

6-2009

junA2009

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "junA2009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 553.
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As if it had to happen all over again
be born and a church out the window
Holy Name. Kiddush ha-Shem. *ming*², said Pound,
sign of it, happy to have a sign
with no associations but its own meaning,

its own obscurity. Sun and moon shining together
but who is the sky? Who owns that preponderant darkness
in which they figure? Not a bible in sight.
Yet.

For a yeoman or Sunday gardener on her dubious lawn
what is there but what is ingrained,
born in the bone?

Isn't the book, Book, some cure for habit?

2.

But her bulbs menaced by young rabbits
she sought a cat, one came, "took
care of the bunny" she said.
destroyer of men, destroyer of cities.
Monday morning they go to work.

1 June 2009

Boston

= = = = =

The words are like butter
disagreeable smooth familiar

my words are like other
I have no patience with the norm
only with form

1 June 2009,
Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

How could the night tell?

The size of longing

is the whole man

minus what he's missing

to feel whole.

Longing is a paradox—

only the most complete

integral integrated

can do it right.

Can spend all the dark hours

whittling a single piece of light.

1 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

And he said: Nature has no nature—
there is nothing that it's not,
nothing that it specially is.
It lives by contradictions—
warfare in the open wound.
All telling is singing
once you get rid of what is told.

1 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

SANCTITY

Spontaneous helpfulness
you can see it when a hand
reaches out to spoil your fall

or saves a wasp window-trapped
and as you let it go outside
you begin to remember who you actually are.

2 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Some things afraid to say
not to sing,
jump out of my shoes
and speak yourself
for a change,

from my opera *The Tattoo Parlor*
an aria in German where
the skin is remembered—

Write on me,
I am what's left of your mind.

2 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

German girls know all about the skin.

Haut. But *hauen* means to carve or chop.

Skin's what carves us out from the world,
the figure in the stone, the speaking edge.

But skin is what is cut. Skin care—

a certain Alemannic softness, girls

of Munich, girls of Vienna. They walk

as if at any moment they could fade

back into the general substance of the world.

Only their skin keeps them free. They lie

in summer by the Eisbach tanning,

saunter through the Prater with me at last,

we sit in marble pavilions side by side

drinking elderberry juice, studying

our special kind of skin.

2 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

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Shapes on the horizon.

A cloud out loud.

2.VI.09

VARIATIONS ON A WORD OF CESAR VALLEJO

1.

Apart from me there are only chalices
filled with what they spill at midnight
lovers on the porches churches full of oil
and no sea anywhere even when the wind.

That day the sky broke why did you leave me
you were all the things I thought I used to be
skin and the sound of women singing at their work
I thought I was the tune they hummed and you

hated all those easy transfers you wanted rough
or else everything slipped right by
like a word hidden in endless sentences
newspapers and other antique imitations of

but I am the only secular the only ordinary left.
Everything else is hierarchy and fundamentalist
thick with rulebooks and nobody ever listens

The scholars know all the details but not what they mean.
I know what everything means but forget all their names.

Interview me with calculus, study all my works and know
what I have amassed is a statistical summary of the universe
encrypted in more or less ordinary words. Watch out.
The easy words are the hardest of all. Decipher me
for Christ's sake and let lilacs blossom on the old fence
and the girl sit by the fountain. That's what it means.

2.

Apart from me this ease is callous—
as if I were the moral one the Ace of Spades
to bruise your midnight shoulders, supper
you call it but I call it spitting in God's face
who gave so much that you might know

but no you turn away to entertain you
don't even touch, I scare you when I call.

3.

Apart from me this eastern chalice
cracks and pours the bull's blood out
we drink as light. The crow
sits on Mithras' shoulder, someone
whose name we don't much speak
licks at the bull's bearing.

The creative *is* the destructive,
be quiet already. All this is just dust
of what rolls along the sky above us
scattering debris. The engine.

I want outside the engine please.

Depart from me who wants to be.
The other side of all that
cupless, a gaunt garden.

2 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

I come with the place
the old man said
I wonder if we all do
are nothing but the place itself
walking around to take the air

on the island they call me by her name
since she's been here forever and I just born
a stranger from the sudden shore.

2 June 2009

= = = = =

If this narrative sunlight
just now awakened
told what it had dreamed
while the fog was round us
things would start to make sense.
Polonius would shut up.
Ophelia would fall asleep over her book.

2 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

FATHER MAPPLE'S SECOND SERMON

Strange stories of where we found
ourselves again and lost us—

bear in a cave, Wonders of the Invisible World
in North America the greatness of the devil
shewn in such rock jags, such brute jaws
agape, the maw of hell greedy in our day,
red trucks beering up outside the larches,
citizens, we fucked up. We huddle
by the fire long after the last ember is cold,
we have pretended to be working, to be busy
even with The Great Work, when all the while
we were just moving things around.

A highway is the opposite of polis. It refutes
the city. It is too easy. It insinuates
solutions outside yourself. It lures
your mind with going. It tells a long lie.

1) Ishmael in *Moby Dick* is a villain. Out of resentment and anomie he
summons up a world and destroys it. Ahab is the shadow of Ishmael, seen
looming gigantic on the morning mist. Ishmael comes from nowhere,
orphan truly. Melville toys with us, makes us concentrate on what Ishmael
sees, ignore what Ishmael does.

2) *On the Road* enacts the restless villainy that soon led to the Vietnam War, and the strange general Roman-American policy, we must have endless wars, but we must have them somewhere else. We travel to fight.

3) The Sakya sage sat under a tree until He knew. It took long enough, all his lives and one whole night, long enough to realize. Realize that there is nothing else to do. Begin the enlightening work. All the rest is just restlessness.

3 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Nothing works any more
except the island roses – a kind
of pale red not the least bit pink—
rugosa, they call them,

rough, and by the rock shore
in sandy soil they thrive
every third day of June—
the sea-wind is their mother

and they are the color of the mind.
This used to be in Persian
but it fell, shattered into English,

I carry it to you hoping for a smile,
a kiss, or good old argument,
secretly just meaning I love you.

3 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

on our sixteenth anniversary

= = = = =

Large marauders from the lower sky
broke our streets for us,
Albion was one of them, Utnapishtim,
all the semi-saviors, the seventeen
hundred and fifty-some categories
of human order have a myriad names
five million of each on earth
at this moment and not one of them
belongs to mathematics at all.
Secret fieldmice erode our plausible
granaries of fact – nibble on a date
in history till there's no war left.

Then take the girl out for supper
treat her as kindred from your same
planet. But nobody knows
how to be here even now.

3 June 2009

Cuttyhunk

A FISH IN THE SKY

it said for dream
at the end of the liturgy
snang.ba.thams.cad.ye.shes on,
basically the wisdom
sitting quiet at the window
almost awake enough to watch
a tawny dog walk across the lawn,
spacemen arriving with statues of
the Early Explainers, Druids,
Pythagoreans, Taoists and such

who turned each thing they found
or beast they recognized into
letters of their huge alphabet
and therewith wrote the rest of the world

the spacemen said. The congregation
if there was one listened as if to a book
yearning in its hearts for such precision
as know what a dog on grass means
and what new cities will be founded on it,
this mere rainy morning which is everything.

4 June 2009, Cuttyhunk