

Leonard Schwartz

Knees and Toes

Older than memory but still of a person, singular as each toe...
I'm not talking about *so* far back, it's not like I had gills.

Like I said, toes, fingers and toes, each one singular
and not one of them good for very much.

Gaffes, guffaws, gangs of transgressors producing
the new, giving birth to the latest bloviater.

I've only got the one, just like I was only one myself,
not counting the other two, and they were younger.

I've only got the one, when you come right down to it
all the others were mere flirtations, though each was fun.

All of them bigger latches than I, not that I once minded
being part of their bevy. But there was this one, she married me

For love, the impact of kisses that reached their mark
transmitting to her thoughts an aura of two-twined-flesh,

A checkerboard so vast it can't be mapped, for all we know
the squares going circular in the deep recesses of each soul.

An aura of the good, or so I'm told,
but I'd better not start believing in it myself.

Way back when, where did I get my milk? I suppose
it was scientific, only fair to go with the latest findings.

A new creed can be arranged for a bunch of us if you think it will help
but I'm not going to be the one to hand it across, it isn't true

And fire is a tricky concept when one thinks about it.
He had black chest hair, reams of it, that was enough

Three of us gods sprung from that one hairy chest.
Birth order saved me, because I came first and wasn't saved

For last. And I liked it, and wore the hat of a lawman. As
the sound of a stream can be heard beneath the traffic's rumble.

As the many species of bat in the sky make themselves at home.
I can't speak for them of course. My home is with you!

But there isn't anything hypothetical about rushing water.
It's really there, and knows no impediment to its plural dance.

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For example, who were those several men and women in reference
to everything I didn't know, particularly the attractive ones?

Too late now to know? Metal, metal, and more metal,
where there should be living maple?

Put aside a glass of wine for Elijah —or maybe some ale —
and we'll check in the morning to see if its drunk.

More invisible than invisibility are certain rhythmical tides.
I've been lucky like that, so many birds so far from their source.