

1-2010

janA2010

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janA2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 467.
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The mystery of it
the cross
embedded in time
eight spokes of the wheel
the seasons
eight ways out from the one way in.

If our present life is dream
history is a dream inside a dream
something we imagine we awaken from

into the imaginary now.
Fomenko, Illig, the men
who tore the hands off the clocks
they know that time is close and space is far,
time is the illusion of unpacking space.

The faster we get there
the less time it's seemed
ergo we are close
still to the beginnings,
Attila not long dead
and there are men alive who may have seen
Jesus vanish into blue Judean skies.

We *need* this revision,
we have compressed time
till after all it's all still beginning.

1 January 2010

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Oak alternatives

the tree

protecting its own eternity inside

transforming weather into wood

or your yew that from

inside itself grows out again

and scarce knows how to die

so we plant him

by our graveyards

to shout Rise up from within.

Or pine who walks down the Tuscan hills

and stands upright on the sea

and men who stand beneath him travel

by power of his sundial straightness

flutter-sailed along the wind

until they get somewhere

they think they need to be

and where he always is.

1 January 2010

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The truth you gave me

I will think only with that.

All the other flowers have gone to sleep.

1.I.10

= = = = =

To stuff time down
upon itself, the rabbit
goes back into the hat.
And nobody wears
hats anymore round here.

1.I.10

= = = = =

Even now I don't know
much about dancing girls

offhand they look as if they've been at it
a score of years or more

and how long does a dance last?
But there was one in the crowd

who danced with her body not her face
she didn't own a smile, didn't

have a face yet so her dance was real
her dance was all she did.

1 January 2010

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A camera will always come back
to the only one who's doing anything.
Among all the prayerful pilgrims
a yellow dog runs by.

1 January 2010

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Casting spells

she thinks you do it with eyes

I look up from her book

and see them, vague far-smoldering focus

fixed on me.

I don't think her spell worked

unless the spell meant to compel me

to turn from this woman with a shiver of disgust.

1 January 2010

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Not mean things
but mean things.

It's all in the minding
forward, the unwinding
of the spool

year by year to unravel
what is already here.

1 January 2010

= = = = =

Maybe today things need to say me.

Maybe I should be quiet a quarter hour
and let them speak.

Or maybe I still think
that I am thinking, hence think I have something to say.

I'll never know till I go native, hearing,
just hearing.

Hearing is the kind of star that shines in daylight.
Wide awake you feel the weight of its light on your tongue.

1 January 2010

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We'll never find a cure for desire.
Society is only symptomatic relief.

1.1.10

= = = = =

Our few certainties dance around us
like cardinals in the snow.
Redbirds they call them out there—
protestant America, no taste for metaphors

things that are clear are very clear.
They stagger me, I am obsessed
with clear numbers (square root of nine)
a single figure dancing in the crowd

red birds' antics under the feeder
snow on tree branches moon in sky.
Subtlety is wasted on me. Born
at noon I love the radiant obvious.

1 January 2010

= = = =

1.

I am allowed

to say this thing.

It knows me,

we come

from the same farm.

It flies on many legs

I swim on one.

2.

You come to a town

where the streets are covered with paper

neatly laid out flat

and no wind knows how to ruffle them.

It's all up to you.

With bare feet and your fat brush

this is your big chance—

to write a word size of a city!

To get it right at last!

3.

But some days you can't
write yourself out of a paper bag
no matter how much ink.
You're dormant in there,
curled up with the loaf of bread
the lukewarm chunk of cheese,
a box of strike-anywhere matches.
No hope. It's like America
yearning for Armageddon.
And finally you get to be alone.

1 January 2010

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But does the hand say more than it should
than a machine would let the fingers type
or a nervous mouth on a corner in New York
talking to a girl just back from New Orleans
full of recovery and endless narrative

does it? You learn the name of everyone
she met and you can tell which ones
she slept with and you don't really care
but have to write them all down because
that's what hands are for and she's
still talking, that's what cities are for.

1 January 2010

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It's a kind of withstanding
as if the music the choir was singing
suddenly discovered a different god

one of its own, one silky with silence
hence needing the rough hands
of all these human throats

and the music curled onto the lap
of such deity while the choir
kept its mind on ordinary things

weddings and car wrecks
and who will come to hold whose hand
when who must walk into the dark?

1 January 2010

= = = = =

Caught a disease in dream
I need tonight to find
a doctor in my sleep
a woman intern
weary of her own wakefulness.

2 January 2010

= = = = =

Broken bits

don't have to be

they can be sopranos too

above the general orchestral hum

bright flotsam

gives the sea its dignity

like poinsettias massed

around a Methodist altar

standing in

for something much harder

to talk about

and impossible to see

sea wrack is my mother

that's all I only mean.

2 January 2010

= = = = =

I need a new paper napkin
to write this down
the waitress comes by
with little tubs of marmalade
her presence is a pressure
I spill a little coffee to relieve it
break the tension
she goes to wipe it up
I forestall her with my napkin
now I have nothing to say
nothing to write it down on.

2 January 2010

= = = = =

Art as a way

of taking all substance

out of the body

and leaving the body

clear perfect radiant of nothing but itself—

the changeless nature shown.

2 January 2010