

1-2014

janG2014

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janG2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 378.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/378

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.

TRYING.

**Means rendering
all the oil from the whale.
A brute of a thing to do
to what had been alive
as we we do.**

**Suppose
we never killed anything
would we never die?
The surmise lives in the air
around us, the moths and small things
beneath our feet perishing
and we beneath some mighty tread,
the hoof of history.**

**Now Joseph brought
all his brethren and his kindred
to him, and gave them places
in that southern kingdom where
as years passed they turned into slaves.**

And the great fish looks to ask the Lord and finds him not.

19 January 2014

AMPHIBOLITY

**or two ways in one gesture
as to go up and forward
as an man might climb the stairs
with no Virgil but his banister
remorselessly up. Down also
is an option. A word
that points to ways, like *cleave*.**

**“We were together for a while,
I hid my longings in you
as if your body were safer than mine.
Sager. Saner. Saying more.”
He wasn’t sure, she wasn’t sure.
The animal of them together
ran loose in the woods and was gone.**

**Is gone. Things go. How does it go,
we say. And then answer, it went.**

19 January 2014

=====

**The day I was killed
was a day like this—
shoveled my way down
from the barn to the meeting,
helped a girl hang up her
fawn-colored faux-fur collar
coat and that was it.
They got me before
I even began to speak,
I sank into suchness
and here I am.**

20 January 2014

=====

**Born in a call or never mind,
grew to grasp what wasn't there**

**but always here (pointing
to his chest) I pointed
to my head and said
here here too?
They are the same he said,
it's in the finger too.**

20 January 2014.

=====

**South Sea and thought
the fabled wave sisters
inchoately lagoon.**

**The sea is never far —
you have to believe me,
I have no other island —**

**a dark line in the sand
where my reign ends —**

**every man is an island
or are there is no sea —**

**for she was in a trance
when I spoke her
then she roused and told me
my future had come and gone
while she slept and I kept watch.**

**And we're alone now
with nothing more than the moon
to worry, and a man's voice
singing from the other side of the sky.**

20 January 2014.

=====

**I have turned my back
on the city
as Ahab turned his body from the sun**

**something is waiting for me
out there in the other,
in the crowded, scarce-peopled,
never quite silence of the trees.**

**Or not trees.
The space
 between them
where the entrance is.**

**There, the untouched,
the un-lost come home.**

20 January 2014.

=====

**I want to write a divine comedy
where the Paradiso
is the exciting part,
all lights and color
and bodies at play
and gods instructing.
And where the Inferno is
you just skim, just
getting the drift
then looking away.**

20 January 2014.

=====

**Let be some one said
or smiling — people
are just a harbor
where thoughts sail in**

**he said, the lanky persimmon-
eating philosopher, well,
it takes all kinds,
the fire service at sunrise
the vesperal candle wax
cold on marble and you
kneeling there
remembering all the gods
you've bothered with your prayers —**

**these are all just speeches
of unknown characters
from one great play,
its Broadway is the Milky Way,
and you'll never escape**

**he said, licking the words
as they slipped through his lips.**

21 January 2014.

=====

**When flowers wither
they change , not lose,
their beauty. A slip
of tulip petal
fallen, pinkish,
soft and always cool,
why, touch it,
tuck it in my
notebook, see
what it will say.**

21 January 2014

=====

**A choreographer
should make the place dance,
the fields move all around, at first
uneasily, then getting their breath,**

**and give the rocks breath
so they leap up, move
and dance and stand to in form,
standstill in measure,
in music, —**

**so the photographer
must make the place move,
must be a choreographer.**

21 January 2014.

=====

**Birdbath in the snow
faux-marbe, real snow,
the basin filled with it
and the birds elsewhere.**

**Learn to survive
the weather,
that arrow flying
from everywhere.**

21 January 2014.

=====

**Waiting
for them to come
stepping down the hill**

**off Greek vases
such delicate
footing, deer, damsels,
deities.**

**They're of the same
seeming, the tread of them
hardly a trace in the snow
as they incede,
 most of them is air,
form, the color
 of no color,
 of dare, desire,
and suddenly they're there.**

21 January 2014.

**A book from tree bark
a fish from the cloud —**

**it is the way we mean
to be together,**

marriage everywhere.

21 January 2014.

=====

**Vialsof perfume
wind and snow —
Florence seen from the air —**

**the novelist wanted
to be in a man's body
to feel the world from outside in
the way men do,
those hollow creatures,
ambulant voids.**

**There was too much in her
to bear. Be another.
She writes a man out
on a piece of paper,
and becomes him.
Then what is the world to do?**

21 January 2014

=====

**Quiet as a bell
who said?**

**The overtones dying away —
the better the metal the longer the song.**

**Bell metal. Mean to me
the way a thing does,
intact,
invariant.**

**No wonder
we like things,
they put us in mind
of what we should be,**

**or how it is, it,
the Verity
under all the blissful accidents.**

22 January 2014.

=====

**Broken cabs are still yellow
the broken lightbulb still can cut the finger
function is a strange body in the bed beside you
a bath in the Dead Sea
selling rights to square centimeters of your living skin**

**or in fee simple the purchase of half an acre
gives you all the way down to the center of the earth
presumably an ever-diminishing pyramid or cone
until the flagrant middle of Our House**

**or is it ours? Are we
just the music it plays?
When King Josiah exiled the priests
of Wisdom into the desert
what they did in turn teach the sand the stone
from which we still can learn,**

**why else is a rock so smart?
Taught the ground to study the stars
and conversely, taught the water
to hide deep away from us
until the Wise Woman speaks
or gets some prince of Egypt to do it for her,
reading the magic spell
she's hidden in his fluent beard.
And is she too just mistress of our feeble choir,
so many voices and just one lone song?**

22 January 2014

