

11-2009

novA2009

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novA2009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 590.
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If color-coded the broken
pieces of the lamp
glued blue to blue
would it still shine?

The moon is brighter
than when I was a child—
then it glimmered now
I have seen it raging in the cloud

dreaming clear through all
local confusions
(the weather, Lucy)
on its way down

to end its dream in me.

1 November 2009

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Suppose it were really what it is
and the sun rising through the blue glass vase
played its blue light on my hand right now
just the thumb of it and the rest asprawl
on this glad paper then who could I be
or pretend to be in this same minute
caught between not and notice almost awake?

1 November 2009

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Papadums anybody?

Handel's Messiah.

I thought the other one was

the one you hanged

who knows why

on some intersected tree.

1.XI.09

= = = = =

Even people who like me
tell lies about me
it's something to do with my image
in the mirror something
they see and I can't see
a lie waiting to be told
a bad motive hidden in my hair.

Assume for a moment that all
the bad things people say are true—
not just about me but everyone
also else. Then that will be
the truth too. No one is wrong.
Every affect matters. Every
perception counts. Is the nature of poetry.

2 November 2009

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Size is a mystery
unsolved, why things
are the size of themselves.
Unless they're overwhelming
big or small we don't even
notice. Will it fit through the door
can a plane carry it, we ask such
but not why it is what it is,
this and no other. It fits
inside itself and fits precisely
into the world—are we asking
what is the world?

2 November 2009

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That the bird
by itself
should come to the roof

and this house play
a part in its life—
a miracle

that we also
maybe are part
of things

and have our use.
Our uses.

2 November 2009

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Next time I will use blue
this green sky confuses the trees.
Themselves like all of us
a kind of compromise
between earth and heaven,
between staying here and wandering away.

2 November 2009

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Don't sign your name to it
before the paper crumbles
and the tree it came from
stands up again in the Maine woods
and has a bird in it instead.

2 November 2009

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In the brightest room in the house
shielding my eyes against the light
I think: run up the stairs
to make the sun go down.

 It makes
a kind of sense, overture
to an opera that will not come open
easy,
 a slimy oyster shell cracked in my hand—
what a way to talk about our Mother!

2 November 2009

THE GENETHLIAC — *a horoscope for Sherry Williams*

The horseman on the plain
shoots five arrows at the horizon.
The plain is the Primary Shield
oldest revealed surface in America.
There is something strange
about the horseman too:
maybe in all these years he
has never gotten off his horse.

*

There are no rivers there
so the fish have to walk
like crocodiles in Egypt
carrying the sun on their backs
all the way to the dark.

The moon meets the sun before dawn,
their copulation (don't be afraid)
is labored and prolonged—it is said
the male goat remains in penetration
in the doe for an hour or more, slowly
squeezing his moonstuff into her.
I have seen them at it in the Alps,

goats with six horns, goats with four.
And I have drunk their milk.

So in the ancient epic of your birth
the sun and moon then rode in a chariot
drawn by goats and crocodiles. Proud
they looked about them
ready at a moment's notice
to invent a new world,
as many of them as you please.

*

They sent a messenger to stand by your bed
and he keeps saying what he said:

you have to work so hard
but you'll love what you do

and the harder you work
every day will be completely new.

You can think up anything you want
and the thinking will sustain you

you can conquer and be conquered by
any world you choose.

[2 November 2009]

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Crows on the lawn
the little girl thought
aren't they supposed
to be in the sky?
Why does it all
have to come down?

2 November 2009

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But we are the first ones too, orgasm without childbirth, pain only for pleasure, a rare and secret female form of the creator creating from herself I saw once and forget her name, she sat calmly and dreamed the world out of her painless lap -- unwelcome pain is a false law, a wicked dream, a stepfather with a beerbottle and a strap, you're right, the smallest thing is the signal, the burst of pleasure from the chick pea hidden in the mattress -- olives are dark red when they are ripe, did you know that, and crushed underfoot in many a grove in California I have seen, so bitter to the taste, they need salt a long time, salt and time, to sweeten them, maybe that's where or why pain was invented, pain is a western thing, the western bank of The River where the dead were housed, the dead whom we impersonate these days, screaming through our masks and fake bloodied sheets, the dead who are our teachers of such sports we think, but we are the first people and have to find a new highway, not the old ones that spoke out of the black sun but the new one, the moon does not know it but the crow brings it in his beak -- this new bread (the bible called it) given by a bird in the wilderness, to feed a mouth of us willing to say nothing of its own, we are the new people, nothing of our own, no self to express, bare and feeling, good on the new road

- - - -

(responding after Amy Levenhagen had sent me this on Halloween:

we are the last ones,/we are the people of account// Thebans have nothing to do at all with this/because their God is called Kneph /& had neither beginning nor end. do you accept death? Yes, but only for the sake of new life. do you accept pain? Yes, but only for the sake of childbirth & orgasm. we are the last ones and keep making last ones, turning our necks on a waterbed of old stories. the pea beneath the mattress has been told as a jewel, a nut, a clit, a biological weapon, the devil's spyglass, imaginary. rules come down from an inconceivable time, the pea has been told as the center of a dream, god of pea tricks burnt in a wicker man?/dark all day/ last neurotic maiden/ never ceasing to touch or scratch)

2 November 2009

SUNDAY MORNING

But they would wait
wouldn't they the cars
at the fitness center
and inside their masters
revving the treadmills,
the old in church, the young
in one another's gyms,
infants snoozing dazed
by the wide screen tv,
it is the Lord's Day
when each adores each's
little god on wheels.

*

But saying mean things
about them won't
help. The peignoir
is a dustcloth now,
the Sunday papers
wrap up the dog's mistake.

The pale sobriety
of yankee time

is a leaf-blower now
howling at the leaves.

*

There is no quiet left.
That's all. The deaf old man
smiles at the children's ruckus
content with his own tinnitus
which at least never for even one
minute stops. You get used to it
like an ugly picture on your bedroom wall.

*

But outside aren't they waiting?
After a hundred years the trees come back
all over Connecticut. Isn't it possible
they'll come back too, the people
who lived on earth and wanted heaven?
Not the godly ones; the ordinary sods
who trysted in the pine woods and said
no more prayers than they had to, and kept
the perfect discipline of intimate desire?

3 November 2009

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But I can't just say *No this isn't me*
even if the words are wrong and summon
the kind of poem or the kind of world
I don't believe in and don't want.

I can't
just say No to what is saying Yes
with eloquent old-fashioned sonority
about people and their fascinations
when what fascinates me is saying so
in my own way, urgent, ridiculous, new.

I ask the asker what to do, the voice
harmonizes with the passing cars, the birds
parsing distances with their cries, the high
trigonometry of shadows on the ground,
noisy, noiseless, hurried, still.

The voice is everything I know, and asks
how dare I not speak what my mouth says?

3 November 2009

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Election Day – the day
when every single adult American
makes a terrible mistake.

3.XI.09

= = = = =

Instead they could sell the country
to the sky, I know a woman
who could sell Wisconsin to the moon

but I have a better offer from the Night—
give your land to me and for one whole year
all of you will dream the same dream.

3 November 2009