

4-22-2014

aprE2014

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprE2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 25.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/25

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.

AT THE RISING OF THE MOON

1.

The moon rose late
and looked in my window
a few nights past plenitude
so that she lingered in the trees
across the lawn, close. close
as a word to the mouth
I thought she spoke to me.

2.

And still is speaking.
Words are moon-talk anyhow
light reflected from
some hardly imaginable knowing.

3.

Or do I mean refracted
the moon a crystal lens
through it some native
saying power speaks?

4.

Branches slice the moon disk
shiver the moonlight towards me.
diffraction pattern, eye,
on new-arisen grass.

5.
So she told me as I slept
my way towards her up the hallway
no light but hers, pressed
my face against the window glass
and carefully pronounced her name.

18 April 2014

,= = = = =

History lying on or under the table
is the rational starting point for
imaginary identities such as
mine or yours or that rather furry
dog the man said was the French
word for marble but he was wrong.

18 April 2014

Frühling früh

All these sticks
with leaves on them
new beginning and me
mourning last night's
saftig moon in clouds,

her soft light my
serenade, now what
will I do with all this sun?

19 April 2014

=====

When you give a pen to someone
you give them
all the words they'll write with it.

When you give someone
a cup of water
you wash away all their sins

When you touch someone
the touch will live forever

non omnis moriar.

19 April 2014

STRANGE WEDDING

Give each one a cup of tea—
that's enough to marry me.

Mycelial the song that links
the drinker to the one who pours

soft just under consciousness
the everlasting family.

19 April 2014

SPORT

Tiresome athletes
searching for the hidden door
everybody else can see
but them and me.

19 April 2014

=====

Why waste monet running in a circle
when you could stiff—
and there the sun would be
straight over your head all the time
and the moon a puddle round your feet

O basin of this world
to bathe in thee,
reposing there like a schoolchild in rain,
blessed individuality
of each raindrop, each
one is wet the same and each
one touches you

or if you claim there is no such
thing as same,
and everything is difference,
I shit the premise, I break the circle

but the water still laps at your knees.

20 April 2014

=====

So it is Easter after all
the ardors of Lent
left me untouched, unchastened,

I had my own preparings to do
to live another day in Parasceve
the Romans say, from *paraskeuo*,
'I prepare'. Passover
sounds like it too. In my heart
there is always a Christian
rejoicing by the empty tomb.
adoring the union of bliss and clarity and emptiness,
Christ's last sign, he showed us
the clear blue sky.

20 April 2014, Easter

=====

I write
what the words permit
how dare
I call this poetry
how dare I call this 'me'?

20 April 2014

= = = = =

I stretched up
and hooked a chain to the sky
everybody asked me why

I took it home and hid it
swinging from my closet door

then everyone accused me, saying
What have you done
to the universe? Where
have you hidden the sky?

O the innocence of art
is a danger thing—
lava keeps its heat a thousand years.

20 April 2014

= = = = =

Bare patches on my chest
where the electrodes sat

strange to feel bare skin
I haven't felt in sixty years

before the chest hair grew.
This too is a tiny Easter,

mini-resurrection, skin,
memory, glance, eye-dance,

the simple weather.
Everything rises.

20 April 2014

OLD AGE

As a very old man, *Falstaff* already behind him, Boito distracted by other matters, even his own music, Verdi turned his thoughts to Mozart, with whom he had always had something of an equivocal relation. Beethoven he adored and studied, even nightly, the quartets always at his bedside. But Mozart, the genius, the eternal, the youthful smile like a marble Ephebe, the greatest... there was still something wrong about him. Sublime, witty, human, ingenious, but cold. But coldness goes with eternity, the marble sky that looks down impassive on Otello's grief. Verdi shivered, huddled deeper into the peasant's goatskin cloak he affected. There was something of Iago in Mozart.

And nowhere clearer than in *The Magic Flute*. It was all wrong. The wrong parties won. With the anti-clericalism that had grown ever stronger in him, he had come to hate the Wisdom Temple and its sanctimonious priests, its county fair-ordeals of water, fire, earth and air. And whether it stood for the Vatican or the Grand Lodge of the Freemasons, Verdi hated it—all pomp and priestcraft and imposition.

And Tamino, a simpering tenorino taken in by a mere picture, by an old man in a false beard. Verdi hated the priestly power that slew Aida and Radames, the priestly bungling in Forza, the paternal interference in Traviata. No wonder The Magic Flute displeased.

So he would change it. He would, as his last act of political and musical defiance, write his own version, *Il Tabarro Magico*, and in it Tamino would wield a sword, would slay the pompous wizards, rescue black Monostatos from contempt and futility, reward him with a lady too. And above all, Pamina and Tamino would be united in exquisite carnal love under the grace and protection of the Queen of the Night, the true heroine of the opera. It would end with a grand trio, the Queen, Tamino, Pamina. Then Tamino would drift away, the way men do, and Pamina and the Queen would sing their duet. Then Pamina, having (as she supposes) learned all she can from the knowing woman, saunters off after her lover. This is the moment Verdi has aimed at all his life, the triumph of the Woman, the flaming intensity of the final victory of Aida, Violetta, Leonora, Eboli, Desdemona. He hears it on his deathbed, and writes it down in the alphabet of heaven, the neums of Paradise, the true Aria of the Queen of the Night. Where do we have to go to hear it? And what

soprano will lift it, triumphant, so the last thing he ever heard, we
ever hear, is her dark?

20 April 2014

= = = =

First morning no
heat needed on front porch
ha! But whya are there roads?
Where is there to go?

*

Followed buffalo trails
through the woods
to get here. The woods
mostly gone, the bison
dead. Roads remain.

*

If we could only map
each movement and each
sitting still, we'd know
where we were going
or thought we were
supposed to go.
But still no why
to all those miles.

21 April 2013

SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

Have no destination in mind.
Have nothing in mind.
Leave the horse in the barn,
car in garage, ox unmuzzled at graze.
Nothing in the sky but very small birds.

2.
Say farewell to your house door
using as many words as you can.
Even words you don't know,
words nobody knows, no mouth
ever spoke. It is good
for a door to hear all that.
And the longer you speak in farewell
the shorter your journey will seem.

3.
Someday you may even get
as far as the lilac bush next door.
People may be sitting on the porch.
They may even call you by name.
And that is who you are.

