

2-2010

febC2010

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febC2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 461.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/461

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after La Roche

Where are the works
that work in the hearts
of the people,
 those poor ones
to whom we give no music,

why did we turn
from giving them
the truth about war and the lies about love
that made opera and Sophocles great
in the old days
 when there still were rivers and mountains?

5 February 2010

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Crows walk quicker on old snow than.

More slide less hop. A treat

to see such ease. As I might fly.

5.II.10

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Giving what one has to others
is not easy.

It is not to be a 'guiding
spirit' but a voice in the desert
promising nothing,

that's truer to the grit of it. The grit of telling.

Love's poison lisped into such ears

healeth as it slayeth.

5 February 2010

(On Confessional Poetry)

Private meanings
pulped into paper.
The marble of real things
leached, loosened,
laid out flat—
as for some silly princess
a pearl dissolves in her champagne
at least she drinks.

5 February 2010

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Haven't got the tune of it today
all starts and stops,
like a bird, hopping
on the shallow snow in hopes
perpetual appetite.
So bird. Live
in a world without apocalypse,
no catastrophe to simplify their minds
or give structure to their dread.
They move ahead one seed at a time.

5 February 2010

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I keep wanting to say
what I don't want to say
but it does.

And I can't even prove
it's it and not me.

Removing "I" from all utterance
will make it even worse—
they'll think I'm hiding
what was there in the first place.

I am not the one who says I.
I am the one who writes it down.

5 February 2010

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Could it speak again
after long silence the tug
on the hip calling
your whole body to the fray of dance

because someone wants you?
Could it be clean as that,
a small mountain and a shepherdess
on it, of it, with green eyes?

This then is the way the river decided
men to go, settle, following the women who
earlier had walked along the shores of it
studying the good gifts of water
as it rubbed against stone and this
holy dirt from which time would drag
mandrake and barley
to nourish and heal—
women taught men that,
cooperation with time, succumbing
to the present moment.
Even now you feel it in their hands.

5 February 2010

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“This, said black fighter pilot Lee Archer, is what America is.”

— *from a prompt by Shepard Pepper*

Three occupations

one man.

One adjective

one man.

A name to call a country by.

I don't know what this is,

I don't know what America is,

it just so happens I cut my hand five minutes ago,

a little scratch, it just so happens

there are blood spots on this paper,

I don't know what America is,

When I was in India America looked like nothing at all,

a bad dream, a hasty mistake.

When I was in France, America came to me, was everywhere,

tried to speak French, tried to be personal

with everyone it meets, America is so personal,

if the man's name were different

would America be something else.

But he is a fighter, a pilot, an archer,
his kind stood up at Crécy and slew the French,
his kind guided ships for Verrazano and Hudson
up into the soon to be bleeding body of the continent,
artery by artery,

did he do it, does he know

what America is?

And if he weren't black

would it be a different America?

Or is he even black, maybe he's the pilot of a black fighter,
some black craft like those Stealths
that zoom down over Helmand shooting at babies?

How do we know which word goes with another word?

How do we know which word he didn't speak about America?

How do we know what America is?

And why America is.

5 February 2010, Olin

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Speak language

the way thunder does,
all the words at once

and meaning lingers after

or what lingers
turns slowly into meaning,

meaning is what stays.

5 February 2010

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The cross-section of a helix
is an arch
just such an arch as
Bruckner builds his churches from—
quiet stone whose angles roar.

Scherzo is fooling nobody.
God knows you're serious.

The deep

grief of 'absolute music' void
of program, narration, emotion,
is nothing but emotion.

At the bottom of all things,
a cello, plucked.

5 February 2010

(Gehry, hearing Leon do Bruckner's 3rd, original version)

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When the bird flies
the field is a peace
to lie down in.

The barnyard
also has something to say.

Haydust in my sneezes
I can't hear any you.

5 February 2010, Gehry

PSYCHOPOLITICS

The weather always knows.

The fascist states will get bad weather now
until they heal their hatred of the poor.

The poor who are mediatized and coaxed to 'vote'
against their own class interests
invite their own catastrophes—*and the earth listens.*

6 February 2010

day of the Delmarva blizzard

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Each instrument knows a different dream.

Aim then

safe harbor when the word has been said,
the nail wedged in, the sail furled and stored away for winter.

I am an island without a sea—
that's why I look at you the way I do,
to see if, maybe, are you my ocean?

6 February 2010

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Estop the little legalisms
keep the day from happening
right now
spilt tea and too much dream,
nobody in the sky.

6 February 2010

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The long parable of ordinary life

If I really believed what I say

it would just be me saying it.

If I have no idea

then the words of it are bound to be true.

Or at least to be you.

6 February 2010

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Fair is fair:

just as there are birds who live only on the ground
so there should be mammals that live only in the air.

Sometimes I think I'll be the first of them
always aloft, seeing everything, serene
as the swallows over wolf-wild Luberon.

6 February 2010

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I haven't gotten it right yet
because it's me still doing it.
I have no faith in agency.

No, it's the wind,
its thin body, the wind moves
the prayer-flags, doesn't stir the branch,

but *it* is right.

The long hope
that money will not always win.
But it will,
because that's who we are.

But we keep the long hope
because that's also who we are.

6 February 2010

δοξα

Saturday is opinion
day, and dumb,
mostly, underfed
and overslept,
dream mucus
mucking the mind.

6 February 2010

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Things I wanted to ask you to be
were mostly red mountain
mostly sea.

Seldom the possible,
never the easy. Except this.
to sleep into being as you are.
And let me wake, and wake you when I can.

6 February 2010