

12-2010

## decF2010

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "decF2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 307.  
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Who am I fooling?

Nobody understands.

There's nothing for them to work with,

just colors on my hands

I leave on their skin—

what kind of testament is that?

I knew you, now you are blue.

23 December 2010

= = = = =

It snowed. I have a cold.

It is a human thing.

It would be no different in Japan.

In Ancient Greece though

someone would be after me

clutching his cold bronze spear.

23 December 2010

= = = = =

I am incorrigible  
like a dirigible  
over your picnic

spying on you from my gondola  
and blocking your sunshine  
I hover

These words right here  
right now are shadows  
quiveringly opaque.

23 December 2010

## CAITLÍN

C: Hello?

M: Hello, is that Catchleen?

C: We say Kate-Linn over here.

M: Could it be I know your name better than you do?

C: Anything is possible—tell me more.

M: You are fleshy and a little moist, on weekends you wear glasses so you  
can see people in the park better.

C: Right so far.

M: And on Thursday nights, because the weekend is so close, you celebrate  
the waning workweek by eating Thai.

C: Vietnamese. If I can get it. Beef Seven Ways.

M: May I touch your thigh?

C: We're on the phone—I'd have to do your touching for you.

M: Will you?

C: I don't even know what you look like.

M: What do looks have to do with it?

C: Appearances are everything. Beauty is skin deep. That's why you look  
at women.

M: I can't even see you. That's why I want to touch you.

C: With me doing the touching?

M: Right. Will you?

C: I might, but you'd never know. I might do it and not say so. I might not  
do it but say I did. I might touch myself somewhere else. And you'd  
never know, It all depends.

M: Depends on what?

C: On whether I wanted to please you or please myself.

M: I'm flattered to think that my touch, even second-hand and from afar,  
could possibly please you.

C: As I said, anything is possible. I don't know what you look like.

M: That again!

C: I don't know who you are.

M: I like the sound of your voice.

C: Me too.

*[pause]*

M: I love your name, the way the Irish say it.

C: Not all of them.

M: That's true. How about you?

C: What do you mean?

M: Deep deep down, when you're at the bottom of yourself, how do you say  
your name?

C: I don't talk down there. Certainly not to myself. Not in human language.

M: What kind would you use?

C: Never mind.

M: But if you did say your name....?

C: Since I don't do it, if I did do it, I'd be somebody else, and have a  
different name.

M: Then I could call you up and pronounce your name correctly.

C: You wouldn't have my number.

M: I'd find it.

C: But you wouldn't know my name. I could be any name, any number.

M: That's true. But there must be some way...there usually is.

C: I don't know your name, for instance.

M: Why haven't you asked?

C: It wouldn't mean anything to me. One name is as good as another for a voice on the phone.

M: Suppose I told you my name was John?

C: I'd say you were lying.

M: Why would you think that?

C: Because men lie, men always lie.

M: Not always.

C: You're right, men just mostly lie.

M: I guess that's true.

C: Is it John?

M: No. That's why I said 'suppose'.

C: That was decent of you, honest even—sorry I missed it.

M: Someday we'll be talking all the time, we won't even need the phone.

C: You mean everybody everywhere, like telepathy?

M: No, I mean you and me.

C: When will we get anything done, if we're talking all the time?

M: What is there to do?

C: That's true.

M: And if there's anything to be done, we can always do it in our sleep.

C: I have to go now.

M: Where?

C: Nowhere, it's just an expression for getting off the phone.

M: It's a little like a lie, isn't it?

C: I'm hanging up now. Good bye.

M: So am I.

23 December 2010

## NORTH NOT

Fight white squalor.

No *arktos*. No anarch.

Not north man.

Northwestman.

The Swedes etc. only got to knowing/singing their Eddas  
when they moved west and south,  
the ones down the Volga didn't do it,

only west, where the Irenman had gone before  
churching the rocky islets,  
churning the ocean of language  
that it be ready

when the north moved west.

Mark this, and mark the dingy  
sordid town we've made out of Alashka,

west, where they pried the words out  
of sunset and green islands.

Run me till I run out of north  
into the west and then I'll mean.

The directions count. I mean there is not only one north.  
The north that counts is the north that comes with me  
when I move west, when I do things like love and speak.



The other north, people live shabby there,  
everything cracks but the will  
but the will to what?

Sad citizens of afterbirth  
squalid because drink  
but they do not drink as in the gardens of Jamshyd  
where wisdom is wet on the lip.

24 December 2010

## GRAIN

It has to be denser  
the grain, too many knotholes  
and your plank splits.  
We want clear pine  
bright, continuous, a text  
with room for itself, to *vector*  
the skill grain forth.

24 December 2010

= = = = =

They walk around the world  
the world knows.  
The stroke of pen on paper  
is enough to make  
something on my table shake—

think of what the crows  
are doing to the lawn!  
Their tread brought  
down from heaven  
heals the earth hard.

24 December 2010

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Your name tells you what you're running from—  
stare it down—look your name in the eye and say No.

24.XII.10

= = = = =

All these envelopes from Christmas cards  
lettuce left on the diner blueplate,  
unnutritious. Yet these empty envelopes  
were licked by their tongues, bear  
quintessences of body-mind discourse  
as sacred spit. The cards themselves  
were only bought or writ.

24 December 2010

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If I wrote one number before the other  
would it change the wind, make  
the tide flood untimely in  
and the moon weep?

Be good

when it comes to numbers,  
polyvalent toxicities. But two  
men holding up the sky.

24 December 2010

= = = = =

But among believers  
the moment of sunset  
must never be witnessed.  
Each carries a dark handkerchief  
called *osnat*, 'wall'  
that he'll whip out and hold  
between his eyes and the setting  
sun if there's no house or hill  
to hide from it. The golden  
radiance around he is allowed  
to see once he's past puberty.

24 December 2010

**from the Urdu**

You do not know me  
but I am closer to you than your name,  
you have never seen me  
but my eyes are on you always.

When you slip on your clothes  
I am between the silk and your skin  
you barely even feel me  
except by knowing that everything is right

you are ready for love  
and the world is very big around you  
though it is I who make you happy  
you know me only as your pleasure.

24 December 2010



= = = = =

When I look in the mirror  
it tells me all its lies  
pretends I'm the same one  
who looked in yesterday

twenty years ago fifty  
years ago, the faces change  
the mirror stays the same.  
Just once I want to see

a difference in that glass  
someone I've never seen  
never pretended to be.  
Hear what he'll say to me.

24 December 2010

***INTERMEZZO***

As much as he loved her  
the composer had to tell a story—  
she was jealous, was pettish,  
excused herself and blamed him—

for this was opera, people  
had to laugh at married people's  
little contretemps, the letter  
gone astray, the telltale hair.

But in between the silly words  
the music worked, told  
a different story, as in the Sixth  
Orchestral Intemezzo

in the opera called *Intermezzo*  
the real composer poured  
the deepest sensuous passion  
of tenderness for his real wife,

four minutes of beauty<sup>1</sup>  
with no hint of irony, four  
minutes of telling the truth  
at last no words will let.

24 December 2010

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning at 62'30" of the Felicity Lott 1990 performance

*for Charlotte, Christmas 2010*

But it's you I have to tell,  
how you look now and bring  
in any season freshness with you  
when you come in, the calm  
clarity of your skin, the noble  
uplift of your profile—I see  
so many ways of you I need  
and know and wake up happy  
knowing. What can a man  
say but what you mean to him,  
I can't presume to explicate  
the you of you. There's always  
more, I think, but what I think  
is just more of me, you spur me  
to say everything and know  
everything and talk about everything,  
silenced only when I try to speak  
ordinary words about the truth of you.

24 December 2010













