

3-2008

marG2008

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marG2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 618.
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TRISTAN

But it could only be
the knife going in
your friend's sword
entering the house
where you kept your heart
he thought you meant him to
you meant him to
you thought so too

a man in love knows nothing
least of all does he know love
that brazen forgiveness
that touches everyone
the same, to be in love
is to be outside the world
and guessing you have only
one self in it and that
self is not you. You ask
your friend to suicide you
so the one you love
will find you missing
and go to sleep and dream you
there, where you both
are so terribly simply gone.

We don't understand
it either. We have listened
and listen still. A thousand years
and no closer. Sometimes
I wake up and think I get it,
how to leave a place
so as to arrive in it
finally, with voices around you,
with vine leaves, with music.
But I know I'm wrong.

28 March 2008

IDENTIKIT

Too busy for France
too angry for Germany
who am I?

Mud cliffs

of Norfolk
over the North Sea
a northern mind
leaving itself alone.

Am I you yet?
Did you notice
the trick of becoming
how it happened
all over again
and the horses —one dark
one pale—who
stood in the deep field
have run away.

29 March 2008

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Somber deliverance

roads tangled up on a spoon
you need a fork
around these paths
a woman with a fork in her pocket
is a sign to go home

where the *spontaneous garden*
waits,

chalk topiary,
shadow roses
and air you eat with a spoon,

now the magical eucharist is ready
all we need is the absolute Knife.

29 March 2008

THINGS BEING CLOSER

alarm (a saint not too frequent)
a peristalsis of the sky
is not being cynical is
being a departure.

From what and whither?
From rot and wither
to a permanent place?
A wave over matter
or embedded therein
like a soldier in amber
her gun gaping wide.

Suppose the sky a simple mouth and then.
What would be its lip its teeth its tongue?

You know everyone,
the sluttish tower of our ignorance
full of spanked women
rises in a bring untutored painting
Brute Art or Folk or Outsider.

An insider's view of outsider art—
that's what poetry means to be,
that's the trouble with me,
I'm so grammatical, good grammar
makes bad politics.

In this city everyone is out of town.
A pretty soldier from an earlier war
her khaki bodice torn by sunshine
torn by rain, her Sten gun at the ready
Teach Yourself Hebrew in her hip
pocket, crouches in the mud
between skirmishes, reads, reads
bad poetry, hiding from the noisy
birds over battlefields – my first love.
Or second. No, third. Zionism
washes off like newsprint –
there is a place where she and I are clean.

Now get out of this story, Me.
Leave it to language grammar or no grammar,
God's own spell-check gets the world right

(can't bend
my knee
can't drink
the sea
can't stop
to pee,
the road
is God)

Eventually I will embed myself in you.
And who will be Sylvia then, or Isis,
or Iris over the trees one final summer,
who will speak the Pale Language to me
and push me in my pram?

Get out of here, Me, I told you once before,
even if you are the only story in the world
language always has another one to tell.

Listen, the road at least knows God.
The little arrow touched your upper lip
and now I can't forget the thing it said,
terribilità, the silent word.

Think with a hammer. Write with your knees.

29 March 2008
[End of Notebook 304]

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Something nude about the day
like five thousand years ago
or a woman with a wand
or bullkelp in her hand
on a beach
alone
as you drift in, smilelessly
telling you this is the place
this is all we ever are.

30 March 2008

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The Sun as colonial power
the earth as subject.
And the other way round.
The earth as moral agent—
the earth (and only the earth)
can say We.

30 March 2008

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There could be
a confrontation here
a stile to climb up
on over

and be. The field
is history. The grass
is number. You are the animal
mon amour.

30 March 2008

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If there is an edge
walk over it

if the sun shines, pour it out

You are a pitcher
a vase a bottle
a shapely accident
a divine mistake

Can't this be
hibiscus? or pussywillow
at least,

Or the child of when our fingers touch.

30 March 2008

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Emblematic of a larger confusion
we go for a spin. Winter
ready to relent. Birds
and so on. Gravel at roadside.
Almost another war ready to begin.

We reach a little tower
and stop for scones. Something
has been accomplished,
we don't know what it could be,
We leave it for the night to decide.

30 March 2008

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Harlequin like hurricane
a little, starlight like starch
a little, makes you look up
stand straight, war is like want
a little, oil is like goodbye.

Once you olive there's no hope
apart. Hence green chasubles
on anxious priests. *Vates*:
someone who lives off what is said
by self or other, who can say?

Latin for priest and prophet both
but no snow yet, more birds than ever
the Darwin mystery stares us in the face
clam is like clover, a cow like cowardice
a thought like theater a little,

we shed the blood of mercy on our altar
stones like stun a little, have like habit
a little, we voice what voices us
imaginary hours! The owls of Minerva
have hidden all any light we meant,

paint my face with your colors and I'll be,
love is like losing, chastity like choosing
carefully are these still my lips and still
your skin they're busy with, a word
is like wonder, never is like now.

31 March 2008

SPECIOUS MIRACLE

That time
had room for me
and let me be
a while and speak

what I suppose
I had to say or
is it another
I'll never know.

31 March 2008

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Listening to a voice
is like staring at red.

A book binding. Poinsettia
bract. Every
color is hidden in itself—

all my staring wont
release the thing I'm yearning for
the non-existent essence of.

31 March 2008

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To be hungry for what happens
and still be kind. Unison.
Fugal structure inhibits
the simple dumb thing I mean to say.
Let's the three or four other things
keep talking too. More complicated
music. More nuanced.

31 March 2008