

3-2007

marB2007

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marB2007" (2007). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 678.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/678

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.

HEAD RAPTURES

red raptures,
horns. Heart's big house
through. Achilles cracks
his scalp on the transom.
Any lover has hard time in.

How. The size of the entrance
is in inverse proportion
to the volume of the edifice.
Into the whole universe
through a mousehole maybe,
not a singularity, a gap,
mere gap, one more, nothing black,
just a yawn in the heart. Head.

And suddenly we're there,
shopping dissatisfied at Uniqlo
head over heels in hurry
a whole city carves out of soap
each time, to fool
the angel inspectors who come to
check if we are sleeping.

*

What does
the line let?
That's the whole
question, the line
let down
into what sea*
catches what fish?

(*By sea we understand
as German does

both ocean and land's lake,
distinguished only by gender
though they get that wrong.)

*

Include the evidence.
The evidence is
the actual crime.
Dead men don't litigate—
a somber festival
left to the living.

*

Now the experiment in identity
lies on the dissecting table in the morgue.
Miles away the murderer is sobbing.
How can he endure what he has done?
Sooner or later he too will enter the dark
where the other one is waiting for him.
Savage explanations likely follow.

*

Chenrezi told the hunters Never
kill anything you can't bring back to life.
Be like jazz. It uses but it never uses up.

*

She has won every
battle with reality she's ever fought.
The ones she turned away and fled from
will undo her. A No mask
of fragile beauty. Black ice tonight
and howling wind to come.

5 March 2007

WHAT IT WANTED ME TO SAY

1.

It meant to say something
but I went on sleeping.

Now what to do. One more
Lost Word, as if my whole life,
anybody's life, were just one next
of interlocking freemasonries
and never a thing without its meaning

or more than one, world without end,
the amen of everything
to a prayer we have to learn to say.

2.

But what was it thinking
while I slept? A balanced
statement, I recall a shape,
this but also that,
a rabbit and a rapture
in the same field. So cold,
1° last night, only 5° now
in windy sunlight – all this
I didn't know. What did I hear
true enough to wake me
or scare me back to sleep?
Hermes busy with our mornings.

3.

But who cares what I was thinking?
Only the unthought matters,
the *news from nowhere*, to steal Morris's
great title, different meaning,
he knew his nowhere and I know not mine,

or yours, our nowhere
is a voice in the dark
calling what may not be my name.

Or some morning the ripples in a puddle
just thawed from last night's rain.
Read the ripple and remember.

6 March 2007

= = = = =

Harsh
but holy
dakpa Tamdrin
incense
Hayagriva

horse-head
the neck laughs
at the mind's conceit

conchetto
how we glue
things together inside
dome of the Pantheon
let the rain in

Deceptions of a wall, a wall
is a trick we think
there is another side

there never is
only here
nowhere to hide.

7 March 2007

= = = = =

It is like itself
so much we
need not become
other than some ones
who have failed
in their search
to become different
from where it was
simple and they
began. The quest
it was called
in the old days,
knight becomes maiden,
maid becomes dragon,
Dante shows it
clearly though he
mistakes it for some
punishment, thinks
it happens in Hell.
But it is the way we
have to be and do it
stealing each other's
properties, identities,
the look on her face
when he first came
close or feel of fire
when she exhaled
later the hot breath
of money in the cave
from which we start
over and over.
By turning we become,
by othering we self.
Over and over. And only
then does hell begin.

8 March 2007 (dreamed into this)

= = = = =

The cornmaiden look of your face
when I bend close to you to impart
some specious secret like a kiss

or the real name of that flower
you thought so long was just a rose.

8 March 2007
[dreamt into]

= = = = =

Open the Gates of the Temple
my father said
and looked the other way

out the window
into the street
where the temple is always

beginning.

8 March 2007

= = = = =

Transfer regular trolley
old as an ice-box
in a digit world.
Become Indiana! Eat meat!
The moon is full of people like you,
worrying about every little stone.

8 March 2007

OF MASTERPLOTS

But what if a book
is the story told of it
by one who has read it
to one who has not
and remembered by the latter
all his life?

*

And what if the Iliad
is Homer's rehearsed
recollection of
a story told him
long before by someone who
had heard it from
someone who really knew,
someone with blood on his hands?

8 March 2007

TALKING

Catching up with words said
feathers from the church roof
flung into the wind who

rests his head where I
rested mine last night
a pillow said

there is a wind and a space
to fill and the wind comes
through us to be shaped,

farting through the mouth
the ancients called it
this business of talking

when a man says enough already
sitting on a hillside hiding his sheep
from eagles and wolves

the stone rimes with itself
the cloud measures the sky
time takes care of its own

passage: I will be quiet
today until even the last
feather is nowhere to be seen.

9 March 2007

= = = = =

Too much talk.

Terrorphone.
The word never fits
through the instrument.

Poetry is the perfect sieve—
only the mistakes get left.
And these too love you.

9 March 2007

= = = = =

So many words
come through the wall
and here they are,
vivid, insubstantial,
like someone you held
in a dream last night
but never knew
before or afterward,
some word you said
that is not even a name.

9 March 2007

EXIT STRATEGY

Before you go in
to the consternation of the Old Believers

it is one heresy to be born
another to live
a third but not the last is to die –

who will rede me this inscription
an enigma built into language
that can say a thing that is not so

the snows of Honolulu
from which ice sculptures are sent
to the Catholic cathedral in Mecca

or a man's heart speaks and he listens.
Some things try to be true.
The heresies, three and then more.
What is beyond the door
if the door itself is one more mistake?

9 March 2007

OPUS PORNOGRAPHICUM

Against all this flesh though
a simple thread
of number
looped around an idea—

a burning bridge over a frozen stream,
a lion prowling up the subway car—
these things I spotted as I rushed
down the railroad of your lap

crying the station names as I fell.

9 March 2007

THE THICKENING

for Michael Ives

thickening as music
pours in
and finds no outgo

becomes us, thicken
as cloth would, goat wool
trampled in water, heavy
needing the

needing the squeeze.

And they say 'expression'
the way they say 'Shostakovich'
having something in mind,
meaning something, as
a word with a soul in it
left over to share,

the peculiar *intervals*
by which the soul knows its own.

As we know our cattle by their eyes their flanks
so pelted with color, their shuffling gait

character, the seal
upon each thing
of where it comes from what it is.

The winter broke today, and some things melt.
Problems in world trade – ships
still have to reckon with the sea.

10 March 2007

= = = = =

I catch my breath
I commit a comma

tracks of many interesting people in the snow
arrow notch of deer hoof
rabbit's parallel ovals advancing, the five
tiny fingers of the intelligent rat.

I know too much to know so little.

10 March 2007

“CLEPSYDRA”

A water clock. Any clock is a thief of time,
an Arab boy in loincloth sneaks out of a cartoon
to steal the ladies' watches in the audience.
Oval gold with black silk strap, by Wittnauer.
The Egyptian princess in drenched linen sheath
feigns indifference to the skilled encaustic portraitist
sweating away in the shadow. Limestone,
almost the whole of western culture is chalk.
Little John thinks about thieves, watches
the infant Saint Augustine clamber over
the wall into John's father's orchard
to steal a pear from the old man's apple tree.
Theft is a miracle. To abstract the property
the way time siphons off each day and leaves
a smudge or ring around the basin whence
(a word used less and less every day) the water
of time once gracefully quivered in sunlight
throwing shimmering highlights on the ceiling,
those glimmers Venetians call *la vecchia*,
the old woman. Time is an old woman.
Chalk, but beeswax too. Colors are by name
eternal. Translators have an easy job of it
mostly, white is white, black is black,
but then all of a sudden Achilles has blue hair.
Then what do we do? Blue as hyacinths,
that rainy flower. How did the peach
get on the apple tree, all those dreary questions
discussed in lengthy sessions in my youth
at the College de 'Pataphysique, corner
of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street, four
a.m. again and the dawn already cracking
overhead. Despair. A sound like Brahms
coming out of the subway. Nowhere to go
that isn't home, somebody's bed, why
can't I sleep with nobody again, the way
an infant floats in its lotus bassinette
indifferent to the milky sea beneath.
Augustine will not soon forget the taste
of sin, John will remember it too,
the taste of an apple in a boy's mouth,
a white boy from Africa, good at language
but confusing pears with apples, mine

with yours. Crime is always linguistics
out of control. Beeswax, chalk and crime.
The things my father had they stole from me.
Legends of the great war, Enkidu wounded
dies beside the stagnant pond, the snake
who stole the flower Old Men Are Young
Again spits it out. The flower floats,
the hero dies, the young saint swallows
what he has stolen. Only then the sin
becomes a part of history, a thing
to measure time with, like the sun,
or shadows on pavement, or a water clock.

-- 10 March 2007

= = = = =

Nothing left to test the taste against
as a stone sinks in milk and leaves nothing
not even a taste

bones stick out of the sea.

11 III 07