

2-2008

febD2008

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febD2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 615.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/615

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.

CORDIS

Winter slow. The books
of dead people
arrive. Music trombones its way
over the snow.

All it takes is love
end quote. It does.
But which of you
when your child
asks for a stone
thinks to give him bread?

A woman's voice high
twittering over the field of battle
walking towards where the well was
to see if water.

Rose-rattled, face
smudged with crying,
she bears the gift
of her presence.
If he is ready, is he ever
ready, is it time yet,

even winter is too much maybe.
When she says 'the weather'
she means the heart, and heart
means hollowness,

the absence that keeps her moving
forward, past the water if any,
the weather noticed or not,
the fire.

Past the earth even
her nerves prowl, her body
follows over, ever, and the field
finally is done.

The battle's elsewhere today,
a man maybe

bleeding in doubt,

I don't want you to see her as I see her,
too particular for that,
you too would be trapped in her features,
as she is, I am,
in her mere beautiful difference.

The way it is. The particulars
from which one lives
I hide from you
so we can both go on.

Suffice to say a woman
grieving,
a child eats something
he picked up off the road,

a man with pains of his own
not far away.
Suffice
to say winter. Winter also is a heart.

21 February 2008

WANTING TO GO OUT

Waiting wanting. Then wanting
only to be. Then being.

Then a hand somewhere,
a hand helps.

No comfort at the base of the skull
the hill of the left side

a twist of damp thick cotton
was doing his feelings for him.

It was a kind of dying
not the same as waiting to feel

some other. A space
left to breathe in only—

speaking fast so the words
slip by virginal, barely touched

in the act of passage never caressed.
Vestal words. Seen and not touched.

Heard but not understood.
Speak to him as if he were a street

the both of you and houses.
As if it were houses and

living was there going on in place
steady still going still

that is what what he can say
can do. To on in one place

staying. To be a door
into itself or a house it has or is.

So this is conversation.
Time is asthma though and hurry

needed. Is and when he goes
out of the house there is gasping.

It gasps to go and then
it hears him out there

doing so. Out there
there is no word waiting.

Language is a widow
waiting at the window for him,

language needs him
he thinks she thinks

to be complete. To be a widow
means he must be dead.

The wood is all green wood now
the air is air nobody breathed

no body shaped this air before
so he is outdoors now

he waits but what is that but time
breathing in him for him?

Who is out there who left this silence
like a snowplow going by?

22 February 2008

= = = = =

All we really need would be an alphabet
but any things we see could be its letters
and we'd still be far from Evolution as
other than the merest concept
we wouldn't have the hardware or the eggs,

all those eggs! Every hearty breakfast could
populate a mid-sized planet nearly
if hens could talk and birds can
you know, you've heard them yourself
Odessa's parakeet or any crow

will tell you what to do if only
you would listen carefully but who does?
Eggs abounding in a land of sinners—
ten thousand years from now or so
our new pole star will be Vega

when women will be nourished exclusively by light
and men nourished only by the sight of women.

23 February 2008

= = = = =

Seventeen is the number of everything,
all we ever are is seventeen years old
packaged and repackaged till we're stale
but no older really, all that skin,
all those bath tub reveries aloud

become the Constitution the League of Nations
or the anything that's next, Scientology
has more answers than questions, that's the problem,
God chose to be elsewhere when we called out
but Elsewhere is nestled deep inside us—

that is the solution, your latte's tepid
while your eyes are lost in the paper,
astounding news from lands you never heard of,
and here you are in love with God again
has nothing to do with religion

just a feeble perch to lodge your white throat sparrow on
my darling but listen to the little fucker sing.

23 February 2008

= = = = =

But all the waiting
finally is one
a snowfield on the screen
a voice walking over it

towards a silence
over there, over there
shaped like pine trees
dark horizon

man's or woman's
who can tell
there never was a sea
it was only ever this

thing the voice said.

24 February 2008

(thinking from *Aleksandr Nevskii* and *Zorn's Lemma*)

TRICE

It takes. Eyeblink but blink
means see unsee see again
and it is changed.

Aladdin,
magic is the Law,
science is the brute transgression of,

it works. But it works alone.
While all the rest
rests in the long kindly field of the Sun.

24 February 2008

= = = = =

Slicing a snowflake
in halves, quarters, sixths
till only sparkle's left
molecules of
mere happiness.

(old note)
24 February 2008

= = = = =

It will never be Christmas at this rate
the starlings aren't even back
the Lexuses are still down in Florida
and this cold hand warms its brother—

why does the year begin midwinter, why
do we have to pay taxes to get to spring?
The calendar is the secret despot of our life,
Lord Monday chopping every joy in half

and none for lunch. A week is a despair.
Recovery. Getting there again, blessed
nada of the weekend night, when love
slips out of Lady Friday's skirts and gives

and gives. Why can't hours be ours?
That's all I'm asking, just for the time
to pass time. Just for a day to be itself
around me and go to sleep when I do

and wake only when I run out of dreams?

25 February 2008

= = = = =

But someone could have been there
the station or the stallion
no light deciding

you know how these things go
every conversation is a poem
every poem Coleridge under his linden

every poem Stein in a bad mood
looking out over the Luxembourg
nobody's ever laughing even

that's the first thing you notice
the most absurd things go unremarked
confess to heinous crimes policemen smile

no wonder nobody wakes up
the wrong side of the bed is the outside
where the foghorn yonks from needed repose

we could get there by tomorrow
only if we abandon yesterday
what a loss, like missing a whole opera.

26 February 2008

= = = = =

Maybe nearby, or maybe just maybe.
The quality! The green horses, their slim riders!
The polished trombones! The forests
come with them wherever they go, you can tell
deep in their casual eyes a faint
trace of non-human ancestry. My blood too
has a tint of green, my tongue a leaf.

26 February 2008

= = = = =

Why does tomorrow
rhyme with sorrow?

Why does the quiet snow
turn dark twigs and branches
into white words that scream at me
read me read me
make out my subtle alphabets

but when I do what they tell me
they always seem to say
what I've been saying all along
as if there were never
a difference between
what happens and the story
we know already

the game called you
and the loser called me

and still the snow comes down.

26 February 2008

I THOUGHT OF TIME

1.

I thought of time
the time we save

or wasted time
are they the same

stored in the same hive?

2.

Ornate fashion of our earnestness
Pressed out in numbered honeylines
Explaining reverie's pontifical nuptials
The golden impregnation of *this* in *that*
In the ivied chapel ruinous of Saint Mind
On all these pagan stones erect
Still strives the common mind half-asleep
From its own shadow seldom waking
As when a bit of bird hunts through the window
Thank god the gaudy picture glass is gone.

3.

Wait. I wanted it
to think me.
Not conversely.
A stream
fed from underearth

not just the busy
rain of consciousness.
I wanted it
to do the wanting
and me to do the waiting

half mindless still
lawn-sprawled and loafing
but conscious wit
still keeps its winter.
I shiver

with all I do not need to know.

4.

Casting many a myriad spell
or remembering your mother—

how different could anything be
from anything else and still fit in

the place where you keep thinking?

5.

To be ambitious as a bird
and every branch your own
and every wind an avenue
and every minute your own safe perch

and know allegiance only to your appetite
your squalling progeny of air and fire
that gorgeous little tune you
squeak out from your hard beak.

27 February 2008

“Life needs the Caribbean”

(from the NYT – Aviv Nisinzweig prompt)

Hart Crane never jumped.
He died of lust in fact
we all do. Named
for what Spaniards thought
some tribe called itself.

But why two B's? To make
us say Caríibbean but we
say Caribbéan anyhow.
Everybody's entitled to
a little poetry, and poetry

is mostly mispronunciation, getting almost right
what someone else almost thinks she means.

27 February 2008

= = = = =

*Corlo radispar, a gon
sedg amún mondes,
huil apopàtar, nosun
léttame uso.*

And then it began.

Cordial impersonations
the whole ship believed in,
why shouldn't Princess Parm
(short for Parmelee)
be a Georgian princess?
Why shouldn't she have been
quite a wild one in Paris once
(photos submitted in evidence,
one especially, bare-
bottomed on the knee of her hussar)

and why shouldn't from her flesh
and others of her stock
later an elixir be concocted
in reverently triste funereal chemistry
which gave off that lovely almost floral
scent I smelled in dream?

We had centuries of miles yet to sail.
Or have. And why shouldn't all
of this be so? It helps the ship go.
Every day a new language, the bishop said
but we always find him at the captain's table

and maybe the smell of something
is the hardest of all things to give up.

28 February 2008

= = = = =

Hold the tradition up to the light
what was he saying
the one who said
tradition keeps a sluttish house

G.M.

or even this bright emerald
gets fingerprints all over it
every minute of the day
we have to wipe our trace away

the filth we leave on things
by saying them

but this woodpecker
heals now
the house by hammering

was there a place where I would be again?
change the name and leave me you,

pour water in the put and leave it in the trees
let the sun coax tea from the shadows

we drink whatever's there
and not a minute less of it.

29 February 2008

= = = = =

All of this is what it meant to be
again but only now began

his face is her face now
this noble philtrum and half-parted lips
between a kiss and an astonishment

long before you were born I sat
beside you in the park and read poetry
to each other, Lorca and Edith Sitwell

and *Season in Hell* in our bad French
the sound of your lips still traveling me
I am shocked in the sound of know you again.

29 February 2008