

2-2013

febB2013

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febB2013" (2013). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 327.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/327

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.

=====

**Unwearied consciousness between
one movement of the sonata and the next—
hold still that urgent light
the only silent thing in all this world.**

4.II.2013

=====

**To act in friendship
ordinary animal
hurry to your genesis
thick lines full of mystery
we wait for weather**

**we may be here to love our aftermath
the *sillage* of our souls
we have no souls you know what I mean
raspberries on those prickly twigs
sweet sharp taste in the ever after**

**is that enough to tell you
before you start praying
the dome is formed from interlocking wills
the fire of desire fuses them to make
one ardent recurving surface the mind house**

**a day off in the clouds like Yellowstone
round her the glint of winter
new cars have come to answer us
they tumble out like bewildered police
competent enough but where's the crime**

**where are the answers I was born to give
the canned goods dusty on the pantry shelf
the white bark of the sycamore decides the sky
a little red truck rolls by means something
hazy clouds have covered what we meant.**

4 February 2013

HOPELESS ALTERNATIVES

That things wear out
or there are more of them
more trees than me

exhaust the winter
or suck time
plucked from the watch

factory one smudge
of fine oil
corner of your mouchoir

handkerchief to fling
flies off with
or shade your eyes

when you nap
in broad daytime
señor, you are old

and the small woman
with corn hair
remembers another country

**on the other side of the moon
and every single night
she comes from there**

**on her wrist a little watch
its numbers glow in the dark
you're never safe from seeing.**

5 February 2013

INSTRUCTION TO THE PAINTER

**Give me something I can hang on the wall
stick a candle under it and call it god
or study it till I'm full of an essay on art
or I can show it to my mother and make her smile.**

5 February 2013

NABUCCO

**The radio signal flickers in and out
teaching Verdi a few postmodern tricks
the chorus of Hebrew slaves
persists out loud, they yearn,
we all yearn, for liberation**

**but from what? From discontinuity
of lucid mental processes,
from losing the thread, from scattered
mind, from chatter, from masters evil or benign,
from nnything that can't be read as sign.**

5 February 2013

=====

Vox coelestis

a boy in a box

high in the dome

angeling a tone

down on all

the lower voices

everybody has to

be at home

where their

voice sounds

and when all chime

the dead awaken.

5 February 2013

=====

**I only smile when I see my shadow
it makes me think I'm really here
real enough to break the light
from everywhere on everything
except where the darkness of my nature
casts itself on grass or sidewalk
and the city springs up around me.
Because the 13 million people of Kolkota
are all phantoms of me, only me,
I break the light eight billion times
and the planet's full of me, nowhere
can I find another but in you
the one who will not talk to me, the one
who casts no shadow or only on my heart.**

5 February 2013

(poem beginning with a phrase by Mariel Norris)

=====

**The cars converging
and who am I among them
the kiss on the daybed
robo-lawnmower so small
a city back yard
got sent out for celery
but did not go not me
I told the joke wrong
wrong joke wrong kiss
too red. Then the milk
gurgling into gallon jugs
straight from the cow
there are mechanisms
for all things how quick
she changed her clothes
someone you barely know
enfranchised by dream
her opal ring tin lacquered
badge from North Korea
in dream everything is gold
a dream is patriotic
in its very nature every
thing belongs to me.
Her hair. The milk.**

6 February 2013

=====

**Have just enough time to get to the day
compile the index of tomorrow**

**one of those mornings the sky deserts us
we see nothing but ourselves
our blue shadows on the white earth—**

**keep the dream your precious secret
it's the only thing you really have.**

6 February 2013

=====

**But what you know about everything
is wrong. Winter is closer to the sun
the trees are upside down. A road
makes you go. Remember the Maine
ambergris on pebbled beach, the dead
fish dried out hard as wood on the rock?
Remember spoken language? Remember night?**

6 February 2013

=====

**I like numbers, like to think
about them, like to count
birds and trees and freight cars.
But I don't like to write them down.
Writing is for naming things.
Infinity scares me, finity appals.
I can't look an eight in the eye.
If I say them they just pass me by.**

6 February 2013

THE NIGHT PERFORMANCE

1.

walking all the way there
and being dark. Being dark
with you and inside you
maybe even darker.

I am the stone

you swallowed
when you were a child,
I have turned
into everything you ever learned since,
all the anger all the moons above
all the housetops in your town.
City. Naked ocean with the waves
holding up the stars
that guide you. You can't
so easy get away from me.

2.

This sounds menacing
is not meant to be.
It's only me.
A rattle in the jungle:
children play at being
priests. They are mocked
by skeptics and evangelicos

they tell me. They are children,
hence natural priests.

They believe nothing, there is
nothing to believe. They do
everything. Everything is there
waiting for them. For you.
Even here in the dark inside you
I can feel their pale hands.

3.

So now it is evening and the blackbirds
have gone home. The trees I know are full of them
down by the river. I roll around
in your belly. You hate me
again. But after a time the sliver of the old moon
rises and you relent. You are
what I am, a victim of appetite.
In the higher branches vultures nest,
and they keep early hours too.
Try to believe me. Rub your fingers
over the part of you where you think
or think I am. Here. Press
so even I can feel you. Why
did it happen this way? And for
that matter why is the moon?

6 February 2013

NOCTURNE

1.

Organic mandarin
cuffed with obsolescent
vocabulary items as
a lark broke
cover from a cloud
and there we were
a tune out of breakfast
hook to hang roses on
in baskets from Iran.
All this was beauty
twice. And then again.

2.

Transport to never. Night.
Try to recover the bird's nest
from the sea cliff swallow
spit and aspen twigs,
then time brought horse
and man across the plain—
vastation where they passed—
priests hoist manuscripts
to catch the last light
and give something back.

3.

Sotto voce

but what about

the undervoice

so quiet

the one we hear

all the time

telling in us

before we ever

let it out

if ever? The current

runs, the moon's

reflection quivers,

trembles but stays.

6 February 2013

POSTCARD

**And all the while the thunder waits
in some other county
above the old red brick town hall
the Civil War soldiers green in bronze
heft their sabers o poor delinquents
of a fancied Union, when no one living
speaks the language they died to save.**

6 February 2013

=====

Weather follows war.

The more guns the more storms.

**This is fact. Read your map
shows all.**

**Where men are angry
the elements divide. Decide
against one another.
Earthquake. Tsunami. Typhoon.**

7 February 2013

=====

O crow my road

I listen

to the tree too

as you do

beneath you

above me.

We fly

from where we stand

become at last

what we are.

You there before me.

7 February 2013