

2-2008

febC2008

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febC2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 615.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/615

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Scattered, the way glances
the eye does, eyeblink,
a measured time
to see.

And if time is measured by
perception can it slow
or no?

In a strange mountain
a pleasant cranny
comfortable for waking men
and a bird flies by.

This is secret
you came back and told me,
you woke up, you shaved your beard,
you had no beard,
you left your flute
you shared with your breath,

you brought with you only
the shadow of a dog,

old pleasure, old pleasures
and you bring them holy man to me.

So when you see a man
walking down your street
with the shadow of a little dog
beside him you'll know it's he.

13 February 2008

for Charlotte

It's almost a shock
how only you are

and all the people
in the big blue world
it's just you I want

and want to while away
this Valentine's and
every day a rose

in that play our work
the hard delight of

art that honest
answering

 what
else could it be
who else could be you?

14 February 2008

SPARAGMOS

And if it were an ear of corn
but who?

And if the scattered
chickenfeed on the bluestone step
brings down a hawk

who is still there
come morning? Is it or an owl after?

Time upon time like a man
leafing through a bible
trying one more time to find
what his wife sees in it
all those words all those pages
spatters of ink.

Who meant?

14 February 2008

RED

Sun on snow.
(Seven and a half
amaryllis flowers
scarlet, one pot
of crimson poinsettia
bracts, one bractless
green, and a vase
full of tigerlilies
and sex. Red. Rose.

Indoors. Out there
the strong dualism
of our Lutheran
woods America
is a long footnote
to the Reformation,
a bunch of crazies
lost in the woods
as if the only way
is cut down trees
to find a way out.)
A room full of light.

14 February 2008

CHRYSOPRASE

Golden leek
combats depression
its color Gemini
too prone to that.

Wear one
in your hat and be Welsh
on the first of March,

hold one in your hand and be
a little boy copying Prometheus
stealing his father's Zippo
burning down what does not love him yet.

The one or ones who burnt
the library at Alexandria
replaces knowledge (gnosis)
with skills (tekhnai).
That is the history of the last two thousand years.

Whereas the Ancients couldn't do a thing
but think their way out of the circle

o pour briser un seul cercle!

I remember that fifty years from Yvan Goll,
printed 1946 in Brooklyn, the same year
my mother and father gave me the Encyclopaedia
Britannica twenty four volumes, came
in two big cartons set down on the porch steps
on an autumn day when Harry Truman
who looked like my father
was president and I opened them
their solid blue leatherette still clean today
and I was hooked,

this fell from heaven

and had me, and in the book
of my memory I find it transcribed
without accents πασαι τεχναι βροτοισιν
εκ Προμηθευ it said *All the skills*
that humans have are from Prometheus,

and there I was pale with longing
looking down the noisy street
where buses B-13 passed night and day,

So now all my beloveds
busy sifting all this chaff
there is some somewhere here
some grain my darlings
and something else
that sticks to your wrists and fingers.

Something once remembered
can never be forgotten.

15 February 2008

THE PHOTONS

How could they have been waiting
for a shadow, these
principles of pure unemended light?

Photons of the beginning
waiting for an interruption
to make them into color, shade, shape

in a bling world,
 waiting for interruption
the way on a morning I wait for you.

Always personalizing. Always I and always you,
how different can they be if language speaks them both?
Anything you can say is just a word.

So cold now a crow came to the bird feeder
they never do and worked the snow beneath it
for what fell. A bird walks

a man flies away into the dream of language
and tells you about it
and tells and tells.

Pick up the phone and love me
he says to the space around him
and only the photons listen

listen to him hard, hoping,
waiting for something firm enough in him
to break their everlasting fall.

16 February 2008

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A hand, palm flat to the mirror,
touches and annihilates itself at once.

Be something else!
the hand's man cries.

16 February 2008

AMONG THE ISOLATES

But what then should the answer be
eye before Eve except after sea?

Shall the railsplitter after all relax
and drop the unwrought hickory

back in the designer's lap for good
saying We don't need a world

we have a mind we have a corpus
of experience an arm a heart

leave out the politics and just be
a city of us, a body is enough to be?

2.

The strange language of these hills
is just consonants, rocks

have no breath, the wind's enough
that comes down from Dagestan

along the shallow sea coast and a flame.
Or I set these blocks of woods together

for you to mess around with on the rug
until you get the blank pale wood

to spell out the bones of a word
and then the wind will come.

You know what it does to curtains.
To the carpet lifting down endless halls.

3.

You breathed it in my ear or just
breathed in my ear. The dust of books

sifted down around us in the stacks
in the old library, the Italian light,

the words you whispered were mostly
vowels, that is how I knew.

I have no idea what the words were
now but still smell your fresh breath.

16 February 2008

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Why would any do anything but make?
Make them happy, anyhow.

Who?

The ones who fell by the gate
beside one,
friends, animals, the air.
Earth's dangerous neighborhood –
whatever you can.

I will. And did he?

He still does.

Sometimes I hear
the angels talking,
they speak of people I hope are me
or not me. They speak of *functions*
as if they were a *mundus operis*,
a world of operation,
or of a single
operation, a work
that still keeps going on
that teaches you and me
our Ps and Qs.

Anxious we listen
or forget to but hear all the same.

16 February 2008

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A little moon
light on snow
just enough
to show trees
and shadows
not enough
to tell shadow
from its tree.

16 February 2008

DEAD TREE

When it is tree
or was. Or gap.
Let a man through

O wait
darling it's the dark
wagging its light at us

the teeth to hide.
And then the Brahms began
and history famously ended.

Now it was just death,
dying done by numbers
no interpretation needed,

hack the flag in ribbons,
recycle.

The sun is green,
gives gas,
the corn stands tall
and nobody knows.

17 February 2008

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But I don't know even *that*,
that being the pale triangular zone
beneath which the mind changes
and autumn begins,
 season of thinking
when you learn how to think with your skin.

17 February 2008

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Sun in mist in rain
the snow unfocused
50 degrees at 10 am
a sudden difference:

water drops from the eaves
smoke rises where it hits the snow—
after all these days of freeze
a kind description.

18 February 2008

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Ink gleams
on new documents
if there is sun, just pools
blue or black if not.
Everything depends.
New countries.
These testimonies
I bring you every day,
Every moment always
on the scaffold
asleep in hurry
the knife falls.

18 February 2008

RED

Looks like we've lost red.

The net is torn, fish
swim out all blue
and silvery

 where will they
be when we can't know

the rods and cones of undersea?

Touch a listen to your brow
the undertow whispers
where we go

 and they'll
be there to meet us,
a crude sketch of your first love.

19 February 2008

ALL KNOWLEDGE

worries us, the kind
heart we hide in the heart
so we turn instead
to the innocent trustfulness
that swallows pills
accepting the omen of the evidence,

trust of a drinker, trust of a fiend in his fancy,
simple heart of an anything addict
trusting the visions that rise

trusting the green and goofy god of the drug
to yield interesting answers
to the zero-grade question
he asks with his last breath, believe me,
every breath is the last
and then the answer bursts,

a little candleflame you can't put out,
your private light, istadeva, your constancy,
the whole ocean is a pirate now,

the thing that really is for one moment yours
and then a moment later, muchacha,
is the blinding light you have to play shadow to,

this is me, you cry, and then not me at all,
only, selah, the wine speaking in me, as me—

shut up, says the wine, you fool,
it is the sun and earth and sea and air
all speaking in me in you, shut up and listen.
Everything you listen to is god. Now you know.
Poor god who has such listeners as you.

19 February 2008

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Can midnight wait?
And where?
Can you imagine
putting Time somewhere?
In what region
can I hide thee?
And never travel
there again and
no one knows?

19 February 2008

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Who would I be if I could be me today
the traveler asked, I want to be

and be on a train through green leaves
from there to here

but no train runs that way that far,
these government machines.

And private money also runs away,
the goals! the goals! and here

is so far, here it seems already gone
and only me, I want to be here.

But who is this me of which we speak?
And who are you? Children

playing at philosophy, old philosophers
trying to be children in their dark forest.

Nothing is as simple as it seems
it seems. Except this.

20 February 2008

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Things often change in the middle.
This is bending. Things smile.
The Commonwealth car
follows its cables. The river
also bends, often to look at itself
in the trees then suddenly city.
Things meet and often smile.
Things change. The car
is crowded, runs west towards
Newtonian spaces far
but never really getting there.
There is never reachable.
The city tries to smile too
but it forgets, a city gets lost
in its streets, this one especially
is every one, women infrequent,
they walk looking at the ground
for the shadow led them here.

20 February 2008