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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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THE HABIT

for M. I.

Everybody has the habit
of being me.
Even the elephant,
even the pretty
yesterday girl
you asked a name for,
the one with tied-back
corn leaf hair
looked as if she'd just
come in from working
her palomino in the paddock,
even she has the habit
of being me.
And you do too.
Which is why Love
works, and her angry
brother Hate can,
we all can see
me in everybody else.
I told you her name
gladly, sadly,
I think it means
the bitterness of God.

20 November 2012

= = = = =

One for the other day

one for tomorrow

parlando,

lightly,

your finger on the fender

imitating some old

nouvelle vague rhythm

lost in your head

your fingers remember,

on and on

Or bla

and bla, it all

turns into music

but what does music

do, what kind of work

do we ask of it

in this country,

does it

herd sheep or walk

beside the blind

or bite a burglar?

Does it even keep

from noxious sleep

the conscientious

meditator?

Now

let's move on
to the marimba—
what kind of tree
died to set it free?

20 November 2012

= = = = =

I don't have to love you anymore
there is a starling for example
working near the feeder,

his concerns (that's one kind of bird
you can tell the sexes apart)
are otherwise from love

and I would too turn
from what I crave\
to what is there, deep unwanted in the world

the undiscussed particulars of things
gears and straps and barrows
the old machinery half gone already

and all the new contrivances not yet come,
among sleek devices I wander from love
world without affect Amen.

20 November 2012

= = = = =

All these trucks
waiting to be me.
Did you think I was flesh?
I am the thought
alone of a machine,
a blurry hologram
with edges you could touch
but wouldn't dare.
So sleep in comfort
your head snug
against the shimmering
outline of my chest
near where a heart would be.

21 November 2012

= = = = =

η βουλη

Break more
talk less
the Bull of Zeus
in the china shop
pawing the clerk's lap
needing her knees
apart, a bad
pun, a child newborn.

*

of Zeus I say
who knew
no better,
 broken wheel spokes
gnawed by possums
 would you believe

me if I showed
the horn of him
holy relic still
with us in these days?

*

the Will of Zeus
the Bull of himself
an Irish pother
a broken rib

he tou Dios boulé

I say it again
in my Yiddish:

what the world wants

of me.

Of you too,

Rivka,

lips half-parted

studying the map

*

Come again?

Caustic soda

leaches lust out,

the greasy robes she wore

to lead him home.

Go to the riverbank,

the edge of things
with me,

to the accented language
and be an alien again—

I never was,
am still not landed
in that kind of country.
Can't do it, can't
ever be here.

21 November 2012

= = = = =

Catch the silence

mid-wing

or let it fall

easy as a shadow

over what you think

then the Unthought

will quietly rule.

22 November 2012

= = = = =

Too much to much
a swerve is commoner
apart these mountains

I see no rock

what you hear
is a market in your ear
screaming women
freshness of fish

you hear Time
like a flag flapping
you have been told
that *fl*- words flutter

so you flee
flatfooted as ever
into the unknown Moraine
the street looks down
from high town ground
Miller Avenue
danger sledding

and even that you wanted

you and your narrow ankles

o but that is actual

only actual

so be *stumm*

sit in a café

a bowl barley soup

doesn't matter knife is dirty

so long the fork she's clean

even on holidays they had to have fun

I watched her spread the air

between her own self

my punishment for looking

was to remember

what is that other

Imagination

Coleridge asked

that isn't just reshuffling

recoloring recombinant memories

children's theater

with cardboard scenes

cardboard women

dueled over by cardboard men

color them as bright as you can

But there is another kind of knife
more like a tree

as we get older it gets longer

pinwheel in a monkey's fist
the wind doesn't care
the colors whirl blur blend

never let me go.

22 November 2012

= = = = =

And you say to the jogger

Jogger stop!

What

if you died right now
heart or lung or some such thing
would you have even now
gotten where you were going?

22.XI.12

GATHERNG THE SENSES

bleak as butter on noman's bread
the willed grass grew

but all around

the split-sensed deity Homo Semisapiens
strewed more and more

until the less of everything
got married in satin weather
and the priest fell down
to worship the ankles of the bride

past any narrative
a knife. Or spoon. Or plate
with bread on it
and yet again

a wonderbus a kiss on ivy
she bit my finger as if to say
anybody round my base is it

we lived so long a time ago
on Wenlock Edge, and Ymir's
chilly lymph crystallized us with dew

or so it sang
and we were suckers for its song

played hide and seek with gospel manners
fried fish in Hoboken
everybody fondling the bride

that vast permission hidden in such slim clothes

or nip a needle
where you need it
the skin skims off
most of the pain
the brain is left
with all the rest

and the little girls in folklore
grow up fast

Red Riding Hood walks by
now the mother of nine

wolf and wolvern man and frow
the flagpole bends
beneath that flimsy symbolism

as if to say
I take thee in
all the ways
that gravel goes

over the Pyrenees
to heathen Spain
wherein Saint James
the Other Christ
set up his school

the west one
on the way to Us
where Celts and seals and seagulls showed the way

into the limitless undoing of the sun

and all the others sauntered to Jerusalem
bloody-fisted with raisin seeds stuck in their teeth

I was a farmer then too
and nothing grew

and so I took the stones that plagued my acres
and built a road with it that passed to the end of the earth

where I live now

disguised as the weather
that worries you day by day
too hot too cold too wind too dim

and I am him
the man or one you think to own
I breathe on your soft neck

and once I had skin too

and a brain like a shout in the street
that other language I could never speak

with apologies
to any possible lexicon
the book that keeps
the meanings of words
woodwise shelved

safe from my reach.

[22.XI.12]

THE ROAD OF TEARS

runs everywhere under
china cups black
burnt-out marshmallows
got your name from the paper
knocked on your door
reverie too close to call
spindrift director's cut
cleave to mild avoirdupois
where all the country is
and why they call it swing

2.

the door was hollow
had a room inside
sit splintery steps
sadly down the dark
the tree was me
or any chemical
bumped along the slot
cybernetic cushioning
big K on jersey
you belong to dim
eyes left desist
lonely people move

3.

Castaways the mordant
principle of diminishing alarm
I was your wolf awhile
my other name of me
short candle long night
snuff out the wick of music
small white bird, no?
road plus sword roadside sign
improvident reality!
eating together a big mistake
mouths meant for adoration
discourse is the thief of mind

4.

crossing over cantilever
can't a lover swallow
one summer's arguments
fender hood and tailgate
capacitative stored abaft
will the silence ever see
woke up and was
any other name a place
cyclothymia neighborhood
a month from winter still
speciated branching off
pelvis hopeful plum

5.

defiled by getting wanted

calculate impurities Leviticus

no wonder he leper

but I was the tree

you rose shape in the carpet

Spanish tinge the broken

mandolin cathouse piano

and time began again

crown I wore in Zwischenland

monks me me sing so

per porrectum canesco

follow the score home

I start to sing.

23 November 2012

RULE BOOK

macramé of syllables

crochets a muffler

too warm until December

mention a woman without letting on

replace any by any other

make it harder but gladder to unpack.

23 November 2012