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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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STATION

along the way to it. What
did we see on our way here.

6:10 A.M. the sun is fresh
the houses all have flags

separate domestic religions

Sometimes the light looks used
but not today,

today is the yacht race
Blues against Yellows and both will wind

and here's the Pineapple against the Watering Can
and weeping children
shoplift from black markets and white markets.

8 June 1993
Boston

MORNING IN NEW BEDFORD

The catch is sunlight
we dream in shadow
slouching towards coffee
of great whales
up side streets
past the Fish Lumpers Union
old church now
Teamsters Hall
we dream about Trotsky,
about your father driving Schachtman to America,
we dream of salt
on the way to an island.
Cure me in Paradise
of hope and fear.

8 June 1993, New Bedford

At the because of things a woman
waits.

Of course it would be a woman,
outlined in strong morning seaport sun.

The shape speaks. Deciding
where the dawn came from.

Daddy, where does the dark go?

It goes back down in the mine
where the gold comes from
lifted to the light by black slaves
sluiced down after every shift
to recover whatever of value
might cling to a man,

the skin of a man,
the value,

a man owns only
what is south of his skin,
if that,
only the dark.

Which goes back down and down, so far
you could never imagine,
the black river and the never seen lagoon

and down there the money grows
leaf by leaf
quivering papery rustle
soft in the dark.

—This is what the sea said to me this morning
as we dared her in New Bedford

and she scandalized as ever by the land,

still haunted by the fabulous rumors of repose.

8 June 1993
M/V *Alert*, Buzzards Bay

The wake of the *Alert* spreads and recedes and finally
fades like a thought from the mind
traceless a memory of motion nothing moved.

8 June 1993
Cuttyhunk

WHEN THE ANGEL COMES

for Charlotte

The day comes market. The angel
gets off the bus surveyed assayed
the presence pondered. Off the boat.
Up the sand. From the cloud
falling on our land the fallen comes.
Will not tell you where I am or whence
arriving. Gull laughs. That's not English
around here. I will not tell you.
And no one ever did. We had to compute it
for ourselves, using a rigorous species of
scientific analysis called fantasy.
Then we understood. It comes as torment
wrapped in sunshine, reminding rain.
Scintillometry of arcane visitations.
Who are they coming silver through the door.
"I will not tell you..." later came to mean
I will not let you know. Everything
is underhand. The secret majesty
that rules the world stands
arms akimbo over everything you see.
Spray of moisture in the wind, eye
on the far cliff. A cloth gets soaked in five minutes
though no rain is ever seen. What do you see.

“...not tell you where I am” became
I will not let you know where you are.
You stand nowhere, morning and no prayers,
thinking about bare-bottomed boats
a mile from the ocean. Pine for it.
Dark Italy of savage prayers and earnest
gods you never heard of cut the tree
and shaped the mast — now who will bring it
to the launching shore, the easy? You will never
know your own coordinates,
you are movement and cannot be known
by simple men. By numbers. By any
color said. Wind eye full of rain looks like us.
Nowhere or never or not there. The reckoning
counts the waves on Barges Beach
and adds the beautiful despair of being here.

9 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

I am too alone to stretch the world.
I have to recreate it
new
out of the magma and the sea.

9 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

The organ grinder of the ultimate
runs the monkey of the relative.
We are the street.

9 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

I am impressed by this rising sun I am
later I will cross something with something else
and get a flower or a new hat I might win
a flowery apron from Grobe the butcher
I can wear on my naked thighs into battle
because the sun makes androgynes of us
to wit our shadows *a fierce world*
with dark distortions extruded
onto the earth: they follow us so much for sunlight
nature unity and progress I am not
a pessimist I am fond of potatoes grow in the ground.

10 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

Island manners. Silent at home we
shout in the street. When we do not tell our loves
we light up our eyes with and stare
ardently in the faces of strangers.
We do not answer. An island
is all the waves coming to it from every side
and no going. Once an island, always.

10 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

Maxwell House an old can of it in the cupboard
surprises me by being drinkable, me the big
coffee maven with my Ygarchefe and Sanani
actually like this. And then I remember
(some days I'm as smart as Frank O'Hara)
Monica Polowy from Buffalo serving
Maxwell House in sunlight to Bertram Turetzky
Jerry Rothenberg Kathy Acker and the rest of us
artists-in-agony or whatever they called it
one beautiful windy Sunday in La Jolla
while the eucalyptus trees creaked in the sea-wind
find us find her find her find us
we are wild geese and elegant polaques
at the court of the Roi Soleil, we are maidens
our hips not unfamiliar with fog.
Litotes on their lips they lie and lie.
What kind of heart could a cup of coffee have?

10 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

Suppose the smell of ammonia came
up from the sea instead. And the clean land
glistened like a middle-aged man
dreaming of Egypt. Pharaoh. The least of it
was the weather. Perhaps in the feast of dreams
he understands the Joseph on every wall—
but o for a pure blank brick, an uninscription,
undiscussable, sand. The shine of it
is more than he can withstand. Intelligence
shared with rock. Swallows dive quick
and we will suppose that he opens his mere eyes.
Nothing smells of anything else. His world
has a lovely fog to it today. His heart
remembering nothing rises hopeful as a gull.
Our dreams are our past lives, dummy. Wake.

10 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

in bravery in sun
skeptic ocean over
stepping prudent
towns yellow sea
poppies & beach peas

each floret pale
Buddha preaching
before a purple aureole
telling the sweet
taste of empty

in the niche of light
all colors stored
until in each pebble
agate or blue glass
we see the intimate

face of our own
preoccupation
domestic theology
of Americans
I touch this thing.

11 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

MAN SLEEPING

He had been sleeping for an hour and the ocean changed
he had been dreaming towers and the sand stretched west
trying to engage him in one more continent.

Elephants and equipose. Entrain.

They wanted him to be England, they wanted his France.

They wanted his sleeve full of doves

and his desires to be as delicate as frog spawn
dry in the noon time heat.

He wanted nothing of what they wanted of him,

slept again like the barque *Unparalleled*

ran aground off this shoaly island full of bibles and Dutch
cheese.

Red skulls of it wedged in rocks for weeks

till gulls and weather woke him

reeling from the Carpenter's embrace

—whose tongue was talking so fast in his mouth?—

am I wood or water? Shanks of maple,

hips of seaside roses, he was heaven.

And woke some more. Mostly fire.

Mostly air. Air was first of all

elements, the moving before somethingness.

Mornings before a single man has gone to work—

he woke and woke, a few things clear.

There is no creator, though a Making Spirit

comes from time to time and welcomes us

from inside out into our own world.

Making things as fast as we can think.

In what language written was the book you never opened?

Who was the mother of the door? Clear too

was the interactive web of influence, a day's your motherfather,

night is your child who dreams you further

into the meek eternity of time. The sun is your little dog.

No wonder kings fear to go to sleep and fear their daughters.

He had been sleeping for a couple of hours

and the sun bit the sea. The scorching of what he sees

until the looking is a kind of dark resentment,

Quiet birds bothered beings he couldn't see.

Desperate loyalists counter rebels in the woods.

A rabbit hobbles towards the shade.

No religion on an island.
No one will relinquish money, a revolution
is shattering the mirrors only,
doesn't change the endless empire of Light,
every blood-slimed sliver of the glass still reflects
the intolerable injustice of this one-life universe.
He woke and knew it had to be something else, other,
had to be seed sown in another summer
that we reap here. Or else the meanings
of our mind were only money.
All thought is consolation and an angry man.
He woke late and took a cab to work,
it hurried yellow deep below the bay,
his head hurt with so little sleep,
waking and waking, his whole life an endless
something, carouse, cartouche, his name
held tight in someone's handkerchief, lariat,
the cab crossed the burning plains safe from animals
and reached the northern business district
his eyes were hot with keeping open the boys
tumbled out and left Russ to pay the fare
with his long Pall Mall cigarettes his failed
midnight. He woke and it was insolent
like any island. Druids came hazarding down
from violet schooners perched in lower clouds
—now under Avalon a wall of sea stones
masoned thick with visionary mortar
held back the lilac thickets still blooming
late as June and the tanager therein
gossiped with the young wife passing
and a duck skims down the sea beach.
Daylight forgives you. Stamina
of sleeping men. It takes
all our energy to stay asleep
when there is so much angry waking.
Into this one bottle he squeezed his vital sap
and woke with a strange feeling in his hands
as if someone held them. Pressure
from inside out. Who wakes?
The house on Canapitsit Neck
looks like a fortress outlined against the levant sun
a small or local gloom, bastille

of energies, all beauty locked in fear. He woke
after three hours sure that someone had died,
a lord or kindly one, sun's serf
perhaps or mind's loving-kindness's minion/
Every time you wake a great king dies.

(11 June 93/C)

All the ways we make our letters
tell I have fallen because I am only

and risen because bright here fog bank over the Vineyard
asking.

 If I shape it differently every day
will the ocean alter?

 Will the character I speak
become me? Cufic. Angular. Ogham. Bent.
Bold. Italic. Chancery. Cuneic. Runic. Lantsa.
Light. Can I be light?

 Imitate everyone
because no one—

is that a threat or promise, a primrose
in shadow on the wall by the waterfall?

How can I hold my own against the sea?

By not telling what's on my mind.
By letting it tell the truth in me.

12 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

The sea is warm today, low wind the light amidst it.
Every different day. Determinant
of how a hand moves, an eye remembers.
Men comforted by the noise of their machines.

12 June 1993. Cuttyhunk

A SMALL SET OF VARIATIONS AGAIN ON
LI SHANG-YIN

A lute with —but I don't like
plucked soft sounds such
they hum a little in
side my bones before ceasing to say—

stars on it but I can't see
stars this weather in my eyes
only the tumult of she looks at me
and the whole sky's be
tween us everything regular as sin
sense sun sea, the lute
but I hear nothing

needs
a hand or two a knee to rest on
for all its stars I can't see can't
bother with the music
as if a lute had anything to say

or some star is
as love is armor of a sort
against all possible inferences
just this one piece of wood
—sound or no sound—
hums in your lap subtly complaining.

12 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

(man sleeping, continued)

He woke after four hours with his shirt on inside out
a maiden led him to a fountain or fled him
in the mountains, he drank of whatever he found was flowing,
things come back thirsty from eternity
wake up the day is made of wood
she had to run he slowed to let her disappear
a grove of aspens quivered by the sea
things he was allowed to remember surely
not one of these the greasy red wrappings
on his prayer bundle laughing seabirds
fishermen trying to decode the foggy banks
the mind is ultimately happy and all pleasure
comes from its solitude comes from its embrace
he woke reading the coarse grain of granite
smooth insinuations of agate a dimension
washed up on the beach cacchinations man or bird
for his embrace the polyester multitudes
Nepali boys strutting by the monastery gates
unsmokably damp cigarettes in monsoons
a breath of hill air and a deep drag to get anything
baseball cap with fishy visor costumes
of the self-dissuaded. It is two hundred
years from the Vendée and finally he gets it.
No one ever wins. It is a process of elimi-
nation, all of us used and worn down and cast off
chaff and draff and urinas to build
some Other Body strong and we go out.
Who is the Body all our deaths are buying,
rebel and royalist alike, our black, your white?
He woke after five hours, were they the tops
of fence posts out the window or ancient
monuments up the glacial hill, tips of them
tall on the far slope facing the open sea
the world came from, to be here
to meet him. Is he a bird again,
what kind, where is the book he woke?
He heard a tree fall two hundred miles away
it was his heart linden his folk tree his appetite.
Now things were cooler in him, Egypt further,
deciding against sun glare he knew the fish were there

the ones he wanted, ordered pairs, gods
obscured or youthful powers, knew were there
because he's seen the likes of them
slammed down on jetties gape-mouthed
dead in the quivering air thirty pounds each of them
and a knife in the harbormaster's hand.
Explain the imbrication of their scales, the feint
of color as the sun explored them. Wanting
to eat them in his childhood way,
haddock stew or fried cod, what could be better,
scour the unsuspecting elements for wise animals
not wise to you and eat them. For Wisdom's alkali,
shriek of potassium in dying cells,
if he could sleep long enough he'd understand
the total genome of every species,
the long count. But never why found it fun to kill.
His hands shook with numbers. Was it numbers?
Inside yourself you sleep alone.
He slept in the toaster in the dinghy in the hap
between blue blue rocks on Church's Beach
just before you get to the wild sea poppies
egg yellow in even light he favored.
The smell of freshness in his line-dried shirt
is just another smell. Why choose?
White shoes. A gold cart snarled
and some robins flew away, it's almost sleeping
in him now, shouts of young men
the far-off giggle of island women
at the last end of their slow twilight
mumble in his lips. Patterns.
What could a pattern be but death or sleep?
Glare on pale oak, is he seeing?

(12 June 1993)

WHITE ROSES

Why don't I ever mention
the white roses?
They are there

rarer than red
and seldom
among those others

mostly nestled
pale among those vetch-
leafed pea flowers

thereby made violeter.
White roses
and rocks of most colors

so turned
to look like human
form

a haunch a shoulder
lifted
against the sea

June a blue northeaster
promising fair weather
quiet

among the white roses.

12 June 1993, Cuttyhunk

THE BLUE NORTHEASTER

brought as they promised what they call fine weather. though it is not fine to me, since rain is my religion. This is just atheism, a day with sun in a sky without a hint of commentary. So all words (nice day, fair weather) should be in quotes, the Young Man in me insists. I rebuke him with the obvious —every word has been said before, if it had not been spoken it would not be a word, would not be here to tell the tale.

Now there are men who listen to their bones, and know the noise the mind makes at her endless work of separating organ from organ in the profound dark of our cells, “selves.” These sounds they recognize and speak again, realizing that the inside is far outside also, and no word (in quotes or otherwise) goes long unheard.

The sea is burnished from the rocky beach to Canapitsit Neck —and these precisions also have some meaning, though not as much as the least sound They heard.

A woman in white takes a little dog out of the back of her four-wheeler and carries it awkwardly on her forearms up the hill. It is a heavy little dog. Silence. A robin perches on the car the woman left.

These bulletins from the Infinite Suppose.

Guided away from the adequate, one makes a mess of everything but perfection. I say this to those who like to note the kinship of sanctity and neurosis, yet doubt the prevenience of grace. Spontaneous blessing of the Lama, working years before it's needed. And all the while it is.

The subtle and beautiful Nepalis make excellent customs inspectors and watchmen at the gates of dream. Bribe them with a few Images, and they'll let you wake.

Cross a word out in such a way the word and the line that crosses it out have nothing to do with each other. You meet long-married couples like that.

Thinking, writing? An idea is a boat adrift on the huge sea of language. Anything can befall it, and it can only go where language —some language— goes. Better to study the sea.

Magic of shores. Amazing common shore between idea and language, between actual and possible; how to reach the shore? Nothing makes sense but the shore. Remember it in the mountains, the wind here stirs the strings of the harp. Bring it home, listen and try not to remember.

Swallows are frantic at the little pond. Couples: geese, gulls, rabbits. But a tribe of swallows grazes fast on unseeables just above the water level. They feed on proximity alone. I eat the closeness of you.

13 June 1993, Cuttyhunk
End of Notebook 205,
The Nepali Notebook