

12-2004

decD2004

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "decD2004" (2004). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 880.
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FIRST STAR

Counting back
to the first star
rose over the brick wall
before I was anybody

over the roof it came
a lady in white
spangled tights
riding a blue horse

to come for me at last
and tell me why.

Later I always hated the circus.
It was a parody of her,
of home, of how and why.

Now thanks to the Jesuits, the sodomites, and the gentlemen of the
Rosy+Cross I can read the alphabet of stars and work out the
messages that the sky sees fit to seed us with. But by these
decipherments I come no closer to the Lady in the sky.

But there is a road on which she comes again, and I meet her, day
or night, above roof or tree. It doesn't have to be Brooklyn or
Paris. It is here, with me, as I am given to ride or walk out there to
meet her.

One time she told me: Walk towards me and I am the road. Kneel
down and it is my lap – how could it be anyone but me?

11 December 2004

END OF SESSION

Far away a car
moving far
away is always
there is always here.

End of the meditation.
Dissolving the form
into emptiness.

A car passes always
tells me
I am not here.

11 December 2004

THE RULE

Spelling out the rule
the one by
whom we live:
everything is everyone

alive alive o.

“for everything that is is holy”

and everything that is not
is alive this moment in you

where else could anything be?

12 December 2004

=====

I don't dare to face my desire.
How could anyone be you

enough for me? There is silence
in the weather,

a cancellation of what we mean.
Rapture. Roses.

People scurry from interpretation,
the haunted knowledge of our how.

Hear the light.
Everything waits.

12 December 2004

=====

Trail fire – glow along the woods rim
where frightened cub scouts are reciting
comforting stories of devils. The wendigo.

I was here once. I lived in fear
and fear taught me its encyclopedia.
I still cherish the heart-stop habit
of certain unexpected words. The hiss
of an animal in the pattern of a rug.

I fell for every terror , and was wise.
Now I am less fearful and a little dumb.
Courage has nothing to communicate,
only cowardice has anything to tell.

12 December 2004

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I carve a silence out of travertine
to hold my heart.

12 XII 04

(or is it dolomite?)

=====

And what was this,
this meaning
like a butterfly on a windowsill
but you don't speak French?

12 December 2004

OPERA

as much as I could listen to in deceiving
as much as the alternate reality out the door
where cars zip by on wet roads and nobody sings

Lamont Cranston is coming down the stairs
and wants to question me on my true *désir*,
it's always the same in dreams, questions,

questions, dogs growling just out of sight,
big ones, I remember too many names,
that's my trouble, Galli-Curci, Paavo Nurmi,

and all you want to hear is jell-o never again
for dessert not even tangerine, and oboes
coming up the road, dream again, and dogs

worrying my ankles now, the pain is awful,
the awe is painful, I'm in a temple now
and all the priests are wearing my face

scowling under silly hats. I feel silk.
Is it you. Is anybody listening.
That's not the point. An opera goes on.

12 December 2004

=====
Is it time for me yet?
Or is the cameraman
still smoking on the fire escape
wishing he could interview
the lady at her desk across the street,
how far everything always is.

I think he is. I studied
equivalently recondite maidens
among the ill-clad fans in the stands
back in the days I pitched relief
for “Love’s Faithful” in semi-pro ball
for a town in northern Florida
where Gainesville meant metropolis.

And that too was far away
from our bayous and mangroves and keys –
but how we smoldered, how we sang,
lost most games but o God
o God the ones we won!

13 December 2004

=====

I'm like your father's dead brother
the one you never called your uncle
but only 'father's brother' or sometimes
by his Christian name. Because I'm closer
to you than anybody, but only in your dreams.

Close but unimportant. The one most like you
hence the one you're scared of most. A bridge
between you and other people, but only one way.
If ever you become me you'll never come back.

14 December 2004

A FAKE JACK SPICER POEM ABOUT POETRY

As if it were somebody else
speaking in me, it is somebody else
speaking in you, eternal spook,
fond animal of all our prairies,
you are the other name of me.

Which means nothing, Wittgenstein's asleep
under the holm oak, dreary schoolboy
lost in the *Aeneid*. Poetry is everywhere
where a line has been followed to the end.

Wherever friction fructifies the hour,
rub, rub-a-dub, smoke, fire, spurt of more than blood.
Mostly Book Eight. A river, a river to the end.
Poetry can be a sort of pearly ooze,
hyperthalassic, busybody, touch touch –

a touch is something waiting
at the very end of my hand, a touch is terminal,
god of boundaries, poetry is boundaries,
revelation, peer over your neighbor's fence
watching God sunbathe while millions pray.
Only language can walk through walls.

14 December 2004

[The ideal poem should have seventeen lines in it: one for each syllable of the ideal Homeric line. Or like a Shakespeare sonnet plus the Blessed Trinity. Alas, the present poem was too busy to end in time, and so is imperfect –to say the least– and too much concerned with those extra lines, each representing a week spent in dissolution on an island in the Carib Sea.]

=====
Say something maybe even this
is enough to start the horn
howling under water
so the ones you *really* care for
hear and are alive again
all round you, spooks of the living,
the ones you live with are real again.

You wake up not from something you eat
but something you hear. It was a *word*
old Utnapishtim gave, not a magic plant,
not some snaky flower called
“Old Men Are Young Again”

but everyone is naked now, he said,
trust them, answer what they are afraid to ask.

15 December 2004

Taliaferro

he has gone through the mirror now
everything changes
a white wolf looks back in
a bird, a blue fish

gender changes first, then religion
the dead have so many religions
and all the gods are there
to comfort and confuse them

and they know not whom to please
but there they are
wagging their tails their wings their fins
quivering but intact, longing,

baffled, outposts of love.

15 December 2004

[remembering Marina's black Labrador, put to sleep on the divan this weekend past]

=====
And at least all the hours be
between the minutes – all art
like love is *perpendicular*,

Gothic art gives us that: to get
to the Mind (God, goal, grail, girl)
you *change directions*,
go off the plane of the given.
God is at right angles to the real.

So you find the time to say what needs you,
do the doing till it's done
by going between the orderly sequence of minutes

out along the magical and terrible hours
that branch out, always perpendicular
to whatever is proposed.

Not centering you need but cornering.

16 December 2004

=====

[continuation of Paris Dream]

Vivid. Scar walk, smell
the inscription.
How he wrote on her.

How he came from another
country smelling of cumin and saffron
and hit her till her skin
showed all the first signs,

the primal images,
snapshots of the first mind
rubbed into her skin.

How I tried to read.
How I laid my head along the skin
like a man sighting up a wall.

Once I stood at the base of the tower
Salisbury Cathedral tallest
spire in Europe, rested
my cheek against the old stone

and saw straight up the wall
five hundred feet to a sky
that seemed so suddenly close.

so with her skin
the rough the mottled so
close to my eyes seemed
closer still as if I read them

inside my head, as if
by inscribing her skin
he had inscribed my mind.

16 December 2004

[And that is what an image is, a phantasm, a ghost of meaning that lingers in
pure gesture, reeling through the mind drunk on such visions.]

Teach me wisdom

it said today.

No image to the verb,
pronoun, no image
of someone to whom
the words were spoken.

Are words said to anybody?

Are they just sound waves passing through
the delicate upsettable chemical of you?

17 December 2004

=====

Homeless verbs (whomless verbs)
triangulate a god.

God listens—
the trajectory of all human speech

finds him. Proves him.

But Epicharmus said: *Mind sees, mind hears.*
Everything else is deaf and blind.

17 December 2004

YOUR DARK RED CAPE

It needs to be some city not too here,
with this velvet capelet as fancy curtain
at the opera house sways open to disclose
the alternate universe of you now loud

because you are quiet, love, and dignified
but now chorus happens and old Italian men
in undershirts on city stoops begin to sing
no reason for anything, eat an orange,

God is a leper we hurry past in the street,
music sticks to us like the smell of adultery
one brings home fearful of detection
on one's clothes. Confused. Music confuses,

the grammar gets lost, the tower sings,
somebody sets somebody's brother on fire,
the playground fills with terrorists,
we don't know, we just don't know.

Sometimes it sounds like Auden, doesn't it,
that Homer of one thing after another, nothing
much mattered but all of it does, terribly,
the inuring, the summing up, nine of them

singing all at once, end of Act One, Rossini
flees by night to Paris, trying to find
something he doesn't know how to do.
Something all his own. Something they can't sing.

17 December 2004

=====

If I were any more sentimental
tomorrow would be yesterday.

17 December 2004

READING FOURIER BY MORNING LIGHT

Sun on grass. Sweet December.
Must be up to something
over in Port Jervis or Pennsylvania
where the ghost of Charles Peirce
is busy with our thinking.
I sit on the deck for a few minutes
and a few snowflakes find their way
from the blue sky with some pretty clouds.
Finches on their thistle tube.
Narcissus looking out the window at me.
Delicately, we displace the world
and set it right, flake by flake, star by star.

17 December 2004