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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Seize a leaf
 a season
or a red car

identify absence

these lingering decisions
feel like lingerie

silky pretty vaguely shameful but you smile

decide me, the arrow said,
decide me, the whirlpool smiled

it all is being caught in a machine
where everything has its role

except for me.
And that's my part.

25 October 2000

there are secants meant to cut cut
is something done to something
something endures a difference and

someone opens a wall a door does
into a room the room is space
something happened to a small

is it number is it something else
again there are things that happen
to no one that is what it really means

26 October 2000

there are se cants meant to cut cut
is some thing done to some thing
some thing en dures a dif ference and

some one o pens a wall a door does
in to a room the room is space
some thing hap pened to a small

is it num ber is it some thing else
again there are things that hap pen
to no one that is what it real ly means

26 October 2000

(sensing separations)

*(after Stephen Vincent Benet's poem about Duke
Robert of Normandy)*

this place we inhabit
its rules so deep in it in us
how did it come
to be only what it is?

a Duke was riding
dark into seafoam
the maiden no maiden
longer held his

leg with her strong arms
wrapped her cheek
to his thighs to enquire
from the immense

power of the weak
what his will would be
on her and what would he
he wanted her so had

to give her to a thane
of his of some sort a sly

leperish ruined fellow
she was glad of

for the company only
and then the sea came in
and no more story
they went inland into the mere

remembrance of a glory
felt like wet clothes
felt like scratchy linen
on her lip it's over

it's over forever the minute
we begin living again
the answer is awful
her beauty continues

to disturb this disturbance
is existence isn't it
the story told beauty
ruins us for life beauty

ruins us for living.

26 October 2000

there are sea chants meant to cut hear
is something done to something
some thing acquires a distance and

someone opens a waltz a door goes
into a room the warm is speak
some thing had opened to a lull

is it numb or is it something bare
against them who are thinking hips and
knees to no one, that is what it means?

26 October 2000

Decisively. Anew. A piece
of paper. Touch typing.
Almond horn. Close
but not enough. Subways,

subways. German city, sun.
Adhesive light. Sprinkle.
Favors. Tower. A lease
on premises. A dose of

career (Have you forgotten
the river's name). On the line.
Slot machine. Butyric
a bad smell. Little by little.

Caprylic. Even a new newspaper
Fades. (Can you imagine)
Mercaptan melody. Old nose.
Intox means propaganda.

It was a garden where everything
was a surprise so nothing
surprised. Orchestral interlude
shaped like a dead apple tree.

27 October 2000

LITERATURE

I wrote the whole *Iliad* with one tail feather
Quill from a white goose one afternoon
Between one breath and the next

No dust settled on my half-full
Cup of wine a passing cloud made
The still surface of look for a moment like the sea.

27 October

2000

Of course some things will be forgotten.
Wagon rutted so deep the canvas only

Could we whisk off and save in all that sinking
One pale dirty flag. Whitecaps hurrying south

Les moutons de mer are yare today, nimble
Energy so quick the scurrying light itself

By white wind transmitted no one jamming
Weather. First bright wind of October

And here it is the end of it. The journey
Where the man I was came to a simple stop.

New Hamburg. By the river.

October 2000

But the flag I need has natural
stars (if those things are
that dazzle the night with promises)

slung on the heart's fat sky
while slender white and scarlet maidens
play horizontal nearby

striplings, stripelings, wonder of political
foreplay, this land is
nothing but foreplay.

Keep America Entertained.
Entrained. Taking notes:
Cabinet of curiosities, history of my obsessions,

Pink bruised by such attentions
Here and anywhere, the stalwart reek
Of diner coffee breaks the merely lyrical.

Salt and pepper. Wanderlust and toast,
Sit smug as an egg in a carton
Safeguarding your pale fragility,

Once there was a number blue as gold,
An alchemist fleeing from a furnace

And a hawk overhead. O God

What more do I need but a hawk in high wind.

28 October 2000

I checked again today.
No one in the mirror.
The federal dining room
Lit by the sconces of absence.

28 October 2000

I am wearing a new shirt today that my love gave me
And looking in the mirror and seeing
A clever little pocket on the sleeve
I didn't know was there when I put it on.

I hope I get to use it before I die, and suddenly
I am full of sadness thinking of all the subtle beautiful
Things in the world small and not so small
That may not get used before the one who might use them

Passes away. Night and hollowness and dust, macabre
sleeve.

28 October 2000

TALK

There is a third animal reaching towards my head
In between a you and a me a kind of Ottoman cavalry
A kind of argosy from Nowhereland with wooden prows
Cutting my nice ocean o for Christ's sake whose face
Is the breasts of your figurehead, their sunken Wasa
Humiliates the Swedes, but you in a canoe are shamed
Enough trying to slip away wet-haunched from history.
Loch Sheldrake. It never will. You can't get shut
Of handball courts and holocaust, your lap quivers
With foreboding, the Memorial Church a broken tooth
And here comes the cavalry again, lowriders swoop
To scoop up the treasure of your company, pommeled
You ride across the north European plain, birches,
Pomerania, the sea. If you want to call it that, dismal
Shallows around Port Nothing with here and there a seal,
Une phoque, tu sais, splashing up on gravel. Lord Woden,
Give us another chance. Don't let it all be wrong
All the time. They fling you down on the soft sand
Lots of sun the mood is entertainment and you sleep.
When you wake up you're me again. But in your dream
You had been victim of a better war, orator, double agent,
Recreational religion, politics, Teflon, snapdragon, snooze.
The way stuff keeps coming back. Memorial, a thing
Is a memorial of itself, a person a memorial of every
Body else. That is the difference. You smell your hands

And something forces you to think about me.

30 October 2000

Names you haven't heard in a while
Golda Meir Yuri Andropov U Nu Trygve Lie

Places you haven't had letters from lately
Obock Memel Tanganyika Baluchistan

Games you've forgotten how to play
Chinese checkers euchre botticelli quoits

Things hard to find at the supermarket
Bluing rennet pig's knuckles ink.

30 October 2000

all audiences are captive
audiences if you hear
anything you are audience
if you hear anything
it will not let you go

this is the spell
that musicians know
bore them or thrill them
there's no difference
an audience is a pocket
goes all the way down

to the sea you hold
somebody to your hear
and what do you hear
all the music she ever
heard and that's the truth
that's the prison

31 October 2000

[ON MEMORY]

Every memory is a lie we spend our lives trying to make true.

.....

You have no right
To remember.

.....

So who is Mnemosyne
Anyway?
Muse's
Mother surely
but whose Daughter?

31 October 2000

A WORD SHAPED LIKE A VIOLIN

That waited so long for him to open, bad door!
That would not prompt his cold hand to turn its
colder brass permission, an egg in his fingers,
breakaway fuselage, open the fucking door,
Tiffany glass lamp cowl discerned in the purple
fucus of the Opal Coast, the fug in the room,
frangipani sweated sweet the leis looped dry over
damask fauteuil, he brought her sea weed and
called her Queen. She wondered how long his
avenues are or would streets be or the twist of
pigeons in the pewter sky between the twin
Italianate steeples of the yellow church, but he
called them doves. Down there she could see
pensioners taking their ease over the parterres of
the municipal arboretum, more doves, please open
the door, why should I, don't you just want to

touch me, the door was in him, the cellar he was she kept coming up from, trying to get out into the light, of course he was under her, she could feel him pressing up against her all the time, all the time, pressing against her, prodding in her, the way horses run, topaze sweat, the sun's last light, her primary virtue was constancy, her aspect intelligence, motive to make. Then his hands, the two of them, took hold, the brass now was warmer than his skin, a heron crouched in tall reeds, the way the head shrank down into the powerful pointy shoulders, waiting too for the right time, you could tell by color when it came, waiting for the sky's assent, they were all waiting, he proposed to love her for her assent.

31 October 2000

— 5 November 2000

