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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Where we put the amazement
writing the check for culture
like a man paying his gas bill

paying for the blue light
heart hung on a cold morning—

For this blue light
(see it under the kettle)
is at the end of the old soldier's tunnel
winks too
in the cup
of the notorious northern blue flower
all your loving is towards

and is what is sought
forever
and after

and is what is seeking
there
in the blue of your heart

the gentian you think grows on the top of the world.

23 September 1992

COMME LA LUMIERE EST MIGNONNE AU DEHORS

O the light is so cute out there
where the broken columns wait
their Hoelderlin to describe

o und die Apotheke
um die Ecke
steht offen.
Hope
is nowhere never not.
The cashbox empties itself
and the ape laughs.

Or where else will we put the sun dial?
A monkey running up the hole.
The pole.
In vain tragedy
the King's daughter
 (we all are)
takes her life.

The new Antigone—
there is no end of dying
and all death is an answer to authority
or every one
except the last,

the nature of nature
it is
that takes you down

into the heartland
of the unsatisfying explanation
below.

Being a child is a drunkenness—
teenagers use alcohol to sober up
into the dull world of socio-sexual responsibility.

Untrackably exhilarated

by the sheer differences
I grew,
 every door
open on a magic cavern. Chasm.

It is still this way with me
—all my writing just hasty field notes—

from this great War. *sKar-ma* light of a star.

Homeland on a thousand islands.
Scent of butter, lots of it, melting
to make oil lamp offerings, melting
into the state called "clarified"

—the purohit smiles at the house-hold altar.

Things.
And offerings.

Small jelly jars. Waves curling in three inches high.

In the drugstore around the corner
there is a poster of a woman bathing.
She advertises something for her skin.
Her image explains as much as I can understand
in 1946. How long do we have to remember?

Isn't a memory also impermanent?
Some parts of the state experienced last night their first frost.
To my cold fingertips, the back of my other hand feels like silk.

23 September 1992

THE DAY EIGHT-DEER COMING ON MY BIRTHDAY

Holy, but not very.
Hurried, but not there.

The swans of Ulverston
repronounced
in all the tides of Morecombe Bay.

Where we are sand
someone else
knows how to walk
along our solitude

leaving someone else's
footsteps
where we thought we were alone.

No one knows
the genesis of feelings
but we manipulate desire.

The birds I mean mate for life
and this is my time of swandom

having been born at last
in the fierce channel between Cuttyhunk and Nashawena

where through the groaners and surf clash
you can hear roaring not far

the lions of property protecting the dead.
Eight of them. One for each deer

to be tracked down and killed
until the Departed wakes again

at the bronze gates of the bank.
Morbid recalcitrance to live on the earth.

A priest of some sort moves shells
around on the damp sand smooth
as a table, sure as a juggler his hands.
Quick vanishings into the unknown world.
A bird eats its shadow and flies away.

Call. Three deer left. Holy,
just enough. Power, from the sea.
Salt tricks, alien chemistries
suddenly assimilated. Wake.
Fueled by desire
amplified by the mysterious
Reverberating Furnace of the alchemists
from which new annealed he lifts
every day the day.

24 September 1992

Slipstream through the knot
unfolding, a name for a little age & then a face
that wall he hides behind
the features the blue-eyed mystery

saves him from the crowd
but not for long but not for long
with the river green as an old chianti bottle
& the barges that make him keep thinking My Father My
Father

& all the repetitions, starting with god the Sun itself,
day after day a whole life of those
subtlest & most velvety variations
on a theme never yet declared by the insolent soloist I am.

24 September 1992
my 57th birthday

LUMINOUS MAGNETS

Coma lumbers meninges, detrains
commonly borne meanings, deters.
Wake in another brain with
still the same mind, how.

24 September 1992

THE LAW

Inalterable, like the sunrays
slanting down on an autumn
afternoon out of an unbroken
blue. How does this color
come from that. And all of these
from that one light.

The breaking. That without changing
it divides, and its semblance
passes through the gaiety
of forms. Red
is a church, blue is the people
pouring from the heart

the colorless water of their remembering.
Until everything's invisible again
and we call it by a different name
but no one sleeps.

24 September 1992

THE DETAILED

arrangement
come to beset

the called,
where the preceptor is natural enough for us all.

24 September 1992

A PHASE OF THE PROCESS

Because of the comfrey in the cup the goldenseal the measure
careful and the bright green of the leaves dried fallow now
and stuffed tight in a ball jar and over them poured a meek
trickle of her father's alcohol he suddenly understood the earth.

This is the place of wonder and the house of tomorrow
and the moment we live in is only a trifling fugitive mistake
compared to the solid mile-wide transaction of ecstasy to fall
from the nearparts of the galaxy to constitute our Lawn

he argued and the clockwork of the universe argued with him
in that calm irritating way that chemicals have of always being
so smug about their reactions — as if it was destiny, not just habit—
until he was almost ready to despair. Then the camel lurched,

Egypt appeared over the red hill and his mother knew one more dying.

24 September 1992

GACELA FOR AUTUMN

Friday's measure a bushel of old papers
planted in wet earth and waiting,

a lot of waiting. The one I want to see
seldom comes from the city but when she does

the admiral we've been reading about in the papers
welcomes dawn graciously as a suicide can

and night is always dying, even in winter
we feel her heart beating alongside of our pulses

if we dare to touch our own wrists on such a morning
hearing the crow and the jay, seeing not much.

25 September 1992

They were sure of it because of the way it lay in the arroyo
a house shaped like a river
the snake shaped like a man and the man was running on all
fours
up the glassy sides of the arroyo o
up to the bric-a-brac light toppling shadow-shattered through
red rocks
who can believe o who can believe

I am with you with a sexual interpretation of the language
speech is an intrusion of a caress however tender or not
into the unspeakable hearing
of a man of a woman we are what we hear we are only a sound

nonsensed up from the flat light along the stretch of the river
a thigh of a river the man runs away
the malevolence of the natural order never ceases to startle
the earthquake kneecaps the old men it makes the old women
suddenly give vent to the bitter milk of fear

o who are they who hang out around the brinks of ravines
the dark festering cloud scapes of no the rain never came
but it leered down at you from the roof of the sky hating you
the way everything hates you
you belong to the language and everyone speaks you out loud.

25 September 1992

Remembering the dead deer
hung by the dozens from
Downsville porches
the ceremonies of self-love
hunting
by blue-chinned patriots
at war with things that are alive.

25 September 1992 [from a week or so back]

Something the matter with my mind
with the moon
grinding down to its cellar time

there is no moon she says tonight

there is a wall I will not climb
door I won't open
flower won't smell

It is a bishop in crimson on his throne
gaudy pretender of a lost planet

this all of this
is Atlantis

vanished nowhere but where we are
the crumbling towers of it
clear sometimes
beneath the usually turbid waters
the everyday mind.

Drafty ravages — I see grey, smell wet.
Those ruined cameras, those stone webs.

25 September 1992

