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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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ENTERING THE CITY

Getting a little closer to beginning is always
a burnt out van along a river
because the Bronx and the rows of spindly houses
house so many — I didn't hear what who said —
analysis is catching up with prophecy
soon I wont be able to be Brooklyn any more
because the long rows of history begin to burn

my prophecy writes itself a burnt-out river
because history is a little closer
to who said what I didn't hear
the long rows of analysis begin to marry
what is closer to catching up with beginning
wont be able to be any kind of island
the spindly house to be begins to burn.

8 April 2003

OTHER ENOUGH TO BE ME

I want to be other than it is
other enough to be me
to be other
before I give up wanting

I want what's accurate
a friend that feeds the future

not to think of absent friends
but Be them when they're here

be them anywhere

to be completely
the uncle of the obvious

to be and be only
in the moment of know

and not in any other?

There is a cure for interest, a cure for relevance.
But no cure for no desire.

I can't get started.
I'm waiting for the return of the repressed
la refoulée

and other trademarks, the
answer everybody else knows
to a question only I know

and then the angel said:
Robèrt, your world is constellated
into question and answer,
why is that?
I don't know another way to know what I know.

But knowing isn't knowing as such
is it, isn't real knowing a kind of water,
isn't knowing a force that makes or does or flows,

but that is what *repression* is: an unknown knowing
that makes or does, that makes us do.

8 April 2003

(PRAYERS TO ANIMALS)

Enduring not endearing, **rhinoceros**,
you stand your ground. Dürer
made you famous in art history,
which is our only history, the look
in your eye, the unfathomable
Jurassic inside a live mammal,
you mystery. Instruct me
how to bear my contradictions.

Lycanth, a word like that, not
a man and not a wolf, a hope
of being both, my childhood plan
to write a book at Kierkegaard
called Both/And, against choosing.
What one desires is choice enough,
lycanthrope, you flower of the moon.
you blue floweretted paradox,
once too when you were young
you reached out into the sky and
a star burned your hand. Teach me
to bear the beauty of my wound.

9 April 2003

AMMONIA

How things know themselves
far off,
we're walking in a mirror,
we smell ammonia,
we think clean, we think Egypt.

Everybody remembers just enough
to confuse them.

What is this clarity
in which love's hectic confusions
are suddenly trapped,
deer in headlights,

a man's whole life of feeling
caught in a figure of speech —

no garter on that pale thigh
he works so hard to slip it off —

from here to mind
one endless leap.

9 April 2003

VIEUX JUKE

(Getting at) least most of it mine
the way (you look at me)
I can't help (running away)
(from you) hey lady you're
(mine) hello hello (yourself)
nobody's fool (everybody's fondle).

10 April 2003

FORGOTTEN AMPLITUDES

inside the quartet
just one of them
enough to interview
low-waited woman
we watch again
the oddly resilient
statue of Saddam
incline like an inchworm
off its pedestal
and again
the man of blood
lurches over his people
what do you hear
that in the music Moses
weeping in the desert
no end to Passover
the savage springtime
lasts forever
the television is
the flames we study
in the domestic heart
sand in the hourglass
sound by sound
fascinating falling
o that man
with one white hand
that blunt Negro
with a forceps
plucking out

the unborn
revenue of lust
I picture thee
among the women
abolishing distances
with a caress
and with the same
soft hardware
abolishing sameness
by penetration
she hid herself
in the zenana
where the sunrays
clatter on the marble floors
she sweeps exhausted
down the wall
another channel
carries the information
a river called Tiger
divided with the sea
keep watching
till you find me
among the images
for surely I am nowhere else.

10 April 2003

SOURCING

What could it be
that listens to me
out of the oven

sometimes I hear
the sound of it hearing
me, a *dull two-way sound*

like a dog on the roof
or a cloud floated
finally away over the hill

10 April 2003

RELUCTANT, THE DANCERS

Dance is miracle
but who does it,

the dance a miracle
but no one does it,

daring to have
something to say

mapping by images
uneasy relationships

between the obedience
proper to subjects

and the independence of mind
on which creative society depends,

sir, to wake up angry
at the government

no surprise
the dull resentment

at homeland rhetoric
all government is repression

that's what govern means

commanding enslaving

meant to keep you working
for the hidden few

who govern the government
only the rhetorics of each

the color of police,
distinguish them

only the pretty flags.

11 April 2003

IN SAINT MARK'S

bookshop Lee Ann Brown and her new
baby Miranda Lee maybe. Blue eyes.
Her husband Tony Torn.
Then Sharon Mesmer
by the sale books yes yes,
we talk so much is it a blasphemy
(yes yes) among so many books.
The main stack is Theory.

What is meet
is met.
What is moot
meets.

The silence inside each of us
comes out all curlicues of word,
one wonders what word
's enough to speak
when all around
nothing is but sort of singing.

Castaways meet in bookshops,
I examine fetishist photos in an album
I look in vain for Vaneigem's book about pleasure
I buy Bruno Szulc even though the book says Schultz
too late as we're leaving I see a new Harry Mathews
we walk up the street wondering about Lee Ann
and immediately see her again waving at us
with her husband Tony Torn from the window

of a sushi palace a mite below ground and I can't see the baby
she was nursing when we first came into the bookstore,

love takes so many forms.

Mosul is fallen. Tikrit resists

long enough for the eleven o'clock news.

In the middle of the heart

the 10th letter of the alphabet lights up Ninth Street,

or no, the letter that means 10,

the complete series, the holy tetraktys in one single glint of light,

hot oil in seed, hot sperm in

search of always a new world,

the letter that takes the form of a white drop

the shape of a tear the size of a pearl

in the necklace of pearls you'd give to a newborn baby girl

instead of a christening cup, instead of a check,

the pearl. I can only tell what happened

ever. Anything that happens is really a miracle,

I'm trying to get it all down right for a change,

wood shavings all over my thigh

from a hotel room pencil I sharpened to write

two words down in my notebook New York

because it is where I am and the pencil too

thin for my ordinary hand in a hotel on Gold Street

convenient for business travelers, I have no business

but one another, trying to write it down

is also a species of opera you wake up hearing it

dying down the alleyway you thought was sleep.

11 April 2003 New York

GOLD STREET EXANIMATIONS

Who am I and who is asking?
Familiar questions in the old city leading
the soul out of the apparent body and
a man I shared a room with was
condemned to death, a quiet tapping
on the door and that was it,
they had come for him, a simple sound
and he was gone. Later they brought me
his cadaver and laid it tender on his bed.
Or was it me, after all, hammered out
between prophecy and dread? Dreams,
as if we didn't have enough trouble as it is.
Trying to explore along the demon's track
out of anxiety to those gentian pastures
lofty in cloud light and rest there, mooing,
Mommy, I need a mountain, art
is the mother of us all but who's the father?
And all these other revelers, consumers,
non-producers, deceivers, these all
are only artists between jobs, between lives
waiting for the next inspiration
which if I remember Latin means the
next breathing in, when each one takes
breath again, a life, a candle someone came
and lit again while we were sleeping,
the prayer I say that's better than yours.

12 April 2003

SHOWERS

Hold hands
with the rain
it wants you
all over

serenity
of actual process
even a garbage truck
jurassicking through the dawn
is part of itself,
therefore smooth,
organic, my heart
beating with desire
to take up and fondle
everything you left
behind or almost
without noticing it
set aside
a million years
for me to find

to make me
part of myself
shout in the street
and be kind.

12 April 2003

Tolerate the noise
of stones asleep in the rain

12 IV 03

CODE OF INTERPRETATION

Taxi lights
what it means
when they're on
and how
'hail' a cab, lift
your lissome arm
the anxiety
around your eyes
stops traffic.

12 April 2003
(the woman on Second Avenue)

In a world of ceaseless fantasy
what do *you* want?

In a world of ceaseless responses
to other people's fantasies projected outward
as politics and culture and behavior
what do you want?

Those who work hard to become artists (rather than to make art) are doomed to perpetual unhappiness, since to be an artist (in their sense) is *to exist as such in the minds of other people..* Depending on the minds of others for the validity of one's own existence! What nightmare could be worse? Make art out of your life, make art your life, let the world catch up. It always does.

12 April 2003

New York

WHAT A DAY IS (HEMEROLOGY)

The day is recycled dreams.

In dreamless sleep the lots are cast
but we know nothing of those gamblers
whose wagers we live out
first in dream and later gorgeously by day.

The natural wakefulness of morning
is recalcitrant. Go slow with me, lady,
we say to the oncoming traffic of the day,
I just woke up, give me a break.

But the sun rolls down the hill at me
just as fast as if I hadn't prayed,
and juniper still tells its blue beads.

But very early, before things taste like themselves
and everything could be anything again
a rim of light around the curtain could come
fresh from some other comedy, other
actors stuffing their scripts inside their clothes
in case they're on the stage so long, so long
they forget what they're supposed to say,

just like me, now, sitting nervous, looking
at the telephone with a forbidding glare,
hearing behind the scenery some more
machinery being trundled onto the world.

13 April 2003

New York

