

1-2003

janF2003

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janF2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 886.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/886

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AN OLD ROMAN KNIFE

When it is said that the universe is alive
one thing among others that is meant is this:
if you follow any object far enough and long away
any percept it will lead you soon enough
to a living sentient being. The oldest piece
of Latin is a maker's name on a bronze blade
and then it says "he made me." Even
the metal tells. The rock on my shabby lawn
killed Abel. Everything is near.

18 January 2003

ALWAYS ONE TO TAKE RISKS



Ordinary ceremonies begin anew
water sports and spirit guides
a motorboat round Ogden's Point
carrying noisy white clothes

their music happens to the water
mingling not unpleasantly with our séance
the ghost of Jean Seberg stands before me now
speaking the fluent heavy accented French
she made the national patois of love

for love is earnest breathing mostly
with death on her lips, she tells us all
we've come to learn,
the curious customs of beyond the tomb:

Don't think money ever stops
I have some now, isn't it pretty, paper and gold,
and eating, we go on eating
but gain and lose no weight,
it's all sensation without consequence,

MIRACLES

Every specific recounted miracle of Christ is anagogy, mark of an equally specific transformation or mutation that the 'Christian' strives to learn, ponder, enact, turn into experience.

These miracles are the real parables. Not the words but the deeds. Not the story even but something you have to do.

18 January 2003

BROKEN WORD

A broken word
like vow or
oath or really
promise is the
ugliest of all

what right does now have
to shape the future
except by living to it day by day?

A promise
is idolatry

is false philosophy
a lie even with the best intentions

a star fallen from heaven
giving a shiver of light as it falls

then nothing at all.

18 January 2003

CANTEEN

In those days I was so hungry
I'd eat the hands off a watch
I'd suck your name right out of your mouth

but I would not drink from that canteen

metal tepid contoured flask war surplus khaki canvas snug

but in Toffenetti's off Times Square
they served ice water in pastel art deco pitchers set
free on every table and

waitresses moved around me with the sound of ice clinking in a glass.

18 January 2003

DREAM TEXT, early 19 January 2003

**This is for the mouth and the shadow
the book and the orange**

this is what heard me
out of sleep.

19.1.03

FOR VANEIGEM

The wild Belgian who doesn't believe in God
believes in the devil:

the one who runs the Spectacle,

the intelligence of greed, the telos of money.

Somewhere back of Vaneigem is the noble savage
spoiled by something —

and for centuries we've trolled to find how that something
affects the world, becomes

society, prison house, slays our pleasures

but never know what that something is.

Conspiracy of kings and popes and banks and bosses —
the most successful conspiracy

is the one least aware of its own existence,

unindicted unconscious co-conspirators

but does the conspiracy run itself,

another world against the world

or are we strangers and that conspiracy is just the world?

There is a river flowing through all things

waters all our roots and if we drink at all we drink from it.

Are we outsiders, is pleasure

the last vestige of the starry knowledge

we fell down from

into the work world? And who is on *our* side

except the yattering artistes

who shut up the minute they too

coopted are half-generously moistened by the flow.

So where did we go wrong?
Is there a way to turn it off?

And who would I be
on the other side of the spectacle
and how would I find you there
lost as we are in the crowd of each other?

19 January 2003

NOCTURNE

I have something late to say
a midnight mistake I love you
again I am made of weather
and change and change but like weather
I always come to you
and will never leave you alone.

*

I translated all the books of the Bible
into skin: the good books
Exodus Leviticus Ezekiel Qoheleth
so you would feel me

*

you would grasp my interpretations
gaily at the tip of your feelings
because we know where love is stored
the little knob that opes the door.

19 January 2003

DREAM TEXT, early 20 January 2003

**I like the part of the story
where the world comes to an end
and what comes next**

something waiting
that washes its face

and smiles from the mirror
your father knew me
before you were born
I am a friend of presidents and kings
I am clean
as a chessboard
and you know me now

you want everything
to be a person
so you can talk with them

you want the future
to send you a letter
close as rain

I told your father
he would have a child
like you, he groaned
with yearning and apprehension
and knew

the trouble with you
you want the sky to love you.

20 January 2003

**Issuant de rêve
je mis ma main**

20 1 03

cave

take

care

20 1 03

One bird waking

blue

everything

something

to give to you.

20 January 2003

I write Coptic
in the snow

showing off
like sunrise

now
 something

unbearably
old beginning.

20 January 2003

The juicy sophistries
of the middle class
disguised as clothes

the poor
speak other languages

I see the sun rise and wonder
Have I done my work for the day already?

20 January 2003

COLD SPELL

Be still
and sympathize.

Rabbit somewhere
out there shivering

in the snow, a girl
with a sore throat

remarkable
saying things

observe
where she sits down

there, that
is the place.

20 January 2003

Next time

agree

we all had mothers

nothing else is sure

we fight

against the light

20 | 03

a scratch on the table
shaped like a bird in flight

my hand
wipes them both away

a shadow of no light.

THE OLD ONES

survivals of palaeo-human
intelligence — language they have
but not words,
do you understand?

under the hedges
sometimes waiting

or you see them in subway tunnels
cuttings, under stone bridges still
when butter-yellow coltsfoot leafless
breaks out in spring

Christ sometimes they hide inside your clothes.

20 January 2003