

1-2008

janD2008

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janD2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 610.
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MEN

Men are weird. They see girls and think about them. A man sees a girl and takes her from wherever she is and sends her, accompanied, on weird journeys inside the man's head. A man drives her deep inside himself, to his hovel or castle, seaside or deep woods, and knows her there in all sorts of ways that are mostly his, just his, but maybe sometimes hers too a little bit. As if some of the real woman survived the journey and has her say in what he thinks, or is able to think. Maybe. How the image he's seized of this seen but unknown woman, her image, carries with it into him some urge or taste or appetite or even will that is not his. Maybe even it is not even hers, though it might be. Whose could it be? Are we to think there is an Angel of Desire who swoops through the lower airs and animates these borrowed images?

15 January 2008

= = = = =

Can there be waiting
in the sense that a tune
will not skip out of the hearing
(the Germans call such
a melody ein Ohrwurm,
ear-worm, won't come
out of the head, an worm
in the apple of your head,
oy veh, Horst-Wessel-lied
a month of Sundays
when the sun shines
and the weekend is
eight days long and beef
roasting in the pan,

and all of this is waiting
just for silence to come
falling from the branches
from the eaves of the garage
from the linden tree
from the broken rosebush
the snowplow touched?

15 January 2008

MUNDUS

It had a little mundus:
I whittled a ditch
around a field
would be my town

I had a town all round
filled it with folk
birds sang in the trees
and a bottle broke

a horse bled
and a bottle broke
the street filled with wine
no one would drink

it flowed out every
door and became the sea
no I had a sea
already it became the sky

nobody ever had a sky before.

15 January 2008
Kingston

[DREAM TEXT]

At 4:11 AM I awake thinking of Theodore of Mopsuestia
after hours of playing jazz
outdoors, lying on the ground near the woods
with a woman, close, we lie pressed together,
the other musicians are far away,
we all are playing: she
the vocalist beside me, I'm on soprano sax
my horn stretched along her body
half-muffled by her, by the autumn leaves
we lie in, she's great,
her music is all the music, it orders
and controls all the rest,
her voice runs us, rules us,
I can barely hear myself.
When we pause for a rest, excited, I say to her
"if I were seventeen and we were in Balzac
I'd say I'm in love with you.
But I'm not and this isn't."
She doesn't even smile, sad, worried,
her husband is slipping away from her,
she knows, it, there's another woman,
he's with her right now, over there in the trees
they're playing together, he's drifting
away to that one from my partner, who still
has to keep singing, I squeeze her,
she doesn't even want him especially
but she doesn't want him gone,
who does want to lose anything?
Even a disease is valuable.
The music begins again, I am less
confident now that the music I bring
to the music can bring her to herself
let alone me. The music is everything,
her eyes are far away but her voice is here,
strong again, always beginning.
I need to know who Theodore of Mopsuestia is.

16 January 2008

= = = = =

Nature is a superstition.

The veil of Isis is the human mind.

These two statements leapt into my waking mind out of any context. I must leave them alone, unelaborated, uncommented. For now.

Let them rest, as nature does, beneath our eyes, beyond and before our wits.

16 1 08

= = = = =

Sun out says me
says who?

Words talk
to themselves
we listen.

One word is Lady Macbeth
then look what we do.

One word is Parthenope
and we look her up
and find she is one of the Sirens
whose song is dangerous, is sweet,
and about her and her sisters
the Suda says: *And the song of pleasure
has no good consequence, only death*

One word is chair and we sit down
in space! Hollow! Bright! All of us
on chairs! And nobody there!

16 January 2008

= = = = =

der Marschallin gewidmet

Over time, time happens.
It's like the long intestine
going forward and looping back and
turn around and finally go down—

time takes its time with us.
And we can stop it, sure,
a little while let the clock become
just ornamental guilt on a marble ledge

and nothing changes. And then it does.
Slippage, the wind, the inner
certainty of dawn again, a gurgle
in the pit of the mind, a thrill

where you need it least.
The mirror hazes over with your breath
moist in sympathy with the grief
its bright bad news must bring you

while all your young lovers
cool their heels in distant rooms.

16 January 2008

= = = = =

Some days it's just today.
Some days it's tomorrow.
How to figure out the difference
ahead of time. Ahead of
time is an island off the coast of nowhere.

16 January 2008
[End of NB 303]

= = = = =

A man and a woman
fell into each other.

Nobody noticed---
nothing showed.

But they know all.

16 January 2008

THE SUBJECT

Knowing something smaller than a T
but bigger than an I
a character between a person and a thing

a fresh wind from the ocean or
a young gentleman pirate Stede Bonnet strung
up on a December day in Carolina

what is the world coming to.
I think of him slung on the meager gallows
like a doorframe with no door in no wall

in no house that any living man has ever seen.
He's there now, you can hear him
moving about that clean old house when the wind blows.

16 January 2008

THE SELECTION OF PLEASURE

marches the mind.

As once the birds over Mestre
wrote out an alphabet
a young American could recognize
and know for the first time
he was part of the whole story
just because he could read,

or as in Homer's time the giddy sheep
paid scant attention to their shepherd's
scrannel flute yet all the while his tunes
sustained their culinary investigations
of this mere grassy habit of the world

so pleasure leads to pleasure and each
precious syntax of entitlement or loss
demands a staunch grammarian to parse
the branching sentence of our ignorance

into the miraculous moment, or momentum
of sheer assent. Yes this thing I feel
feels all of me and takes me
to a place I had not known
and yet it seems like home,

that Oregon wild secret coast where in mist
the agate of the heart, tossed
this way and that way by the in and outcome
of the waves is most at rest.

17 January 2008

= = = = =

Pull the night mask
from the furniture
and put it on.

To seal the eyes in
so they must turn
inside to see.

What is there
for them is nowhere
else outside.

Be not deceived:
what you see
is what is vanished

already or not come.
May never come
because it is there

already forever
in the being seen.
Now is never.

17 January 2008

= = = = =

A museum of incandescent
unreliable visionaries
these poems be.

Trust this word
only as far as you can taste it.
Thrust it savagely
into the back of the mouth.

Can you swallow this?

These
lines are the Wandering Jew.
They will follow you everywhere
in disguise. When you are a shepherd
they will be your wolf
then suddenly will be your sheep,
all of them, every one

none of you will ever be lost.

17 January 2008

THE ILIAD OF HOMER

A little boy with playing with tin soldiers
one of them draws his tiny
sword and plunges it into the boy.
The wound expands, every wound expands
to be as big as the intention
behind the blade.
The little boy dies. The neighborhood
mourns him for a little while.

17 January 2008
[shrine room]

= = = = =

Suppose I didn't know
what the words meant
or how to spell them
but just kept talking?

Suppose a stone fell
into a pond and liked the feeling
so again and again it fell,
over and over the beautiful

outward ripples please it
going out and going out
forever and *all of that*
I meant the stone thinks.

A word is a stone that just keeps falling.

17 January 2008

[Dream Transcript]

I wake with a sense of almost intolerable burden. In my left hand is a scrap of parchment with a fragmentary brightly hand-colored coat of arms, all floriated. I understand that these are the arms of the Archduke. The one who shot himself – or was murdered — at Mayerling. And it seems I know at once that this was the most critical event in European, or even world, history of its era. Strangely, the sense of burden, a personal burden I must carry or discharge, immediately lifts off me when I hear or see or say the word “Archduke” – it is replaced instead by an immense sadness. No one can do anything about that death. It is so sad. Suicide saddest, murder viler. Fully awake now I cannot endure being in bed. I get up. It is almost light. In the distance I hear a snowplow clearing the road. I write all this down, and only when I’m through with transcribing the dream scrap proper do I recall that last night Charlotte handed me a CD of Beethoven trios, one of which was listed on the jacket as the Erzherzogtrio. I pointed out to her that this meant Archduke Trio.

18 January 2008

[Interesting: Erz/Herzog = Arch duke. But a false analysis would read: Erz/Herz = iron heart.]

= = = = =

The skeleton of suppose
astonished my left eye—
but it could be yours, padre,
I'm not the only one who looks

for God in the unlikeliest.
Say Mass with this in mind:
a dreamer wakes up, the book
still in his hands. Still

from before sleep? Or from
the dream itself, that skeleton
of every day that time
drapes its shabby muscles on

to make us march. Pray
for the pronouns, padre,
who are all we ever are,
typos in a boring document.

18 January 2008

= = = = =

It is light now. The light is white.
I want to be asleep
but not in bed.
I want to be awake in a white world
with nothing seen,
full of light but somehow else.

I want my eyes to have closed on something right.
Something I can clutch into the dark.

18 January 2008

= = = = =

All the things I don't need
surround the thing I do

one tree in a forest of trees who knows
which one is the one
I have to climb
or to cut down or be hanged from

myself to myself
one eye closed against the impudent light

they call this sacrifice
and me a pagan
when it is the only thing or only way
to know the thing I know.

19 January 2008

ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI

Over Mary's head the dove
(in Memling's Annunciation)
inscribed within a gold-rimmed
red halo forms a clock
hands saying nine-fifteen

over her bed. Time to rise
or rest or sleep so deep the body
takes nine months to wake
and then. And then another
answers when she speaks.

Behold me, ready for what comes.

19 January 2008
for Don Bruckner

ANNUNCIATIO

= = = = =

The scrabble mind of poets making sense
the cocktail party crammed inside the head
the downstairs non-stop disco, the bodies
of everyone you ever knew still busy
shambling around slutty dance moves
and all you have is consonants and vowels
you fool. Poetry is just cheating out loud.

19 January 2008

= = = = =

Or my father dancing
lightfooted for the Keystone
camera in Coney Island
looks like nineteen thirty nine.
I am nervous stalwart at his side
moveless in short black pants.
He's all over the sidewalk
smiling, his hat never moving
from his head for all his prance,
yes, prance more than dance,
on a side street with his back
to the north and to his right
side the huge trelliswork
of the slow long chugging
not too thrilling peaceful
roller coaster called A
Mile Through the Clouds
he loved more than me to ride.

19 January 2008