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Robert Kelly
Bard College

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NUMBERS

Numbers are hardest
because they mean least
but can touch anything
with their abstract glamour
7 Cups 7 Wives 7 Gods

We always know how many
but never what it is
the thing we're counting
a leaf a brick some
compromise between eternal form and human hands

and hands are forms too
and of eternity
the closest wingtips, fingers.

Here is a number for you:
hawk in an empty sky.

6 July 2004

=====
Her things in the rain
put something on
to open the door

and when the door is open
which one comes in?

Dilaudid does the work of opium,
hides pain
and anxiety, that savage flower
on which pain reposes,
hides pain, hides anxiety under pain,
hides the real nature of the situation
so it turns actual.

You do what you want to do.

All you need is dress for the occasion,
the going down, the miracle,
the living door.

6 July 2004

<late:> =====

An upstanding
and an uprising
are the same color
on different animals

different cloths

I remember something already
music a wide bay
touch me that way again

we are in the car
wet with vivacious rain
we will be traveling this way forever.

6 July 2004

HERSELF

Askance at her antics
(a blue faience frog
held tightly in her right hand
she promises everyone)
the severe monotheists relent
only over maple syrup breakfasts
just enough calories to
edge old men into amiable spaces
reminiscent of love.

They forgive her, they try to remember,
they try to believe her again.

And I live here, I live with her
every day and never doubt her lies,
they have made me happy all my life,
she never gets any older, I never smarter,
she keeps me going, my hand
still trembles when she touches me.

7 July 2004

=====

A plume from a gull, say,
or intermediate seabird
with long pointy beak.
That must be 'indeterminate,'
the other makes no sense,
a policy for controlling immigration,
refuse the albatross at the shore,
and that other bird, with blue feet,
whose name is not polite to say.
It is morning when gentlefolk
cause houseplants to be watered
and the Sisters of Saint Gestas
walk their neighbor's dogs for free
but sometimes they don't come back,
young postulants vanish over the hill.
Maybe it really is 'intermediate,'
a stage on life's long path, a teazle
growing beside the house, the woman
who had been young goes back to hell
driving through Canada. How cruel
words can be all by themselves
when there's no one to say them, no one
to overhear their scandalous persuasions.
Do it. Do everything you ever meant.

7 July 2004

EVE'S SONG

It is dark where I am
waiting for you

a dark made out of rain
children, wings, desire

reaching for you in the back seat
in the rain

in the woods you've never entered
although you think you never left

the dripping branches
are always ahead of you

the same rain soaks us both
but I have been here before

I know the way—
that is my only value for you

the way you can follow
every instance of my body to the end.

8 July 2004

=====

Waiting for more some more.

Waiting for fractions

to be absorbed into their numerators

and be whole again,

like a white clapboard house with azaleas in front of it

or a clever dog making a dumb child laugh.

8 July 2004

SUMMER COLD

my voice thick, my voice
is someone else's, somebody
whose heart is lower than mine

who am I do, do the words
get sick too, catarrh
of ordinary talk, buzz and snuffle,

my body is misspelled this morning
nothing works right, my pockets
sewed themselves up in the night.

8 July 2004

=====

Another, have another word.

The wind lets these things fall –
it rained in and night and you remembered.
Now there is nothing to pull close,
plaited straw of your marketing basket,
wet locks of your hair –
clear bright colorless water makes pale hair dark,
who makes that happen?
whatever the Lord is, he's no chemist,
no physician, no social planner.
Nothing moves except the machinery
but it's mostly pointed in the wrong direction.
And all we're left with is our will –
that dynamite of whimsy, wish and appetite
that breaks the placid rocks around us,
a cosmos cluelessly neat. Forgive me,
it's a little Melville in my throat this morning,
some heavy sneezing, fog off Marblehead.

8 July 2004

=====

The book gets smaller

the wind carries around

reads to us from

so many nights till

all the stories are gone

except this one.

9 July 2004

=====

Portuguese pop songs stay in the mind
sexy and sinuous and long
like so many things I can almost understand.
And the spoken ads between songs
are invitations to implausible blisses.
Anything that sounds so mouthy must be true,
a language faithful to the lips that speak it.

9 July 2004

(remembering New Be'ford radio)

=====
Honk honk they
used to say
lifting the glass

I thought their elbows
were pale geese
and their fingers beaks

held a pale
unpleasant liquid
intensely insipid

that made their little
Irish
eyes light up.

9 July 2004

=====

all the scenarios
locked in her glance
and me without a key

9 VII 04

=====

Nothing remembers me a stone

because person is a chance
for every opposite and equal reflection
a tree stands
also down
in Walkill shallows I made my move

it was clear I was on the wrong planet
from the way the sun felt, the way the road hurt,
from the way the older Italian boy
had a cock like a hose down to his knees
I knew.

And the vapid taste of lukewarm things
and the black sweat on my neck.

I'm trying to tell you how and what I knew,
food tasted weird but I had to eat a lot of it
just to keep going and it made me fat.
I never liked it. I never longed for anything
but water and women. Where was I born
to be like that? Where should I be now,
inspector?

Why is the ocean the only answer,
the slim woman running by the waves
breaking white from a green sea,
why are there colors?

So much light but no sun,
that's all I know about the place
I must be coming from,

after that
it's all effort and sweat and feeling sorry for myself
and roads uphill and dogs bark and the train never comes.
Out of sight men play detestable music
that echoes through the tile-walled corridors.
And all the time I think I'm going home.

9 July 2004

SAMOTHRACE

All things coming

sayless, a wait.

Woman voice radio

talk in car pass

every effing thing asks

who you are.

Island of riddles.

Every island also is.

An island is because

there's no getting

away from the particular

question an island is.

This much I know.

I have to answer the body.

Every body.

Walk naked through the forest till I know.

10 July 2004

=====

That's why I need you
so I tell you
how much you need me.
The air around us
understands such lies
such truths and balances
all things using the twin
sisters Echo and Silence
and then its all done.

10 July 2004

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

Harmony of the sky –
someone at the switch
the Bishop says
but I don't hear the organ
I just hear you

like the old Times Square IRT
alive with change trains possibilities
snacks and news stands and hot colors
as if there were nothing in the world
but traveling and information,

your wet skin in the dark –
isn't that what you said?

10 July 2004

<late:> =====

If I ever need you you'll be there
at the end of a doorknob
in the dark of a closet
you'll be counting the grains of dust
they taste like incense
you'll be recording on your little Walkman
the echo of all the silences
between us.

For even *nothing* has a shadow
and it will be waiting for me at the gate
to bring me to my room
and turn down the coverlet and kiss me to sleep.

10 July 2004