

11-2008

novC2008

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novC2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 658.
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IF THAT A CHILD COULD OR LATER REMEMBER

1.

What it would have been to be a dancer
or to have danced what it could have been

and not alone but not either together
because a dance is one whoever does it

and one dancer is all by the self who
or who thinks to dance = *an idea*

the body has of itself to move
regardless of anything but here

the dancer leaps from an idea of the ground
to an idea of the rock –feet

remember earth and collarbone
remembers sky how is there any room

for an idea of you let alone actual you

2.

but the dance is not something to see
it is illicit and imperial, it hides in daylight

it dares anyone to watch,
the best dancer hates to be seen

dances alone in a dark closet

3.

all the room the dancer needs is in the dancer's body
its moves are what space is made of

space comes after
space happens to the dance

place is what is left when the dance is done

4.

only one no matter how many
only one no matter you

dancer in the arms of a dancer
each one dancing alone
that is the mystery of dance
the bodies cannot come together

why should they, there is another mystery for that
and that one too is best done in the dark

averte oculis custode oculorum

so much talk and not a leg
the dancer has not a leg to stand on

the body falls out of the sky again and again
and the dance tells why

11 November 2008

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What doth he know of subways
who hath not come to himself
hungover, still half drunk,
in angry sunlight when the train
slows to a stop in an unknown
el station high over Agonyville
when he ought to have descended
underground three stations back
and his head crieth out?

11 November 2008

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They are blowing the leaves away
and then together. They are doing
things with leaves to the leaves.
And taking the leaves away.
This happens. Philosophers
have no convincing explanation.
Biologists keep canny silence.
Tell me how many leaves they say
what kind of leaves they say
and how many of each kind they say.

These questions are the same as silence.
When it is cold the mind walks
a long way to school because
at a certain point in childhood
you stop having a body.
It happens at a particular street
the street has a name the bus passes.
The clothes are still there still real
they move by themselves.

This is the meaning of childhood:
you do not exist. The Count of Monte Cristo
is waiting to become you
he has a sword he has a girl at either elbow
offering him green wine and hashish paste.
You have read about the world no here it is.
Cars and trucks hurry past you
terrified of your emptiness.
Even the leaves are frightened
or would be if there were still leaves.

11 November 2008

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Esse scribi

I am looking at the sky
or was until I started writing down
what I was looking at

now the sky is left alone
to look at me.

And when it turns away in its turn
to tell what it was looking at
in whose words will it write it down?

11 November 2008

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Rabboni, the last light
of a day
is always the last light of a life

everything so beautiful
as it comes to an end

as if all the while, all
the roses and sunlight and skyscrapers
were just for this moment

when it all fades
into the deep folds of grey
and we sleep forever in complexity.

11 November 2008

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Garbagemen wearing gloves
uniformed in Orpheus

the slant-trombone for marching bands
valve slides out at an angle doesn't bean the trumpeter in front

and so they jog through the streets
playing Ponchielli as they go

This was child in Italy
this was mistake and all my woes—

a cat marsh by the shallow sea
and sharks summer soon.

And I knew those old men
who cam back half-plowed and weary

after one last bright day
catching flukes off Rockaway.

12 November 2008

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All that's left is a blue flower—
cornflower maybe
color of what the dying soldier sees above him
mother mantle take him take me in.

12 November 2008

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Coaxing to be done
rinse out your Platonists and

you dream hard dreams then
caught in the mousetrap of Opinio

no chassis and god knows no wheel
just the still gleam of pitted
chrome fenders in winter sunlight,

God knows no wheel.
We did it.
But to think a thing is not so bad.
To think a thought is terrible.

Thoughts commoditize the mind.
Look at the funda
mentalists for whom even God is a commodity,
buy It or die.

To free names from commodity,
to climb the peaks of emptiness.

A thing is something you've gotten off your mind.

The sacredness of matter
(the molecule = movement)
heals the stiffened think.

Why we so long ago learned to eat—
our sin is our resurrection.

But who would understand me
when I say such things
the ones who think they understand a flower
when they nod their heads and say
the irises by the rain spout

or how yellow turn the winter
leaves of the wild rose?

It is not enough to tell the truth
the truth has to be listening.

13 November 2008

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The bear dragged the bag of seed
to the edge of the trees, tore it open, found
seeds tasted less good than they smelled,
left the bag there. Later some blue jays
found the seed spilled all over the grass.
Things happen. Vultures tumble
through the sky – lots of them around
these days, a dozen or more sometimes
in an intricate spiraling lazy
towering over the woods or the meadow.
How do such things *know* how to be?

13 November 2008

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Don't number things—
God didn't
make you a cash register.

13.XI.08

FORTY DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS

What happened each day.

How long is a day.

Do the 40 days equal the whole life,
proportioned out?

40 days is a ninth of a year,
enneagon,
we live around, on, the Rim of the world.

There is no center.
No center of the world.
Existence is an edge.

The edge of emptiness.
To be in the desert one-ninth of the year.

One-ninth of a day. 2.6 hours.

Who counts the wings on a bird who flies by?
Who counts the sky?

A river is always flowing,
running away from the name we give it

we live in an astonishment of permissions
noticing hardly anything. Yet every cloud
is the exact image of your mother's face.

One-ninth of a meaning.

So Jesus on the first day ate bread
and cheese. For the salt.

Salt is good. A while.
And after that no food at all.

He sat there, maybe on a rock.
Are there rocks?
What is in a wilderness,
a wanderness?

Maybe a rock. Broke
on the second day what was left
of the bread into small bits
and fed it to the ravens.
Crows. They know how to talk

and sometimes do.
Who lived in Palestine in those days?
Who lives there now?

Divided the bread into nine pieces
and gave each bird a life.

I know whose son I am.
Of whom though am I the father?

Thirty-eight days to go
and no one to count them

for him. Clouds.
Did they have clouds in those days?

Did anything ever happen before now?
Isn't he still in the desert
fasting, enduring
the phantasms of history
that we impersonate, aren't the rocks around him
loud with our music,

maybe it's still only the third day

and we are dreaming that we're awake,
reading and writing and eating and strolling around and going to sleep
in the deeper quieter pastures of the dream?

Or maybe not.
Maybe anything that ever happened
is done and never come again,
and by the third or fourth day of fasting
I don't know who I am.

And that is an achievement. An improvement
over the false knowledge I call by my name.

Wish I were a crow
to fly above your head
with I were a loaf of bread
to nibble your lips

because then you would be here.

munda cor meum

but the angel brought fire, not food

Call them angel or call them devil
they both are angels—
we're the ones who decide,
who make them what they are.

Theirs is the neutral glory of the Messenger
we can take for good or take for ill.

Every angel tempts us.
Every devil blesses.

Is that what it means
to leave stones scattered all over the field.
Messages. Messages.

Why do you call it a field,
a field gives wheat,
this is just a flatness
a thing that is there with nothing on it.

Stones are on it. Every stone a message.
And he listens.

The horizon is a fence.
Heads of people bodies of animals
seen above the fence
as they walk here and there—

he infers bodies from their faces
infers purpose from their movements.

By now I would be speaking to the crows.

But what if there is no purpose?
Brownian movement.
But what if Brownian movement is purposeful too
and we not know?

So much we don't know.

And it's still the third day.

Or is it always the third day,
one rises from the dead, the dream,
the done, the gone,

on rises breadless, birdless
in the rock-strewn light,

I have been here all the time
one thinks, or her I am again.

Only the third day and already you can't trust even a rock.

Does one die
out of sheer impatience for one's next life?

Thinks: I've done my work here,
now let me take what's left of my energy to my next life—

would a rock
know enough to say that?

Feed me, feed me!
That's what stone says,

a thorough examination of the obvious.

Feed me is what everything says.

14 November 2008

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Waiting for the police
somebody's car smoldering
quietly roadside.
Where is anybody?
Not even the crows
or if they are
have nothing more to say.
The world seems to be a place
where everything forgets.

15 November 2008

WALKING ALONG

Now I think I am a tower.
Down at the end of sight
my feet are very far away.

So far I think my eyes
are in a tower and my body
the curving walls of it

standing up from the earth.
How far away the ground is,
there might be animals down

there, and cities full of men
and women at their ease
and some of them are towers too.

Tower upon tower and all I see
is far away, I'm lost in being tall,
a tower and my tears will be their rain.

15 November 2008