

1-2008

## janE2008

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, "janE2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 613.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/613](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/613)

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).

= = = = =

Out in the woods behind my house  
is an animal who has no house  
and to that animal I have come

to the condition where there are only vowels  
a language that is just breath after breath.

19 January 2008

= = = = =

Calypso quick gather  
strum a word to clear  
the history of a place  
into bleak gamble  
a family to suck in.  
It is it is a vampire  
capital feeds on us all  
the window wide the wind  
fucking up the curtains  
the bloodbeaked bird  
comes waddling in  
to bite and proselytize  
till we are money too  
and lose ourselves in it  
the way it works the  
way it goes we are  
the food we sometimes eat.

19/20 January 2008  
*(thinking of Sir Lancelot)*

= = = = =

Where the sparrow  
hid his seed  
and the bluebirds, whole  
flock of them, came  
to inquire of the hollow  
in the tree by the garage  
and books came in the mail  
and a top was spinning  
on the dining room table later.  
Who can know more than his father?  
We tear down what the old man knew.  
And so we go on into the deep time  
with no knowing, no growing,  
everybody starts at zero.  
We are born with scorn.

19 January 2008

## LEWER

Let me close and lewer  
new word, lean  
close to your left ear and whisper  
smutty things, innocent  
as foxes in the woods, every  
thing is play and kill,  
every body's there for you to eat,

lewer, my pagan lips  
do this at you –  
the word arose in my right ear,  
the good one, darling, in time  
with my hand hoisting the heavy pen,  
morning is so feeble, the sweet  
sunlight on the nasty squirrels,  
all that peace. And a word

flustered to be said,  
almost speaking German now,  
innocent as Trakl in a book  
and yet the stream is moving  
full but sluggish with the cold  
like the insides of my morning head,  
a hope a word  
a hope a word will come  
that says it all  
that everybody hears and  
that can eat everybody pleasantly up.

20 January 2008

= = = = =

Is it rapture yet,  
Goodman Smith,  
is it Portugal again  
my little jet?

Are we ever anywhere  
but where we've been  
and this place is no place  
no place yet?

To be one's own GPS  
and listen to the voice  
inside you hear so  
clear halfway between

an Englishwoman and a crow  
that tells you where to go  
in that most dangerous  
vehicle called Sitting Still.

20 January 2008

= = = = =

Is everything that exists just a sketch  
of something else, better, to come?  
Or is just a memory of a better  
thing that long ago had been?  
Or is it nothing but itself and there is no self?

20 January 2008

= = = = =

Have you some to say  
or sequence?  
In Brooklyn, on a wide boulevard  
a woman is  
remembering me right now.

It is almost intolerable  
to belong to someone so far  
and her hands are all over my dream.

The sample rate of everyday life  
needs to change. The lost  
decibels of difference uncompress!  
Let it all be dangerous, distorted, hence true.

20 January 2008



= = = = =

Ask someone else  
my pockets have holes in them  
rats came and bit through  
to swallow everything  
I thought to carry  
with me in this bad world  
we make so good.

My magnet fell through  
and is gone, still somehow  
I must bring you to me,

ask someone else,  
my business is with empty hands,  
a few stones,  
a broken table.  
And sunshine is my only knife.

20 January 2008

= = = = =

This makes me *Magus*:  
empty-headed everywhere the wind.

20.1.08

## DARKNESS

1.

It's when the colors walk away we know  
the other thing has come. They tell us  
it's just the absence of light but we know better.  
The dark is an animal all its own—  
you can see it rub its flanks against the sky,  
open its quiet mouth and things are gone.

2.

It stands between me and the sun  
as if it meant me to pray to it  
and I do, I will pray to any beast  
or god or passenger idea fleeting  
through my thought, they all are godlike—  
everything that comes to mind  
is mind and I bow down.

20 January 2008

= = = = =

Wouldn't it be wonderful  
if we could read the day  
direct without writing it first,

all there when we spring the door  
and breathe the bright information in,

eyebreadth, miraculous meanings  
brought by common carrier, the air,

for wisdom is the milk of air  
we drink with special skin.

21 January 2008

= = = = =

Girls named Laura are afraid of me—  
respect, suspicion, aversion, fear: these  
four are the qualities  
of any given Laura to any given me.

21 January 2008

= = = = =

Or were they ever waiting  
was everything ever the same,  
was the sun the same as the sea  
because it occupied the same  
attention span, *a child's mind*  
*vacant, regardant*

as we'd say in one more lost language  
when men wore signs upon their arms  
to say who they thought they were  
as we tattoos on our meek skin.

At last the wind comes down  
the stairs the ship comes in  
the landlord serves us sky for breakfast  
with a little bit of tree thrown in—

mirror phase, the cat forgets  
to chase its tail. Maturity  
like a bowl of oatmeal  
cooling rapidly despite sunshine—  
even he can't turn the sun off  
or charge us for it though he'd like to.

And we'd like to pay, we adore  
transaction more than sex or food.  
And that is what our Child can't get,  
why one hand is so much better  
than some other, why keep holding on,

why we write things down  
on paper or our skin when  
everything is written there already,  
just leave him alone a minute  
and he will read them in his own time.

22 January 2008

= = = = =

The slow accumulation of detail.

The mail?

Not come yet  
a sparrow on the power line ok?

But there will be a time.

For what”

Not time in general, just a time,  
specific, *kairos*, like Jesus.

Jive me not. No, serious. A little boy  
lost along the beach at Rockaway  
wandering in the shady caverns  
under the boardwalk  
in and out of the supporting pillars

*Mark Lambert*

lost and didn't know it,  
lost and happy

to be where he was, is,  
the exploration of never  
one second at a time.

Here I am  
the sand said, and here I am,  
the surf, I'm listening.

23 January 2008

= = = = =

There are such things as eggs  
aviators, eagles even  
floating over the Hudson as I speak.

Big river. Belongs to me  
but you can ride it,  
sometimes,  
while my mother tongue is other wise engaged.

23 January 2008



= = = = =

I cannot die  
I have not read  
the last inscription  
of the trees

the words they spell  
January against  
the pale sky  
and they *move*

they shiver  
in the wind  
to call the eye  
to understand

this is the word  
I am meant  
to transcribe.  
Begin, or die.

23 January 2008

= = = = =

But there was something there  
some dust the nose knew  
and sneezed it out but some essence  
in it stayed behind and lasted

like a kind of thinking the head  
had never known before  
a subtle difference a maybe  
where there had been yes

and here he was still breathing  
but the woods were still there  
and the sky had not gone down  
even though the house was

what was the house now that  
was so different from what he once  
knew around him as cloth as wood  
as space and its absence

when the foot stubbed the wall  
and the hand stopped midway  
in a last despairing gesture  
because a door was shut

and now somehow otherwise  
without being open without  
anyone having come and no one gone  
he stood there in the wrong bones.

23 January 2008

## Variations on Robin's "Ethan and the Fawn"

Hoof stamp in snow  
crunch: a snort  
of breathy sound—  
a doe kept the dog

at bay – my dog  
and the deer sees me  
coming down the steps  
to it and takes off

the way they do  
suddenly gone the way  
the weather changes  
and there it was

I thought a rabbit  
toddled from the pines  
fur so fresh it stood.  
The dog kept still

despite his breed,  
let the new thing  
hobble towards him:  
a newborn fawn

nose mused in,  
eyes unfocused  
nuzzles the dog's warm  
side. Who sat

paternal, taking care,  
ignoring my call,  
obedient to an older  
calling, the care

of new life. The doe  
was waiting, I dragged  
the dog inside  
so that nature

could be natural again,

two silhouettes  
larger, smaller,  
the shapes the same

vanish in twilight.

23 January 2008

= = = = =

As much as offered by the first face  
I wanton rushed to snow. Here  
ambered with daylight even a plain hill.  
*Own this and prosper* speak the dead leaves.

24 January 2008

= = = = =

Oak leaves yesterday  
ice under deep leaf  
fall crunched  
briefly off trail

to go, Before the bare  
gave out and snow.  
Dynamics of sunshine  
and run-off, *drainage*

the essence of cure  
Teste thought not  
just suspend the operant  
pathogen but coax

its exit from the system.  
There is a name  
for this in politics and love.  
Who's that at the door?

24 January 2008