

4-2007

aprD2007

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprD2007" (2007). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 685.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/685

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.

= = = = =

Examine the obvious
with your last breath
and it too will save you
like Proust's yew trees
at the side of the road.

16 April 2007

THE WAY

Stare
at what is there
until it is.

Then you can walk
through it
beyond the openings.

16 April 2007

= = = = =

Constant upwelling of pastiche, a smell of violet mustache wax when too close to the performing lips, you can hear them say anything you choose, what language do the lips speak while the man speaks French, stilted, half-pretending to be someone different from himself, who could that be, ever? We are no one to begin with. It is a room in Paris in May. Colette is there, and Anatole France, and Reynaldo Hahn. Proust is standing by the piano, reciting poems he has written about painters. Hahn plays accompaniments composed just for this hour, these verses. People think the lines 'subtle, full of nuance' but poorly read. Who can read a word worse than the man who wrote it already, if he knew how to pronounce it, pronounce them aloud, he had no need to write them down. Yet he did. We are betrayed by every instrument. Even music can't save us. The piano is a dead dog in the living room. Light from candles smears on noisy lips.

16 April 2007

= = = = =

An ominous day in Ciudad Juarez.
Something happened. Pretty elm trees
neatly pollarded. A mall. The eternal
yellow dog of sunlight sprawled
in such places. In such countries
everything is a street. Oranges heap
in the market place, old man selling
dried snakes, stiff, for health and magic.
Or that was another Mexico. Or
rhymes with orange, a rhyme
can kiss hello not just say goodbye.

17 April 2007

= = = = =

Because the sky is porcelain
the rain inside the old Dodge sedan
where Young Love sheltered
two boys together though one
claimed to be a man one claimed
to be a girl, the voice of the past
is squeaky baritones, geese
overhead in spring, everyone
wakes up an alien. I weave my
book from broken blankets
full of smallpox sent to Sioux
in the horror time of our own
ancestors the whites. Every
day it rains reminds New York
my youth the politics of dime
desires subway hieroglyphics
scratched in safety glass how
loud the tunnel roared. You
were Niagara I was a traveler
we met in lostness and kiss kiss.

17 April 2007

IDENTITY

Scatter. The seed
is Osiris. Is the same.

We heard the syllables they ate.
Eat. The process

continues us. Without it
we would be birds, snakes,

fronds. The movement
is built in. I listen

to the same of me
and think it is the future

coming fast along my skin.

2.
Industrial waste land of the past
certain sentimental charm

like Pasolini black and white.
The seed inside the seed

is what I mean. The messenger
and what he reads

seated in the subway of your self
as he's on his way.

He becomes the message, he falls
loving through the dooryard

where you stand with open self
waiting his instruction.

Which thrills you with becoming.
Now you are Osiris. Again.

The boat of the last time
founders in the deepest part of the sky.

Which makes it blue. Every
answer has a kindred question.

You are ready for your close-up again.

18 April 2007

**“Questions do not always imply a moving of the lips, and a sound upon the ear.
Every MAN is a mark of interrogation! His existence summons thought.”**

-- A. J. Davis, *The Penetralia*, p.13

I'm not close enough to you today.
Or ever. My standing there (here)
beside the shadow of you my mind
casts on the empty window makes
an image: man standing by window
staring at someone who isn't there.
Cold grass cold blue flowers a few
and shadows. Rain casts shadows
too. And why don't you. Just being
there is the biggest question. Now
that you're not. How can it be
that we can think of each other
or anyone or anything at all that
is not here? O treachery of rodent
mind that has such hunger in it
the local habitat of light cannot suffice.

18 April 2007

= = = = =

But I wanted to be close
the man with the cigar
is long gone from the window
I tell his story over and over.
Nothing happened. Just green eyes.

18 April 2007

= = = = =

These things begin me.

18 IV 07

MECHANICS DANCE

from & for Joseph Summer

When music starts to think
it takes my breath away

*

Stars in daytime
hide. One moderate
sun nearby
effaces all the others.
Yeats knew this,
he called it "Politics,"
a young girl.

*

I can use his name because I've known him all my life. It's no more name-dropping than it is to talk about my Uncle Owen – less, in fact, since you likely never knew *him*, or had one of your own.

*

Barbarian warriors land on Hampstead Heath right on the lawn below Kenwood House. A film is beginning, 'turned,' as they say in French, or a civilization is ending. How unclear we are about the simplest things.

*

But if my breath is gone
how will I dance or speak

or even rise from this oaken seat
and walk away to come by it again?

*

Every play – suppose for a minute I’m writing a play, and need to review—is about the four last things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell. Even comedy. If there were no death in the world, no one would ever laugh again.

*

Music nuzzles. The silvery brush-off a violin gives to the frottage of the string bass. Impertinent melody, we’ll soon stifle you! Music sinks in timbre, founders like a boat full of immigrants lost at sea.

*

Love makes us cruel, or nothing does.

*

A robin on the lawn looks in the low window, seems to wonder why I talk with my hand in a blank book not with my beak. Don’t I want you to hear what I’m thinking?

*

Writing hides.

A stone in the sky
falls. Gravitational
field of a single word
seizing all the others.

Round what word
does this music turn?

Music, sir? These are words.
Then why can’t they speak?

*

He had never noticed
how yellow the robin’s beak
is. Or this robin’s was.

*

Because a word
is the shape
that silence takes
when it gives itself to you.

*

It does the best it can
the beautiful violin, 18:40.

Beautiful writing for the strings
as if a sprucewood box, del Gesu,
my fingers feel it through the table top.

Resonance in oak. What
things say when we let them.

But who is we
when music is?

*

Absolute assertion:
child crooning to itself
to make sleep come.

I can taste his blanket
around my face
damp from both our breaths.

*

Hurry, it's almost now.

The light comes on again
as if a mother is.

19 April 2007

AURAL

the love
affair in the ear

or drunken party to
which Memory is not invited,

that mother,
spoiling all my recencies.

Old tears, old kisses,
such.

Let me hear now
in now,

the ear is the path of means.

19 April 2007

= = = = =

Weather hauling slow into the light
such flowers as love waiting: squills
quickest to run up our little hill
but even them the chill arrests
and daffodil just one, at Blithewood,
where there must have been,
one day, a patch of western sun.
Not here, not yet, and only wet
grass seems green. Late spring,
Laertes, and the ship is gone.

19 April 2007

= = = = =

Holding it in
place until you

find the spot
buried in spruces

or tenderfoot
half-acres not

far from rock.
It is here.

Believe it
hard as it is

to do or not.
The thing

that is itself
is the worst

of all. Some
dumb song

won't let
you alone.

20 April 2007

= = = = =

The small world inside the great
commences. Spring, they say.
Cammina, cammina! the devil sings,
move on, move on,
what we think is a house is a road.
And even the slowest road goes.

20 April 2007

HOUSE

Walk into the corner of the night.
Stand with one buttock pressed against each wall.
Press deep into the corner.
Press. Close eyes.
The sound you hear will be your city.
Move there.

Abandon your child.
You are suddenly alive.

The walls press back.
A house always figures out
a way to touch you,
You bring it with you wherever you go.

20 April 2007

EMPHASES

It *is* simple.

I want you to speak to me *there*.

With *that* mouth.

20 April 2007

APRIL SABBATH

The opportune, the lilac is. Or when
the other side of the fence unknown to you
bears plausible inscriptions in a foreign tongue
run up overnight with sky-blue acrylic.
Some things wash off. Some fences
run against the grain. Some mornings
you just can't find the pulse – the corpse
of a day stretched out chill and pale
with sunlight mocking it. Awake, or
as they used to say, Arise. Or is the light
some priestly character intoning all it knows,
can't blame ritual for never changing
when the weather does, what does a book
know about time, it lies there ever ready
maybe. Or maybe not: could a book also
be part of the interminable matinee
performance of our broken lives, I mean
you can't even find it on the shelf
unless the deities in charge allow you to.
The said and the thing and the grass.
What we have left when the dream dries up.
One cup of coffee lights the world unquote.

21 April 2007

REVISION

Revising time itself
to speak clearer
from that mouth,
the one you mean
really, the one that gleams.

21 April 2007

LIES

Signs of lying: lawyer's
moving lips ha ha
but there are other.
Dry mouth tells lies. All
the moisture goes then
to the hands. Tremble
of damp electric stuff
that used to be your skin.

Whereas telling the truth
has no body of its own.

21 April 2007

PINES

I want to know how my father knew
where the road went and why we couldn't
and we couldn't drive off it through the trees
especially one stand of tall pines isolated
near Narrowsburgh that seemed to me
countrier and lonelier and holier than
I'd ever seen or been and still it calls me.
My Colonus where I will kiss you girls
goodbye and disappear. As he is gone,
gone on a gurney in a pale sheet
sunrise in September and I watched
his pale feet twisting for the journey.
My father. Whenever I see pines like that
a grove of them all alone I know
this is the place to which I'm summoned.
And I hear the sight of them when I sleep.

21 April 2007

SPELL

Make me.
Milder. Manner.
Spell me. Shell.
Clip off umbilic
and be not born.
At least be most.

21 IV 07

BEATRICE

A bridge separates
what will never
marry.

He saw her
there, she was red
and white and he
was her future,
always a page
or two ahead, she
did everything
to catch up with now,
a husband
of her own, a child,
but he was always
and before her
and waiting for her
where she did not come,
everything she did
embedded her
in distance, difference,
her own shape and his
lost over the horizon
of his unchanging
desire for the first
form. The one seen.
The colors on the bridge.

21 April 2007

= = = = =

So much to forget.
I thought it would be easy,
but I was always me
waiting to be myself.
The habit of is—
like a heart of stone.

21 April 2007