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Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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Cars of telling  
moon of release  
who asked a little  
and got less

phones of feeling  
five easy minutes  
and no one sleeps  
so earnest

the pilgrims  
who've lost their map  
no Santiago no  
Plimoth rock

cars of telling  
take you  
nowhere in noon light  
be happy

enough to stay  
restless to be  
the other place you  
the blessings of.

5 December 2006

## ASHERA

Quick turn around the wood  
post holds the hill up

*whatever we really are  
hangs from the sky*

jabber of dancers' feet  
why isn't anybody talking  
they all are but their speech  
is ceiling and door their  
language is courtyard and well

and a dog, language is a dog  
isn't it, you're drunk,  
we are language's dog,  
that's how it goes,  
we belong to Phoenician,  
this conversation in the market place  
this Lacan in sportsjacket holding forth in the lecture hall—  
this is just us wagging our tail  
to make language love us,

drink it, goed along with as  
mulch of it as you ban care.

Oh. The hill is a fall of heaven.  
Her stick  
stuck up.  
Holds us together  
word by word.

Inside the ruined dance hall  
twitching ballerinas movelessly twirl  
lost in this master that's found them at last.

5 December 2006

## NEXUS

To be cut off from the world  
that feeds me  
and that I feed,  
                                  the food  
my love transactions  
and these words the only food.

\*

Bulletin: the poet is a fetus hearing distant rumors of a world all round him, rumors that feed directly into his blood and make him feel and make him think. From which he grows and moves.

Bulletin: The world is a fetus inside the poet. It grows inside him and disturbs the once gracile form of how he moves and rests. Swollen with world, he agonizes to express it, never himself, just express the world. Express means 'squeeze out.' Childbirth all day long. His hour has come upon him.

\*

To be inside the world inside you.  
Loving = leaving, loss = lore.

Everything spoken is a lost cause.

And on the winning side: a walk in moonlight.

6 December 2006



makes me see her as she is,

vicious burden of the actual,  
all my life I've loved the evidence

now here I am, trapped in my own identity,  
Each stone is yours she says,  
I know that, I have said it myself  
over and over, each stone is you  
it lifts you to a private heaven,  
I was your bliss  
your golden statuette  
tiptoe on the wrecked cathedral,  
I was your god  
and you were faithful—  
which is the last temptation of the devil  
and here we are together  
alone with what you always meant.

And it is a kind of music,  
darling, isn't it? Like a shadow or like rain.  
Like something you still need to name.

6 December 2006

= = = = =

What do we ever know except what we're told?  
Experience? Experience is just things  
telling us. Things tell us their own stories.  
We believe them too,  
we believe everything we're told. I believe you,  
the elderberry bushes near Narrowsburgh  
the old woman with her wine.

6 December 2006

*[On a prompt, from an unknown woman]*

I left [mumble, mumble] my...  
(maybe it's a book) [thinks:] I walked  
down the hall, came back to get it

A tisket a tasket  
they sang when I was young  
I had a little basket  
and all the rhymes were new then

and now I've lost it  
she wanders up and down the hall  
looking for what she only  
now knows she's lost,

she's lost and wanders  
comes through the door and sees  
and says and takes a little  
bundle tied with string

nobody uses string anymore  
what could it really be  
strap or bungee or chain  
let down from the moon

to hold our words together  
golden chain, my tongue  
to your ear, listen,  
a word she left for us to hear.

6 December 2006



## A CEREMONY

What you take away  
is what is left to us.

Sing it as snow, sheep  
stumble to your feet  
having learned at last  
from their watchdogs how  
to fawn on manhood.

You came from nowhere  
and are here, the ox  
remembers nothing  
but his eyes are full of you.

The larger humans  
are cliffs to your small  
sea. You squall  
intermittently deep  
in the celebrated straw.

It tickles. Prickles.  
How healed we might yet be  
by one stalk of it  
now found.

                    But the wind  
hid it in its argosies,  
never-ending enterprise  
from there to somewhere else

but you are here.  
You grew up and died  
and left us a strange beginning  
over and over, the crow  
strutting on cold grass knows  
how as well as we, or better  
since he can go on up  
and see us down here  
kneeling eternally  
around the empty straw.

And each can think

what each disposes.  
The child is gone  
into the man we are.

7 December 2006

(Hearing Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* performed by the Bard Chorus conducted by Sharon Björndal)

SCHUMANN'S *TRIUMPHBOGEN*  
(from the *Dichtungen für das Pianoforte*)

But the tune is the same  
it curves in midair  
comes back for me

takes me by the hand  
but it has no hands

its eyes are glass  
its feet are brass  
we roll along, its heart  
is my heart in fact

we'll get there if ever  
only together, Burma Road,  
gory dagger, blue star  
on the fuselage, *who am I*  
each tune demands,

doesn't anybody understand,  
every tune is a person  
leaning on me, leading me on,  
shoving its face in my face  
and I don't have a face anymore

just this architecture of identity  
pale as winter sunlight

welcome, whoever,  
the stones that build you  
are made of air, the air  
is quick, filters through brick,  
sounds speaks its way through walls  
forgive forgive me

I run away from you  
from all of you, I am close  
at last to my native silence,  
that beautiful bare neighborhood of hedges  
and houses I never went inside  
and in these churches lived

only small flames in little blood-red jars.

7 December 2006

= = = = =

if I could be as quick  
as your fingertips  
I could have long ago been gone.

7 XII 06

= = = = =

there is somewhere  
in the world  
a book you actually have to read.

7 XII 06

SCHUMANN, *STERNENKRANZ*  
(from *Dichtungen für das Pianoforte*)

A wreath of stars  
taken one by one

around your neck  
one or two rest

further down  
between your breasts

and that is all night is  
a sequence of erasures

and when everything is gone  
the lights come on

they tell us  
are far suns

but who am I  
to believe what I am told

\*

I stand shivering like a man  
staring up at the names in the sky

spoken one by one  
louder or softer

some of the names seem  
to be part of other names

names have so few boundaries  
I am not the only one who calls himself I

and Robert said all this and Robert listened  
but they were not the same name, just the same man

spread out over the centuries  
the way names are spread out over the sky

one by one spoken  
so many thousands

of years to read even  
one of them rightly never

constellations: pictures  
no one ever saw

we spent our childhood trying to see  
the lion the bear the lady on her chair.

\*

And when you know the name of something  
you're halfway there.

You are a woman then you think  
compact and capable

the way women are  
always remembering

something that sounds like Beethoven  
or feels like Christmas

morning, all the orphans  
gathered round the burning tree,

listen to me you try to tell them,  
what you do not have

    you'll never have again,  
and what you have now  
    will last forever

you want love

    but all you'll get is love  
you want warmth and care and tenderness  
but all you'll get is tenderness and warmth and care,  
there is nothing in the world  
but what you see inside you,  
look! look up at the stars!

The children did but it was day.



They saw only one star, a big one,  
one they had to share,  
and even that one they knew by some other name.

8 December 2006

GOBLINS,

                  always goblins  
digging roots around my tree.  
I think they're me.

I am the dark, I am the cellar  
and the rickety wooden stairs  
go down me to the stagnant  
lake that stretches out beneath  
every human house and see  
the stalwart gondoliers who scare us  
skimming their preposterous romances  
by which we are transported  
hero-like from life to life  
drowning in sensation,  
gasping ashore at last but where?

Another cellar another house  
to climb up into and be  
father or mother in, and always  
the dark children with their vile wisdom  
play rough around our feet,  
I struggle in vain to kick myself free.

9 December 2006

(hearing Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, No.3)

= = = = =

Every body  
plays music  
different the same

incense  
smoky sunlight  
Ayurvedic clear

the wind, air,  
the material breath  
inside a girl.

A green bird,  
many birds.  
Sparrows don't count.

9 December 2006

## SCENIC RAILWAY

My father's hat  
listens to Mozart

his name for a blessing.

Same dance he did  
as you held his hand  
moseying around Coney Island  
under the el station, under the Mile Through the Clouds  
erector-set complexity of struts and scaffold  
lifting a railway over the local mind

jouncing along the track not even scared  
at this easy one, the sea suddenly closer than you knew  
stretching out from this place you though was strong  
only now you knew the land was an apron only  
narrow and slight, how could you ever trust that

knowing that, you held onto his hand less  
enduring your ignorance enduring your desire  
lips sealed against disclosure,  
let him lead you to the dance, he leaping  
you hopping, shy, hoping, not yet understanding the dance.

You would.

It would all come.

You would spend years  
trying to forgive  
his quiet cavalier affection  
you still don't understand  
how to love somebody and say nothing  
nothing ever about it  
as if language were never invented at all

Yet he gave you a blank book  
to fill  
and every day for fifty years you filled it

over and over  
talking yourself into and out of love

talking the sea into place  
from the top of the rickety long-ago sky.

10 December 2006