

6-2004

junH2004

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "junH2004" (2004). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 854.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/854

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.

=====

Deadly nightshade

its purple chalices have
grown up over
the rosebush by the rock

So many things
waiting to be read.

25 June 2004

(Fog)

It is too quiet this morning
for me to bother it
with gentle conversation
this written stuff, this muffled shout.

25 June 2004

<late> =====

If it didn't hear me
it heard the wind
in the window

the soft rush a quarter mile away
that was the sea.

Listen. If it didn't touch me

someone did.

It was something like a wall behind me
something like a river at my feet.

Nobody knows.

If it wasn't what I thought
maybe it was something nobody thought,

a guess, an antelope fleeing in the dark.

25 June 2004

=====

There was a time when every rock was numbered

and the children knew which one to pick up
to smite their father with or build a cairn to mourn him
or round a campfire in the wilderness. Every leaf
had its letter and the grains of earth were code.

And now I ask you who is your mother now
when so many of those things are mute
that used to tell us. And we believed
everything we heard and touched each other.

The garden's lost, we tell each other, trying
to be analytical and tough. But we are acres
from each other now, and even the wilderness is gone.

26 June 2004

MISSING PEOPLE

There should be a bureau in the head
that handles where they go,
the ones that we let go who fall
out of the everyday, and even dream
seldom rehearses their identities.

Poor lost ones of so eager a collector once,
I knew you when you still had names
but you're just narrow wavering gestalts
that now and then come between me and myself.

26 June 2004

=====

You are of course two people,
the one you know me with
and the one I know. The one I know
stands in eternity and beckons us both.
Me to embrace, you to become.
This is the truth, and all the rest
--relationships and sayings and farewellings--
are just bleak seeming compared to that:
The truth of you in time
that I can help you see and be
and still I'm just a figure in your dance.

2.

Any lover says that, any friend.
Only an enemy helps you be
the way you want to be
or get what you want.

A friend sees what you can't
and tries to coax you through the passages
that lead not to what you want
but who you are. A friend demands.

A friend is difficult. But a friend has hands.

26 June 2004

MIST

Usually when the actual rain begins

the mist gets less

conveyed downward

it is vehicle, not vague,

a message not a mood.

26 June 2004

=====

Voices

of the fishermen

their white boat

close in to shore

I hear them

so quiet the morning

their voices always loud

three of them

talking the past

how things were yesterday

how things are in the rain.

26 June 2004

<late> =====

The things that wait for me to say them
and the things that wait for you.
I found them with my feet in the water
toes disappearing in sand suck
and the mild undertow thrilling back out.
And I am trying to say them
and you are trying not to
because refuting everything I mean
is what your desire is
and the best refutation of all is silence.

26 June 2004

=====

Don't turn into one of those
whatever they are
who need so many ones around them
that they are zero in themselves.

27 June 2004

High school love songs

what we try to keep hidden
in the locker room but show deep in the locker

an accumulation of design--
Eros love to take advantage
of the place itself,
loves to become part of the architecture,
take over the plumbing, be homework
be bed be wall be door.

A touch is worth a whole night's study.

27 June 2004

**“Not a cloud in the sky,
not even one,”**

Grégoire Aslan

says in *The Roots of Heaven*,
with the smile of a cunning patient devil.
The compass still pretends to point north,
the pregnant woman hangs her
laundry on the fence. Laundry
comes from lavender.
To dry it in the brisk dawn wind.
The sun pretends to shine.
Everything is as we imagine
when we say Summer Morning,
The Island. Why say more?

2.

To make you think what you're thinking.
To make you think other people think
and think like you. To make me work
harder to mean what I'm saying.

3.

A body is a strange thing.
A body is a machine for making bodies.
One becomes many
but what happens to one?
Where is one when there is many?

There must be a better way of doing this,
the nine month waddle, the loss of self
not into space or God or love or humankind
but just into one other self,
pouring of fear and selfish anxiety
from one vessel into the next.

There must be another way
to use that love. Or make it love.

27 June 2004, Cuttyhunk

PASCAL

yes, but what terrifies me
is those abyssal moments of deep inner space

when people show what they really
think of you or of themselves.

27 VI 04 Cuttyhunk

<late> =====

after the last ocean
gets swallowed
and the last sky
wrapped under your skin
and the earth itself
trembles at your touch
then even you
will understand yourself
and go conscious
if not willingly but who knows
into the dark forgivenesses
of I love you

27 June 2004

<late:> =====

TOUCHING BOTTOM

But it isn't the bottom yet
I still have far to go,
there are mermaids still butterflying
between me and deep gravel
with red agates in it and blue pearls
whoever you are,

it is late

but not that late
not a stone and not a quarry
but a fingernail that catches light
people who find pain interesting
a saddle on a fence rail
a sun gone down.

East

is darkness with a lighthouse in it –
when it gets chronic
you call it the sun
and like the way it hurts you,
it reveals all your designs
but still the mer-people are busy
with their own semantics
half between you and the ocean floor

and half a miracle above.

Some people still can talk
and some still will talk with me –
angular miracle
above all the miracles of salt,
cubic gospel and tetrahedron π
is like every named thing
the name of a *relation*.
A woman is between me and the world.

27 June 2004, Cuttyhunk

COLORS

Islands change their religion in the night.
It isn't just the dark light fights against,
it struggles with every hue and version of itself
and once it passes through the birthing prism
colors are the agonists of time —

a few great painters could read the history
of all realms and persons from the way the colors fall
at any given moment of time's day,
from how the rub and cry and sleep against
each other beneath a never neutral sky.

28 June 2004, Cuttyhunk

LOVE SONG OF THE OGRE

I want a girl for breakfast
the Ogre said
and then a wife for lunch
and a mother for supper –
how shall I get my food
with so few hours
of the day, so few lovers,
so few bright children
I can carry home with me
and save them from the teeth
of what just happens?
An ogre's work is hard,
to bring the beautiful children,
their beautiful mothers and sisters
safe to where history
can never erode their looks,
their looking, their new curiosity,
to bring them deep in me
so that they can weather out
the storms of time
and only I grow old.

28 June 2004
leaving Cuttyhunk