

4-2006

aprC2006

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprC2006" (2006). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 736.
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CROW IN MAPLE

Crow in maple
different from crow in cottonwood.

Explain. The river flows out of the moon
and never back again.

I'm trying to tell you, you
who know no flower but the rose
and for whom all trees are pine trees or Others,

how can I explain
the spaciousness of a cottonwood in spring
no leaves yet, just the immensity of reach

while the maple just as leafless
holds itself close to itself,
a maple is all kissing

and a crow knows the formula of each
trying to make everything speak

so he can haul it away into the sky.

A crow is all answers.

14 April 2006

PLEASURE

The joy of putting yourself in clothes
in a car in a booth in a roadhouse
is a single joy. It sounds like 1954.

14 April 2006

GOOD FRIDAY 2006

*And the Bishop of Manila
Saffron blind and poor
Says mass with two chisels
For women and for men.
—Lorca, "San Miguel"*

It is Good Friday and why.
I am waiting for something
to tell me something
about why I am waiting

and for whom. It is not
the Bishop with the files
in his hands to saw down
the cross that has seen

so much pain in its name.

O when the cross
was just wood!

O when the bishop

was just a man and I was a man
like you and a woman
like you and the saffron
in the waterbowls

made their own daylight
in the shimmer of the butterlamps,
o when light
was only light, when the world

was enough of a mass to say.

14 April 2006

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You made a fight of it
I was trying to retreat
vanishing over the hill
leaving the terrain of the argument
to you, but no
you wanted to shout
battle-cries and auguries
so I turned and fought.
Now all the birds have flown away
over the same hill that would have saved us.

15 April 2006

=====

Yet silence is so arrogant!

A piper with his band

goes by between the syllables

summoning to blood-soaked moorlands

the last lingering lovers trying to explain.

15 April 2006

=====

Handle. Hand
does it. Candle.
What is a cand?
Why can't we
ever understand?

15 April 2006

=====

A brick waiting for the builder.

What does the sky wait for,

pilgrim? Does shale have

a believable explanation?

And all these flowers?

I know you mean well, so many churches,

so many virgins holding candles

waiting impatiently for night.

But do you need to go there,

go up to each of them and say

I am come, I am not the one

you expected but the one that came ?

Don't you think they know that already

after so many mornings?

15 April 2006

Holy Saturday

Σαυρος

Some sinister misprint said
holy Saturday for holy Staur-day,
day when the *stauros* the holy cross
had finished with its work and lay down.

15 April 2006

Growing time

Finding an hour
and when found
divide it into simple words
as if time is a second language
please god we still have to learn

Be easy with me
all my Saturdays, gods and calipers
and those small blue flowers
don't bother remembering their names
sky blue, and small, and flowers
and they're all around me on this little hill.

15 April 2006

=====

Hearing a voice that doesn't love me
saying it loves me. It's like
harsh weather in a strange town.

Does this mean always? Is the street
a part of the climate?
Are there even motorcars?

Have we gotten to now yet
in the universal history?

15 April 2006

=====

How many times I've heard Brahms's second violin sonata

how many times I've eaten lasagna

how many times it's rained –

somebody may know but I don't know –

does that mean I've led the infamous 'unexamined life?'

Or does even asking the question count in my favor?

15 April 2006

=====

He just wanted to go off and preposterous with you under the streetlamp
because of what for once you weren't saying.

And that famous spine of yours that holds so many stories
would have talked to his fingers one by one
and done all the musics that such lutes can do.

15 April 2006

ORIGINAL ALTAR

A woman's back given

A woman's back. She bends forward at the waist
Until her back is flat. She parallels the earth
Up from which she stands.

A woman's back

Is an animal,

An animal going *the other way*.

What is the other way? The tail of the animal
is the woman's reptile brain, medulla, cerebellum, hind brain, old one,
the tail of the lizard is the head of the woman.

This is an animal going the other way.

The eye is in the fundament, which the French call *l'oeil bronze*
the brazen eye that gleams its light,
that tells the body where it's coming from, *hence*
where it must go.

The eye is in the bottom, the base of the spine.

So the spine is the whole animal, its tail in the skull and its head the pelvis
hurrying into the world.

The woman moves one way, her head to the door
but her back moves the other way, walking back,
seeing her way back into the room.

So a woman and her back are going
both ways at once.
And whatever goes the other way
leads to the god. God is always the other way
away.

2.

The back. The back is the altar.
She talked about the back then she gave me her back.
She said: this is the altar. Say your mass on me.
In the Bible when God says: When you cross over Jordan
build me an altar, build it from uncut, unmasoned stone
he means build it of this. The back of the woman
is the altar, the animal, the stone crocodile
standing forever forever motionless in the jungle of everything that moves.

(Wolves and whales)

3.

What is a **wolf**?

A woman on all fours.

When it is said that Romulus and Remus were suckled by a wolf
they mean a woman on all fours, her breasts hang down.

Her back is flat,
beneath her the children sit up and nurse from the
breasts, one for each,
Romulus means little Rome or little Remus, Remus means the Roman one,
so Remus came first, the little brother kills him, Abel and Cain,
but no matter who is who and who is who
her breasts are always full, the altar is spread out beneath the sky,
a wolf, a wolf is forgiveness.

And what was waiting above the wolf's back
when the children played beneath her,
what was she sheltering them from
that only worked for one of them,

one will die and one will live
and the wolf runs back into the woods.

4.

What is a **whale**?

A woman with a hole in her head.

The pool was small, the whale was large,
a young whale, the back broadly
is what we got to see, I reached
over the railing when I could and touched,

reached over the limits and touched
the smooth back, white here and there with cream,
sunblock they put on her back
because her skin is as sensitive as mine

but she had no house to hide in, unless
she sank a few feet down in the pool
her back was to the sun all day, no deep,
and the ocean was just a block away,

I touched the smooth tough back
wet with cream and seawater and her own
uptossed celebration of the air, the spout
or airhole she carried in her head

to let the old air out sprayed over me
a little and the rest of us standing there
in our element watching the trapped girl
in Coney Island fifty years ago.

(4 April 2006)
finished Easter 2006

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The actual message
comes up again.
How can you not hear
what I made so plain,
a text you can actually
walk on, a sentence
that tickles your feet?

16 April 2006

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But things do come.
The gull on landfill
stalks among the little blue flames
of the methane burn-offs.
More birds come. Beneath
the tell-tale smoothness
of new grass on a new hill
the old stuff ferments away
and turns into everything else.
This is the meditation of things
themselves, their slow transport
into the ocean of the other.
Chemistry is our natural religion.
And everything that goes
down into the ground must
come out again. Grace abounding.
Little yellow flowers. Look,
it all takes care of itself.
Acres of always. The resurrection.
One of us went down to show the way.

16 April 2006