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**for m.w.**

Arnold J. Kemp

“painting has no air . . .”

— *Gertrude Stein*

“That there should never be air  
in a picture surprises me.”

— *Barbara Guest*

Wave upon wave of life

Like the stripes of sea bass

Like the desert cactus

Rethinking landscape

There is always an American

Question of the longest road

Of wanting to be awake

To see this occurrence

These places where

Human zooming motors

Hum at 90 miles per hour

Hokaido orange

Breaking human limits

To get home and the dew

And oil on the roads

Like that light — quick

Manganese violet

And rainbowed as magic

At dawn the shadows

Of our human forms

Move over the land like

Iron oxide yellow

Hands across the sexual body

Sometimes just caressing

The mud, sometimes gripping

Garnet

As if there should be more

To be had than idealized

Egyptian blue

Nipples and salty cocks

As if this is what we imagined

We intended to be the sea

Cobalt bottle green

Our hands dipping into and

Down to the ground that's

Moving until it's up and around

Prussian blue

Our elbows and then

We're shin deep in it —

Lead tin yellow deep

The tide I mean —

Madder Lake

I mean my God

What assumes painting

Assumes the sea receiving

The changing sun

Azurite sky blue

The purple night

The building clouds

The point of time

How should I interrupt

“The building clouds”

Their solitude, their cumulative inaction

There’s a purple mole at the center of

Each unpredictable sponge

That calls out to me

Kyanite dark grey

Come bring your cosmic young

Those infant stars

Into this field unfolded

Into a blue earth rundown

Lapis lazuli

Directly to a gate

To a cave created by light

To a center of the world

To a hill of grass where the wind moves

It’s like saying painting has no rain and yet

It’s free and beautiful with light from inside and out

A form unlike the universe

Crushing the curve of the sea

Deepest horizons that can be

Cinnabar

A straight line

Despite rare and suspicious flowers

A cave that is a rose

That ruptures nature's names

Holding that names begin nature

And that the last museum was one poem

Full of ruptures and could be one from

Which all kinds of thinking are flying

Deliberately unsettling in

Antimony

Its delivery through veils

Its diversions from conventions

The way it is out of control

The last hour a flock of pale flesh in

Which there is no question of whiteness

Here the question is a witness

To the accuracy of precision

And a feeling of the magic of an image

In the feeling of painting

Where each one is critical of another

Like our night dreams are critical of our days

Sights flutter in the light

What is perceptible

What is illuminated

What arouses

The drive to converse with angels

Verona green earth

Dreamers, heroes, affection, nature's pictures

Glimpses of retreat among colored structure

Names of nature

Of sprits and visions

But then yesterday arrived and remains

Under suspicion of our embarrassment

Of what could be seen here

A steak lake

A butter bed

An ice cube necktie

A prune juice mountain

A sun burn equinox

A feather hammer

A bee hive sweater

A rattle snake scarf

A rusted water

A rose thorn chair

A crown of fried eggs

An unstable horizon

Dioxazine violet

Red jasper

Cobalt blue

Vivianite yellow

Meteorite brown

Alizarine crimson

Nicosia green

Aniline black

A color dazzling as moonrise

Elves' balls

Mice teeth instead of our own

A psychic pigment

A swarm of sharks

An electric mythic swamp

A neon breakfast

An oracular mind.

Spanish ochre

Jade

Pompeii red

Slate gray

Carmine Red

Bohemian green earth

Red Bole

Terra ercolano

—Arnold J. Kemp

October, 2018