

10-2004

octC2004

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "octC2004" (2004). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 872.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/872

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NEW MOON

We'll have a new moon tonight.

So tell me (said Yankel)
what was wrong with the old one?
It had flecks and smudges on it
and it tended to dwindle all month long
until it went out and somebody
had to get it lit again,
but we could live with that,
and personally I like those dark
moon nights, for romance,
for escaping. This new moon
you talk about,
won't it keep shining all the time,
won't it hang in the sky like a traffic light
even when the sun is out?
It'll make me nervous all afternoon
and I'll never get out of here come night.

12 October 2004

BROOKLYN

is my fact.

Corner of Fifth and Fifth

literal. Charlotte

on the avenue, I on the street.

Sidewalk terrace of the Belleville
café. 6:17, the light fading.

Filet de morue later, lotte aux cèpes

later, 6:47, the blue blur

ganging up on those eastern streets,

over Prospect Park the dark is coming

over Crown Heights where I used to live

and Brownsville before that, and City Line

and Idlewild the dark is coming,

from Queens, the Salisbury Plains,

Montauk, night is coming

from Europe, Africa, Asia,

the dark is coming from the orient, the dark

is coming from where the light is made.

12 October 2004

Brooklyn

=====
Not have to have
I have to have.
Knowing. Holding everybody
by the name. She stands there
like a yew tree at the door.
It is the prime of autumn,
they say the peak. Milk
runs down the slope.
A casein paint she says
made from human milk.
And pray what would the pigment be
worthy of such medium?
Say it, don't do it.
Don't do anything.
Don't milk your breast.
Pour into us instead
the juice of your entitlements
attending to every acre of the word
every suburb of the mood.
It has become the case you live in me.

12 October 2004
Hotel Wolcott

=====

(thinking of Sophocles)

Face at no window
sun catches thirteenth floor
and sends it down the shaft
looking in on all of us

some light. Who are we.
Children of the sun
fleeing from that loving
father. It is a horror

to have been begotten,
to take your place
in a line of consequences,
a mere result of causes.

Ever after. So what.
The sun warms and pleases
burns and withers.
The face at no window

has no control.
Can I accept this sonship
of the unknown obvious
above? Not to have been

born and yet to be
is best, to endure
presence and awareness
like sun on an old brick wall.

13 October 2004 NYC

=====

The sun reminds me I was begun,
got great, will go.

Presumably

to come again
after some quiet music
and let it be another day.

That I

am no different from time.
And time no different from going.
Sometimes I feel time on my skin
not like sunlight, like cloth, sleep
snug on someone's hip, brushing past.

13 October 2004
Hotel Wolcott

=====

Something changes. The long Hellenic line
of the Post Office stretching far away west
along Thirty-first street, tucked in
between new and newer curvilinears.
Holds. Everything imitates. Even
if only a circle. I am the one
who decides here, I, who imitate myself
shamelessly, the interloper
into other people's plausible mysteries,
dulcimer-denying bard in a bevy of muses,
mean them, mean me, mean you
till you mean so deep the sky itself
has no room for all you are.

13 October 2004
Penn Station

=====

To enter society
is to imitate other people.
To flee from it
is to imitate animals,
trees, stones.
Everything
was here before us.
And yet there is
an unknown me
for me to imitate,
always the self
to impersonate
anew. I write
the letter backwards
so it seems to come
from you. I sign it
“I love you” to
make you do.

13 October 2004
Amtrak

A PRAISE OF TARA

/sGrol.ma.la./

1.

Jersey cliffs Tara above them
green in the wispy blue and white
striped autumn air
green, sixteen, the intensity
of every maiden in her mien

(maiden means she has never
lost her center, is still
the center of everyone, everyone
comes to her to be found

as to the wooded cliffs above
the western bank morning comes
face to face and all the general
light turns green,

that manner of meaning,
to give your own color to the world
is what a maiden does,
a woman young, her dreams intact.

Green girl, give me your dreams,
let me dream them in me.
To see Tara on the morning
is the initiations, the dew
empowerment and all her power
virgins me.

2.

The basic rule
o Boy & Girl Scouts of the soul
in this dark woodland trauma
is to pray.

And you turn into
whatever you pray to.

Pray hard to her
to come infest you
with her purity

infect you with her eternal
teenage intensity
of noticing the slightest thing
and daring to care
daring to take care
of everyone

when she smiles you become yourself
when she slips gently into you
as a girl slips into a chemise
she wears you in the street
you are her clothes, you are the face
she shows to everyone.
This is the empowerment of skin.

13 October 2004
Amtrak, heading north

=====
Let me hear the hurry instead of do.

The Alpine organizers prepare
one more acclivity to climb
constructing out of all they guess
the sleek grey schist of thy ascent

as they cry to the divinity that rules such jaunts
amo quid vincitur
almost vertical, ithyphallic mostly,
condescending to birds along the way,
staved with stalagmites, at last they cave.

They mount into what has been called
the empyrean or even (Shelley) the inane –
certainly the high airless wind-soaked place
in search of mortal caves to burrow in. Tall.

Rub the crown of the head against the humid nub
on the way in.

Know the way. Know the place.
Knowing backwards to the door.

Nothing wood,
nothing stone anymore. Cloud outside,

hard cloud. Listen to the abstract conversation,
contours of the winds.

They have come
and come again to a condition where there are no things,
only doing. That is what a mountain is.

14 October 2004

THE DOG

(after Jonathan Peyster)

The dog walked down the street.

There are some women at the corner
smoking in the cold air.

They're on their nico-break from the desk,
the dog keeps working.

Walking. The patrol
of an animal –a dog is an animal,
Socrates a man, both are mortal,
Socrates is dead, the dog alive,
the dog is walking– a dog's work
is endless.

What they are looking for
never gets there
though all along the way
are other lovely things:
God gives us little destinations
to make us glad.
To keep us on the road.

Or make us mad, the Greeks said
that about their gods,
fulfilled desire is the end of the road.
The dog, any dog,
has no road. The dog has a street.
A street is what houses happen to a road.

The women happen to the street.
The dog tries to happen to the women
but the women shoo him
though one of them feels sorry.
The dog is not a cute dog,
not at all, has that been explained?

The dog is not sorry to be gone,
the overwhelming smell of cigarette smoke
confuses him, everything smells the same,
he is confused too
by the sound of the voices
mixing with the smell, the sight
of their mouths opening and closing
confuses him too, they look
exactly like people calling a dog

but they don't want a dog.
A street is so long. A street
goes so far. Having said all that,
it is hard to imagine
how a dog can ever stop walking
along the street, how we could ever rightly say
a dog *walked* when the dog is still
walking. That is the only story we have left.
The dog is gone. Only the story
of what we notice. What we tell.

14 October 2004

=====

Feeding M&Ms to the blind.
Can they tell?

Or tell me
why I only want the blue?

14 X 04

=====

not one hero but all of them,
barons of the empty sea
between here and hell

they thought was heaven
they had such rulership therein

because a man never know
where the next wave rises
and they heard all their saints

singing some sort of Latin
far away, like holy seagulls
and everything gone.

14 October 2004
Kingston

AMBER

wet amber,
trident, Shiva's hand
raised against despair,,
sky lucid as rain
but no rain,
 earth wet,
spill and rigging
the land is driven
shipwise to no shore.

The lair. The lady
(luminous) rests her back
against the stone
and looks at him.
At me. Honest weather,
the long hidden bodies,
samite, velvet
of a cold Renaissance,

a block of stone. Freemason
(she means me) carve an Image
we both can pray through
in the rock,

that's all a woman asks,
that and pearls, tears, amber.

2.
Playing catch
with mortal mind
he analyzes cusps
and who lives there

dream kids, low
riders of East L.A.
the torque of memory
in the synagogue of time,

I remember nada.
Astrology fills you.
True information
about imaginary people.

You believe your way
deeper into the system,
the Situation. Gnostic
potentates

squat on your head.
You taste the residue
of personality
and call it your friend.

You are in love with it,
you live for it, would
die for it, the image
fell from your stars.

Starcraft, dealer of men.
Heart men and Spade men,
one belongs to one's elements,
I am phosphorus, I kindle

in mere air, I tremble
always ready to immerse
in my own consciousness,
cold generous flame.

To burn you, to abuse
the distances between us.
Over the steeple and under the knee—
belief did this to us,

atheism cured by touch.

3.
Skipper silver on the banks of woe,
down to 7 on the London market
Troy they call it for it too was burned
sacked turned to caramel in poetry
carbon diamond Ottoman ash,
commas everywhere.

This

is the ash of silver
as silver is the ash of gold —

didn't anybody tell you
when the world was made
that no one made the world?
We all did it to each other,
pilgrim consciousness lost in waking.

4.
I want to be a Turk today
and bugger everyone in sight,
want to be a church become a mosque,
a poem become cliché,
want to be a narrow strait
drunk on contradictions,
a husband torn between two oceans,
I want to be famous and despised,
like leprosy, I want to be a rosary

in everybody's hands, amber beads,
it is not easy to be me,
tidal waded with wanting,
disarmed, expensive, indifferent to securing
the goals so passionately wanted.

5.
For wanting's all. And getting's nowhere.
And what you get does nobody good.

Be coarse with me among the pronouns,
liminal lady, so steely elegant

as if you too were pure magnesium
blue as weather and nice to the feel.

15 October 2004

=====
Finding the argument
is later than answer.

Sullen sun.
I recall it now
at a rainy midnight
exactly.

I live in the country,
that is the whole story.
Tomorrow we check out the sheep
at the wool fair. Rain's best
for rams, you smell the true
reek, the wool, the beasts,
their sheer determination
to be wholly, merely, there.

Who was I before I came here,
what did I look like
before a tree?

Once I could see nothing
green from my window,
once I sailed across the sea.

May I explain the martinis,
the brandy alexanders
that brought me home,
the dingy apartment on 12th,
the wholesale meat market
midnights outside Las Americas
where you went to buy
in those days Lorca or Huidobro.

At night the moon was
over 13th Street too,
the moon always finds me,
you too, the girls
coming out of El Faro,

then rain, then no moon,
bloodstains on the sidewalks,
steam from the subway vents.
And then I was gone.

15 October 2004