

Tuumba 4

ARCHIPELAGO

by *Kenneth Irby*



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"All that we *are* is in our love. It is an archipelago, and its islands may be visited each in turn."

— Walter de la Mare

FOR THE YEAR

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for Ruth, again

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FOR THE SKALD

1

so woke from the dream of
galdr charm *gala* sing
young and alone on a long road
and the sleeper seldom the victor
I-forget the heron hovers
men must speak of what men do
flame quickens flame
what happens cannot be hidden
the Arch-Bowman graces
Eye of Archer Weight of Arrow
across Song's Steelyard
Reacher of the Song Reacher of the Flame

2

awake early
heaped high
made boughs
across song's fields

wove words
cairns of praise
leaf with speech
not soon to fall

Sweden, the crowns
or how much come I spent
fucking you in the ass

October, later, October
the cold calls travel
or held of me, you

or Nunez, on the road
there is no way to know
but go back on to

rain and warm across the Northern Appalachians
as far as the Lakes
the Prairies 40° yesterday 80° at Atlantic City

Giesecking's birthday 1895, Ruth's brother's funeral
a year ago, the First Arabesque

and so seek many homes of the spirit
whether it is one
or bundles, restless

the high plateaus, the high
Plateau, The Rio Grande

through the Ry-o Grand and by rug merchants down
Christian passes East and West rock St Vartan
crown behind call Nunez
Moctezuma and St Olaf Christ
the knight is dying in his bed, and with a stone beside

and there beyond the brocade wall

crossing the eyes "we got onto

acid trip years before the third don Juan"

"yourself or better with someone else in the mirror cross

and the third eye overlap stare into first it's

and then focuses"

and your face over mine not ours and the cloud, say

not the light but with the glow, say the

and now feel *that*, follow that

fountain pen straight in the lecturer's face

violence is quickness the sting of the tail Mars

in the closeness of living together

the ascendant how quick

and fall

and now that way without remorse and without "No, I'm not mad, I only

get mad at something important and nothing a human being can do

is that important"

how easily I have forever talked to you

romantic *forever* to learn *for*

and does not talk of love or fucking but

impeccable no getting used to

1

until there is no other place to go and at that place

dance before death

the only place where you can go both out and in

power is *stored* *is home*

but every particle

2

I am no crow, hath not th'advantage

etc.

and you across from me

also the

the lion in the sunlight kneading with his paws an unseen

West, the Old West, Springfield and beyond, Edward Taylor barely edged of wilderness

in the bare, straight December eyelash blinking

iridescence, old

restlessness and patience, not continent, not

only continent, breaking the patterns

with his paws turning the unseen

the Wife of the House breaking the pattern of the spirit

Taylor meditating before the spectre of his congregation at the edge of

to break down to let in

at the Beginning of Empire the Lion looking looking

into the dark between his paws West

and we at the knead of the humbling of the spirit

at the wavering of the dissolution of unsure intent Imperial

to let in

a bed of strings by phone across the continent
now sleep on home in each

the stands of the rocks of talk number 18
rune straws

make love to return
but no more keeps than not

tight
situps against the winter
by night
your face by day
not dreams not a
stringing's worth

but, well, we'd *make*
I always said, and you
"not into that
building kind of" but
now, across

as if it ever only
sexual, and we laughed
as if that were ever
only

the so endures
the redwood sorrel
stems of the bed
the eucalyptus runes
of the West
our twice nine openings
rocks by East

•

at the other end of the bed
only to go back
wake in power

•

"they were too terrible to cry"

to carry the weight of the circle of heaven
on squared shoulders

what's important to write about's
to joke about

the pot of hot fat in
next to the ice-cap liver

place certainly *not* recollection

Eastern Baltica, Saramatia, Livland, Hiiumaa

the Barrier Canyon
crack to emergence

breakfast cereal grain
grit in the graves

and so steer

how unavailable I must have always been to you
being so available

strictly sentimental, and insistent
and some selfish head

the tenderness lasts still though
the hardest to come to

and without sentiment, and no
SM over embarrassment

the intellect of heart has no memory

all that graciousness isn't tenderness
that's violent and careful
and always touch

so let the bed take off where it wants to
not just the dream but the double

never a family of my own
but those I know
"give me an order of french fries
2 cokes
and a home, to go"

and follow you into the underground out of the heart

no way to talk tonight, yearning
for the only body
lost not lost

I thought I was
you rubbed off on me
into you

for the return of the affections
the boat of the sun
leaping over and over
but no recovery

the despair of ineptitude, earned
not answerable but distance

as if it were hopeless and despair alone
any hope

and it is hopeless, but no debasement, no slavery
facing to break the

one way to surrender the self and come close to

but I love you, not the pain
and not the being in love

(homage to Edward Schafer)

sit at the edge of the tub and watch her
out of the porcelain gleam into the water

drain of drains, reign of lime and orange
against the vodka scales

Mystic, still, willow

it doesn't seem enough and so it isn't enough

lacking the self, I said that to, and knew

I wouldn't answer otherwise until

•

and not for dreams but only pay attention once again
or that my father's beard was white the other night
seeing him sitting on a bench beside the door
the weakness to admit the shame of only *seen*
and then not change the life because

•

past 2, the bedtime brandy and soda still to tell
Munch peering around the corner at himself
down the fjord midwar 2 am
musing that mirror, and the woman in the bath, and still
not the old, no, not to say the *old* words, but the rise of

(for C. O. S. 18 July 1975)

to fuck, always
and to live with God, way

and missing Grand, Rose
fathers' intelligence
exactitude shared
over Sharon

love, more than the Earth

in her service

(from Ghalib)

Fuck it I'm crazy
not in love
but that's more attention
just for you

But never *any* chance of
love-making?
each time irritation's
retaking?

Lightning
life
quicker
heart

And I will make obedience
habit
disinclination
yours

O God just let the skirmishings
continue
even never meeting catching sight
enough

Never
another you
or long ago already
long ago

And if what I think is grief
is fire
how long the open eyes of stars
toward the other side?

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My friends, let us love what we
love. The man who damn well refuses
to love what he loves dooms himself.

— Van Gogh

In the light of certain theories of
history in which man is characterized
by an economical struggle for survival,
the persistence of poetry is a difficult
fact to account for. Poetry is the
history of man's disinterestedness.

— Wallace Fowle

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