

2-2013

febC2013

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febC2013" (2013). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 323.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/323

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 trouble with Aristotle
no word for sky
that doesn't have you in it.**

7 February 2013

=====

**Music student trudges up hill
Confucius Mao Bach and mother
weighing her down. Her father
weeps far away in broken sleep.**

7 February 2013

=====

**Bus drive by with open door
let winter in, bus
go back and forth, nobody
stay on it for long.**

7.II.13

OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC

I hear on the radio
deep-voiced choir: a Russian Mass
there are interruptions as the signal
cuts in and out, changing the words,
pomiluy, have mercy, *vieky viekov*,
through all ages of ages the words
change, chip away at the sense
a thousand years, how can we
understand the words
after so many lives?

The words

grow with us, always
as young as we are.
This deep tuned silence.

7 February 2013

=====

**Someone looks at me
is the same as hearing
what they're thinking
but any words there are**

broken, like water.

7 February 2013

=====

**In the moon when
deer walk hungry down the hill
the stars between snowstorms
are especially clear.**

**How long I've been reading them,
so long I hardly ever
look up to see them
and when I do I see**

my eyes are dim now.

**After a lot of life
the stars are mostly inside you
only a few up there**

you still can see.

7 February 2013

=====

**An hour in another country
almost home
the voices like seafoam
hushed on the rock**

**but what if they never stopped singing
and the real birds had to flee
from the storm of insinuated desires
all music breathes?**

**and what if even I
were listening, hearing their urgencies
but never knowing who they are who sing,
isn't that the great quiet grief of heaven**

where they have, almost all of them, forgotten the earth?

7 February 2013

=====

**Revise me,
the thing they do with raisins
bitter aftertaste of lemons, of the sun**

**you watch them try to dance
by the marina, you climb
up to the headland
and watch them through binoculars—
all you can really see
is movement, it breaks your heart
and you can't tell why,**

**so many bodies young and old, plain
and glamorous, all moving
to a music too far away to hear**

**and your heart feels thick with sludge
which in a moment you recognize,
that's what's left of love,
bitter, heavy, strangely nourishing.**

7 February 2013

=====

**Cast a word to be obvious
before the great snow
predict me an answer
to write on the ground
the wau frat boys drunk
at prairie schools mow
vulgar words deep
in thr growing fields
only birds or planes or gods
can see and be shocked by.
Vulgar, from *vulgus*,
the crowd. They use
the words to help them think
there's someone there,
some city of real people
hidden in all that corn.**

8 February 2013

=====

**Write me a silence in the sky
could be a question or an answer
as long as it sounds like
somebody's there,**

**that kind of silence
when you're in an empty house at night
but know you're not alone.**

8 February 2013

=====

**Because they had porters
they traveled with trunks
umbrellas shotguns sitzbaths
duodecimo editions of the classics**

**and so they brought me here
to this snowy jungle up the river
far from the intelligible
gull cry of the nourishing sea**

**far inland, whimpering
day and night to be born,
really born, into a glorious
and multitudinous body**

**like the replica they left in heaven
to shine down on me some mornings
and explain all I had ceased to be
by taking on a name and being me.**

8 February 2013

=====

Still trying for another other
the Don flows down to the sea.
Titles of books, the thousand
kulaks slain, two million peasants
starve to death. Behind the arras
the father spies upon his daughter.
From the moon, a special angel
with poor eyesight watches us.
Did you hear what they just said?
It is snowing all around us
and all we see is white. Everything
has an explanation. Go to church
before the priests get there
and be alone with god,
whoever you find that to be.
In quiet, wearing white clothes,
a summer evening lost in memory.
Do you really think I'm cold
don't care won't move can't reach
out of the magic circle of my will
to make ordinary stuff happen
such as by inertia or by gravity?
Push hands. Orchestral music
Liszt's *Hungaria* we think—

he didn't speak the language
and I can't sing. Religion
is an excuse for architecture,
music, painting, cemetery
statuary, cypress trees
native to the Levant, I can't
stop worrying, it is a skill
infixd since childhood. Who
will deliver me from this
body of fear? As the apostle
asked, using the true name of fear.

2.

Maybe again. Here and then.
A game? A drink? A thing
shared, not necessarily all that
good for you. But there.
An intimate encounter by yourself
—who do you think that tree is
and are you sure this house is home?
So many doubters for one small
doubt. People at table waiting
to be served. Glasses. Silverware.
It is so quiet lovely they hardly
need the food. What would they eat?
Rose repoussé handle of the knife
the thick petals on the spoon.

3.

**A line in silver oxide drawn
darkens in our atmosphere.
The profile of the queen
quietly appears. I draw not,
so with my thickest pen
I write some name, some name
and hope it grows a person
and that one will talk to me.
But the wind is always waiting too
so who comes first? The sound
becomes flesh? The air
takes leave of us and we succumb
to where the wind has been?
No. From the name I swear
she will arise, her breath firm
will breathe a place for me to be.
There, that's what I see on the paper,
the glowing surfaces of light
come an intricate tantra of lines.
Fine lines. And any one of them
I follow leads me home. No.
Not home. No home but here.**

8 February 2013

THE INVADERS

**Coming anyhow end
mark the floreat
a woman of her time
descanting**

or what we hear

**madrigals in overcoats
in high school auditoriums
all the boys in crimson ties**

**sensory overload of being young
no wondrr tantrums
bone aches sudden swoons pf inattention,
sleeps.**

**I will give you my attention, love,
but will not pay it**

**then the chariots rolled in
of the Indo-Aryan paranoid lifestyle peoples
that is, the ones who made up history
and believe it still**

and teach it hard to frowning children.

Gentle people have no history

they dream the present

with lips and hands.

9 February 2013

=====

**Ovid things spring starts today
(bt warns of plenty winter left)
—Venus rising from the morning sea.**

9 February 2013

=====

**Narrow as an arrow
the hour goes by.
The snow is thick, sun
thin. We have words
for everthin,
more words than things.
Freedom. Peace. Liberty.**

9 February 2013

=====

4.

Or the wind is aspiration
from inward out
to breathe a decent world
by children—was I music once?
The wind the drifting snow
lost vocabulary of old men
they plow the roads and driveways
why don't they clean me
of my accreted misconceptions,
ring the bell, wake the Great
Unlearner and drag me in.
So much to forget—
far away and still at home
one more miracle of weather
I lost my chance to be a sailor
but still hold carefully one
clean water glass in my hand
shivering inside with secret light,
life, I wouldn't call anything so
lovely and lucid a goblet.

9 February 2013

=====

**But I need to say more
need to be more
things come upon me as I sleep**

**a smell of reason
fights against the magic images
that speak my dream**

**Awake, I say, but no one
in me listens. The drone
of soft evasion we call sleep**

**seems enterprise enough.
Under the dream trees
even the shaman is asleep.**

9 February 2013