

1-2005

janJ2005

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janJ2005" (2005). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 768.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/768

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.

BASQUE IN SUNLIGHT

just play, their work
is play,
whatever you have to do
make light of it,

make a song and dance of it,
a game, and spend
the light playing the game

then take the night
for your own
and play
the quiet dark games of the night

Just play.
When we speak at all
we're speaking Basque.
Play Basque. A word
means to play.

Our word means wyrd,
means weird means destiny –
we have to go to Latin to say what we mean

their words break rock
by laughter, insert the *zakil*
in the *alu* and a race is born

whose words come before them
the dark words still half-rock half-sound –

Speak them
the way you hurl a ball
with all the power

in your body
against what is not
your body, the wall,
the rock wall

as you speak out
your hard mysterious words
that even you don't know,
hurl them against the silence
that means to kill us all

speak them
as if the sound of them
burns its way out of your mouth

words like cries
and you are the last to know what it means

this word you cry.
Only the word is at fault,
the hard beautiful polished stone of the spoken word,

we all are where and who we are
forever. Only the words move,
the words get up in the night in the rock,
bounce off the rock wall and dance.

29 January 2005

ALU

Basque for vulva, Hindi for potato.

Apple of the earth:
Eve's fruit
lifted,
 taken in.

This is the ultimate yin.

The yoni-food that contains
strange yet to be discovered
alkaloids of tenderness and care.

Rice nourishes
but alu makes you kind,

because it is a dark fruit
because it comes from the bottom of the earth
from a place where there can be no falling anymore.

29 January 2005

=====

I explain too much.

I should just let it sit there in the sun,
the sun will take care of it,
will make everything clear.

You need me only to lean on
or sometimes to rest in my shadow
to get out of the sun.

It's there every day
but we never understand it.
Let me try to explain.

29 January 2005

=====

Every night you dig up the seed
and look at it, brush it free of dirt,
breathe on it, spit on it tenderly
and plant it again.

There is
another way of doing these things.
Another thing to do with love.

29 January 2005

=====

Release me, wooden stick,
release something in me

if only to speak.
Speaking means: hiding in the word.

And when the word is gone
there I am

shivering on the mountaintop of what I meant.
Rescue me.

Bring me to the island of meaning less.

29 January 2005

=====

Tumescant attack.

Say it. Later
figure out what it means
and who meant it
when it chose to
say itself in my head

who did it?
Three times it said.
So that I finally
write it down.

Permanent everyday obvious mystery:
who speaks?

As time passes, animals get what we call older –
a strange disease of how we seem.

I look at a photo of Guy Davenport
printed with his obituary –
clearly the same face I knew forty years ago
when I took my first jet flight ever,
to Kentucky, when we were friends.

But something happened to the time
so past tense seems truer than present,

or we are friends in the aorist,
the unbounded tense, unfettered by time
actually passing.

We never lost affection,
we lost the time of us.

and our faces changed.

What is this *something else*
that does not seem to wish us well?

But who can tell,
maybe our faces are getting ready
to be emperors in Otherland

my profile getting ready for its gold coin,
sweet money of the only place that lasts.

29 January 2005

*So the words 'meant' only to make me
run away from their evident meaning
to what was really on my mind?*

LONGITUDE,

what does the longitude give us?

Ford gave us latitude,
the cities of the forties, the civilized,

and the mystic thirties, ancient Cairo, Lhasa, Benares.

Latitude gives us shared seasons.
weather often, always light,

the light of 42°N
on Annandale, on Florence falls.

But the longitude, the quiddity of that,
is what?

Look at the map and pretend.

30 I 05

α A

The sky is not different from I see with

or into its open awayness
my own awayness opens

same into same so a seen
white is white everywhere inside

and things think their way away together
in the dance called *fading* –

it seems a one way arrow
but who knows
where such thought sound seen
things fade *to?*

30 January 2005

=====

mausoleum as
under the snow a lawn
and underneath it constructed
vast brick and concrete room

and nothing in it!
Space all my own
and just for me
secluded,
nothing but walls and floor and ceiling
and me to walk about at ease

a private space not even on
the face of the earth

hidden, habit, found.

30 January 2005

=====
This fade-out thing that flowers do
leaving no messages behind
or just a few, hard to interpret,
scribbled too fast
 and then the cloth
of petal is still there
but not the color,

the torn cloth is a different color,
paler, and the fabric
changed. This amaryllis
on the windowsill
has bloomed twice
since Thanksgiving, first four huge red
chalices, then after they withered,
five more, even bigger,
more scarlet than before.

And now those too are looking paler
two days before Candlemas.

Seasons, celebrations. I find in nature
no history, no memory.
Archive is what we don't remember,
clay tablets, yellowed paper, the hides
of calves tortured into parchment narrative.
all gone in dark where my flowers go.

Nothing leaves. Everything comes towards.
I grieve for all the emptiness filled up.

31 January 2005

=====

What does it mean
that birds live under my house?

I see them flying out from the foundation.
Is there a sky don't there we don't know about?

31 January 2005

=====
it is the bottom of it now
cellar of the thought
the cold wind finds everything
the admirals shiver on their phosphorescent bridges

a blue Buddha image very small
has made its way down the veins of my right arm
Do something about me
I am wrong

wrap sheets of gold around my bone
and tell me this is living
this is a woman's face
calm in the next door light

busy with her being far
since all we do is distance
and nothing moves
that freight train stood still in Calicoon

tracks down the middle of the only street
I stood on the ladder and smiled
at the camera how many years
the sky lasts

31 January 2005