

3-2010

marD2010

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marD2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 483.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/483

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.

= = = = =

I am the man you were supposed to be
see here your church your children your country club
where you played tennis till age shook you and you golfed

here are your bank accounts and your x-rays
here is the office where you practiced law
until they made you a petty magistrate somewhere

after a little pro bono stuff amid all the money
here I am complete, the real man you
eternal lilacs on my well-groomed lawn

a wife in Talbots and three daughters on my mind
you as you are now, a wordy godless ruin,
you must just be my bad dream.

15 March 2010

= = = = =

The light seems thick today

I think I can taste it

even swallow a little of it down

to let it celebrate inside

we like to lose ourselves in thinking

minarets bristle up out of the snow

I saw the angel hands that wielded them

inside everything it is so snowy bright and far away

if you hear violins you're either wrong

or they are playing at some abstract fugue

where the tones are not talking to you

and all the notes have to do is remember one another

just like us, that's all we have to do

the huge Siberian kindness where we are so alone

shadow towers, sky the color of the snow and no snow

is it enough that music hears itself?

sometimes looking out the big window

I'm not sure I didn't die in that dentist's chair on Hanson

Place

that Good Friday rainday fifty years ago

when I thought it was the Last Judgment and it was.

15 March 2010

= = = = =

We allow ourselves to speak.

Rain rattles on the roof,

the phone rocks on the table

from the vibration of my writing about it.

Then the music stops.

Sometimes I think Russia is the only real country,

I don't know why,

its Angel is bigger than any other country's Angel,

it speaks so many languages

it has so many deaths, so many miles to bury bodies in,

it has frozen seas.

15 March 2010

= = = = =

Is it enough that music listens?

Is anything near enough

ever to the meaning

for us to hear it beating?

15 March 2010

= = = = =

Come back home instead of weather
and waking the door.

I hear me among the candles
licking them and squeezing them
to make the light come.

It is so dark inside my memory,

I have almost succeeded
in outliving all my remembrances.

Soon I can close the door and just be now.

Open the window. And you be now with me too.

15 March 2010

81.

It is the truck hurrying downhill makes sun flash
through trees we move in a still world

everything flashes around us skin is pure result
we wear the hide of so much being seen

trees give light the air gives substance
all our idioms are wrong ideas are empty

we have settled for music when we could have had bread
warm trucks run through the veins below the city

traffic well-composed sounds in the key of thunder
hurry to the gallery mother's paintings cover every inch

lie on the ground and watch projections fill all space

this is young art it still has colors in it

it pours water on itself it sings to strangers

art is a teenager's first time getting drunk

we had painted the ceiling a spotty pale blue

we walked around the woods naked for a while

being for the moment female and male I followed you

you hid in the bushes while the audience blushed

they tried not to give your hiding place away

but I found you I just said my body towards you

brave of us to be naked in the middle of so much art

our own exhilarating art of doing what comes next.

16 March 2010

82.

Of course it wasn't my own body I danced in

I'm glad we can borrow other bodies not just at night

to do the night work where the truth is made

not just owls not just dreams not just silence

but real machines and far away the whippoorwills

he said went frenzy-throated when a soul slips free

but what is a soul we have evolved beyond the soul

a new ghostly organ rouses in us now

less personal than soul more magnetic of influence

insulated from marketing immune to cheap imports

a tougher hombre in a silken boat

like Egypt but with soft skin a silent Debussy

you get the picture you see it in my eyes

weary of sacrilege you apologize to the dark

all those voices are good to hear all of them

only one woman you must not think about

for every man there is one deathly Dalila inside

all the rest are just like you and accurate

are we here even yet with all that singing in the trees

room full of sunlight and someone just left?

16 March 2010

83.

Would it know me if I touched it

the cougar came sloping down the ridge

the carpenters must be building the morning

what would a world without hammers be like

we'd tie all things together like mothers like witches

we would always be dressed for winter

summer never ends there despite the snow

the arguments in seminaries the frozen pool

how dare we baptize wordless ones infants

next we'll be marrying them in the womb

we have to take our shirts off this is labor
that flag you sewed is for the wrong country

our New Glory is a blank transparent sheet
that lets the whole world show through the material

a nation is a shared neurosis nothing more
a nation is a deer slain on the hillside

of course all this land is mine who else could I be
I found this sun in my sky I moored it to my house

now it spreads its sandy goldish light
all over my little dining room the wood glistens

this wood I also found The Invention of the True Cross
ash we groan on for one another's sake

be kind to each other and stay home

there is no other wisdom the church fell silent

what are all those pictures doing on the wall

what are we doing here in borrowed bodies?

16 March 2010

84.

Count to seven and be a bird

a wading bird with long thin legs alert

stand out of water like a human soul

be a wingspread with no wings a bird with no shadow

be a shadow nailed to the light itself

be a sunset in the east be wrong as a man

be a man be covered with fur be wrong as you can

people forget where they're coming from and where they're

bound

we come from further than you think

we sit in the dark often and remember nothing

we carry boats with us in case we come to water

cool mist comes out of the ground at evening

the sky is so hungry for us

we have no names

geese are yelping overhead now

as if I too had said something

not a word it's something alive in the sky

come to my house and I'll let you feel my mind.

16 March 2010

85.

Wild geese embarrass air the weight of time
whoever dares to remember is soon forgotten

there is a machine that runs such things
the Tower of Babel is each human generation

wisdom of the fathers wasted on the sons
I had to do it all myself

the son casts off the father every generation starts afresh
the fallen tower is where each child begins

stands on the bones of his fallen father
gets nowhere bones crumble onto bone

and her daughters also cast the tower down

we are poor sinners in Shinar still

our war forever between the river and the river

no matter how far we go we come back here to kill

the way eels to the Sargasso we run to Babylon to kill

but what do I know I who am not even here

I am a muscle left over in the air

when far away a man was being built

tall he was and his head had almost pierced

the clouds to see who lived up there when we made him fall.

17 March 2010

= = = = =

A week got left back there

now a broken now

men shout among men to make happy

but silence has such a tender mouth.

17 March 2010

PIECES OF GOD

most men

think of women that way

not just Don Juans but almost every man

knows that the more women he knows

the better he knows God

putting holy knowledge together

piece by piece

trying to hold in his mind

hold in his arms

the impossible wholeness of God.

17 March 2010

86.

Not the end of the road the end of the river

exhausted by eating the wind dies a little into the bushes

temperament is lost in feeling

no two strings say the same tone

you start to remember something

then you cut it short

there is no past there is nothing back there

no back there to be in

just a kind of cool breeze now

replaces something you don't remember either.

17 March 2010

87.

Always voices from the woods

not just the trees but from the wood itself inside them

for that heart wood their trees are distant strangers

but substance self declares us busy listening

hope to find an ear that hears in me

viewless space arranging everything

the word 'same' is the biggest lie of all

count the letters of your alphabet you gullibles

are they the same as yesterday

then why can't you remember her name

you know the one before your mother

the one who pushed you down the little hill

the one who hung the swing in the pear tree

just sturdy enough to sway you up and down

the one who opened the door in the hillside

the one who smiled and closed it after you.

18 March 2010

88.

Be the one who spread the shore
whittled the flute some taught taught to play

roses twine up around the *scholar's desk*¹
dangerous pointy full of inferences

how could there be anyone but me²
why do the shadows move when everything is still

I want this word to be clear five hundred years
even after numbers pass away and colors grow old

the birds' investigations will carry on
I see one on the lawn right now.

¹ Where Tomcat Murr learned what the world of fashion could not teach.

² The central question in all philosophy, never to my knowledge articulated in these terms.

18 March 2010