

1-2003

## janG2003

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## A GENESIS

Things fly here  
and code us

later we decode  
and are.

It is simple  
when you think it

you and me  
adding up

I borrow you  
'for eternity'

you are a book  
I live by

the flame  
I read it by

we function  
the lovely machine

always answers  
the sky

it fell from  
the plane

landing  
catches up

with its shadow  
existence

no different  
we belong to it

at last  
no word

changes a thing  
breathing in

is change enough.

21 January 2003

## THE ORGANIST

takes his church with him  
he hoists the steeple  
on his back  
and staggers through the town  
and plays

                                he wont let us  
alone with his music

I have seen this many times  
in Switzerland, by some lake,  
the people listening, entering  
into small boats, a bronze  
statue overlooks the shore.  
Of a saint, frowning.

21 January 2003

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*(responding to Fiona's poem)*

o god don't do this to me  
don't show me a kid with his books  
it's me sixty years ago isn't it, it's me  
hauling an orange crate upstairs  
to stand them up in books, upright  
on the shelves, real books,  
thin as they were or one of them even  
a book of poems I could make nothing of  
why would anyone write the truth in lines?

21 January 2003

## THE LAST

or the mold  
or the foot itself  
wrong wrong

the mile should not be so long  
the hand not so far away from the hand

People think: he's chasing a \$10 bill  
blown along by the wind  
but this kind of money you catch  
by sitting at home with your eyes closed

maybe from time to time your nostrils flare  
as if you were a lion

and you smelled far off, everything is far, about far,  
the blood of something that concerned you,

golden eyes, and you think about that a long time.

21 January 2003

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midnight oranges  
allowed to talk  
about anything  
even what only  
happens to be

isn't it?  
speech is the only  
permission  
if you can focus  
you can say it

if you say it  
it is happening  
already  
in the animal mind  
you are

midnight oranges  
let us  
spill little words  
over each other  
trust me

I am no one.

22 January 2003

## FINDING THE SMALL

Finding the small  
is not easy

It must be followed  
like a fox through wheat fields

quick as a color  
take hold

It is the only thing  
worth your touch.

22 January 2003



## IF I COULD SPEAK RUSSIAN I WOULD SAY

Let the peremptory ego speak:  
know me, I am the size  
of your desire plus the church on fire  
and young monks running  
over the snow without stopping their chant

plus the river sleeps  
where the longboat stops at midnight  
someone climbs  
up the water steps dripping wet  
and that is the word

I have been trying to tell you  
all my life  
listen to it while you can make it yours  
because the only  
thing other than your word is me.

22 January 2003

## PLANTING WINTER

But I heard your piano  
it was a guitar  
I didn't understand  
a sound  
so much to tell

the oranges of Avignon  
we shared last night  
I have a confession  
I've been thinking of you again  
when I was a Pope in that city  
didn't you know  
the aggressions of poetry against the intellect  
a rabbit caught in the machine

2.

you, you.  
You, Inc.  
You whose secret thousand instances  
have bamboozled my nights for fifty years,  
you. And I was the Pope in Avignon  
another life  
I ate your oranges  
every one  
and licked my fingers.

3.

They don't have the music I like  
so I put up with yours,  
faded billboard of the heart  
swaying in a highway breeze  
Oklahoma midnight summer

I smell the green from which we're made.

4,

It's cold even for a child

to be beautiful the way a smile

knows all too well how to be

I am an animal of rapture

a rolling ball a subway car.

Give me directions to your insides.

To linger there. Like a loved

book by the bedside, slipped

under the bedstead, maybe

covered with dust. But your dust.

22 January 2003

Rhinebeck

## HOW NOT TO TAKE WEATHER PERSONALLY

This is the main thing.

Otherwise the freeze comes inside  
or you have tornado in the heart.

Insanity gives birth to a sad world.

Do not be the one it happens to.

Watch weather from the side.

22 January 2003

Rhinebeck

**E**legant eland  
as if I dreamed one  
but it's too cold to dream  
too hot under the covers

we are weather after all  
and what does it mean  
to have words in your mouth  
and no one to say them too?  
it's reading a book in the dark.

23 January 2003

**A**nother answer.  
I have been  
all the people you can name  
and can prove it —  
here is Stravinsky's acidulous blood  
in the passionate hallways of my arteries  
*couloirs, miroirs,*  
here is Greta Garbo's wrist  
softly fitted round my bones  
and here is Frankenstein  
himself doubting his savoir-faire.  
I am your sciences,  
all their formulas stuffed in my mouth.

23 January 2003

**B**elief bird,  
that's me.  
You can't name a deity  
I don't believe in.

even Rat-Tusk the imaginary  
squirrel up the cosmic tree  
gets his meed of praise from me  
and bellicole Athena with her elegant spear  
probing the unconsciousness of us  
tongue tip by satin slip,  
and the big rock out on my hill  
that someone on in 1912  
*Vote for Wilson* and I still do.

23 January 2003

**C**atholic cantharides  
everything turns me on.  
Especially the emptiness of streets,  
churches, warehouses, railway stations

like 30<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia  
a town that relies heavily on moon.  
Axes of energy, pronouns  
hard to identify, shehe, sheshe,  
mewho, you? An angel nobody sees  
idles over the city all day long  
like a crippled jet circling to land.  
Stacking pattern: air forgives air.  
Barely legal Thai masseuses  
run Visa cards through small devices.  
I never go inside  
I am a piece of paper blown along the street  
with your handwriting on it  
scudding so fast I can't read what I say.  
Gutter language is an angel's mouth  
or just some man worried about his friends.

23 January 2003



**D**emon dapper  
I saunter for a change  
dressed like a parson on his golf day  
offering flames for other people's cigarettes.

I don't play. I'm like the kangaroos  
you see pictures of on Sydney greens  
taking mild interest in all that seems.

But only seems. All my new clothes  
mean to impress you, look how trim

I look in this austere anorak.

The world is just a hallway  
where we can't see the walls.

But I see them. I am me,  
ambassador from Tartary,  
crow on a snowbank, waiting.

And probably for you.

23 January 2003

**G**olgotha gone.  
Of course I saw God die  
and come back to life again.

It happens all the time  
between one breath and the next.  
There's nothing new in the world  
but your next breath.  
I sneak up close to you  
to get the warmth of it on my cheek,  
I hear your breath in my ear  
a word you don't know you're saying  
thrills me, we both know you mean it,  
it's the things we don't intend  
that mean most, a theory about that  
is called Theology, or why God died  
and left you to take his place  
while the world slept  
and only you were waking. And me  
coming back to life as if my whole body  
were just a distant frontier of your skin.

23 January 2003

**T**ouch truth  
it's all that's left.  
I get so solemn sometimes  
dissolve me in sour cream

like horseradish, these are native  
birds staring at us from the trees  
like words we can't pronounce,  
this naked footprint on my thigh.  
Be sandy with me and put up  
with the nervous repetitions of the sea  
never sure we get the point  
the waves have been promoting all these years.  
Like missionaries developing a taste for native meat.  
Here is my philosophy in a nutshell:  
I am a bird on your windowsill  
I study you whenever the sun lets me come down.  
What's left for us? The truth, my friend,  
the other side of the sky.

23 January 2003

**H**arpies harry  
us, no, Mongols  
on the warpath  
a house made of arrows

so cold this winter

nothing carries

and the air falls.

Ten days below ice

and Doubt is busy

that old Working Man

takes everything personally

which is the actual link

between poetry and insanity:

the hazards of her calling

call to her in the city night,

why always alone and never alone?

It seems there is a metal in the world

that rusts into unhappiness

ours, no matter what we do or try to.

When things go wrong I turn into someone else

since the one I am can't bear contradiction

adversity and other boring movies

that still keep us glued to our seats.

As if there were anywhere outside the theater

even if they turned the damned projector off.

23 January 2003

## THE BOOK OF DISCONSOLATE CHILDREN

is still reading me.

It is so strange to be with the young,  
they never seem to figure it out  
that I am them too, I walked  
down all their streets, and everything  
they feel now I felt  
and still can feel. Since *every*  
is something stored inside,  
and everything I ever was I am.

What an insult the old are to the young,  
having all the young have plus everything else  
that happened since. How intolerable  
the old are, I thought so once  
and think so still, since no one  
ever grows old inside, certainly there is no time  
inside the body, no time in life  
to change the huge luminosity  
of being into something less or feeble.  
It stays what it ever was, sometimes it grows  
until death borrows it away for purposes of its own.  
And what does death do with all that light?

23 January 2003

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Fill the world with poetry.

What else do I have to do?

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