

3-2014

marG2014

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marG2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 183.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/183

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THE ICEBOATS AT ROKEBY

From my point of view
I'd rather be closer to the action
where the ice actually meets the sunrays
and decrystallization starts—

the iceboats under Barrytown
slither fast along the slush
coaxed by the north wind—we
live all solid winter for this hour

but I stay hpme, I,
who am the feeblest part of us,
the skeptic, the timid, the myopic,
the absentee landlord of the clouds.

2.

So spring me no raptures
on swift mahogany hulls
of someone's grandpa's time,
I stay at home. But honor

here, sheer as Pindar,
the exploits of those who even
stand on the ice of tidal rivers
testing Newton and making guarddian
angels fret,

let alone those
who skim along the surface
inches over an opposing current
(said river flows both ways)
could in a moment sweep them under

then farewell Love and all the loco venery
pf not quite springtime.

3.

And the girl made him do it,
walk to the frtozen island over
the frozen tide. That made
uneasy rendezvous among scrubby
pines and boulders of the rock
they skidded their way to
and soon departed.

O the hoots

**of laughter in the heart of desire,
laugh at yourself for wanting,
laugh for having, laugh for having had,
as in the famous sonnet, laugh
for lack of a more sinister dismay ,
the shame that melts this kindly
discreet and isolating ice away.**

27 March 2014

=====

**When the eye-glance
slivers down to a slit
of the seen, the painting turns
into a door, narrow
but you can open it

and sometimes go through.**

27 March 2014

=====

**A bagpipe band in Staatsburg
a new blinker on 9G in Tivoli/
Set my people free.**

27 March 2014

POLITY

1.

**Agitation in the lower house
the Senate sleeping upstairs
the nation has tinnitus
interminable speeches at the rostrum
the hum of nothingness
to block all change.**

2.

**Orpheus wakes up in hell,
pulses throbbing in his temples,
forgets all about Eurydice,
who's she?**

The buzz

**of dying insects fills the air,
hell is the silence of the father,
the noise of everything else.**

3.

The siege continues.

There is no peace.

The city has always been surrounded.

Some citizens escape to the country

where the trees watch them.

Sometimes there is a quiet

they mistake for a message

from someone who is not there.

Is never there.

They go back to the trembling streets

and whisper of what they have seen,

the Lamb slain in the sky

dying in its own blood

the farmers told them was the Sun.

27 March 2014

=====

The years

engage.

The chariots

tumble past,

each warrior

a name

almost forgotten,

turn a blind eye

on what just happens.

For this is form

and Form

is lovely, nurturing

by its nature

and when

we have seen

the form of things

we are complete.

27 March 2014, Kingston

HAYDN

First cello

concerto,

Starker, car

radio,

gleam

of sun on a shopping cart

stranded roadside

cars pass quick.

27 March 2014, Kingston

=====

**The girls of Brooklyn
wore pale satin blouses
they could hardly keep tucked in
snug waistbands of their modest skirts—
to think that this is all I know about the world!**

2.

**I who was a senator of grammar
and vice-president of theodicy
smiling right and left
with a graham cracker in each hand
barely remember the Murtha girls
who lived around the corner
on Sutter Avenue where the gulls
from the coast came to dawn patrol.**

3.

**Or even closer to the bay
at Santa Fortunata's
annual autumn bash**

**the bigger girls whose names
I never got to know wore black
and purple on their tawny arms
and smiled in dark places
between the gaudy booths
oil vat boiling up the zeppole
huge clacketing wheel of the tombola.**

4.

**Is that enough recall,
Dr. Semaphore?
Can I go back to sleep now,
the comfy dream called
ordinary everyday,
this now and no remember?**

28 March 2014

=====

Blue is a kind of green
isn't it? The grass
that covers the sky.

You kissed me once
and that too was a mistake,
wrong mixture in the beaker

made the litmus turn bright blue.
Never mind who,
if the kiss fits, share it.

There are so few left
to lose, so many to fear—
no wonder I keep wishing

I was still the altar boy
I never was, sure
of wide green fields, sea birds,

**marshlands where the streets end,
a dog at the door,
the nearsighted stars.**

28 March 2014

=====

Help. I have a hawk in the head.

It harries everywhere, fierce

single eye is all I see

on all I see. The fine

discriminations of a bird's eye

finding the world to prey on.

To consume. Help.

The hawk always ready to fly.

28 March 2014

=====

dlya Mashi

The 'infinite wall'
white wood curved
fiddle-form out
to bell around who
knows what would
have to be white ribs
bowed out ivory
round human thorax
where the heart has
its house, four rooms
of boundless space
bone wall around infinity.

28 March 2014

=====

Listen, April,
it's time
for you
to come
again, big
breasted with flowers,
make a diva
of our back lawn.
a Russian general's
chest of the meek flowerbed
around the birdbath,

come with your hair
full of forsythia,
come with your wild
ducks and blackbirds,
lilacs on all your fingers.

29 March 214

=====

I'm tired of what I don't know
ignorances gnaw at me
annoying as joggers on quiet morning—
what can they be fleeing? where is there
so worth running to? who are they
sweating in baseball caps, dogs
trotting easy by the master's desperate rush.
See, I have drifted into prejudices.
Damn dog. Damn fitness. Damn exercise.
They're all just cover-ups for ignorance—
just sit in your awkward armchair and grow wise:
make a list of all that you don't know,
start with Adam's mother and then go on
to what date to whittle on your tombstone.
And who was Robin Hood? And where
would you get if you got up right now
and started running, yes, with all those dog-
besotted sweat-pants wearing narcissists out there
panting their pilgrimage to Jerusalem?

29 March 2014

LEARNING CURVE

1.

Cloud cover

front of house

out back

still sun

then not.

So much

to figure out.

2.

Daedals and hoplites

hierodules and parasangs.

Everything fits together

but in what? And where?

3.

Dilapidations. Spirited

rebuttals of small religions

already on the ropes.

Beleaguer me

**with information, I
am a mistake all
ready to make myself.**

4.

**Once I thought
I knew about
the city but
it was the city
knew about me.**

29 March 2014

=====

Even if I did know better
im not sure better is the name for it
broken cabbage heads strewn behind the Stop & Shop
pale cars already at dawn cruising down 9G—
all this should mean nothing to me
but in fact it has its arms around my life
like the goddess Tiamat in the old stories
who wrapped herself around everything
so they would wake and breed and sleep again
and feed her with the infinity of their dreams.

29 March 2014