

Poems by Brian Keeble

Punctum

What centres our vicissitudes,
Their turn and turn about as grief
Must move from joy, then joy to grief—
An alternating constancy
Fixing the measure of each move
As death gives every birth its rule—
Is cause of wonder at how the pulse
Is set in motion from the first,
Twisting the thread of life through change
That our advancing destiny
Might weave the implacable template true.
An irreducible punctum hides
Inscrutable depths of solitude
And stillness. Nothing possessed
Of transience equates to how
It shapes the mind's deep treasure when
Finding in contention's strife
The soul's calm equilibrium.

Who Knows?

(After Shabistari)

For Ali

Before a mirror you might stand
To shape once more your likeness, and
see reflected another 'me'
Whose 'who?' you're sure you cannot be.

Then ask, whose fixed and glassy stare
Thrown back acknowledges you there?

That 'self' you know yourself to be
Must fail to grasp this 'shadow-me'.

And yet 'non-me', existing so,
Is by appearance what you know.

Might you confess you know no way
By which to join the night with day?

The past that's gone, the future to come,
You then call time, but of both the sum

Is measured by the point's unmoving now.
From that you merely imagine time: how

Its fleeting course deceives the mind,
Ever arriving, to depart in kind.

All things are vacuous—so much noise
And echo to beguile the unwise

Who've yet to grasp there's nothing but Me!
Show me how all accidents flee

To make up substance. And tell me where
And when it happens. What do they share

That makes length, breadth and depth arise
From nothingness? Don't compromise.

Be sure to know both worlds proceed
Along such lines. Let faith concede

What sense cannot embrace and know:
There is no other way to show

That illusions are the very appeal
By which I'm known as knowing's seal.

Let's not exist as strangers; see
You know your only 'self' as Me!

Of Wonder at the Eternal Filiation

If I should speak, what words would praise
That are not, Lord, already Yours
As Father of all? From first to last
We are configured in Your Word
Whose roots knit all to eternity.
At this we can but marvel; how
From ghostly wanton with her that is
Your treasure and Your bride—yet by
Such sport not yielding earthly fruit,
And that the better pleasing to
Your sight—Your Word is born in Him
Your son, assuming time as flesh begot
In His nativity of Mary,
Co-redemptrix, Mother of God.
And so, impure and of this world
Whose womb receives us, our wonder clings
To how in Mary you grant to us
In perpetuity our fleshly rank
By that unceasing virgin birth;
Thus all our children Yours through her,
Since one same geniture is shared
According to our brevity,
We being as grass so soon cut down.
And how all this in being so
Makes binding to our transience
The one unchanging paradigm:
That that which does not speak Your Word
Knows no nativity, as one
From perfect purity cannot not be.