

8-2013

aug092013

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aug092013" (2013). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 161.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/161

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.

= = = = =

Why is it raining
only behind the house?

Is the street too simple
for its complex math,

too flat, monochrome,
of no interest to the *Folk*

of Waters Over
who perform such wonders

with grass and trees
and here and there *une*

fleur just to be sure.

9 August 2013

= = = = =

I spend a life waiting for the borders to open—
I'm still in Paris, summer '54,
the German frontier closed, cholera in the Rhineland,
I never left, I never came home
I'm in a café on the Place Maubert
and the only language I understand is rain.

9 August 2013

= = = = =

Only be small
and lift the lid
not even knowing
it's good to eat

or where they went
all the people you knew,
in this silence you
are almost real.

9 August 2013

for Nathlie, the Violet Painting

It's one of those pictures
that change everything.

It differs me
From what I was
Before I saw

And then I understand
It's not me that's changed
Alone but that images
Dare to look
Out at us again
As once before
A Virgin or a Cardinal could,
Accepting the truth
Of being utterly seen.

9 August 2013

= = = = =

Waiting for more
then a door

the rain
is my only brain

today the pleasure
of thinking along with it,

the shaggy wet trees.

I have to understand this thing or die.

9 August 2013

= = = = =

“these are the forgeries of jealousy”
she said and then the world implicit
spoke finally out loud *Name*
your child Titania and be her girl
forever after for now I see
the writing on the table, the oak
that Shakespeare gouged one sober night
between looking out the window
seeing her pass and looking back.
O saint Ambiguity be my flash!

9 August 2013

= = = = =

In time the word
drifts away from the page—
but only in time
that servant of ours with
ideas of his own.
Or one idea— he
passes and we try to stay.

He envies our stability
and urges us along,
coaxing every hour—

bad teeth, a word lost from the page.
The unforgettable leaves an absence in the heart.

10 August 2013

Narwhal tusk
or horn
 or love
in a dream
in the middle of the head,

a shimmering, half-
imaginary animal,
make-up round her eyes
messy when she cries—
some of our friends seem
not long for this world—
we live in a time of goings.
Death, and other dreams.

10 August 2013

= = = = =

A darker scheme
like a pigeon on the roof.
There are no pigeons here
although we're all related,
Jews and Italians, bluejay
bothering silence, we got here
in a dream, the long haul
over the ocean prairie
they said was the sea.
I am a long time ago.
I had a roof with pigeons on it.
What would Charles have said?
Carry your street with you when you go.

10 August 2013

SIDHE

An Irish or lolder
blessing the way
she comes and slips
her tongue in your
mouth, the the tip
of it for you
to sip the new
wisdom from
her always world.
This one taste
opens your ears
forever after.

10 August 2013

MOUSE

The moves we make
disdaining the animal's
soft reprisals,
that tenderness it
jabs heart to see—
Be simple, it is a small
person with fur, it looks
up at you as you look at the tree
in your backyard,
will it fall?

Everything is at risk.

Be easy, creature,

for a while.

I am your mother.

11 August 2013

= = = = =

Wait for the tree to know me
ha! the Japanese
have been waiting for centuries
and see? cryptomeria wood,
carven image of Kwannon,
body of compassion.

11 August 2013

=====

The Perseids are coming
don't count them.

Write down quick
whatever you were saying
or thinking when you see
each one. They know
(these meteors, manticores,
fabulous beasts of light,
of like substance with all you think)
all the flashes in your mind.
They know you and only you
can ever tell.

11 August 2013

OPHELIA

Ophelia in the Russian condenser
trapped there, born there?
not clear. Is there a difference?
I found her there, there is a purring
or whining at times in the device
that is her lost self. Then I am water
and bid her drown in me —
that death in me will not hurt her,
she'd survive pink and various
with flowers in her eyes and her hands
full of coming and going.

But how to get her
out of the machine.
I don't speak Russian
but I try to condense, condense,
thicken the air around the condenser
till it implodes. Is that what will happen?
Where will my blood go to rest
if I thicken it that much?
Let us call the Russian condenser
my heart (why?) and let's say Ophelia
is trapped in me. (I don't even know her,
we've never even met,

she's just one more deluded girl
in a lifetime of obsessions).
But let's say it and see what happens.
The condenser roars
like a fridge on a hot day
trying to keep up.
Ophelia, I cry, Ophélie I try
in French, Opal, Nephel,
Nehi, baby baby
honey honey here I'm.
How do I even know that she's in there
or anybody,
it said so when I slept
and sleep commands all the wakers.
Good soldier, do what I'm told.
Write it. Blood in the dust,
trickle of sweat on dusty skin,
see. See.
Try to see everything
like a man born blind.

2.

The Russian condenser condenses everything.
That's its art.
Or that is art.
Why Russian? Russians take so long
to do anything. Tolstoy Dostoyevsky Mussorgsky

Taneyev Solzhenitsyn. But then Osip came,
slim-lipped almond stem, quick
as a child's locomotive
rushing round the Christmas tree,
elegant as a new dish,
truthful, sweet, so
Russians can condense, is he
the one, Ophelia lost in Mandelstam?
What girl is lost in a poem
today, or is it a poet
or history or some bad book
because too thick.

I lost you in Mandelstam

I cry but no reply
except the machine hum or drone
or whine or groan or chatter.
And now not even that — because
it is the dream machine and I'm awake.
Now anybody lost has to get lost in me.

12 August 2013

=====

The court is out
and will never come back.
We'll never know.
We're all guilty
until proven innocent.
The building is dark.
No one answers when we call.

12 August 2013