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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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PERSONAL

Tired of old neckties
the closet puts an ad in the paper:
Single Dark Bisexual Closet
seeking surprises. If you're weird,
small, clean and don't smell too bad
come on over and turn my knob.
I've got a place for you in my heart—
You know who you are.
No pets. No polyesters.

28 August 2002

A BRIEF BOTANIC GARDEN

Knowing is other.

The full train

lurches through clover

spills seeds from elsewhere,

native nowhere

they germinate

along our track.

We leave the road behind us.

Track, on the track.

Numbers go by

and we trust them,

weird wheats.

Counting things

we work back to origins.

Grovelling. It is the middle,

we come from middle.

Find the center

of the landmass a million

years ago and it is there.

There as a dead wolf

lying by a dead man.

I think you are Armenia but who knows?

28 August 2002

THE ANSWER

Such that the second sentence
replaces the first. Forever lost
it lingers (mama, mama)
in the cry of the mind.

Wordlessly accurate you
fucking just know.
But does this knowing
do you any good?

Yeast infection
barnacles on your bottom
a typhoon walking up the sea.
Hopeless, the information

you need was lost with
Atlantis. Find one
find the other. Hopeless
but not impossible.

As it is
a razor with no beard
a limestone wall
with no moonshine.

28 August 2002

TRISTIA

Time is your only enemy
and time your only weapon against it.

28 August 2002

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Tell me simple: what should they know?
These children, almost people, how
to help them learn what you think they should.
What do you think? How can we teach?
Why should school be different from the world?
Does telling them do any good? What
if the classroom were just any room
and had no teacher, just a lucid absence
where the daylight lands through big windows.
Sunlight, a room full of tools, instruments,
measures, books, bibles, pencils,
keyboards, horns, flowers, wheels
and live jaguars pacing in the halls?

28 August 2002

the rain is mostly leaves
the lisp I hear
on this holiday of water
finally I love it
rain I love you you are my lady
my signal my kingdom
I am always ready for you

soft as you are this morning
kissing the maple leaves outside
to make me jealous
it's just like you I love you for it

for your music only skin can understand

29 August 2002

The rain remembers.

It is not necessary
to turn your body inside out.

The decoy on the windowsill
brings down a flock of angels
the kind who read the papers.

Or become newspapers
flopping white along the streets
tomorrow night.

But the news is always old
by the time they get it
and newspapers themselves
are weary things, nostalgic
souvenirs of some belle époque
when the word stood still.

The news is always old.

But angels are eternal,
which is a kind of excuse,
a slight irrelevancy
allowed in their timeless beauty,
a hint of classicism
about their urgent whispers.

29 August 2002

PESSOA

I if anybody am Pessoa.
But I have silenced
the names of all my persons,

secret heteronyms.

Who wrote what.

I left their poems to
sort themselves out.

Trusting you, always you.

See, I always knew
I could be all of them, all
my voices, let all of them
say all their different poetries,
because I trusted you.

Always you. I knew
somewhere and some day
you would figure all of me out,
hear the words tossed out
from all my mouths,
sort them, hear them, and know.

I knew you would know.
Always you, always know.
You know who I am

of all the people in the world

you understand. In your own

sweet time you speak

all the names of me.

And all I am is thanks to you.

29 August 2002

Reading Neoplatonists at midnight

is just getting ready for trouble.

The fine, the mind,

the *away from here...*

They find the middle of the moment.

An exaltation of the secret

for whose sake men fight in front of bars

that have just closed, there is an Idea

hidden in action they think

it takes action to disclose.

Revelation must always be a kind of pain.

29 August 2002

THEOLOGY

Slag glass, blue green, a chunk
broken from the bottom of the crucible.

I am so depressed, I want to call you
on a sea shell, I want to reach out
with no plan, fingers with no pen.
Let the pores of my skin be code
you know how to read with yours.

But things swing us out of reach.
There's only my shadow, that furtive
church that runs beside us,
where we can sometimes meet,
overlap, praying to the same god.

29 August 2002

CRIVELLI

Nothing empty. Art
inscribes
and no space is spared.

The sky is full of birds,
angels, a golden
vortex from which a shining
beam comes down.

The vortex is the Father.
The lightbeam is the Sun
entering his mother.
Carlo Crivelli is the Holy Ghost
remembering this onto the panel
color by color till we finally exist.

29 August 2002

(thinking of the painting he has labeled *Libertas Ecclesiastica*)

It is what you do with it later
that matters. Where it goes
and how you tremble when you put it away
in the old china closet your mother told you
was there to be looked at and seldom seen
and seldomer brought out to use, life
is like that, we sit in a tool room
and we are tools, so rarely do we deploy
all the feeble multitudes we are.
Our skills. Did your mother say all that?
No, I put it together later, out of winter,
out of what girls said to me in bed or after,
out of a dying priest and a burning house
and a fox who crossed the road and paused
to look at me as if I were there. And suddenly
I really was. That moment opened a door,
one that's always there. A real door
has nothing to do with time. Someday
when I finish putting all the things away
I will go in and be where I'm supposed to be,
another house, another mother,
and I will be master of another question.

30 August 2002

Just stay with the little

thing there is
the feel of wetness
could be dew

sun just over the trees
purr of a car
on the lonely highway
Sabbath morning

going far
but being here now
so many miracles
water pistol running shoe

Once I thought
there was a mountain
I, a kid who needed
a ruler to draw a straight line

a pen to write a word down
a coat to go out walking /outside
yet I think there really
was a mountain and it stays

there rough beyond the small
certainties of scissors,
sometimes the simplest
words reverberate

strangely you hear them
and that echo is
the mountain's answer
unimaginably close.

31 August 2002

THE CRAFT

Do not despair
hope comes too soon
the princess
buried in the alphabet

move with only
moderate pain through
thorns through flame
and wake her with your kiss

pronouncing this.
She whom you summon
from the sleep of words
into briefest form

will set you free
and your name also
will be murmured
among streets and beehives.

31 August 2002

AUTHORITY

Desire is the authority/

The bell that tells the town

it doesn't want to understand

do this do this for me

do this thing to me let me

do this to you

these things

these powers of the lower sky

lord it over

one another

we said what we wanted and they did

and we were masters of each other

the situation is a small river

drives a creaking mill wheel where?

in the oldest town.

Desire is so powerful because it is never original.

everything you want has been wanted so long

before you got here to want it

always

desire is already there
built into the world

to specify ourselves
in the action. The authority.

To desire and say what you desire.
No one can sleep till they give you what you want.

31 August 2002