

4-9-2013

## aprC2013

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprC2013" (2013). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 23.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/23](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/23)

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

=====

**Catching up with ourselves  
like the sun coming out —  
who is it who calls her  
every morning from those spaces  
she swims down to  
leaving her night cloak behind?**

**2.**

**The sun is one.  
And everybody else is two  
except you. You are three  
so with you  
I am four,  
your favorite number.  
Which is why you let me  
get away with things like this.**

**3.**

**Or examine the slowly cerulean  
happening right now while you sleep,  
adjectives slowly turning  
into nouns as the day begins.**

**4.**

**Look (or wake and see):**

**there are things all round us  
all belong to us by being  
not just by being seen.**

**7 April 2013**

=====

**My hand is a rope  
tight tight  
around a bundle of bones  
like the fasces carried  
by the lictor in old Rome.  
If the rope slackens,  
the pen will fall,  
ink all over the world  
but nothing said.  
Only by writing can silence be preserved.**

**7 April 2013**

=====

**The orchestra  
makes the ladies sing.  
The man in the cardboard shadows  
has no freedom either,  
a man he can't see  
controls the breath in his chest.  
Words made this happen  
long ago to someone else  
and now he is them.  
No agency, pure celebrity.  
To be in the spotlight now  
is the supreme obedience.**

**7 April 2013**

=====

**The chorus says nothing.  
They are townspeople,  
they just want to go home  
but need to stand in the street  
having opinions about  
everything they see. These  
opinions are their only  
history and soon forgotten.  
Then they can go home.**

**7 April 2013**

=====

### **Declamation**

**your deck of cards  
the light increasing  
something happening  
to the sky.**

### **King Herod**

**is coming or the girl  
is taking off her clothes,  
what kind of opera  
is it is really  
up to you. So many  
voices in my chest  
how can I know  
who is speaking?**

**7 April 2013**

=====

**The things you need before you begin  
you can learn only by beginning.**

**Everything is like that, one word  
much like another. The lost city  
but what does that mean?**

**Voices caressing absent bodies.**

**The first product of alchemy  
is that woman standing there,  
rubedo, but with yellow hair.**

**7 April 2013**



**YS**

**City sunken  
into the shallow  
bay of my memory.  
I don't know any more  
the name of the woman  
who gave me the key  
or why I opened  
such a strange door, bronze it seemed  
and the whole sea came in.  
Who left it there  
for me to be?**

**7 April 2013**

=====

**Not so proudly waiting  
like a piece of soft white wood  
for the whittler's hand  
or wit or skill  
to make something of the day.  
Let wisdom grow all night  
like the hair on my face  
bristly in the morning.  
Razors and knowing  
the accidents away.  
Take accident by the arm,  
is it thirst after all,  
lechery for essences?  
It is everywhere the same  
undifferentiated.**

**The beauty  
shows up in the mistakes.**

**8 April 2013**

=====

**Not a gospel, a tree.  
Or a girl playing a fiddle  
for her father. Or a gate  
opening by itself. Midnight.  
Streetlight dim.**

**8 April 2013**

=====

**A body to do anything  
with is not.**

**In spring birds sing,  
they're up to something  
music knows,**

**I ignore  
the implications of the hour  
people go to work, this  
on my day off.**

**Weak sunlight seems  
tangled in the branches.**

**It must make sense,  
doesn't have to be wrong,  
the word is made of stripes,  
held together by color  
and a glass of water  
by no means full.**

**Miracle. Every tomb  
is empty today,  
this word this other word  
the king's daughter  
let the ocean in,  
we listen, we who live  
by the shore, listen**

to the dreams of clams  
(millions of shells  
along the Hudson shore),  
oysters, all the shelly tribe  
because all that they do  
is dream out from their shallows  
images they have  
no eyes to see, we  
see for them,  
we dream language  
out loud to answer  
the miasma of their meaning  
seeping into the pearly air.  
Those who live far from oceans  
hardly ever dream  
or speak. Or see things  
that aren't there,  
the way we do,  
children of Eve,  
apple core and seed,  
oyster shell ashtrays  
full of our past,  
hung over angels  
asleep at every house door.

8 April 2013

=====

April after April  
the blue-eyed grass  
comes up the hill.  
From books I've read  
I'd call it squill,  
the old woman next door  
told me years ago  
they all grew from my  
half-acre long before  
it was mine. And now  
they're up and down  
the road, blue surging  
quietly grasses  
everywhere. Something  
lingers after us  
I suppose, they feel  
meaningful, like a mind  
remembering houses  
or a mother's birthday  
long after her death.  
They're always out  
on that day, and forsythia  
her favorite too.

8 April 2013

=====

**And in sleep  
that other country  
knows me**

**where the miracles  
are made, baseball  
stadiums full of dancers**

**around a great bull  
seems to be alive  
those horns tipped with gold**

**those chattering priests  
and the wind from Crete  
nibbles at our heels**

**for we are dancers too  
clumsy as can be  
but full of that devotion**

**to pure risk that  
makes the dance, makes  
men dance and women fly**

**and in those days we  
will live in houses  
the walls of darkness made**

**and the roofs of crystal  
can you hear me yet  
in Mexico? In that mild**

**city where the moon never sets?**

**9 April 2013**



=====

**The grass is thinking about it  
but the daffodils aren't sure yet —  
some up the road have risked it  
but yours, ours, here, green  
yes but no yellow yet. Time  
is part of space and waits  
for the proper starbeam  
to ascend to its own color.  
Time, I'm trying to say,  
is our only flower.  
I hand it to you,  
with some birds to  
warble and flutter and distract.  
Or do I mean distraction  
is a flower too,  
a sudden red, or blue eye  
like the squills that have  
always again come up,  
are here now, shimmering  
small up the little hill,  
an actual flower.  
Look away and the world looks back.**

**9 April 2013**

=====

**The wind closed my book for me  
should I pay attention? I'm trying to right now  
by opening the book again and saying this.  
This. This. This is not very interesting.  
Maybe the wind was right.  
(What do I mean maybe?)  
Being colloquial is scholarship on its back,  
naked at midnight in the cold corridors  
of the old museum. Marble, terrazzo,  
carved wood, hard benches, moonlight  
through dusty skylights, a statue overheard.**

**9 April 2013**

=====

**What do things say?**

**Spring sudden**

**and my house has an outside again**

**I have to confess to thinking about flowers,  
certain flowers, just like poets long ago  
when there was hardly anything else  
to look at but such natural things.**

**So I confess to daffodils and lilies,  
fast shadows of crows across the lawn,  
a rock pool in deep woods,  
someone venturing in  
and coming out again, slowly,  
shivering a little, the cold skin.**

**9 April 2013**

=====

**A bird saying chew chew chew  
(or chee-ew chee-ew chee-ew)  
and there are subtle variations  
in each repetition, sometimes  
a distinct catalectic, once  
the third chew left off  
do the distinctions mean to birds  
and if not are we likewise  
encumbered with meaningless distinctions,  
like light and dark, like me and you?**

**9 April 2013**

## **CONCERT**

**Exalt the *animal*  
part of anything.  
The lights go down,  
I hear the best  
of sounds, the dust  
sifts in the piano.**

**9 April 2013**