

5-2012

mayA2012

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "mayA2012" (2012). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 152.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/152

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.

THE OIL OF LIGHT

consorts the day.

Oboe weather—

Sleep, Love, it is not yet the dawn

he sang though dawn

had come and stayed a while

and was not yet gone

a sentence started speaking

before I was born

I catch the last few words of it

or maybe it still goes on.

1 May 2012

= = = = =

Tell love
the way you tell time
watching the shadow
move across a cheek
and show the covert bones
beneath the kisses,
the sheer person who
fulfills you. The lover.
Tell the lover
the way you tell the truth,
counting the beads of it
every last one.

1 May 2012

= = = =

Looking for listening
the world as image
swept by in a book
I translated this
into milk—you drank it
before I was born.

I saw a meadow full of poppies
daffodils forget-me-nots
I drove across it in my little car
with such round wheels such
round wheels and yellow spokes

and green leather lariats
trailed loosely from my hands
but you saw the restless
surface of the sea
you almost drowned in your seeing
in what you thought you saw
but I hauled you up and out
from the harmless grass
and still you kept seeing water, water
all the while the milk was soft on your lip,

milk of time

to come, taste
of the future
I spill you now
German books and Irish manners
listen close to what I dare not say

why are there so
many people on the moon
why is one hand
smarter than the other
who are they anyway
and why is morning?

I love your questions
they're like a glimpse of skin
between shirt and skirt
some words are older than others
a fresh etymology of now

but why are feelings?
Why do you care what I think
or why do I feel anything at all
when I look at you
or even at nothing and the grass
stretches out like the sea?

I saw a meadow full of flowers

and they all were mine
you saw the ocean and it soaked your feet,
came to me in wet socks,
god, you said, how we get lost in what we see

I took you in my car
and we went to the place
where going always goes
and we were there an hour
before you heard the sea coming back—

I tried to calm you with my flowers
dried between your toes with soft green moss
but you were terrified
of all those restless waves to come,
the sea-words, the godly surfers,
the little ships like lobsters
slow toppling on the shore,
the wet wind's incessant exhortations,

I have given you poppies yellow and red
but you gave them to the sea
and the waves talked everything away.

2 May 2012

= = = = =

Are you young enough to change?
Those wrinkles you see in the old
represents convictions, prejudices,
every crease a fixed idea.

Are you young enough to change?
“...weep to see
that quarried cartilage
grow old”
 sheer weariness
of thinking what you think,

weariness of holding what you hold.

2 May 2012

= = = = =

When we re member the harbor that
 is a ship we are the light itself is
 pure separation we island slow intemperate
 the animal war canoe a bird

and there was a shirt lying in the stairwell
 black lisle cotton as may be another island
 heap of clothes all that's left of don't
 count the numbers the numbers are too sacred

to play baby blocks with adding or taking away
 the numbers are gods today is six in the house of four
 the prisoner with a shard of chalk draws the moon
 on the cell wall over the years what he has drawn

learns to wax like the sky thing and wane
 this comforts the prisoner all the lines
 in his head are silent now he has forgiven
 all his betrayers his mind is like milk now

chalky smooth sometimes through the haze he sees
 a girl with a pony-tail jogging slow through his trees
 she is the island the priest comes but no confession
 this is a car a prison a stone

go with me all the way to the wall
they wont let us have hammer and nails we
in our wisdom study our shadows on the stone
noting resemblances the differences the sly

surprises of shape the distortions of identity
that charm us so we cry out we lecture the shadows
they listen everything listens sometimes they speak
until night takes our little world away.

3 May 2012

= = = = =

Island a lone man in a chair
sea's a road with trees

no one moving
so he must be everywhere

he must be everyone.

3.V.12

TANIST

1.

He was a king of Norway I consider
 beer is the ocean on which warfare sails
 he has his descendants scattered through our blood
 it is unlikely that he could read Greek
 but strangely we can, Darwin's Natural
 Agency permits so much—what
 did we exchange when we kissed
 so lightly barely brushing the lips wet lips
coram populo and nobody slept?
 Big for a fight and big for hearing a tin harp struck
 Karelian girlfriends with their humming *kanteles*.
 A lip is an investigation, a word its result.
Word is consequence. Father begotten by the son.

2.

So sacred kingship still our business here
 penis sheath and bullroarer, the Cambridge school
 invented the primitive world, till then
 they were just us, Bluetooth or Strathclyde Picts
 or on the Hill of Tara we two one time slept.

3.

Yearning words into music, the young
poet at the prince's knees, not knowing
whether kiss or kill, suck or bite
the royal member off. Words escape him
and all he ever has is words. Don't ask me
I was a king once, held all and all forgot.

4.

Wet things fall. Or let them. Human forms
from falling towers, dark shapes against the
fire fall. Things to remember in the fall.
You could have written music if you chose.
But they choose for us, the ones who fall.
Octopus weather, this air touches everywhere
no bones to speak of, word-weary busy
as an archeologist in dirt as I should be.

5.

Don't lose the bandwidth. Nietzsche
on the line, the whole century shaped by him,
permanent revolution, what else
can *sich überwinden* mean? Eternal
uprising. The king's head in your lap too.

4 May 2012

= = = = =

All animals are diseases
Not just cancer the crab and lupus the wolf
All animals are human ailments
And their cures, arthritis is the snake
That snakebite cures, the cat's leukemia
Kills the unsuspecting child unless

I don't know what, I only know
The terrifying proposition: *every beast*
Represents a human ailment
And its cure. There. I've said it clearly.
It's up to you to make it true.

2.

But who are you?
Or another question in another time,
They struck down Caesar to take his place,
How many sesterces to drive that one knife in?

3.

Because disease is the animal name for capital,
The thing once gotten can't get rid of.
Go back to Freud and start again—don't lose
Sight of what must get told. And only one ever

Is there to tell it. In an anechoic chamber
You hear only your own heartbeat your own blood
The chyme turning in your belly. Trust that.
Trust what you hear yourself think
Below the jittery lexicon of thinking.

4 May 2012, Hopson

THE SIGNAL

1.

But friction holds you
and the man decides—

be certain, sophomores,
of these green aisles
they lead you lead you
whither the man decides
the man the mind the over one—

veer not and see if good deer
walk with you along the some and some—
everything's a river, boss, everything knows.

2.

A mes élèves I spoke like that
a wind in the desert of their music
meaning,

 stay awake and kiss the cross
your bodies form and is.

Revolution just means a people
throws off their foreign masters
and enslave themselves,

self-government the hell it is because the self's
in gell and lives there all the time
in bondage. By very nature self is serf.

3.

They answered me
speaking from afar.
This doesn't sound like me,
it sounds more like a bicycle bell
chiming in the wilderness of trees
the roots are serpents and weird birds chirp.

4.

I stopped and was astonished at the sound
unheard before, a ghostly magical
summonsing as if meaning at me—
in sun I stood unsure if bird had sung
or if some prankster chid me from the trees.
It was an old time in which I stood,
I could not go on walking, all round me instead
that single unfamiliar call-note built
an airy tent of strangeness all around me,

an indoor feeling fallen through the trees
from that one sound. It told and told
and helped the sun go down. Then it gave way
to silence, I was free to keep walking down the hill,
the car, the beautiful ordinary back again
safe from that mystery, an actual bird.

5 May 2012

LET ROSE ARISE

I came from reading Goethe
into the wet wind,
all his nameless hetairas
cloaked again scuttled away.

It is but day. The roses
aren't. Something arises.
Not about penetration. The wind
touches everywhere and passes.

No diseases. No remorse.
So the moon this night
is closer to the earth than ever.
And opposite the sun or 'full'
though she (or he we once thought)

is never less than ample—
it is the sun can be chary
with her (his) own light.

For sun was a woman once
and still cheers and sears
and maddens us with her light.

5 May 2012

= = = = =

So Plato was walking around
under the full moon, hearing
in the middle distance common
music, It bothered him, tunes
hummed, beats hammered out,
and the words, there were words
but he couldn't make them out,
went along in the old Lydian mode
(not the mediaeval one, the ancient,
probably our C major scale). Sad.
Bummed out in moonlight. It made
him want to make love, stole
the juices war and wisdom needed
and war needs all the jizm it can get.
We make war because we can't think
clearly. We can't think because Eros
is straight arrow and thinking's round,
moves all ways at once when love's
just one. He thought of some of the bodies
he had known so well, their minds
a little less clear, and all the thwarted
rendezvous of anybody's life. It's spring,
the moon at perigee—the road to the moon
is ten times the circumference of the earth.
There must be a rule. There must be a truth.

He stopped walking and recognized
the music had stopped too. The moon
was still there. And that too is some
sort of natural law, how long is art?
Will the moon one day come close,
come home to this ardent puzzled earth
that longs for her, that longs for everything?
He would not dignify such thoughts as thinking.

5 May 2012