

10-2012

octG2012

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "octG2012" (2012). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 122.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/122

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.

= = = = =

Hide the light from the day.
Sometimes I want to clutch you tight
and crawl beneath your comfort and be held.
Why is this me?

*In weakness
is my strength.*

Carve that
on my mantelpiece, a brave
tattoo on a dying man. Rejoice
in the am! For jubilee
comes every year, and all injustice
stands down. I am afraid, I hold
tight to you, support me,
in my terror is my bravery,
I admit it, I am long
for this world, the grey light
of evening has walked
into my maples. Living
is like leather, supple
with use, cracked with neglect.
Live me hard and hold me,
I am afraid of being me,
I'm trying to tell you I'm afraid
and need to be comforted.

No need for explanation.
Just hold me till it's over.

15 October 2012

= = = = =

Some lives are just waiting
for someone else to pick up
the burden of being me.

It seems.

Then there is weather
and soldiers marching in loud sleep
across imaginary frontiers
or killing sleeping people from the air.
What have I done to stop it.
If we could just take hold
of the simplest rule: don't kill.
Everything good would come from that.
The simplest, terrifying solution:
let them live till they die.
To which the messrs. Kurtz
who run our planet answer
"Exterminate the brutes."
And on mornings like this,
half an hour before dawn
it all feels like my fault.
And why not? We all did this together.

16 October 2012

= = = = =

All the policemen in the world
a soft ballet
riding out the weather
means nothing, just came to mind
come home to mind
I've never seen a lark
for all the music that they spell
a broken mountain a fallen bell
the Book of Changes tells us
animals always show the way
but which way? And are
you sure the road is clear
to what they show,
that the road is ours?
The road makes time,
a bullion on the stove awaiting
integers of vegetable
count way past ten
if you want the stars to go
on shining there are clothes
if I were more an animal
or someone leads me
I dream a tenderness
no man deserves

I summon you before the court
and you and you have no explanation
for why I feel so sad
animals die all the time
why shouldn't I? The pipe
leads to the harbor
there were two dolphins
playing in the channel
I have no right to what I see
I have no right to say
what comes to mind —
these are the perhaps crimes
for me to be guilty of
to see to say and live another day
that's a lot to ask
when Fimbul winter hurries close
imagining the obvious
I suddenly feel like a child
watching crimson tail lights up the hill.
I rest my case. Your honor.

16 October 2012

= = = = =

Born not to know the difference
the differences I lived
maple trees gamboge and cinnamon
ash trees paler, the tea-stained light
around the long ago, autumn's feathers
color lets me come close
write my prayer book and carry it to church.

16 October 2012

= = = = =

This finch would fly —
still here in all the cold rememberings
a color merchant falling down the air
we give him thistle seed he gives us
a sleight of feeling at the feeder,
a thrill no bigger than a sparrow,
but yellow, sometimes, sometimes even now.

16 October 2012

KNOW

I have to know
what other people know
before I can know
what only I can know.

16.x.12

= = = = =

Now I am Wallace Stevens
double-checking
that my door is locked
and windows too
going around
in my dark house
to do it. Just me and the dark
in the dark,
wondering if everything
could be worse.
Every night the same
ritual, protecting
us from someone
or someone
from me.

16 October 2012

=====

Mist autumn maple
religious conversion of the trees
everybody admits to believing
something anything else
the Statue of Liberty
is a free translation.

17.x.12

= = = = =

1.

But what did you understand
when I hit you, how else
can a father touch the most precious
woman in the world
forbidden fruit apple maple able
at least it was the flat of my hand.

2.

And that the dream said,
he put her to sleep among flowering roses
and if she stirred in her dream
the thorns would prick her
back to wakefulness —
there is no fathoming a daughter's dream.

3.

Silence the night in her
feelings and desires,
she is free to do everything
I don't know how to do.
I want to be her,
she who is so much me,

I will make the bruised anemones
blossom on her pale skin.

17 October 2012

PROVIDENCE

In all that city
not one person stood at the window.
Cars were moving, pigeons
swirled around the over-lifesized
statue of a famous admiral
high on a fluted column but
no one looked out of
all those windows, I counted
713 before I got tired
and no face no form no shadow
saw me counting.
What was so interesting indoors
at that ordinary hour, mid-afternoon,
so exciting out here
in public emptiness, just me
and all the cars and birds
and the numbers, maybe I should
have kept counting,
maybe I would have reached a number
Kabbalah would interpret for me
and I would know something
at last. Maybe all those people
I can't see are busy counting too
or looking up numbers in old books,
learning new alphabets, frightened

of that populous bluegrey city sky
that makes me a little nervous too—
so big, so far away yet right on top of me.

17 October 2012

= = = = =

The problem with weather is it doesn't answer.
Every day a new set of questions and no book
to turn to the back of to find the right answer.
No hardbound red algebra book such as Mr. Breen
smashed on the head of a laggard freshman
back in the days before concussions, when pain
was understood but damage not yet imagined.
School by its essence was about discomfort
at best, boredom and menace. Which brings
me back to weather. There are fields out there
that know nothing of trees, there are kegs
of cider hidden in rickety barns, old people
speaking Polish. grey angry dogs, pregnant
teenagers and all the while the secret ferment
of the world busies itself with wine and miso,
the little weather locked inside things grown
in earth and art. And everything has to change.
And why is algebra anyhow? What did the mind
ever do to us that we want to hurt it with thinking?

17 October 2012

IDEAS

are mostly packaging—
a toy box with nothing in it,
all cardboard and bright images,
nothing inside.

We buy labels
(independence, integrity, freedom)
and die for them.

17.X.12

= = = = =

Catching things as they fall

there is a sky

and it is never far,

not even the stars

carry it away.

But some days it comes

closer to our faces —

that freshness in the air

is sky returning

to our embrace.

We think we have

to take care of the earth,

no, the earth

takes care of us.

What we hurt

is always ourselves.

Or we are the earth

and sky loves us,

only sky knows why.

18 October 2012

= = = = =

Carry over. Carry on.

Keep the misery under the door.

How. Rage

from what dogs have.

There was a coyote

on the lawn. Day *Tz'i*

that kind of dog.

A wolf at anchor

under the maple

yes. But years

also know how to stay.

1972 is with us still,

awkward, pimped music,

sleek as purple. See.

Follow the fact

the feel gives. Esther

was a starry queen,

Rachel a sheep. Animals

everywhere. Everything

you can *name*

is an animal.

Infinite zoo

this thinking business.

Only enough gas

to fly with

we call it air.

This morning is trapped

in terminology,

the Iroquois civilized

the settlers. Teeth

and telling time,

telling the name

of each day.

“Medicine of time”

tired of knowing so little

he opened another eye

saw the days slip past

chanting some language

scarily new

he had to learn,

he learned

to apologize

to everyone

and they all answered.

Apology is a way of making

things aware of themselves

so that they begin to speak

apology makes things

answer. An answer

is the same as forgiveness.

Day 5-Sinner repentant

my hand held out
forgive me please
I have wanted wrong
and seldom reckoned.
Listen to me
with your hand too
makes the one of us
complete in each.
Think they will always
make me talk
or think me away
to forgive me the sky.

18 October 2012