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I Didn't Do It

Kevin Boyle

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Kevin Boyle

I Didn't Do It

All I love now, finally, is the sound of concrete
still mixing at red lights as the truck revs
in gear on the hill to stand still, the clicking
of gallons and dollars and cents at the pumps,
a hand drill whose noise cringes in pine
and spins wildly when through, the weak give

of the rain-sagged, haphazard plywood that covers
the slip in the earth dug for further wires,
the pit I look to, its mud floor beyond even the pleasure
of the heated machines frantic in motion: there
is a world made of earth and nothing else—
no heart, no thought, no sense, no wonder.

I just stand there rescued nearly to sleep
with machine grease, becalmed by mechanical church chimes,
sent away from myself with the memory of cash registers'
tumbling, voided numbers, let alone where I shouldn't want
to belong.

But in the distant sound of a bus braking to stop
I imagine the exhaust of blow dryers and then fleeing hair,
and find, even in all these engines and motors, something
as simple and unwanted as your face looking into a mirror,

and your body weighing in naked on the scale, the whole back
of you looking toward me, then your voice slicing out
through showers, your hair snarled up in a spat.

I try not to feel anything nearly, my mind hurried
toward the earth sides I see dug away, the moisture
along the walls laced with white cable, and at the bottom
a heads-up watch someone lost, or tossed there to change luck,
or just trashed. Is it a woman's watch or a child's
Disney watch with pleasing animals in it?—it's something
thin from this height—and I think
of jumping down into its face with my boot heels, grinding
its gears to a halt. I think
of its delicate hands pointlessly circling inside
the circle of glass, how I'd like to ruin their day,
stop whatever silicon chip inhabits it.