

2-2007

febA2007

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "febA2007" (2007). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 673.
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Always staying to the knot
a rock. A rock is mostly
something guessed not found.
A knot is where you find.

But all the work of tying
meets in one small town.
You live there faute de lieux
where else could people be?

Symmetries astonish you
into obvious theologies.
And yet. Synchrony rules.
You read a book till things are so.

This is not what he meant back then
by 'mental strife.' This is oil
and comforter and quilt of mind.
A real bird works hard, in cold.

Ribcage not meant to armor but to fly.

1 February 2007

POETRY

I can put the title
anywhere in the painting I please
right? An owl
lamenting over a mousetrap
like a babe in front of Tiffany's.
I can use colored ink
or crayons even.
I can draw a fish.

1 February 2007

Aria

Where have I come
so far from

the plains are plans
that no one made

I have to carry out
until I reach

myself across
the last river

deep last mountain
of I am.

1 February 2007

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How a dried up
jag of peel
from a Stayman apple
under the lamp
on the table top
looks like a garnet.
I pick it up
the resemblance lasts
down into my fingertips.

1 February 2007

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As long as these are coming to me
I need an owl, a dark place in trees
where I confess to any passing priest
on her way to the fountain. This
is my sword – with it once
I stirred a silver cup so tarnished
it looked like owl feathers.
What slipped thereafter wet from the
blade became, this drink I offered
to the innocent. They made me king,
the way children do. Now you
come along and must unking me,
unkind me too. I would be a bird
again, or a boy on the way to be one.

2 February 2007

(from a typed slip several years old)

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Sneak up on it
must and only
two streets to say it
cobbletongue rebel
at the mind with slaves.
The man who broke the book.
Or winter dawn as Kitty Hawk.
They take care of themselves
actually, we just have to let them out.

2 February 2007

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Some keel aspire lung boat
tour the sky. Squaye
it said in the French book dream
was ready in the cruel queer house.
Mes frères. Who will deny
a man the right to name himself.
I am Christ Jesus come back
in you again, I tell you
you are He for whom you have been waiting.
I said the word now you have to be.

2 February 2007

ST ANTHONY'S EMBERS

Brave grass from id, rust rye,
fabled ergot of brain screen
project don't believe it while we can.
Seigle. Folklore of the rush,
despondent paleface, williwaw
welcome February cold. Will warm
subliminal gospel built into sunshine.

Take. It's lovely work talking to you.
Coffee smell of a flower nobody found.

Aroma is alterity. Nothing is
the fragrance it gives off. Yet in
the old brownstone church Owen
Kelly built the incense has the taste of God.
Space is built on that deceiving
–receiving – kabbalah – I said
it looks like the hip of a woman
juttet out, you said it looked
like an old man hunched over,
then young and old both sat down
splayed right arms over the chairback.

Images are only breakfast, tears for lunch.
But from the sobbing pillow afternoons
some sweet – but what could it be? – comes.

2 February 2007

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Is as was. This life.
Now it's ok to listen.
She stood on a chair
pale skin so many have
beneath the signifying
colors of their clothes.
If this one memory
could cure I'd need
no other. But all the others
stuff Silenus. The medicine
cabinet hung on the wall
of the mind has of course
a mirror on its door.
We open up our own
image and find inside
all the dusty remedies
that never worked, fifty
years of memories
still there, sticky brown
bottles, illegible labels,
memories that nobody
remembers but here they are.
And you do. You slam
the door shut – one
look is dose enough.
Back then your fingers
hold her gently so she won't
fall, she laughs down at you
from where she changes
the bulb on the ceiling.
Your head is where you
would have lived once
for months if she had been
your mother. Instead of.
What are you now? A scar
of sunlight across the table.
Someone comes into the room.
You slam the door closed again.
This time is stays shut. Things
sometimes do. And you see
your face still embarrassed by
desire. All these years. Time

is just the first of your mistakes.

2 February 2007

VOCABULARY LESSON

Eco-station green resort
Rouault a hundred years ago
met Matisse I thought was now

a car in the snow
weird tracks on the lawn, wait

if this were Boulder Colorado
I would call an animal

magpies golfing up Arapahoe or
prairie dog town out
past the dead diner
where America begins again.

Eco-station, ski resort
rationally in tune with enviro-issues
and all the snow is green

rational tune
vocabulary items
Put the music on
(put on: trick or deceive)
listening as a species of being deceived.

Turn it on
its side so
no the other
side we used to
have to flip
so we can
who's we? hear it

vocabulary item Georges
Rouault's painting *The Old King*
so popular at MoMA
when I was a kid
every kid needs to have a king
so I had him,
a big poster I mounted on poster board
and hunk like a punkah fan from the beam

above my little cellar room,
roll over, Rimbaud,
I want to bite
your girl's other cheek,
and there the king presided
swaying in the little draft,
murky, semitic, eyes
turned away from
what I might be doing in the dark,
learning vocabulary items

the borrowed words
we'll never give back

I told you to put it on
who me? I will, I do, now hear
the sea flood through the straining bulkhead
and that means a dream
will not be denied
by merest daylight listen
poinsettia amaryllis et cetera

and outside Egyptian snow.
I hear those halls now flooded with
the messy particles of eroded theologies
when 'the love of God' meant what we mean by 'science'
and there were no specious differences to solve.

Like Handel, like an oboe—
men forget ideas at times when they are playing.
Play the oboe. Or work the oboe?
Vocabulary items,
my work is my play,
my merest mark serenest mândala

vocabulary item
Haddad interviewed by Lacan,
every person named, and all her names,
an item on my list.
List = trick or deceit.

But that's a different language!
—That's just politics – all languages are one.

But what about Babel?
—This, where we are, is Shinar,
we're still here,
rubble of 9/11 for example
just a telling reminder of the clash,
crash of interpretations,
Semitic vs Japhetic, vocabulary items
long ago used up, taken off the shelf
where only kids can find them

left alone with language and their little king
kids take down the words and say them

every language fits the mouth
imagine my tongue in your mouth
for example imagine vocabulary
items falling from the rafters
deep in the unknown interior of your house,

we all speak the same language,
it's our hearing that's impaired,
if only we could listen we could understand,

but listening is hard,
listening has no vocabulary.

Green resorts where all the guests
are flowers, all the flowers have meanings,
cure diseases, where all diseases
are garbled messages.

From the lowlands where we keep our rubble
we have to bring up here with us
all the colors we intend to see.

Sallow brick of the old king's face,
his eyes averted, essential
for a kid to hide from his king,
to get his singing done,
all his dark vocabulary.

3 February 2007

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One set the sea
one set the tree
which is me?

Not this not that
not not-this not not-that
just the mind

not this one
this one
just the wind

had an invention
a car that runs on air
we gazed

on him with praises
to be so green
but the wind

the one who meant
was hard to find
like a friend

a man born blind
has to see it first
'a sadness

in search of a heart'
then the rest of us
will all know

and the car go.

4 February 2007

POLITICAL POEM

[*Note: This is a prose piece called "Political Poem."*]

Things bothering me:
I get so angry
thinking politics
I am a part of it or them
part of the problem.

Rationally (poetry
is the supreme rationality)
I know that *those who do harm*
are the ones I should be reaching,
teaching, I should not be

just emitting pretty
consolations for the victims.
Though they need it.
I don't think it does much good
to make more or less well meaning

Americans feel even worse about
being victims of current American policy—
the temporary demons we were tricked into choosing
(election means choice) – we had no choice, did we?
Well, maybe it helps a little.

But not enough, this is not enough of a real thing
to call it poetry.
Poetry is a supreme thing,
rational, emotional, persuasive, driven,
true. That's all, and that's the truth,

Truth is what helps.
If I say this with all my heart
does one reader, somewhere, lower his rifle?
If I could get one householder to stop killing mice
wouldn't I be doing more for this green world than Chomsky?

4 February 2007

MARGINALIA

Now when I finish all my hundred books I can go back and write in all the margins: a new body of work, a new life, parallel lines to infinity, any alphabet I like, print or write, a rapture!

4 11 07

ARCTIC LOGIC

Gazing raptly at anything that's bright.
The native me
encounters
a thing:

o Paradiso I sing, like Caruso
singing Meyerbeer singing
Vasco da Gama singing *here*
is a bright country
full of love and orchids

it will kill me
piece by piece

but not till I have mentioned every one
is that song done.

4 February 2007

STAND

on bridge look down
at stream flows fast
ten feet beneath
shallow clear.

I will wait here
for a sign, till
something comes floating
fast towards me

fish or snake or knight
on Swan Boat
then I can leave
this betweening.

But it is winter
it is cold, it is winter
all the Knights
are hibernating,

there is water in me
also current, it too
can take me home
I can be the very one

I'm waiting for,
a cold man on a bridge.
From the other side
I see the water rush away

leaving behind at streamside
cute coasters of clear ice
shimmering shining
now can I please go home?

4 February 2007

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to HSB

Peeling onion
other night
thought of this.
Dorn would laugh
to see me cry--
real men
eat skin and all.
Spit out poetry.

4 February 2007