

4-2010

aprD2010

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprD2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 448.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/448

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Wake up a roomy answer
from all those narrow strings

where the woman's old bouzouki
sings blue-grass on a broken moon

for we're all poor Greeks now
we are the originals of tragedy

we've lost our own flesh language
into language, all we have left

is that eye disease called art
that skin disease called being beautiful.

12 April 2010

= = = = =

Hard to think I'll get there soon

Union Street where all the money lives

by day but in the night it runs

back to the dreamworld of the cross-bay poor.

12 April 2010

111.

Will it light up when you touch it
will the hasp fall off and the door open

there your father is again risen from the dead
they all do rise that is the secret

o fingerprint of time on space
there are so many secrets each is the only

which of is is listening to what father says
he tells where he has been he has been in wood

behind every door and in the wood of it he's waiting
as once he waited for my mother's footstep

one year they were Christmas together

the minute they set eyes on one another the child is born

hasp hasp the rusty iron told me so

when an idea gets sick it cries out to the crow

animal souls combat false logic

study the cat study the sheep by the crib

where were you all those years getting born

right behind you you thought I was a tree

you leaned against me and spoke softly to yourself

no I thought you were a bus I ran to catch

all this time I thought I was me

serenade from broken strings a girl in love

three at a fishing hole angling for alewives

weird things happen when you look away

a week's a weird thing to happen to time

the train tries to make the land stand still

presence would inhibit all my sophomores

my husband Jane caught two turkey and one fox

any miracle is shaped like a pyramid

so many children to sweep the road and no traffic

13 April 2010

112.

Dear hand dear flightless wing

best discovery fire best invention was the lamp

eyes Saint Lucy holds in her hand

heal sight by looking

a pyramid four elements come to one point

base covers the whole economy a miracle

I have explained everything if you read long enough

many around this island marry the deceased

such nuptials ravage village midnights

you hear the cries but you see no music

there are no torches at such marriages

fire engines hurtle past but nowhere a flame

learn foreign languages by speaking your own

coax the gates open word by word

see naked sinners enjoying hell

sweet surprise of getting who they are

Michelangelo thought heaven was a naked man

one young one old no need for clouds

whatever we see we see forever

that is the eternal punishment for art.

13 April 2010

= = = = =

Close to the ridge beyond which
the thick stream flows these days west
crows are shuffling in dead leaves

they look bigger up there than on the lawn
at first I thought they were wild
turkeys I saw there two days ago

but they were themselves and this is now.

13 April 2010

113.

To be inward to the walk of crows
shadows flying through the grass

all those sages buzzed on narghilehs
apple of tobacco honeyed cannabis

they're no help to us they're gardeners
in the concrete garden only shadows grow

the soft hips of resentment sway
in hidden caftans holy men hate god

all this the young bird told me
with no ambiguity there is no meaning

delight in all their peacock confusions

lacework of identity lets through the light.

14 April 2010

114.

we know enough to listen to the crows

listen to the scarlet banners though

they flap and whisper in the wind

red is the color that knows how to talk

I am gold though I gleam because your skin

once upon a time all this was old

then the plaster cast of Venus cracked again

but this time a living thing came out

an animal seemed to know who we were

it's weird when an animal calls you by name

when you don't know its name and not sure of your own
somebody is calling somebody that's all

in being summoned we live and breathe
an animal is just one answer even you

how far do I have to go to be here
in the night that is nowhere tidy armies sleep

keep following your shadow you'll never get lost
and the parlor will be paradise again

your aunt will be pretty have her parrot on a perch
velvet curtains glossy in the light of an afternoon

outside in a country where you've never been
the TV lights up the room you must be home.

14 April 2010

115.

How do you spell sky when there are no stars in it
trees write all winter long but who can read them

every branch and stem a stroke of ink
just figure out the language first

these trees certainly speak Chinese
but Sumerian angles too and Magyar runes

just shift your vision press down on your identity
and the language changes in your eyes

now what did the tree just say?
never mind the leaves they're just the smell of breath

the leaves are mouths that's all they are
but how various and beautiful their lips

wait I hear an opera deep in the wood
you're just giddy from too much sung.

15 April 2010

= = = = =

Puns are allowed when the water breaks
the baby tumbles through the narrow street of pain
and makes that sound we recognize as living.
Life is noise. Just press
your ear to any tree and hear what you see.

15 April 2010

116.

Sometimes silence gives the only life

Der Panther breaks out of its cage

songs stop rhyming all over the world

music comes to fill the void of words

just before sun the trees show their own true colors

then the Midas touch comes from heaven

o god you are the rain your skirts are wet

one raindrop on my wrist your Galilee

let me almost drown in your tumult

gorgeous fresh rust on magnets in the rain

I have worked for years to find it music

I left the room and there it was behind me

music comes when you go

something is simple around here at last

air is a compound that is the secret

music when silence clawed apart

no wonder so many fingers itch to scratch guitars

the lute of the obvious is seldom still

but I have painted the world on your eyelids

so we both remember what you are.

16 April 2010

CHIPS

a garden of her such

Representations

how old is she & where doth she

sail up the harbor from ancient Maryland but why

(there's something pre-nasal about Delmarva
the dream told me

and I believe, why else have a dream if not)

You pull the leaves off one by one
until the Leaf

the last the truest one

the radical Signifier

the way some people find
a girl in every flower

nose-twist spate in cumulus

Connecticut

It is said that Paracelsus said the guiding guardians of every species
flower takes on or is the form of a woman.

You see her sometimes
in the vegetable market

Field of the Flowers, Rome, where Bruno
was torn up from the earth and burned

you see here there
bent low over a barrow

testing the florets of a broccoli
maybe, taste of a leek

Roses and roses, they are so new
I wonder if tulips are good for you

Most flowers
when we read what they have written

most flowers write in a nice Elizabethan chancery cursive script
but some of the newer ones
have barely learned to print block letters

a whole family of flowers like schoolchildren in Brooklyn
or 1943

the year that everything happened

no one knows

Cavaretta tormentosa

Campanella claudica introduced late from the Islands

the flowers explained that I was wrong

I always am

everything came later came later

as usual I couldn't help it

I see the large pages or leaves
creamy white paper

and on each one a flower dreams
with her luminous consort
dreaming her life inside

hard to see her
colors lost in all

that pallor
find themselves

shaped

all our eyes are shaping color to our wits

petals sepals bracts corolla
these words mean I have taken
my eyes off the whole flower

I have lost the point

the pollen the fruit

but honey dreams us
in its hive,
no more remembers
the sticky flower
it once was

as we in paradise neglect
our history lessons here

I bow down to the flower
I swear I never touched her

I had lost the shadow of the flower
the shadow lost all the color and the shape

shifted

I was alone with the point I had lost

the girl woke me

barely awake herself
she looks though she never sleeps

wake up and write me down

naked lily

so spring so marsh
trout-lily speckled with remorse
naughty dreams all winter

for winter is the swiving of the mind

wake up and make me

there are confusions in language
confessions in language
no flower can heal

phonetic alphabets run wild among the cabbages

beneath a leaf
a word is born

how can you find a flower though

call her on the phone
if it answers it's a rose

how come a gorgeous
painting of an ugly barrel cactus

what could be uglier than

but when you draw with a hand like hers
every fucking thing's a flower

a fucking flower

we don't use language like that around Mother

but she gave her the hands to do it

every flower a Roman citizen
built on the principle of arch

wicked arches
lilies in the rain bent over

every flower a fornication

Imperatrix julia

Stop that, an arch is paradigm
of any city
a city is a stone we travel through

Bellatrix neo-eboracensis

there was a war once and then

lassitude of leaves

I choose the vascular

big and showy comme moi

we stood on the old steps watching a man far-off beating his dog
she giggled and blushed and said "I want to be that dog"

all of her art born in that moment

to be subject to the thing you see

experience the pain it feels

experience it as beauty

for color also is the pain of light

and make joy out of it

the lines the light the flowers.

*17 April 2010
for Lori Chips*

