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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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Oh the lost ones
the underground ones
across the street ones
faces in the hot spotlight of memory
the brain’s a stage
and they all strut across it,
the missing ones,
glowing mug shots banked in memory
of how she moved, how he
turned from the keyboard and got up
shy genius smile at the brink of never.

4 September 2012

_in mem. Franz Kamin_
Daylight happened as I looked the other way —
let the web receive my alternate identities,
the Pessoa people who jump around in me
taking turns shouting through my lips —

how can I make you know my lips
my wet little curses endearments
obvious lecheries waiting for wet answers
because everyone is always incomplete

and then a new one comes to empty me
and find himself with fresh identity —
speakwise, and we are spokes in one mortal wheel.

4 September 2012
It gets sentimental out there
where the fallen tree attracts
shy woodland travelers
not quite ready to make love —
each thinking about teatime or tiffin
and all the nearby birds disturbed.
To rescue me by randomness alone!
To believe all mute animals!
To watch them get up and walk
companionably away not even touching!
To accept the oracle of anything!

4 September 2012
A feather left from falling —
let the air for once be pure

when they be ought of bus
who hurry home —
what was that
you were speaking?
I was coughing, it was morning, nervous,
book dust fatal to inhale,
stretch your legs towards the birdbath
and hope to know the difference —
but wait, don’t moral me, that
phrase you opened with, can’t be English,
who are you and who are you hearing?

A woman in Paris pressed
against me in a crowded bus
I tried to understand the grid
of streets, the going, the way
it feels another city
sometimes always the same.
Always a corner to stand baffled on.
And where should I get off?
And how to do that, pull a cord,
cry out, ask for help,
but in what language?
A touching story but un peu cliché.

There is nothing moving in the underbrush.
And I’m afraid of it.

4 September 2012
I don’t think you know
how nervous I am.
I don’t think anybody does.
I laugh and wisecrack
but so what. The terrible
apartness screams inside
and it comes out funny.
What if I just shut up
and stood there looking at you
trying to hear you are.

4 September 2012
Are there times the voice inhabits
clock of her body
ratcheting always towards noon
when iron birds are taught to sing

soon the world will know itself away
and who will you be then, Marigold?

Forget me. All I ever was
is a mouth to bite you, fierce
but never swallow you down.

4 September 2012 [first text in Shafer House]
The important thing is to count numbers
over your breath and under your skin
to find out where the ape is creeping in
or where the old serpent hid his rattles —
evolution! What a dance they do begin
demons of anxiety and proof
run circles around the silly priests and nuns
who spend their lives deciding what’s a sin.
And nothing is! It’s all rain and wind and sun,
it’s born before me and will never die.
So that’s what counting’s for — to go places
where you and I will never fly.

4 September 2012
HOME TRUTHS

Ocean rules it.
It can’t be otherwise
it is the biggest thing,
    our master.
Whom Jove by his vague sky
and intermittent fulgurations sought to tame
and never will,
    ocean is what most we are.
All we are a bunch of islands floating through the sky.

*

The rose of Sharon
blossoms for months
on the berm before our house
a yard from the road
it loves it there
came here from far away
a long time ago,
loves the roadside, thrives on traffic.
Gifts to passersby.

*
There are fashions in exile,
every socio-economic order
breeds its own escapees —
only a limited number of ways
to escape from any of this.
Or every this has its own that.
The cock crows at dawn.
Getting out of the System is part of the System.
There is no time outside time.

*

Trying to avoid writing about desires
he wrote about opinions instead,
politics and history and all the fraudulent explanations
of how desire rules the animal.
Opinions are just the lusts of the brain.
Better keep the mind on that girl standing there
who spared Yeats one more dreary Senate speech.

5 September 2012
My speech is rusty, an iron band around my thinking. Everything I see or think about needs to have something about it. Charliehorse logic, a spatter of loose opinions. I want instead to write from ignorance and on my knees.

5 September 2012
APOLOGIA

I’ve told the truth about myself  
so many times it turned into lies.

No words can unspeak what they simply see

the truth of my heart,
the thing that hurts me:
I’m never doing enough.
I’ve never done enough.

*

School is school, no matter what side of the desk you’re on.

*

Once I thought I could (like some fabled anybody) live for pleasure. Did I disguise pleasure as obligation, destiny, work, to let myself do what I want? *Is this what I want?* is what everyone should ask every morning. And add: Who wanted this?

*

It takes forever to find out what I mean.
A Writer’s Life:

too many confessions,
too few sins.

5 September 2012
Lobos missed
the way today
the feel of things

meant not wolves, means seals,

wolf of the sea, canid they are,
barking, far off in the mist

trying to open the word,

trying to be far.

And one came up and swam beside her
in natural measure,

two sleek people

in water worship

joined in quick knowledge,

left to be.

Leave me alone, we used to say,
meaning not what the words do
but another thing,

stop doing it to me

whatever it was, language usually,

that thief of solo,
we didn’t mean to be alone
or always do.

2.
So in the mist
    is politics, Janacek’s music
played by Rudolf down the road,
I remember the feel of it but not the sound,

the missed,
    the things we let
language get away with,

    and it’s not even away,
it’s here, in me, the mist,
the things we let it do,

and as you know from meeting crazy persons
language never leaves anyone alone.

6 September 2012
Make me sicker make me better
all this summer you’ve been on my mind
or I’ve been after you, cool day with mist,

the day will come, we say,
as one who says it never will.
Any more than when we
kill time. It won’t stay dead.

It will not pass. It is here to stay.
I am in the middle of what it means.
Lawnmower a few scattered leaves on the lawn.

Not revulsion, not a photo
in the paper we turn away from,
tattered carcass or glib politico,
something instead that turns
away from us, as if we
were too bright for it to look at
or it were shy of our nonstop velleity
the will in us to want,
the want that stands in for will,
shy about terrible demand.
For men are screaming with desires all day long.

6 September 2012
Human body blocks wifi transmission —
try it at home and see
where all the energies suddenly
blocked from your smart TV must go —
in you, embedded now, alive but never seen —
the ghosts in your very own machine.
They are there, moving sly among all the things
you really have seen and forgotten,
the happy few you have
actually remembered,
you’re alive with them now, you zoo.
Finding once or many how
the fullest elegance
fondles you across the street —
nothing is far!

To hear the well-beloved tree
means amiable lunacy —
we reflect back to the dark world
the light that beauty shines on us.

And so we need to move around
never waiting for what comes by itself
to those whose minds are busy somewhere else —
and leave the business to our legs, those wise aesthetes.

6 September 2012