

4-2009

aprD2009

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprD2009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 539.  
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Determining the outer edge of the idea  
by numbers he turned his back on landscape  
left all round the motion mattered. Later  
he looked out and found himself in the middle  
of an utter desert. Nothing but horizons  
anywhere. But at least he had found  
himself. At least he was in the middle.

7 April 2009

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Everything has to keep short  
because of the weather—  
the asthmatic light of northern lands  
darkens coming and going  
every day different, clouds  
toying with the sun – how could  
a long breath prosper, candle-  
flicker, nervous cough, robins  
yattering outside. A word  
has to be enough. And then another.

7 April 2009

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Was there left there  
enough to start a dance even?  
A whistle for you and a bassoon for me  
and the room full of cheeses?

Who knows  
who lives in clothes?  
What is a ravigator?

I think though I hear music.

You think you hear music?  
That too, I think I hear music.

But anything you hear is music  
so dance to the noises in your head  
hallucinate a fox-trot, a furry  
yipping creature (soft, sharp)  
to trot with and then  
a waltz from Stalingrad.

Now: whose feet are those at yesterday of your legs?  
Whose bones does your shadow flicker from?

A dancer must suppose he is alone

the woman in his arms is weather  
and ditto for her, this nervous lump  
with his tentacles around her is  
for one terrifying atavistic moment  
the whole world. Run away from me  
who runs away from you.  
Be alone – that's where music lives.

7 April 2009

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Allie and Louie by the limestone kilns  
are walking with their wolfy dog  
away from us, smile back over their  
shoulders, at us, what do they know  
about the dark from which I try  
to speak to them? As much as I do.  
The nice dog could tell them if more  
information was required. But I could see  
it in their eyes, they knew already  
the whole story they were born to be,

7 April 2009

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Bright mood on the wolf path  
thick with peace. Creepers  
round hemlocks high-  
winding. Woodpeckers.  
It is when we go  
that the old comes back—  
*wooden woods* we heard  
the soul say, softly,  
language as evidence.

8 April 2009

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Sometimes we get too close to what we know  
then it is Sanskrit. Or sandstorm,  
that's what he meant, the dead leaves whirling  
all round our feet but there are no leaves.

Our eyes muffled in our scarves. They always are—  
we use whatever comes to hand to muffle them,  
perilous witnesses! We will protect them  
from their worst enemy, the world.

8 April 2009



## VICTORY

Relax, you are part of the problem.  
And cute, like a spotted panther  
yoked to a golden chariot wherein  
the Queen of Elsewhere rides  
through the triumphal arch built  
right in your own city. Your yard  
sprouts her laurel tree. Relax  
like a wheel spinning, an all-nighter  
full of disjointed conversation  
fueled by the alkaloids of god knows.  
Relax like an ambulance, I mean,  
how much worse could it get, relax  
like a man studying Sanskrit  
for what he thinks are religious reasons.  
Relax like the high desert, sunset  
turns joshua trees to dull flames.  
Relax, your chickens are safe  
in their coop, your only fox far away.  
Relax like an unwelcome love letter  
tossed on the fire this chilly night.

8 April 2009

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Clouds come  
to show us the way.  
The fewer the differences  
the shorter the song.  
Start singing now  
before the storm.  
Be my lightning again.

8 April 2009

## **THE ALPHABET**

Bearing the burden, become.

Caring the cardiac, cause.

Daring the doubtful, do.

Fishing the firths, froth.

Haring through harvest, have.

Maring the mule, mate.

Paring the pump, plunge.

Raring the river, row.

Tearing the treaty, tell.

Weaving the weft, want.

Yearning the young, yell.

The alphabet is a history of your sins.

9 April 2009

## **BY THE WAY,**

if there were a baker in time for the bread, a broker in touch with the money, a brother in town for the wedding, a dignified bearer in tow of the expedition, oh things are hard when you live in the country, and every single suppose you want to acquire is a big if, a big old if if the truth be known. So they sing about it all the time, drivel guitar and glum adversity, all there is is snatch and not getting any, no way.

9 April 2009

## PERCEIVING SHORN OF JUDGMENT PARADISE NEARS

Start over again,  
humble at whose feet?  
A throne around us  
we see some shoes  
and sense – no more –  
a presence overhead.  
Lack humility my  
self-defeating arrogance  
pauses at the sight  
pines around a lake  
or I relent and let it  
free of commentary  
about what want wants  
be a man and a tree  
alone, ask nothing.  
Simplicity also  
is pride, to smile  
at something that is  
because I am.

9 April 2009

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Pretend everything was born in the bed  
and had meaning and meant things  
just there. Pretend there is no meaning  
anywhere but there, and is no else or other  
to confound the intimate absurdity of this  
kiss. I mean I was born here and you too  
but that, or those, just doesn't mean.

There is no logic to it though we strive,  
river roll and walk around and take the bus  
to meet on the bridge. All that's obvious  
and anyone. But that things mean things  
or a thing means things, there should be  
Latin names perhaps for this disease.

For logic has its own pathologies. All  
the places I was born. All the hearts that  
beat soft now beneath your breasts.  
These are miracles if not mistakes.

Sometimes I think they really do come  
from a far country to harry us or marry us  
the way I get headaches from sunlight  
and they come in and come in and at night  
force us upward to see their stars till

their logic mingles with our sense impressions—  
this is alchemy, that things have meanings,  
you have green eyes and somehow this  
by itself is wonderful. Who taught us  
that, or teaches us that even now?

9 April 2009

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A day to do  
nothing but be.  
Could it be?

9.IV.09



## QUESTIONS OF TRUTH

1.

Try to be fond of these: a looking glass  
a thought out of season  
a tie fallen on the closet floor,  
writing love letters on inrolling wave  
a pleasant anxiety of your very own  
will you come to the dance?

I won't be there but come anyway  
truth is an animal and must run  
truth is saying things about what flows  
and trying to stop it just one moment  
and make the moment last  
truth is just an obstacle to going on.

2.

No wonder Botticelli showed her naked  
a disconcertingly skinny woman  
bothering a convention of dishonest men  
her arm uplifted her hand pointing up  
as if to appeal to something or someone  
even higher than herself, what could that be  
that power truer than the truth?

3.

Things don't come back by themselves  
car doors slam you look up hopeful  
it is the neighbor going off to work  
not the one you think of coming back.

Not by themselves yet alone when they come  
moved by some principle you think you know  
you call it prayer and pray with it eyes shut  
to see better your imagination of the return.

Maybe it works maybe you really are  
part of the energy by which they return  
the ones who do come back. Things do  
come back because there is a back to come to

a person with eyes closed stands at a window  
listening to cars come along and pause and go.

9 April 2009

## LEVITICUS

Things on the way to other things  
is also a Bible – those parts  
where little laws get laid down,  
mildew on an old house wall,  
the long thigh sinews of a bull—  
those are best, full of useful  
nowness in a haze of then,  
and no God cluttering the sky.  
Just some soft smelly greenish  
stuff on a white wall  
dusty to the fingertips,  
sweet a little to the taste  
as if it too had in its day known love.

10 April 2009

Good Friday

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I have to hear what you have to tell me  
an orchard full of veiled women  
hurrying through heavy-laden trees  
rarely reach up to pluck  
pears for their journey—

I taste this too — I hurry  
because they do, I need to know  
where they are hurrying and why.  
Why do I need this information?

Because it's in your mouth  
as you lie back talking  
almost as if I weren't here  
or as if I could hear you almost  
as well as you hear yourself—

you are naked and telling about apple trees,  
Normandy, another life, this one,  
your hands gentle on your skin  
as if you were new to yourself,  
you are saying All my life I have wanted this  
to be one of those who not lose  
focus no matter what happens,  
who do not lose intensity no matter

how deep the chasms of love, the long  
shipwrecks of autumn afternoons.

You mean Atlantis, I cried, I come  
to life again in you. You seemed  
to disagree a little, almost as if  
you were surprised to find me still here.

10 April 2009

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Each of us has his own relationship  
with the hours of the day.

Tell me your three o'clock I'll sing you my noon.

10 April 2009