

1-2014

## janH2014

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janH2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 376.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/376](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/376)

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](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

=====

**Can the blue offering  
forget the sun it  
stands in? Forgive?  
It is all one field  
open for us  
from the beginning, us  
so slow to know.**

**23 January 2014**

=====

**If one day we let it  
do what it wants to do  
where would we be?**

**Would it reward us  
or would we suddenly find  
ourselves excluded from reality**

**free at last?**

**23 January 2014**

=====

**But there are places  
where it can be done  
using steel not too sharp  
or the dorsal fin of a carp  
(*Ferox cupidinus*) or the tip  
of a Bic all its ink dried up  
or using the second act  
tenor aria from *The Woman  
without a Shadow* when  
the emperor sings to his  
lost falcon now found again,  
or a plate of gelatin with  
newsprint pressed to it  
so that there is a transfer  
to the gel of all the words  
backwards but still there.  
Yes, by God, the words  
are still there and we read them  
upside down and dying.  
Or we can use a pledget  
of cotton. Or an orange peel  
after the fruit has been sucked  
off by furtive orphans in one  
more tiresome old novel  
that breaks your heart with truth.**

**23 January 2014**

=====

**The child punished by silence  
is not punished by silence alone  
but by the desperate imaginations  
of what the silent parent is being  
silent about, the terrible *absent word*  
that for all the child knows is  
trembling on the brink of speech,  
a word once said that will uproot  
his whole life and nothing left of love.  
And all his life he fears that word.**

**23 January 2014**

=====

***Enthralled by the obvious***

**I wrote on paper and nothing more  
and now I find it on the floor  
where human language turns to dust**

**and I wonder what I meant  
or else I know all too well—the sound  
of anything, any piece of crap found  
in the street, a note some woman sent**

**and what she said or didn't say  
just the way she looked at me or not  
how many crows flew by my chimney-pot  
and how many suns are in the sky today.**

**None of this is what I had in mind at all.  
I meant something subtler, something small.**

**23 January 2014**

=====

Not the syllable the *mora*

the *actual*

*time* the word the part  
of a word takes to say,

strength and it are each one syllable  
but the song is different

takes longer, lifts the voice and holds  
there aloft a while

then lets it fall.

Because poetry is language shaping time  
the time it takes

tells.

23 January 2014

=====

*die Amme und Keikobad*

**Well of course the nurse-  
maid must be the devil's partner  
since her business is to make  
the child into not-a-child, deny  
the child-thing wherever it sings  
in her poor charges. But angels  
all night long do all they can  
to keep the child-thing hot inside  
ever-wanting ever-knowing  
leaving nothing long untouched.  
A child is seizure is spasm is desire  
kindness everything possible always.**

**23 January 2014**

## **SOMETIMES**

**the hand sees better than the eye  
the mountain top is closer than the hill  
sometimes it depends  
on where you begin  
counting your steps along a marble stair  
measuring moonlight in a jelly jar  
you can do it all  
you know you can  
voices from the furthest away you can hear  
are your father and mother right inside your ear.**

**24 January 2014**

=====

**Things walk slow when they begin  
they haven't put their bodies on  
but when the petals begin to fall  
the tiger roars — what a sound,  
you can hear it clearly even  
if you've never heard it before.  
Who are you, after all,  
to depend on experience?  
It's all there already always  
waiting for you at the door.  
Open the city and step out —  
see, the woods remember you  
before you even had a name.**

**24 January 2014**

## **ZIONIST MANIFESTO**

**There's a little black guy surrounded by a crowd of white guys. The black guy is sort of well-dressed, and has money in his pockets. The white guys are mostly shabbily dressed, but a few are natty, and one, in particular, standing a little back of the rest of them, is really elegant, and very rich. Anyhow, there are eight white guys, and they really don't like black people, not at all. Especially well-dressed ones, who claim to have friends outside the black community. The white guys are waiting for something, to make a move, to receive a command, maybe from the rich white guy, or else just waiting for the black guy to say or do something that will give them a good excuse to waste him. They feel pretty confident, since there are eight of them and only one of him. He shouldn't really be in their neighborhood anyhow, should he? What's he doing here? So it's his fault if he gets roughed up or killed, right?**

**Now just demonstrate that the black guy is the real problem, just make sure the world knows it's all his fault.**

**24 January 2014**

=====

*Something waiting*  
it keeps saying.  
Should I pay attention  
to the voodoo of my fears?

Is it just the weather  
with us always, always  
*a change in the air*  
to distract me from the road

the *moon-street*, its plea  
along calm water, walk it  
into the reflected light  
to taste the original

light where it first fell.  
O moon-gate open for me  
and show me the other place  
this place is supposed to be.

24 January 2014

=====

**Chord, imaginary,  
a splay of tones  
in asymptotic relation  
to a solid geometric form  
that would remind a monk  
of the sun, rising through winter trees.**

**And that is enough.  
You hear it now, listen,  
if you bury your face in your hands,  
the air compressed and released  
enact that sound.**

**Huxley  
healed his eyes he said by *palming*,  
resting the palms of his hands  
on the supraorbital ridge and the cheekbones  
gently rotating, never pressing on the eyeball itself.  
those same cheekbones Achilles  
protected by bronze flaps on his helmet  
and you should too, warrior  
of this everlasting war against the silence.  
Close your eyes and touch it as it passes by.**

**24 January 2014**

=====

**What can I recall  
from someone else  
beginning to be?**

**Or was it me?  
The mystery novel  
has no end,**

**we'll never know  
who did what.  
sleuthless, incomplete.**

**An empty glass  
on the windowsill  
still full of light.**

**25 January 2014**

=====

**Out the winter window  
the story needs me**

**I know the other  
side of death**

**believe me.  
It is the day of the strange Lord,**

**his wide eyes open in our sleep  
looking over the shoulders**

**of our perplexity towards  
the doorway of the unconfused,**

**those things outside so close  
together that look like trees.**

**25 January 2014**

=====

**The unintelligible  
needs me.**

**To say it  
and leave the room**

**without explaining  
anything. Here,**

**here it is, all of it,  
it's up to you.**

**25 January 2014**

=====

**Worry is heat.**

**Anxiety the burner in the gut  
when never enough heat comes  
in from outside  
where people are**

**how could there ever  
be enough love in the world?**

**2.**

**I swear there is.**

**I heard it  
in the wind,**

**it belled out  
in an orchestra, the kind  
that grinds along behind the singer  
to keep the song going,**

**aria.**

**how soon the voice alone  
loses the way,**

**needs that othering  
to find its own.**

**3.**

**So listening Sunday morning to Rossini's *Otello* speaks to my  
condition — never done enough, seldom good enough,  
boisterously confident in my false analysis, yet fixed on the  
Great Work — a trio now beautifully preparing for the tragedy.**

**O generous music that gives us such pleasure as we descend  
into a jealous hell of eternal regret for momentary crimes.**

**4.**

**A little tune  
to remember  
as when Swann and Odette  
are finished with each other  
there is a residue,  
the *little tune* still there —  
Franck? Hahn? Fauré?**

**The tune left its name behind  
to become ours,  
hums its way through the woods**

**into which only the bravest love trespasses.**

**26 January 2014**

=====

**Charity as beginning.  
All alone on stage  
the spotlight sidles  
looking for its man—**

**because the light is here  
before us  
                  we inherit  
shadows too  
                  and stand  
outlined against  
the ratty tapestry of our deeds,**

***ohime!* the grief  
of a little man on a big earth.**

**26 January 2014**