

1-2008

## janA2008

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janA2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 608.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/608](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/608)

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](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

May your new year  
be full of excitement & serenity,  
magic & reason,  
Making eVerythIng new,  
makIng new thIngS.

A very happy new year from Robert & Charlotte

= = = = =

Slow stir of music inside muscle

*bless* means sprinkle with blood

*immolate* means sprinkle with flour

how can we survive our  
vocabulary one more year?

1 January 2008

= = = = =

We are centuries  
each to each

a scream  
on a gold mosaic ground

one leaf fallen  
brings the whole sky down.

1 January 2008

= = = = =

Maybe the stream across the road  
full from seven snows  
goes there too

Even at its thinnest, meager  
water barely  
covering the pebbles, and a heron  
standing there

even then it went  
infallible  
to the same destination

Old or young straight or bent  
darkly engoaled  
in darkness we arrive.

1 January 2008

= = = = =

Everything the mind touches  
turns into anxiety.  
Because it touches too tight.

Let the mind look clearly  
like a girl on a field  
a week ago a block away

and let her go, the mind  
should be a traveler  
not a settler, not a farmer,

a quick forager in slow woods.

2 January 2008

## WALKING

Walking the broad occasion falls us  
ampersands of living power us  
imaginable maculate though perfect  
three-cornered sphere your hat  
in my hands a story in your shoe  
shoved under an apt recipient o pine  
getting there by herring light a moon  
scheming infrequently obscure  
you animal along or alone in wet sand  
footprints of some earlier age  
can still see the dune crests dislodged  
o circumstance o almost sister osculum  
novum principessa lumine a grasp  
of porpentine a relax of eels we  
move haunted through a wantless world  
walking sundials or b-list preachers  
ever obvious trust to tell some truth  
trust truth to twist away from easy ears  
an obelisk fallen between friends  
or city gasped for breath called love-  
in-idleness you recall that music  
from your mother's harp how hard  
that some men will be children  
no matter what fish think the sea is for.

2 January 2008

## IDLENESS

What I was saying to Jeanne Fleming on New Years Eve was a praise of idleness, of a few minutes or hours doing nothing. Though nothing is often the hardest of all to do.

An empty quarter-hour is a precious jewel. Use time by losing it. Imagine it this way: an idle moment is a pebble tossed into a pond. Oooh, you think, it's lost, it's gone, I wasted my time! But then you see the ripples round the vanishing point, ripples growing ever wider, ineluctable, touching every contour and interbreeding with every wave. The ripple of that idleness runs rich and various till the end of water, the end of life.

In a busy, overcommitted life I still draw on certain reserves of time and leisure left over from some months in a teen-age summer, when I did nothing but read and loaf around, looking, desiring, seeing what there was to desire and to do.

2 January 2008



= = = = =

Because of it  
any it  
we are close enough

But then the sirens  
run through the night  
along avenues we did not know were there  
that makes us wonder

what desperate situation is so near  
and we know nothing

all around us it spreads  
whatever it is  
the night knows it  
and sometimes tells us what it knows

or not,  
sounds always know it, always tell  
but we can't tell sounds apart

it's all in the same ear  
the same unknowing

2 January 2008

= = = = =

Every night while I am sleeping  
my gizmos get their chance to feed  
and play, thrill their sockets with  
juice from the DC charger  
seeps into them and makes them strong  
while I discharge the stuff of dreams  
and wake up ready for the newest  
food of sense and intellect I hope  
with all my gizmos at my side  
to feed me pleasure and to guide.  
We humans are the meek reciprocals  
of everything else that simply is.

3 January 2008

= = = = =

When my body doesn't want to do  
all the things the people in my head  
keep telling it to, then I am a letter  
lost on the way to the mailbox,  
chewed by a sheepdog, left in the rain.

Anything but to begin again  
the fearsome activities of every day,  
the door, the telephone, the moon.  
I am mysterious, like sleep,  
and dangerous, like soap. Everybody  
recognizes me and has some story  
in which I seem to figure  
unbeknownst to myself.

We have this strange verb 'do' and this  
slightly less strange 'make' and everybody  
in there keeps trying to put them together.  
Dear Christ, isn't watching sunlight on the snow  
conquistador and rhapsody enough?

3 January 2008

## ENCOMIUM OTII

Of course idleness  
resurfaces as deed.  
Of course the sun  
comes back again.  
Haven't we learned  
what the night has been  
trying to tell us  
thousands of years?

3 January 2008

= = = = =

Savants for nude tears wanted  
it sounds so right to say it  
so say it must mean something  
you never know a cellar door  
to Galilee and he the self  
in present in your aspirations  
most the way a cardinal in on snow  
conspicuous and momentary only  
and then again because ye are a  
people of again stiff-necked  
rehearsers for a never act  
but how the twirl of us repeats  
we stalk about on exclamation points  
and seldom bend to question who  
put these notions in the head  
you spout as language honey  
dripping from the newest rock  
a jay caught on an iron flange  
this woman came and rescued  
holding his big warm body  
in her gloved hands until he knew  
himself again and flew.  
this was the true gospel actual bird.

4 January 2008

## SOMETHING ACTUAL

Something actual begins here  
or hereabouts, just this side  
of the little woods between  
Hannaford's parking lot  
and the highway south.  
You see the sun there often  
as if it were trapped inside  
or figured out a way to call  
you to attend its royal Going  
Down whenever you go out  
to buy bread or a fish. They  
have good fish at that store,  
lately though a lot of weird  
pinko fillets from Vietnam,  
who knows what kind of fish  
they really are. They and you,  
so many chapters to that  
story, the sun will set and rise  
again before it's done. But  
(this is the point) something  
actual gets there when you see  
the sun caught in the pines  
or the trout splayed on ice.  
A flock of deer sometimes  
steps down the hill and crosses  
through the cars, even when  
people are still around to watch.  
Something actual, search me,  
I know it's here, I feel it  
strong as the cold west wind  
but I don't know what it is.  
Maybe it doesn't know either  
and we can all get through  
our whole lives without ever  
knowing. Or maybe not.

4 January 2008

= = = = =

The movie moment  
when the doubt  
spills out

Forgive me Satan  
I have been a meager  
devil, a slack slut

when you wanted fire,  
I have made  
too much love

to mirrors, windows  
even everywhere  
and so few doors.

5 January 2008

= = = = =

I want a new magazine to come out  
made up of roots of some tangled tree  
you have to wait twenty years  
to find out what kind.

Magazine used to mean storehouse or storeroom  
or just store,  
store. It's full of things  
that nobody wants  
at the price proposed/  
The alternative is Kant, or perpetual prose.

5 January 2008



## POET

They make fun of me  
the way I speak  
my mouth to your ear  
telling the truth  
right into you

I'm supposed to be on TV  
instead, honeymilking loads of lies.

Yet even the truth I whisper  
is made of falsity,  
has the lie-word in it deep,  
the I-word, the mooching me.

5 January 2008

## EPIPHANY

Anybody waiting for the light  
must bring the light.

Anybody hungry for the word  
must speak the word.

Anyone who would be guided  
by a star must be the star.

Having declared themselves thus  
the wise men knelt down and prayed  
to the child each brought inside.

6 January 2008

= = = = =

The snow is everywhere  
but on the roads. Meaning  
we can only go and not stay.  
But everything means that, doesn't it.

6 1 08

= = = = =

Snow-helmeted eminences  
bird pole gazebo cupola maple stump  
I never bothered to erase are all  
galeated, a scrabble word,  
with last week's snow. Last night  
Klee's 'The Big Dome' caught my eye  
again after all these years, vast  
cupola above a mere building  
down below where people are.  
These white helmets won't last  
the week. But while they're here  
their warriors are there for the asking,  
battle me against the sky, ethical  
dative that 'me,' forest critters,  
wood people, feathery democrats.  
The point here seems to be that  
everything is covered by something else  
the way even now the sun sits there  
grinning on top of the sky. And why?

6 January 2008