

The colour
of Mirror



Kevin M. Rowe

I asked myself:
"What is the difference
between adultery and
idolatry?"

"Nothing" I said,
"you either want to
be a celebrity or
fuck one."

Rejoice
rejoindre
replace myself,
celebratory leprosy
I lose 35, 000 skin
cells an hour. I am
always
anew.

always
becoming.

always
changing.

Little duckling
tiny baby gosling
baby baby changeling
flying south in an
 antique sky.

Paint me a portrait
 of that sky so pink
 a single speck
 a bird on the horizon
 a pigeon
 a carrier pigeon
 pigeon post
 an undelivered love letter
2 to a stranger
 frozen in time
 the pigeon's mission.

Forget missionary position
and forget the
crossroads
forget the hollow
hallows and
and

let the saints decay
and turn to dust
the dust that billows out
from old books

old books
opened by aging
librarians
dust to dust
where
rusting religions
corrupt love.

I have written this before
but before it was different.

I used to know what
difference was.

What has another
name must
be different, and
what lacks a name
must be
the same the same.

When I wash my face
in the morning,
I feel different.

As time passes the past
becomes obsolete.

I am a new animal
all the same
a hungry animal
no, not the same at all
but an animal the same,
this changeling
this animal.

I have a body
I like to rest against
yours.

4 I have a celestial body
that
I am forced to share.
An atlas of the universe:
 a celestial map
 has two hemispheres.

Can you imagine without
placing yourself at some
Cartesian coordinate
or another?
You can forget
where you are,
but never forget
where you come from.

When I was born
I was just another statistic.

Before I had a name
I had a number.

My mattress had a number too,
it was hidden on its
underbelly.

I slept in comfort
all the time knowing I could
count on
my old mattress.

5

I never enjoyed counting sheep
we are different animals
we are different
numerals
we are separated
by the fact that I have fingers
and toes
the fact
that I can count
the fact that
I can speak
maybe you can speak?

you do speak,
but it is the language of
the cosmos and I am
a black hole.

...

We were written
her and I wrote.

...

6 I knit her contently
I knit her commonplace.

See that window up there?
I made it a picture
and in it we framed our
lives
where the shadows strike
the wall and drip onto the
floor,
we were warm there once.

I put it in a letter
an envelope tied shut
with yarn.

I knit her completely
I knit her discretely.

A cradle or a coffin?
it's just a place to
store our things.

She was tucked in neatly
between a Tijuana catcall
and my lust for the night
her words
were water drops
in a vacant tub
they echoed soft
the world's thinnest drum.

7

I knit her sublimely
I knit her soulful.

Do you remember when we
stitched our
fingers and toes
together?

I still couldn't swim
and she
she hugged me dry.

...

“Elaborate,”
said the colour to the
mirror
“What colour are you?”
I ask.

8 Never repeat yourself to
the mirror
this mirror reflects
only shadows
wet like the purple night

she tells me who
I am
my reflection is
her gaze

we laugh
through eyelashes
thick as
forests

eyes just as brown
eyes just as green.

...

His arms folded like
origami
patient paper
dissolving into wet
cement
waiting, curled up
like a crooked fishhook
against the wall
of a building
which defines the city
which defies a country
spitting Morse code into
the wind.

9

The street in front of me
is being disemboweled,
I feel its pain.

I am never late,
but today I am.

The waiting game is never
easy for those who bore
banal as she waits
my bus passes by.

•••

I write suffocate
you hold your breath
I write mother
you hold her hand
I write myself
you read me
I write her
she is mine
she is yours
this page is a mirror
“I am white,” says the
IO mirror.

The words are me
inside of you
a book and the cosmos
letters burn incandescent
stars
in the startling realization
that
we are in this together.

I write warmth
her embrace
the night wet and cold.

...

Button gone missing
and into the fold
where the accordions bellow
breathes an iron lung
decadent figures dance
between shadows
of stars.

Button gone missing
a matrix of
apology
the sun cathartic
the midday moon
button of the sky.
Button gone missing
and into the fray
apologetic sky
the melody of noon
where streets cracked
like elephant skin
greet the safety of
our shoes
and all while I am
with them I am
missing you.

II

...

I wrote her a beautiful bird,
a sparrow,
born of a gunshot wound
the same bird that
 rattled around
my ribcage
blood red sparrow
 parade with the day
written with red ribbon
 a spoon in her nest
see that window up there?

I2

I made it a picture
 and in it
 shadows
mirroring the mirage of life
so pretty sewn into the
 drapes
so pretty where it becomes
 difficult
 to
 decipher
where I begin
 and you end.

...

So pretty
the mirror that forgets
 our reflection
so pretty the cause
pretty pretty pleased
 petty pestilence
so pretty pendant
brass of bone skin
pretty picture
window thief
prettied up
 prying voyeur
cold cuckold
adrift with the snow
pillowed crystalline white
so pretty the mirror
that reflects
childhood dreams
so pretty analysis
psycho or none-
so pretty nun
angelic soft
breast of
mother
so pretty word
so pretty pretty
so pretty kiss

lip service
for the deaf
so pretty sky
open to let us in.

...

Spectrum
expect 'em
spectrum
except 'em
spectrum
 reject 'em.

14

ask again
repeat
“Silver! I am silver!”
says the mirror.

“Lies! All lies!”
Science replies.

...

I beat the drum
inside my head
swollen becomes the
membrane.

Crackling struck
mirrored vagueness
where obscurantists
cannot be wrong.

“I am black,”
says the mirror
“Wrong again,”
I say I say.

I bright the flame
inside my liver
one drink
too too many
I bright the light
behind the mirror
one switch
too too many

“I smell of whisky,”
says the mirror
“that smell is me,”
I say.

I beat the drum
inside my head
so pretty pulsing
heartbeat in a skull.

The sparrow spiraled
caught my eye
semitone eye
sepia tone vision

“I am brown,”
or
“you are not,”
I say.

I burn the night
incandescent
I burn the day
sebutone

“I have soft skin,”
says the mirror
“that is I,”
I say.

Hands who have
forgotten the
pleasure of
work and
eyes who have
forgotten
that mirrors lie.

...

I asked myself:
“what is the difference
between idolatry and
adultery?”

“Everything” I said,
“you either want to
fuck a celebrity
or be one.”

Placeless
and placelessness
celebratory incest
we are the same
the mirror and I
changing positions
inside out
outside in
with my back to it
the mirror will make
faces.

Colourless portrait
we share this lie.

All the ambiguity of nature
of the cosmos
of our love
into the fold
and into the fray.

“I am grey”
the mirror says
“you are not”
I say.

18 Colourless foul thing
colour it whatever
colour it deceitful
colour it her pretty
colour it her gone
colour it you're leaving
begun be gone
be gone begun
colour it memory
don't forget to forget
colour it amnesia
and stray from its eyes.

“I am cold”
the mirror says
“for once you are right”
I say I say.

kevinmrowe.ca