

2-2010

febH2010

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febH2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 468.
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37.

Sometimes the counting numbers just don't work
sometimes they count right back

a blue book on a black table and who knows me?
I am the arriver from the other side

rhythm runs us
and the ripple of her string strikes

remotest atolls of human feeling
in the rimless ocean of what we think we know

never does a number get to red or green
the terrible number between one and two

dance dive deep into your fur
she thought he said he said a prayer

why does every language sound like this
earthquakes shake the prison but the walls don't fall.

18 February 2010

38.

So she had two husbands
and they both were wives

they thought their way and felt their way
and got in one another's way

and that way was she or that was her
depending whether she came or went

each husband said Get in my way
and so she did and so they say

a woman is a man and the other way round
a man with two wives has no wife at all.

19 February 2010

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Trying to lift a weight that is not there
unload an empty back

fingers sticky from dream alas one wakes.

19.II.10

(ATHLETE)

Ripple of nipple in the sheer of shirt.

19.II.10

39.

To rise without compunction
into a day without a word

all travel tunnels through my thought
and I stay home glad sunlight dim in amber

licking shadows of travelers off the wall
Atlantis rises into all our houses

the lost city of the Amazon
hides in old apartment houses on Grand Concourse

that is no elevator shaft it is a palm tree
through which we climb to Deborah's boudoir

through the sterile skies
our skin unscathed with innocent eyes

bring picnic baskets to Paradise
from which the four rivers still sluggishly flow

body language thought and dream
we are an old old people almost born

patches of grass show through snow
or is it one more animal I can't name

light is full of tricks as ever
the sky is loud today

could this be spring could this be a woman
standing on the rocks nothing to do but gaze

into the distances I cannot see
where someone mighty gazes back at her

could it be a kind of faithful music
you don't have to turn in on or off?

20 February 2010

40.

It's not what I want to tell but what it tells
I tell this lie till it becomes the truth

or you do it
and in your hands no lie can linger

what else can I do when the blood is rising
in the apple orchards up Grancelli's hill

over there in the north where words peter out
blue green creatures explain I still am lying

as if the mind has to be reminded
let it rest in the form of a flower

a yellow tulip from somewhere (find out where)
my love bought and set out on the table

where the eastern sun now understands them
but I am baffled by such easy things.

20 February 2010

41.

These investigations find their way
seek out each obscurity

try to resist the seductions of clarity
understanding is lesser than wisdom

go from dark to dark in other words
darker still be maiden on the hill

give her shrine back black fire
funeral poms of reason reckon

these investigations mean to turn you
over my knee so you see earth again

transformed by your experience at last
earth is never the given earth has to be won

earth is do feel out in the dark
earth is your own dear child earth is to become.

21 February 2010

42.

This simple system knows us so well

I was early for the aftermath

the thing you mean was born before the sky

there was no noise to its abrupt unfolding

even now all you can hear of it

blood in your arteries speaks by the ear

for hearing *witnesses*

and all we know is island either

children arrested in adult bodies

playing with the Pentagon

a child from wisdom is soon parted

the body grows the child towards war

I am not one to know what I am saying

or why I'm saying it the only truth I have

why should you listen the one thing you need to know

leave out the language and hear the words

leave out the words and understand
forget the understanding and be wise

a skier in the grand slalom
rides a body through a gravity of gates

to go as far as the body can go
no end of the gates you go through

no end to the going
and still never be alone.

21 February 2010

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I've been alone so long
all night in dream
I was a skater in a small northern city
comfortably abed in a borrowed
room above a tavern,
lay on my back with arms crossed
drowsing half in and out of
dream in dream, speculating
who it was who would be coming
soon up the stairs to share my room
another skater maybe, younger,
less sure, no idea what gender either,
just a sense of somebody
on the stairs,
someone who would come
and needed me to be kind.
No sound. My arms
locked together.
Why is alone so comfortable?
When will the other one come?
When will I finally sleep?
And then I woke.

22 February 2010

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Legions of geese, freedmen in forum,
horses bleeding, the war always beginning.

I lay out my roads, from Arles to Avignon,
from Vindobona to Byzantium, large or less,
same stone underfoot.

It seldom snows in language.
Did they see salt flats from far off and guess snow,
Nevada?

I am the names of places,
that's most of what I am,
my meat is where I've been,
my bones the infinite unvisited
they dream in me at night.

Not just at night. Of animals
I most resemble the cathedral,
of great men of history I most resemble myself
the unattainable, the generous, the unknown.
Of mountains I am the nape of your neck,
of seas I am the moisture in the flat of your mouth,
without me there would be few kisses and no speech.

I am beginning to remember who you are
there was a stone road, wind around our knees,
I was a Protestant and did not know what to do,
we must go back there now, to that very hour,
same stone, same sky, swallows too close above our heads

you broke away and lay down on the road,
pressed your ear to the stone and heard
Roman soldiers marching on their way to Spain

22 February 2010

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And there were places where we fell
became city a room inside other rooms
eventually you climb into the smallest room
when I was young there was no way out
millions of separate miracles we were
and every one the identical distance from you
whether by 'you' mean myself or daringly
try to name some other creature hard to catch,
we saw pictures of them in our magazines.

22 February 2010

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How to escape from nowhere
on foot, through the air,
your wings furled like an umbrella
thinking carefully one by one
of people you used to know
even loved or played ping-pong with
and now have no idea where they are.
Float! They will bring you to them
over the frozen sea of mere recollection
to the warm lap where they live these days
safe from judgment, safe from words.

22 February 2010

or have they more likely been
here all along and we just now beginning to notice

shimmering through these big soft flakes
voiceless words coming out of the woods?

23 February 2010

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Who are they waiting in
who come to me now
through the faint snow
the air contrives to milk
here in somehow land
to be between to be
caressed on all sides
by what is not even there
but the caress is real?

23 February 2010

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So is this the faerie of the day
a sudden utter knowing
that rises from no thing known,
a thrill in emptiness?

23 February 2010