

1-2009

jan12009

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "jan12009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 768.
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BLIZZARD

The different place where I am
David not just the one
as if I were one, I need more
names than one, than me or I am –

in the terrible bluster of snow
its threat to obliterate
all difference into overwhelming
evidence of one

I read a mad gospel of identity.

23 January 2005

(thinking of Lawrence's "Living, I mean to depart to where I am.")

=====
The questioner
holds a shovel in his hands
and there is snow

or there is snow
and no question
presents itself to the mind

hours later
the question is back
but it is dark

no one wonders
why no one wonders
as if the snow were enough

the snow is enough.

23 January 2005

=====
Today long journey
to the garage
the office the blue
sky three below zero

as if we were in a jet
on our way away
from the world this
relatively warm place
this bloody history
up to where the angels
squabble with pale swords
and slay by thinking

and what they kill
comes to life again
by merest wish
but we turn all that
to coal and sulfur
murder and prison
surgery with dinner knives
make love by mortgage.

24 January 2005

=====

And the only thing I really believe
is what I think

and what interests me
is what I can make up

my share of the creation
cosmos consensus little tune.

24 January 2005

=====

Let everybody know
the opposite of itself:

that way we'll learn
what is the opposite

of a body. Of a hand.

24 January 2005

=====

Sketching space till it's there
and when there's space enough
then speech comes fill it

and you'd be at the gate
in the gold of waiting
a shimmering chemise

we see in catalogues
on shiny paper
yearning our custom

but there is no space
in commodity, every object
needs hollowing out

so we can soul in it
and night can see its way
through the absences to us.

25 January 2005

We did not come here for that

The skulls were already on the altar
made of Bohemian crystal
they winked plausibly, creepily,
in the flickering black candles,
scented – bay, bergamot,
patchouli overwhelming the others.

I thought I was here to meet a friend.
She had told me of these ‘Folklore Evenings’
she called them. And there she was
dressed like a Hammer Films villainess
in an H&M slinky thing. Brand names,
cling to brand names, the secular
will save me, commodity, commodity!

O here I am she said. I let the skulls talk for me.
I closed my eyes and listened to their chant,
wondering could we get to the Odeon before
it shuts down for one more night forever.

25 January 2005

AVCTORIS

We call it my music
when we listen
my book when we read—

that's right. In that the apple
takes all colors to itself
but the one we call red

and we say Red Apple.
In that the one who lets
the book happen
be written by her hands

that one has no book
only a book to come
a book that's gone.

26 January 2005

=====

Sense
waiting in the instruments
to get said

what a pen has on its mind
let loose
through slow inky fingers

and no one will ever empty the piano.

26 January 2005

=====

Lilies exploding right in front of me
yellow and sandarac and mauve
but almost invisible in snow light
as if white were taking all her colors back.

26 January 2005

=====

And you, my dear, who
do you think you are today?

I am the door of the room
you came through to be
where you think you are now.
But I am closed and locked
and you are not there,

not here at all,
only your questions linger
like some sad girl down the hall
smoking a lonely cigarette.

26 January 2005

OTHER

1.

Can I allow myself
to be the other person here
in this brief history
intricate as the ruins
of an air-raid city,
disorder's bitter alphabet
set to teach a man
to live by skin alone.
As we Irish say, the road
to where you want to be
is uphill both ways.

2.

But to be the other!
Such a wonder—
friendship is like a postcard
from it, love like a video
a careful vacationer brings home.
You can almost smell the trees
hear the clam shells crunch
under the tawny sandal'd foot
of the other, lithe as light,
incomparably not
anything you know.

3.

I know. Wet
with hope
that drenches the world
I try to find you in
what I take to be my mind

(the storeroom
only I can open,
the stuff I find there
I have to describe
to make anybody else
take note of,
even you, even you)
I find you most
in shadow, I love shade,
sometimes you gleam
like a precious ruby
of that hue they call
orchid – sometimes
I don't see you at all
but know you're there,
moving swiftly over
shaky pontoon bridges
slung up by night
over rivers running
perpendicular to
everything I mean.

4.

Say more about the other
to make it be there
where I can come to it and be.

It – recent word in English,
shifting from the grammatical neuter
(but there is no grammar in desire,
just syntax and phonology)
to the gender-free or indeterminate.

To be all sex and no gender,
what liberty! To be it

among the indeterminate!
To be it in the eternal hide-and-seek
and always have to hide
and always have to make yourself be found!

So how could I be the other?
Can the seeker be the one he seeks?

26 January 2005

Afflictions of the keyboard

Today in Iraq all the notes were wrong.
More died today than any other day
since this world called a war began—
when ‘more’ means more Americans
and we don’t count the other kind,
the treacherous worthless characters
who just live there. What kind of person
would live in such a place, we think?
People who don’t know whether
they’re alive or dead might just as well be.
And I think of a strange fool-like man
no longer young who sits fooling around
at a piano, hammering out by ear
whatever sounds like music. And it kills.

26 January 2005

It has happened to you too

–Billie Chernicoff

The birds this time. Fluttering
from the statue of Andrade
who was he to the horse
in front of the doomed hotel.

I was born here. Between
the milkman and the horse,
the bellboy and the cigarette,
the thigh and the thigh.

I was never born. This life business
just comes along, and here you are,
me I mean, here I am. I keep
getting us confused.

It never began. It never
has a chance of ending.
The birds too are clueless
but pearl grey beautiful

like the brass doors of the doomed hotel.

[Class practice in Olin 101, swayed by the sad news at noon that the Plaza Hotel is to close,
to become condos and boutiques.]

27 January 2005

=====

We live in a room
Haunted by the alphabet

The wind helps
It scares me

Help me help me
Pages are fluttering.

27 January 2005

BARREL

At the bottom of it
an inch of salt

the fish are flown
Bornholm herrings
far from home.

Packing things.
Who packed them?

Cooper, who?
Fisherman, who?

By trade we try
always to come home
we never get there

no matter how much
we eat tomorrow
is hungry again.

28 January 2005

MINYAN AT BIRKENAU

Jesus climbs down from his tree
and goes to die on Birch Meadow
with his fellow Jews

and there his body lies
among the thousands of thousands
bones and ashes

one more evidence
of that sacred ground
one more pilgrimage.

28 January 2005

BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL

It is not the Romans who killed Christ,
not the Jews, not even the Philistines.

Class killed Him. The oligarchs
killed him. They always will.

Class warfare is the root of every other.
Every war is one rich man against another.

28 January 2005