emigrants

crossing vast oceans
on our trivial wings
or do we dream

them the whole thing
here
into our trees?

7 September 2000

Wilderness death
The last of me
The first of who

7 September 2000

it is not easy
to be orient

lodge a motion
against the dark

again and again
secretly

loving that secret
enemy.

7 September 2000

SLEEPING WITH CHARLOTTE

semaphores of repose
her arms swung
hourslow under the duvet
till day comes having understood
not the message but the messenger

7 September 2000

Analyzing the story
took at last
the story away. Left me
alone, with the telephone
still in my hand.

Some like me, some not.
A few love, a few loathe.
I am no different
(I thought I was)
from any and every
(I thought I was)

object of emotional incidence.
I have done terrible things
as if I had to risk everything
to have anything,

or this one thing,
my difference

and following every impulse to its end
into the shadows past the Kotbusser Tor station

to say the first thing that comes into my mouth
without meaning it and without refuting it

just saying what the heart let
itself catch from what spilled
from the mouth

neither lie nor truth.
A *saying*. Every word's
a quiet violence against what is the case.

8 September 2000

HORTEN

The word she wrote
to show me where it is
leads me to nothing

just her hand
writing it. I see her
hand, the word

forgets to focus
on the paper
the ink is blue

the hands of course
are pale mediaeval
here, hers. Even

her arm is vague
and I cant remember
was she the vivacious

concierge or the teller
in the Kaufhof
but her hand goes on

writing its unreadable word.

9 September 2000

The pomposity of music sometimes
When it is only what we take care of
That cares for us in turn. A man
Past infancy can be nourished
Exclusively by his enthusiasms,
I'm not talking about philately
Though some envelopes still bear pretty stamps.
The trouble with e-mail is no mucilage.

9 September 2000
— 11 September 2000

THE EVENT

Who are we all who all together
Admire the absences we make between us
Spilling shadow from our little hands?
Who else could drink from such a shallow fountain?

9 September 2000

RHYME

for Illiana, Terence, Margaret

1.
Terence rhymed to make the matter plain —
Rhyme *remembers*, so makes us bear in mind
Everything that came before

So we can order the history of things
Into that meaningful midnight calm
When we look across the lawn

(The table, napery, dance floor, candles,
Years and years) and say *We love you* or *She*
Taught me music.

2.
I think I don't much like to rhyme
Because I'm on the lam from remembering,
Like guilty Tannhäuser

Slouching along, hiding from the stars.
So many things I'm not so glad I did
Or saw or heard or meant or got.

And then something stands out like last night —
Pracht im Nebel I thought when I saw the torches
Guiding our cars through the meadow fog

And that I want always to remember,
The splendid house a woman opened
And the friends rushed in to kiss a friend

With all the tender devious gifts
Of music, poetry and truffles, truffles
While the crouchbacked moon looked on

Amazed at all the giving and forgiving.

10 September 2000

I think poets are spectacular cripples
Sprawled noisily over the living room,
Sulking over magazines under lampshades
Looking up with their weird eyes
Full of neither venom nor compassion,
Wary waiting glance at all these uncles and aunts
Cavorting at the party. And it all
Is a party for these uninvited guests,
their mitts full of canapés and wine.
A poet is all waiting and wanting and waiting
Till every now and then a word
Bumps into a word and the light goes on
And the poet stops even pretending
To be paying attention to your body or your soul.

10 September 2000

Name it.

It will be

You.

Yours.

Can't fail.

It's like a deck

With 52 aces

How could you

Lose.

Karma

Is how. It

Could be terrible,

Be yours.

Or some

Body else's worse

Even than yours

And you would win.

For a while.

But then.

10 September 2000

Morpheus

Who is Morpheus?

— Leonard Schwartz

mOrpheus is the dead Orpheus

what is said of the latter
is the case of the former
after slaying

I mean after being slain

He who slays us every night
Or as we say about some girl
Who charms us out of our self
Possession, we fall for her, we say
She slays me,

And in every case
It is Orpheus who is slain,

Becomes the God
Of having fallen asleep and being in a dream
And dreaming about all the beauty of the world
The battlements of glory and the gold rivers of Lydia

All in a dream

Now when they asked Who
slew Orphée?

The answer came: The bacchantes, the bassarids, the girls.
And we know
Who they were.

Who they are
Right now

I could name them

The ones
Who keep you awake all night long

Until the dreamer in you
Kills the poet
And you fall on sleep

And meet her there
I will not name her

Meet her
Leaving the robe of your office behind you
Knowing no function
But to know her and embrace her

Like the dark brown almost god you are

Down there in the doldrums
Between sleep and dreaming

So Morpheus is the god of wisdom
after the siege of that intense dispersion
he calls the other sex

to him and from him, the cast
grains of sand

hear me, the sAnd-man sleeps.

10 September 2000

CRYPTANALYSIS

After a certain point one day, drinking coffee in a coffee house and listening to a radio on the shelf behind the espresso machine playing a four-handed late piano andante of Mozart, he realized that Mozart was the only answer. Not that Mozart himself knew the answer — with such a genius, how could one be sure, but probably not. But Mozart was the answer. It came to him in one simple moment: take all the compositions Mozart ever wrote, and arrange them in strict order of their composition.

If the exact date was unknown, leave it aside for the moment.

Take the resultant opus, and play it, in order, listening first generally, then later carefully. Months it would take to do it consciously. Listen and note what the music said.

Study every parameter. Graph every pitch, every accidental, every dynamic marking, every variety of note, every expressive mark. Read in order the verbal text that accompanied cantata, motet, song, opera.

Graph after graph, statement after statement..

Take what you have heard and what you have before you as the encryption of a single text.

Decipher it.

From the gaps in the resultant clear text you will know where to fit in the many compositions without firm date, once these compositions have themselves been decoded according to the same cipher discovered in the whole corpus of sound.

And he determined to devote his life to this decipherment. A hidden life it would have to be, dedicated to this great mystery, well-hidden in plain sight for two hundred years. No better code than the code that no one thinks is a code, he reflected. And he reflected on the life that would be his, all the work, copying, listening, playing, transcribing unrecorded pieces in some form he could play on his mother's old piano left to him after his parents died together in a plane crash on a hillside in Sardinia he had never seen. A small piano. A whole life he would spend. The thought of it exalted him and wearied him. He stared into his empty cup and wondered what would become of him. O my dear God, he thought.

11 September 2000

We don't ask much except the father.
I mean the son. I should say the holy
Ghost. We ask the whole
To be everything, and to compress
Itself into what we sense we need —
Such senses profligate of sense!

11 September 2000

FACULTY DINING ROOM

Piranhas and pimentos and palaver.
And in the faculty uni-gendered bathroom
A dead fly has lain supine and stiff
On the same time three days now
And no resurrection. I sound
Mad at somebody. It must be me.

11 September 2000

(after a line by Robert Duncan)

Arietta with leaves
I almost hear

Speakable music
For change sake

For-othering
Far mothering

Despot time
That will not take

Yes for an answer.

11 September 2000

Instances of conversational perfidy
As when your host reveals himself to be
The ex-boyfriend of your ex-girlfriend
And you are suddenly mired unwelcome
In affinity, yuck, why do we ever
Touch one another? Don't we know
Identity is more catching than disease?
And still you have to drink his wine
And tell him your imported jokes
And flirt with his appalling latest wife.

11 September 2000

I'm sitting at a table eating my lunch.
There is no one nearby I want to talk to,
Not even anybody who wants to talk to me.
I want to be reading, not the mail, a book.
I want to be reading a book. But I am bookless
And empty handed, nothing but me
And the food and the light of observation.
Nothing ever stops. So I must compose
Myself textlessly and in public
In contemplation of the ever-emerging
Narrative that goes by. I get to guess
The secret dungeons each one goes home to
Every night and what arcane disciplines
They practice there with string and steel
And skin and memory and sleep.
I don't think these unconscious pontiffs
Ever grasp what they're doing. Aimless
Gestures fulfill ancient rituals.
Vagrant onanisms populate the earth.
They pass me by now in their bodies
On their way to the lost religion of their lives
That creates the earth. This actual one
They make me walk on tomorrow
When the dark again turns into now.

11 September 2000

(What I heard them say to me as I fell asleep:)

We've come to take you home
Where the fire brightens the intelligent chamber
And it never stops raining, you love rain,

Lake and mountain, river and sea,
And the wind runs naked through the old wood,
Old rooms, old books

And women stand by water waiting for you to dry them
For you to lick with hungry reverence
The sacrament of their skin.

11 September 2000