

12-2004

## decH2004

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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=====

to run away from my friends  
is to run away from my own nature  
my karma

since it is my predispositions my habits  
that brought them to me and me to them  
and no meeting can take place without a past

so running away from my friends  
is running away from my past

not a bad thing to do,  
running away from my friends is recognizing  
who and what kind of person I am

and I am running from that  
always running from that  
and that is not such a bad thing to do

and I see my shadow before me as I trot  
almost but not quite mindlessly from friend to friend  
seeking none

that null-set friendship when my mind is clean.

28 December 2004

### THREE PLACES IN NEW ENGLAND

#### *Austerlitz*

It really could be  
some battle place  
the plain rising to the heavy hills  
along the highway  
two hundred years  
ago and all the blood  
is still not dry

you can see it stain  
the autumn moon  
the one they call the Hunter's

ruddy with beasts.  
But now it's winter,  
the bloodless moon  
rises in the afternoon  
and flees from us  
before we begin to sing.

#### *Chicopee*

a mile a sing  
the truck side said

a mile a sing  
song one mile long

song mile  
it fell  
out of the alphabet  
and turned left

mobile home park  
spooky in mist

*Great Barrington*

A sly café  
papered with old sheet music  
pop tunes of the '40s and before-ties  
as sung by their pictures on the sheet,  
always sleazy-dapper mustache man,  
singer of that song, our song,  
who knows Syd Dean now  
or Jerry Wayne

and an ad for three songs on one sheet  
(My Dear Girl. L'amour Toujours l'Amour. Adlai.)  
tells us that it or maybe every word  
HARMS WORTHWHILE SONGS.

[from NB scratches late-December 2004]

28 December 2004

## WHAT TOWER

*[Dream text, 8:26 a.m.:*

*What did Greek illuminates light up  
that Latins couldn't? A tower.*

*And then I woke.]*

Now find the tower.

1.

What was the tower?  
As I wrote the dream down  
I thought: Magdala,

Miriam of. Our Mary  
Magdalene, the Lord's Lady.  
She is the tower.

Comes from the tower. Later:  
*tower of ivory, seat of brass*  
the Latins will say of her,

thinking they mean the other  
Mary, the Mother  
who walked up to heaven

when they thought her sleeping,  
Dormition of the Virgin,  
parinirvana,

all the disciples gathered round  
the old woman  
slept her way to living.

So the Greeks, those gospel  
writers, knew the Tower  
was Magdala,

Mary Magdalene  
who living came to us  
bearing the literal word

incarnate among  
scarlet oleanders of Arles,  
salt marshes, many wild horses.

2.

But what was the tower?  
What tower? Watts Towers.  
Where Simon Rodia built  
a city ship, vesica  
piscis its shape, the shape  
of woman. And sailed it  
downtown, a cunning  
vessel of cement and broken  
bottles and his tools,  
his simple tools, sailed it  
to where the poor live  
who have need of it most,  
towers full of color full of air  
for a people of color  
who fill their bellies with song  
since the poor (said Simon's  
master) you have always  
with you: be with the poor  
they are your work in heaven.

3.

*for Ann Doherty*

What tower? Watertower.

O the girls of Chicago

city of love

beside the elongate lake

mother of lakes

phallus of water

the middle fabric

our whole pleasure,

Watertower Place

where the shops ascend

level after level

around a hollow space

the heart of money

Watertower tower

of buying and no having,

of wanting and slim

getting, this

was the death hand

of Chicago city of love

lifted by its lake

vulva, its tower

defiled by desire

not for the other

but for shadows,

the windows of each gallery

filled with shadows

and she stood there,

Ann, dear blonde

surly desperate

unanswering Ann

(her name was  
Mary's mother,  
all the stories  
locked in one tower)

Ann stood there  
over all the shadows  
and wanted nothing  
anymore and leaped  
or fell, and fell  
and fell until  
she was a customer  
dead on the pavement  
below, atrium,  
dark house of light  
inside the shadow,

she met her own shadow  
on the way down  
and became it  
on the ground—  
that terrible tower  
had not spoken

as a tower should  
to every despairing woman,  
had not told her  
what she needed to hear,  
she did not ask  
so it did not answer,  
terrible tower  
don't you know  
it is the silent ones  
we have to answer



no matter what they ask  
or don't ask, all  
we are is listeners,  
Tower, you have to talk,

woe to those who  
built in the city  
a tower that does not talk.

4.

What tower?

There is a plain in China  
far out west where in every  
little village and sometimes  
the open spaces between

very high towers stand  
thin, precarious,  
empty, never used  
in human memory,

towers for their own sake,  
towers. These are our obsessions.  
We build them tall  
on our meager landscape,  
to store our shadows in,

because a shadow is a fragile thing,  
can't take much light or air,  
not much color  
just the colors they lay on in our dreams,

though some shadows have a kind of color  
and some are strong enough to last a lifetime

maybe outlive the body  
that cast them between  
themselves and the light,

shadow of a panther  
shadow of a woman bending to the fountain  
shadow of a tower falling  
silent under a blue sky.

28 December 2004

## ASTRONOMY

But I'm stuck waiting here  
wondering why the stars still shine—  
could they be as old as I am?

I remember the stars when I was little  
but I think they were different then,  
different animals prowling different  
circles overhead, the strange  
neighborhood where stories happen,  
and they were brighter then  
but the brick houses of Brooklyn  
bore them, bravely, on every roof.

Where did those stars go,  
the constellations I remember, the Black  
Leopard, The Ice Skater, the Crucified  
Carrying His Cross Back Down the Hill?

And where did these new stars come from,  
everybody talks about them, Dipper, Little Bear,  
and a lady upright on an uncomfortable Chair?

They have changed so much world on me,  
how can I find my way from mother to mother?

28 December 2004

## CARTOMANCY

A new deck of cards:  
an amazing Parrot  
staring in the dark of his covered cage  
about to announce  
a whole new kind of light!  
A new kind of daylight  
only he can see!

but then I turn another card  
and a different sort of bird flies out  
screeching the way a birch tree  
creaks in wind on a bitter cold day.

But today we saw a mile from water  
a swan fly slowly overhead.

28 December 2004

FAMA

To use the little grace I knew  
or suck a fountain pen  
to make an idea come

then listen to what it thinks  
but all the while keep walking  
looking for the big roof of Saint  
Eustache above the tourist heads—

do all this and you will *be*  
music, like a skirt worn snug  
or a man on roller skates.

*At length they will listen –*  
calm yourself, they're listening already,  
dominations, powers, even cherubim,  
everybody but the seraphim  
they have no ears but only eyes  
and wreath around the shining space  
where deity would be if *being*  
were what God did do

instead of absconding eternally.  
Deity is what flees before us  
and makes us follow, hurrying  
past the church and through the market,  
past money and past river,  
past all the foreign languages,  
church bells, cute students  
of dead sciences, parks,  
fields, prairies, seas,  
glorious hum of bees around the empty hive.

29 Dec/04

## SHOPPING LIST

He wrote down apples  
and couldn't think of anything else.  
He doesn't like apples,  
apples are for her.  
What else would she like?

He couldn't think.  
He looked at the word  
and saw he had written in  
in French, for her,

pommes. Red, organic,  
local best.  
None of that had to be said,  
written down.  
The blank paper has its own rights too.

What else.  
When only one word  
stands on the list  
you know you're near  
the end of something.

What. And did he know it?  
Does he know it even now  
as he stares at the empty platter  
where apples usually sat  
and only knows there are no apples?  
When the light goes out the room is dark.  
That surely is enough to know.

29 December 2004

*EXP. DOC.*

Shift the pain to the other hand.  
Squeeze hard.  
The sponge ball fights back.  
This is an opera after all,  
*The Hand & the Ball*,  
more Verdi than Ravel,  
o hand of mine, old baritone,  
how sad to see you wince,  
your hunchbacked knuckles  
good for rubbing my sore eyes—  
that kind of music.  
Furtive, haunting, bad.  
You punched the wall  
once too often.  
But the wall fell down.

29 December 2004

=====  
But trying  
is a flower too

the amaryllis  
on the window sill

opens crimson  
against the evening snow.

Every rhyme  
would be a lie.

Even a line itself  
by ending tells

too much of the truth  
and more than it knows.

29 December 2004



## AFTERMATH

A phone number  
in a foreign god  
rings inside her

she sticks her red tongue out  
that drips with blood  
for you.

Strange blood  
maybe from you too.  
Later he says

if they find my wife  
they will call me  
looking at the camera

as if the lens  
and all of us behind it  
were idiots, mute

witnesses to an immense  
disaster, if they find her  
of course they'll call me

and tell me so, call me  
from the sky  
on no telephone,

and I will hurry to her  
on no road  
and it will be a fairytale

again, a prince  
crashing through  
the glass hedge

and finds her sleeping,  
wakes her  
for the journey home

and to carry us  
the king will send  
two white horses,

no flames anywhere.

29 December 2004

# f

fecund pecunia *feoh*

cattle

coins floating in air

Kennedy half dollars.  
Franz Joseph. F, first  
letter. Maria Theresia thalers.

A cow comes first,  
Aleph's wife,  
walks through the meadow,

finds me. Gives me milk.  
Milk of the letters,

salt from the mill lost in the sea,

milk, gives me the letters.  
Of course the cow.

A coin  
floats between her horns.

My desire is a coin that rises over the world.  
I can be gold. Pay me,  
my fee is everything.

I turn everything to what is told.  
Pay me my fee is everyone.

Feoh. My fee is feelings.  
I want everything, the world around me  
is my fee I feel  
and everyone,

my ox and my cow and my wife,  
Leah, a heifer, my fee  
is Leah, never mind Rachel,  
the cow I want, not the sheep,

I want the north not the east.  
From the North comes Light.

F light. F train. Brooklyn to Queens by way of the city.  
A token once for the slot  
some coin with a slit in it,  
a cap. F  
promises me everything.  
The way a woman would.

29 December 2004