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Not sure to do or not do
praise God I am permitted to
have fun along the away

with the material words
we gave us. The only matter.

A word is the smell of an animal
passing close in the night.

The sense they make of me.

1 July 2008
Outside a quarter hour or more
before the sense to look up at the sky
where a communiqué of interesting small clouds
shouldering close together hardly moved
and the new sun tucked in them over the hill
like a parenthesis making a hard thing clear.

1 July 2008
Robert Kelly
THE JEWELED NET OF INDRA

1.
Lattices are interesting. They are the girls of carpentry, a dance of openings, a shimmer of compossibles, a sheet of shadows. Trellises and lattices and gauze, shimmer of far-off cities deep below the back porch.

2.
You lattice me on your veranda
I choose the disappearances
there’s always some wood left
to hide your eyes. To dream connection,

discontinuity built in: a flag
with no middle, hence flag of freedom.
The ruly shape that Nothingness
puts on so we can see Her.
3.
Steel has one too. Steel and such. All metalwork is latticey, a glimpse inside. See your way into steel: a ball-bearing smooth but just look in: some children riding to the country with their dad. Mother in backseat of course knitting. Inside a copper coin the army of the Third Republic advances to battle, brave and frightened, the Rhine not far. Inside my gold ring a sober population tends fields of golden barley in the sun. Each hand does its own work—that is the point. A lattice is nothing, but with connections. And getting married to something like silver. The marriage of emptiness with mind. Sometimes with a massy turquoise set therein and sometimes just outside.
THINKING

1. Stop thinking and begin. When the pen runs out of ink then it will also have been thought.

2. Thinking is improvisation, spin craft, excuse. If someone didn’t blame us we’d never think at all.

3. Children who get blamed all the time become criminals or philosophers, those lawyers of the soul, those thugs of mind.

4. Thinking is the greatest of our evasions. Language helps to overcome it. Unless the word takes us by the hand and we let it lead us we will die in the rational wilderness. A desert where dying men think things have meaning and they linger entranced by the shadows of what the already dead men said.
5.
A word is vector, nurse or muse,
a word spirits us from thought,
from reason to guesswork, from guess
to jouissance, a word is wet,
a word is what you get to drink.

1 July 2008
Waiting for the word to take effect
release the pain a wing
an arm a hand a thumb to hold a feather
straight and drag the name, you,
up through the mud of my mind.

The birds have already begun their remarks
and even the sky is getting some idea.
The pain we read as blue
wakes it, and I suppose it means me.

1 July 2008
A little air
walks into the room
and says why
aren’t you out here
with me?
I have no answer
but to say but now
you are here
inside with me,
a sleepless air
a pain without excuses.
Yet you have come
so far to be here
where I have always been
maybe even waiting
and maybe for you
to come from all
the tireless traveling
you do to be here
now? Is it possible
that here is moving too?

1 July 2008
ADVENTURE

I like adventure stories only when you go to it it doesn’t come to you.

Anything that comes is terror, the White Guest at the door. Midnight is not required. Even the sun casts a shadow at you. A quiet arrow.

1 July 2008
When I thought I was finished
with beginning I began.
The light was what I needed
the dark did its job too

and I baffled my dozen enemies
with the same behavior
I used to trick myself
till I was a most successful failure

and everybody knew my name.

2 July 2008
VOCATION

Have I lost what I meant to say?
But not what I was meant to say,
words can be good listeners
and I wrote them down.

Some pain made me whimper
but the whimper came out changed,
love made me praise out loud
but out came something soberer and hard—

that’s why they call us priests,
we serve something in some capacity;
in a dark prison we stand, passing
from hands that give us to hands

that take substances that might be food.

2 July 2008
But why do things hurt. Or the habit of breaking lasts. Why isn’t it always just what it is until it isn’t anymore? Because what it is, is just this losing, this breaking away at the edge, this faltering inside. Are we just along for the ride?

3 July 2008
BERGMILCH

A phone call. We discussed that mineral the Germans call moon-milk, always wet when you find it. And white. And wherever ferns grow in the mountains you’ll find my mouth there, busy discovering one more name for you, saying whatever comes into my mind. They call it milk of mountains too so when you call I want to answer the way a lover speaks the other lover’s common name so softly against the other lover’s skin. With feeling. On the phone we remember feeling. White and wet and far, right here in that very rock. Droitci as they say in the northern plains. We hear the network buzz as we begin, time to wrap, takes so long to say so long and there is no language that does it right. We hang up, each supposing each has touched something in the dark.

3 July 2008
Caught with a stolen calendar
the desperado leapt
from a high rock
into a river where there is no time.

4 July 2008
Why would they be close to me?
Morning waits a birthing
they call it now, giving to the light
or giving light a little name.
I saw her as she walked away
as she rode on a motorcycle out the door
silent up the broken road.

4 July 2008
Let anybody say the things that has to
or another man his box held on his head
neat as the pediments or what are they
balanced on the giant ladies
in California on the hill above the sea
the exposition park the room
I live in is a thousand miles.

They built the women out of staff I think
plaster over lath I think the latticework of mind
projected in the sky to hold an empty box
what could be the better offering to the god
than an empty head for her to fill
from up there where the empty brightness is
that all falls down and laughs in us?

5 July 2008
VOCATION (2)

Accord to me Assyrian presumptions
oiled beard and patchouli’d concubines
and temple columns so high can’t see the top
so broad it takes a day to walk around one.

Grant me sheer circumference and wine,
storehouses full of what I do not want
and will never use, stone granaries congested
with barleycorns unknown on earth,
star wheat and lascivious spelt. Grant me
universal excess of sheer thing.

Then I’ll be content to be your humble man,
a modest braggart on an elsewise silent earth.

5 July 2008
I want to rule the world.
But who are you?

5.VII.08
Saturday and every Saturday begins in me
a critique of the American republic
or republican America. The shabby, the loss.
The economy jerrybuilt on endless war.
The phony war on drugs, the realish war
in unknown Orients – men die in both.
I wish it were Sunday and I could stop.

5 July 2008
Could there be so late
one word left to say
*Abendmahl* and sad Apostles,

potatoes fall out of the air
and sparrows bathe in dust—
there is no answer
till the question ripens
like the smell of someone
who has not washed today.

Miracle is what they meant: the poor
given food, the sick
made better.
The plain kindness of the facts.

Who do people say you are?
Doorman of an infinite hotel
dressed in blood and tears
not all of them my own.

5 July 2008
There is prayer after all,
green stems of bamboo
up in pebbles of the pond
stand from clean water.

5.VII.08