

2-2007

febB2007

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febB2007" (2007). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 672.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/672

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.

YELLOW SAPPHIRE

Earth lends a finger
this orient sun
investigates. Light
is pure midrash

of what there is.
Light is a word
spoken. This
ring. Or any thing.

5 February 2007

BLIND MEN,

their testy certainty,
their stubbornness.
Milton. Ned Ferris.
They are left alone
with their long
interpretations.

5 February 2007

= = = = =

Trying to be clear
by only being here.

5 11 07

DUN LAOGHAIRE

*(out-take from **Fire Exit**):*

astonishing accommodations in the sky
you made me feel I was the wind
and you a sandy beach

you'll never be the same after I come by
and I'll have grains of you in all my going
and all night long the cannon aimed at France

10 VI 06

looped 6 February 2007

=====

(Berio, Sequenza VII)

O Boy

this was my street
I am traffic
I know you didn't ask
who I am
you never care
me who you ask I am
you me
you street me I you
this asked.

But another
waiting for cover,

a letter
from a lover
that is the misery of language
everything rhymes

to say all those sound and never mean
a flea in time's ear

o boy it's today today
I have to remember
a hoot in the head

lost the host in the crowd
only heard
the leap of his voice
echoing far

he was hearing me
from where I want

the after tone
Echo's echo
when you just can't tell
you just can't tell

somewhere in another country

a cat is walking over my grave

or a crow hovers over

do they have crows there?
in that country
they have everything

that's why I go there to die
so they'll have me

one thing for every word at least
and then we fight
to see who gets to sleep with it

a duel like Lammermoor
a tuneful dismay

lost luck a spinnaker
on no sea
nobody ever brings the ocean in but me

always time to begin

but I wait to begin
without time
like a lawyer
with no law

getting the last
word in after all.

6 February 2007

= = = = =

Or because a special being
intended a (example) *forest* or
any.

Since my days in Honolulu
it has been my custom to *specify*.
A useful habit, and needed
daily in my work on Punchbowl Hill.

I was an eagle.
I was almost anything you could put a name to.
But at least I was there.

White nene geese, white long-legged birds,
truckloads of Kiribati workers in the Ewa district.
I was that most problematic of things,
a man supposing himself to be.

I was an eagle
and then a Russian novel
took me out to dinner
steak and mahi-mahi, the usual,
and a flambéed dessert I couldn't taste
allergy to fire.

After, we walked along the beach
and read each other below the pink hotel.

6 February 2007

FIVE AJMAC

A day I don't know much about
let's see what we can find out—

the sun is colding
there are five sinners shivering on the road
towards Point Absolution where the sea
keeps it a little milder somehow,
there are days when even the intensest hero
craves tepidity – those pages are left out
of Dostoevsky mostly.

Only Cervantes
as usual understands: it is the commonplace
that makes men great, women beautiful,
burros into steeds. This morning's coffee
lukewarm now will be the wine of noon.

Does that make me a sinner?
So many lives to feed this one life,
so many dreary whistles to fetch one tune.

One dog it meant, but I won't let it.
He kept a hound to hunt with not to race.
"In Nature's realm, death's the most natural of all"
I wrote in one of my morose pamphlets
and I believed me. And when he did too
he took himself off to the dictionary, that fairyland,
drank the green beer of Saint Patrick's Day
and followed each draft (or draught) with a dragon.
In that book nobody dies.

7 February 2007

BRAHMS

Can the opposing thumb
for once be still
and let the tool drop?

But then the cello would stop too
and the cello is the only food I need.

*

Iron Gate. River gather.
Tyrant melody! You ran
an empire once,
from alchemists to Mayerling

one long tune.
I grew a beard
to hide the simple thing I say.

7 February 2007

= = = = =

Waiting for the end up
the sow-tail tunnel's end
where daylight's stored

the sun is an animal carved out of stone
sits on the sky
watches us

Listen, you can hear his eyes
even when you close yours

on such a day, the wind,
bare trees, people speaking French, etc.

8 February 2007

THE GLEAM

Asterisms abound.
Even in the dullest
jet a gleam articulates—

ten years I have followed the gleam.
It is the civil ecstasy
the architect the priest

belong to me
the interruptions of the breath
that make sense

diviner's mugwort
who ever ate a brown flower?
or Venus's looking glass

a word rejuvenates,
it comes from you, you come from it,
a spa a fountain

and it is something we can buy
from each other
so many kinds of money

and money still is Mercury
money heals.
Ladies and gentlemen, the Gods!

but that curtain never closes, never rises,
and I have to lift
a little thing in me to witness them

so I can swear by them to what I've seen
and they can take such pleasure from my antics
as immortals find in us interruptibles,

us mortal and fumbling magicians
and pretty girls with music in their hair —
in the last light every evening

I'd face the altar till I found the gleam
came to me from the silver water bowl

hold the brass chalice with a candle in it

till the light itself deposed
and I was east alone
mother of a gleam that stayed in me,

the meditation.
Don't you understand
the angel is the one who *stays*,

an angel is the intersection,
failure is impossible,
don't you understand

a thousand years ago the world ended
we have been enduring the millennium
air conditioned gothic ampicillin cyberspace

the knife with scripture on it
the talking blade, the broad
tattoos on Alexandra's back

a culture ends where it begins
in skin, the parceller,
the sensible, the mete, the mute.

[an outtake from *Fire Exit*]
[1 August 2006]
8 February 2007

= = = = =

Listen forward to the truck groan
letter left out
in the rain last night

give energy and aim
and witness by the distance itself
because we cannot bear the other

who is the body of distance
“I write to be loved from far off—
in your case my work was wasted”

Barthes wrote to an angry woman,
can we just drive through the trees.
Why are roads?

Why can't we just go and go
why is everything so far?
So that we can love.

[an outtake from *Fire Exit*]
[1 August 2006]
8 February 2007

= = = = =

Thank god the plumbers are at work again
turning a house into a person
to absorb process and eliminate

a house is a tall thick quiet man
who stands beside a road
and holds you safe-ish in his arms

though he is feminine in the best languages
a man with the gender of a woman
balk and beam and yearn and yearn

inside dark as tomorrow
and takes good care
but without plumbing a house is just a hat

domus, 'une maison'

a woman is a wolf
a man is a bone beside the track—
time ate me

and I am in his entrails now
signaling frantically to you
Love Me from Afar

and let it be my name
you growl as you fall asleep
a thousand miles away across the counterpane

like my dingy skyline of Crown Heights.

[an outtake from *Fire Exit*]

[7 August 2006]

8 February 2007

[for the Defeffable Project:]

Linsey Woolsey

Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee. *Leviticus*, 19:19.

I was a loom, I let
them finger me.
Flax thread and wool
yarn yammered in me
mingling, \yalk *ki'ayim*
snaking in and out of each
other, mischling,
mestizo, forbidden
marriage of This with
That. I was a sinner
on the day Knife.
I saw what I was
and cut the thread
but there is more
always, forbidden,
a thread will never end
no matter how many times
time cuts it, linger,
a man and a woman
is linen and woolen,
znfuc *sha'atnez* do you
finally understand
the Lord said? No
how can that be true
or even meaningful
if so? Can you put on
a man and wear him
in the Egypt sun, can
you wear a woman
winter? I was a loom
and I knew. What I love
is mixing, making

many into one thing
and being wrong,
a loom is wrong, cloth
hides, cloth knows
too much about this
inside it, cloth is a sin,
I am an Anabaptist
about underwear,
what is woven is crime,
why is God against me
didn't he make the world
out of two strands
of different fiber, wool,
linen, woman, man, didn't
she weave it for me all
Friday night and make me
wear it in sunshine
proud as a piece of wood?

9 February 2007

= = = = =

Walking behavior. We always fight about *knives*. Fill the demijohns with javel. Leave unstoppered. The fume will rid your *place* of mildew in six hours.

Dream to report doctor. Two girls walking naked proud a little scared maybe shy but proud even more of being who doing what they are. They passed my window. I saw them through the blinds, alerted to their passage by the sound of horses. As I watched them stepping up the road there was the sound of a single horse, clopping, close. The last thing I remember was my index finger holding down the flexible slat of the blind.

So I could see them.

Explain. Why did I never see the horse? Were the girls it? Four legs after all. Their pretty rumps. Mare priestesses. Epona. You would think like that.

They were walking behavior. It thrilled me to see them, not the prettiness of them but the boldness do you understand? And the sound of the horse's hooves was pleasingly mysterious. It is not uncommon in summer for horsewomen to pass my house, the slow amble of their sleek bay horses, raising a little dust, raising a little sound. But this is winter. The girls were naked but didn't seem cold, they laughed, egging each other on, to walk slowly, proudly. Why?

I don't know I don't know. I didn't touch them, I know you didn't mean that, but I don't think their skin was cold. It was cold, but they were not. At least not in the dream. Dream is a different weather always.

Everything you tell me, everything you say is pretty much instead of something else that *means to be said* but you won't come out and say it. Come out. Who were the girls? What is walking behavior? What is free will?

All behavior is bad behavior. All wickedness is giving. It doesn't say that in the bible but it means it. What were the girls giving? Something they must have meant to be giving or being to one another. Something to one another and something to you.

To each a different, according to each's capacity to receive. This is kabbalah, the science of reception. The whole world is on fire but no one burns. In other words. The beginning of anything you ever say is concealment. Only after the meaning has been concealed can the meaning be spoken. Knives, chlorine solution, glass jars, mildew – in the strange old laboratory the dream was painfully made, of fresh young girls untouched by shame, but holding shame in their minds

lightly, playing with it, like a guitarist teasing a tune, variation, variation, doctor,
naked variation, that is the world. Two girls walking by, naked, smiling.

10 February 2007

SPAGYRIC PRACTICES

1.

Meet the standards of exacting null.
The primrose you spied last Gemini
will cast a little yellow light along your road
—enough to falter, tell earth from air
and both from water suffices. Fire
speaks for itself. 1 flower. Or 1 flower
depending on how you read.
So much of me depends on you.

2.

That is the Art Spagyric. Not some automatic
Squibb effect loosed from passive blossom but
a danced quadrille amongst you two,
two is plenty of population. Since each
brings a myriad of incarnations to the dance,
infinity of instances and here you are.
Not what the flower does but how you coax it
to coax you, ogle it till it stares back at you
suddenly with your mother's eyes
and licks your wound. Her ears explain you,
demanding, assuring, finally whispering
the natural vows. To be. Do this.
A flower is a vow you find in the field—
you pluck each other and you heal.

3.

Image in the calyx of the chosen one
the Buddha, seated. The one you find
at the brink of your mind, where your mind
ends in something else beginning.
Picture Buddha in the flower, bow slightly,
shyly but sincerely, the way the flower
dips in wind, we have lost almost all
of our grand ritual gestures, but you can do
this much, dip your head and say

You who are better than I or any me,
you who can be found in or through me,
you who are as easy as a flower as a cloud
rearise from your flower and settle in my heart
bringing the good news of pollen and alkaloid
so I can breathe all this information in and be it.

4.

Grandeur has something ridiculous around the edges
by which we are privileged to come close to it.

Examples follow: [despots from Georgia, Austria,
China, Cambodia, Cuba]. Stifling frightened laughter
we condescend to royalty. But never to a flower.

A flower is a pagan thing, a tragedy in suspense,
a flower makes you smile but never laugh.

It grieves forever. Only you can heal its withering.

10 February 2007