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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## LOCAL MIND

thinking about Victor Erice's *El Sol del Membrillo*.

*for Russell.*

Being willing to change  
One thing is another  
Look at it a long time  
That's all the local mind can do  
With you remember  
And be me

An adequate philosophy  
Of cinema, ¡mira!  
That it all moves  
And you hold still

To take the motion out  
And analyze the obvious  
Until you see it  
And in the same instant  
Seeing (seeing it)  
You're nobody again  
The pure good way you were  
The night before you were you

2.

There is no darkness only  
The coquetry of light  
Nobody ever loves you as much as you require  
That is the rule

It has you think  
To be the right way  
The light comes by you  
Not raining not remembering too much

3.

You fall asleep as you watch  
The way a fruit ripens then gets sweet then rots  
Then something else more or less happens  
You wake up you make something  
And where is the yellow thing you once beheld?

11 July 2002

*A WEDDING TRIPTYCH FOR JENNIFER AXINN,  
WHO MAKES THE PUREST TRIPTYCHS OF OUR DAY*

*For the groom: an assignment*

My friend Brigitte  
was born on a hillside  
under the church of Santa Margherita  
among the vineyards  
where a famous wine is grown

we walked around the church  
together in the night  
looking down at the valley  
and hearing the wind  
walk with us among the grape leaves

but I never went into the church  
I guess I was tired of churches  
so I don't know anything  
about that saint,  
who she was or what she did  
or why they built the old church  
falling to pieces in plaster and white.

So that's up to you.  
You have to go into the church.  
You have to go in daylight and in dark  
and look around and spread your arms  
and hold the emptiness of space the  
fullness of wood and stone and bronze,

you have to ask the darkness who she is,

learn which of all the saints, what her story is,  
you have to hold her story in your arms  
and be astonished, you have to understand  
this is the hugest woman in the world  
big as the sky and holding everything  
and you hold her

and you have to take care of her  
as if she were a tiny newborn baby fox.

*For the bride: a history*

When girls are little they play in the woods  
if they're lucky enough to have woods to play in

and in the woods they find a stone or two  
if the woods are lucky enough to have a stone

the stones are likely to come in different sizes  
and the little girl is likely to pick a big one

a boulder really or what the books call a *xenolith*  
a rock that is a stranger coming from a far place

just like herself  
brought from god knows where by time or ice

and nobody knows where anybody comes from

and why she's here, that's hard to figure out,

but she is here and the rock is here  
and the rock is big and doesn't move any more.

Wherever it came from it's here now and forever,  
big and hard, she stands on it she sits on it

she hides under the outswelling curve of it  
on sunny days and holds its shade,

mixes its shadow with her own.  
A stone supports and shelters her at once.

How can something be over and under,  
a house and a dance floor, a book and a voice?

Because every rock has a voice.  
And a good man is a stone who came to life.

*For the couple, a gilded finial*

If you lived in a tent it would come to a point  
If you lived in a cave it would lead somewhere  
If you lived in a house it would fit in the sky

On top of everything there's something else  
Underneath anything is what you meant in the first place  
The first place is the last place you finally find.

*With affection and admiration, these words to bless you both. Robert Kelly, July 2002*

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To cast something at the feet  
is to wake up a religion  
from its sleep inside a stone

it comes out like a greenback  
hummingbird it annoys the flower  
productively, small as it is

it is a stream gushing over a weir  
or turning a turbine  
it is a seagull alone in the sky

11 July 2002

## SOME RESPONSIBILITIES

I will not think about the other  
just this, the responsible  
inlet in a savage coast  
it wants to believe in itself  
the way things do  
not as an other but as a self  
the way a metamorphic rock  
personally arrives

a person then  
articles with formulas  
namable but not sayable  
just like you.

2.

Lick the stamp  
no more they  
stick themselves  
to what you say  
send or get

the old  
almost distinguished  
thing a  
paper in your hand

2b.

that sense of what is to be done  
with a loose label  
remember the old ones  
with red edges and ink  
would claim the middle  
inscribing  
at the center of things  
a name, framed

the last of all our  
arts identity.

3.

so leaves one  
to that messy feeling  
they call thinking

where rules at best  
direct the fervent  
traffic of the heart

neat blacktop  
parking lots with  
spaces marked

vague in white against  
the permanent continuum  
dark down below

3b.

so that kind of weather  
my prince so sleep  
snug as you can or  
dawn will make you

rainless morning and an army  
changed into trees  
so many enemies  
asleep around you

green or your dreams  
I dream of you again  
in and out the doors I go  
and you see me I don't  
see you you are  
a little boy  
all the toys you bring  
I give you

you watch me change  
inside all the giving  
something known  
held clear  
as if we belonged  
and a process needs us  
unimaginable temperature  
when a thing just is  
you are my son.

4.

but that's another story  
not another's  
the centuries of calm

the folded stepladder leaning against the shed  
represents the power of historians to transform experience  
the dead branch fallen from the living linden  
symbolizes arrogance in mathematical reasoning  
the slats of wood set out to dry on the oil tank top  
express the triumph of time over consciousness  
hornets build their nests in the tool shed door  
ponder with me the absence of the personal

as if I were you  
child again and no one died  
pour this vessel  
into that  
the contents hardly  
matter the flash  
is all, the gush  
from mouth to mouth

into the flask of necessity  
pour the wine of identity

put this bottle into that  
until nobody's home  
it's almost now.

12 July 2002



to violate the precincts  
charted for my heart to keep  
a red song in a green hour  
at last formally investigate

that's all, that's poetry  
that's what I was born  
to break, remake, insist upon

like a crabby young wife making a scene in the supermarket.

12 July 2002

## **POETRY**

A natural thing?  
Only investigated.

The rest is foam  
cute and even  
tingling round the hocks of bathers

rusty skinnydippers in the dark of moon.

12 July 2002

SIXTY

There is a secret here  
locked in hexagesimals.

Babylon the circle and the sun.  
But that was then.

What happens now's a shocking thing  
an unpredicted liberty —

all your old fussy gravitas  
is still there but right beside it

a gorgeous new kind of responsibility  
such that you don't care,

Duncan lived here, people love you,  
all your talk won't hold back the dawn

but suddenly it doesn't matter  
things spill themselves from glasses

from rivers from mouths  
it's all a chemical you understand

and all you have to do is listen  
it forms itself under your hands

the way rocks in fact are relatives of air  
or a balanced stone just the bottom of the sky.

13 July 2002

*for George's sixtieth birthday: the next day*