

1-2011

janC2011

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janC2011" (2011). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 352.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/352

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The meaning of meaning you

something about snow, something

about flying down the air

with nothing for wings,

with no kind of wings

something about being there

in such a way that any room

organizes itself around you

I can't help it, it's love

makes you do all this

and love that lets me see you do it.

It is dumb and tremendous and all over you

like music when your mind's on something else.

But there is nothing else.

Just this, with you

sitting in the middle of it

having just come back from everywhere.

Something about a boat in the sky,
something about jungles, something about a smile.

I look at you like a little boy
who has just found the book he always wanted to read,
I mean the man hoping for it all his life.

9 January 2011

= = = = =

There are things

that have faces.

They face us.

Lustrous with distance

to see them is

to be caressed.

This disperses

and regathers.

There is water

on it often

and no ship.

Where would one

come or go from

to be here

he asked I had

no answer but edges

things sometimes

activate the space
between you have

go slow to hear
them one of us said.

10 January 2011

=====

Getting ready to be right,
write:

The Wrong of Winter

not by Stravinsky. What
do mortals know of winter?
We who have eaten all
the colors know
all the dialects of light.
A shudder in the wind,
our knowledge has cold hands.
But who are we?

10 January 2011

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A good essay is one such that the reader of it has no choice but start writing in response, contradiction. Every word is an investigation. Enough to know that, and everything to be learned.

Exemplum: The classic Golden Age detective story—clue, deduction, induction, decipherment—blossomed in the age when Science ascended in public view to be both a fashion and a requirement. No surprise that sleuths were scientists –amateurs like Sherlock Holmes or professional like Dr.Thorndike— or polymaths like Philo Vance. But as time passes, wars come and go, science seems more humdrum, familiar, dangerous with a whole raft of not so interesting fatalities of its own. The scientist detective gives way to the working cop. Procedurals replace brainteasers, and violence spills from the battlefield into gangland, professional detectives combatting professional murderers. Efficiency replaces intuition and deduction. Recently, the procedural shifts from ordinary detectives and ordinary police (however skillful) and turns to crazed personages who are more avengers than decipherers. The passage from calm Holmes’s scarred chemistry bench to the half-demented lethal tattooed lady is a vivid histomap of the last century or so.

* * *

Why should the essay say any more than this? The reader instantly leaps to agreements and disagreements, comes up with further instances, evidences, contradiction, revisions, adding ideas or rubbing them out. Why should the writer spoil that pleasure by preempting the arguments? Is it a gift to the reader, this business of reading, gives the reader the dance to do.

11 January 2011

= = = = =

Does it look as if these things mean it
a coaster with a coffee cup a vase of flowers
specify: anemones indigo and pink and red
we care about these things because we are the living
and have nowhere to turn but what is here.
Thereafter in a blue glass vase settled they
opened in the warm room, snow light, the blue
light between day and remembering. The wolf
hour people called it, teeth and running and deep warm fur.

11 January 2011

= = = = =

The opportunity lives with me
said the blue jay the seed
is my savior in all this snow

the cardinal asked if that is so
who do I who am such a different hue
find the same salvation in my need?

Ah foolish folks the sparrows call
we proliferate around your feet
eat anything and are no color at all.

12 January 2011

WATCHING BIRDS IN THE SNOW

I wish Charles Parker would come back
music without intelligence is soup,
real intelligence not learning and not vogue.
The body thinks its way out through the breath.

12 January 2011

= = = = =

The woman entered the voice
she saw a body painted on the ceiling

it was blue and had gold stars on it
not like the constellations we see over America

it was her own body and it ceilinged her

safe in the walls of the voice
in which she was speaking.

The man lay quiet in the listening
knowing that she had come

and done to time what had to be done

All the walls were down. Now
all of a sudden hearing heard.

12 January 2011

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HIS SILVER WHISTLE ICED HER LIVING HOUSE

curling the names
across the ice
the Canadian Shield problem
too many versts for too few names

and every one of them is named me
I too incolate the tundras
I too am waiting for everything
using nothing touching everything

I am a shadow
waiting for its man
there's nothing solid about me
seafoam and roses you know how
long they last
 wait, how did you
get onto the ice

I am a margin that nothing meets

but you your twirl, camel, illegal leap
and now the sit-spin

that screws right down through the ice
down through the water
down through the earth
down through up the other side of the sky

and you are gone from my mind
with all your cold soft clothes
but icicles are gleaming in the sun
on my roof mine mine
back to the me work again
the basic broken radio of a self
plug yanked out of the no-wall
trickle-charge info of your things
but now I don't know your name either

asparagus? deep-trenched white cylinder?
wet mango stone original seed
all slippery with religion vampire?

the bite was on the back of your neck
never your throat
who would blemish or suck loose
the gorgeous instrument from which
an ordinary word we need
keeps coming keeps coming

I hardly needed to use teeth

just a word or two of my own
let me speak, skater,
and then you zipped away
flip-girtled over power knees
sneering back “no word
is your own let alone two”

and you were gone
it must not be too far from here
this sky-rink with no boundaries
cars parked all over the sky
their headlights burning to show her Earth
this amateur stripper giving the cosmos
the show of its life

we live
to be revealed

because there is something in us, even me,
from the beginning
something the universe needs
something not so much hidden as forgotten

we think it helps to take things off—
hence the sciences of striptease
organic chemistry geology—
feeble intellect clumsy will

we follow each other over the ice
hoping to find in you
what I have forgotten in me

your body reminds me of before my self

we don't have to change places here
it's enough for some nice icicles to form
depend so gleaming in
sun moored to the white pine tree
o little hill

how sad beauty makes us why

arioso dolente

no opus number on the heart

but still it makes sound
minimalism narcissism listen to your pulse
music from the ringing in your ears—
to go on ice you make
your foot thin as a knife blade
to go on snow
you make your foot broad as a bear paw
tennis racket a winnowing fan
yet ice and snow are one same substance – aqua –
in same old wintertime

what is wrong with us
the icicle daggering with light

I knew this was the day it starts to begin

who can read my garble
written word speaks so many meanings
for a week I live by myself
in the attic of my bonehouse
I read the dust that settles
sifts between pages in the books
dust that brownians along in sunlight
through the dusty window
things I remember from a lifetime of forgetting

I know all this stuff why am I saying it
it must be you nearby (the weather
is always at hand) listening
(everything listens so few people do)
willing to be (since being means
to *exist in relation*)

some once-dead Greek

I need here to authenticate
the leading voice of my dim fugue—
escape escape

Listening changed me

I knew more the wield of what there is
it was a moment with a meaning

and all the laughing trucks ran past
and trees turned red in sunset
she is coming towards me over the ice
fast

I am abashed
before her I wonder year after year
what kind of dance needs to make the body move
when the body itself
in stillness is all possible design redemption
union mysterious transaction

we people are the fractals of a single endless curve
the angels whisper that at the end
of time is forms a perfect sphere.

13 January 2011

WHAT BUILDINGS SAY AT MIDNIGHT

Walking into a building
is hearing a sentence

sentences have all kinds of shapes
and say all sorts of things

I was in the old chapel
empty except for the moonlight

meager through ivied windows
made traceries on the stone

at the crossing of the nave
I lay spread-eagled on my back

and let the cold of the stone flood up in me
for the coldness of stone

is its language, is the way it speaks
its information into us

if we listen with our skin
our answering heat.

And I listened to the shape of the building
the ancient consciousness expressed.

13 January 2011

HARMONIELEHRE

There is a harmony of it
a word I almost heard
hammering on the house
woodpecker

 feed the birds
the sun takes care of the rest
that would be a mountain in Japan
a rural courthouse anywhere

Justice itself is a miscarriage
of love,
 the rules are random,
philosophy is a cry for help,
jailmail, a thousand volume
postcard from prison,

 listen,
that's all I dare recommend.
No hope no fear much love
and hurt none.

 They're all alive
they're all waiting for you.

2.

How dare you beak my wall?

Light lets you, and the fact of wood.

I withdraw my question,

the only things we dare put on our feet

is to walk in the other guy's shoes

I live your life you live mine.

The soul puts out bright feathers,

bright skin.

The alluvial habit of time,

a house is built of wind.

3.

Care. Old farm procedures.

Gather. We are so deep in the dream.

Maybe what all these catastrophes are explaining,

waking from the dream of system, something

breaking through, or showing through,

something there all the time—

I flew over Labrador the ice was green

the ice was blue the coast of the sea was white

I did not know I still don't know

such fear of that beauty.

Sometimes it only counts when you look down.

14 January 2011

= = = = =

I don't know the first thing about people
all these years and I still move towards them wondering—
cliffs of Dover? Carib isle? gaunt
green ice of Labrador and a musk ox groaning?

Who are you when you have a name
are you a place that walks on two legs
are you a place I can walk to on my own

who are you when you have a name
and a physical presence
or I can see you in the movies

who are you when I know your name
and you don't know mine?

Who are all these people who do not know my name?

14 January 2011