

9-2003

sepF2003

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "sepF2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 911.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/911

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.

YOUNG MAGIC

A girl or two
trying to remember
something else
but nothing's there
but what they represent

this is called waiting for the bus
and sometimes lighting a cigarette
to make it come faster,
a ritual that works, or
not saying the name of what you really want

or saying it over and over again
the love-sign fading
flushed under the storm cloud
and one guesses it's only night time
but the other knows better.

25 September 2003

CHART

Any map will tell you where you are
if you accept its definition of itself and you.

This is the fatal weakness of philosophy.

25 IX 03

EVENT

small blue violet flowers have come out and spoken

25 IX 03

What language am I today?

Cancel the offending words.

25 IX 03

SUNRISE IN THE WOODS

The trees have been trying
to wake up for years
but they're too busy living.
Which is that phase of dying
where we do all the work.

25 September 2003

DEMONSTRATIO

Pick a number from One to Ten.

Now announce the number you chose.

See which number wins.

This is the meaning of democracy.

The number that most people picked
must be the truest number of all.

LOVE SONG

I want to tell you something
I don't know yet. You want
to hear nothing but silence
isn't ready for you yet.
We have to settle for frustration,
saying half of what I mean
and you half-listening.

25 September 2003

ALTERNATE AFFIRMATIONS

Because I did believe
and it is magic. Because
I do believe
and it was normal. Both

become, both are so,
a man steps out of the shower
with clean hair
history catches up with

the least kindness
nothing is lost but where does it go?
Chanting your body
to another place

for a breath or two
alone with mind
and your skin is wet
and who is left to follow

follow whom where?
Becoming blissful, a believer
catches careless Charity
dancing down divinity,

every elementary event
festive, faith-fraught,
gather contingent glories
half heaven half here.

26 September 2003



CHROMOPHONE

Each vowel nucleus maps a color —
chromophone, analyze a text so,
color map of poetry.

26 IX 03

WHAT COLOR WOULD YOU BE IF YOU WERE HOME

What color would you be if you were home
and what would your mother say about your hair

can we walk on wet grass with dry hot feet
are we animals of the environment after all
and not the purple princesses we meant?

It still is morning Mass, you're the bread
and I'm the wine and by the end of it
there be no more of such
temporary commodities as you and me.

But something's left that will miss the pale
presence of your body and maybe even my
hot exhausted blush, bottling ecstasy so many years.

26 September 2003

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

Was it a bathroom much in need of new grout
or a pot of oatmeal ready to be served
when the phone went off and The Agenda
changed, how cold and thick things are now
aren't they compared to London in the heyday
when you could walk along the Serpentine
re-hearing seldom performed operas in your head
and hardly anybody played softball in the park.
Bark. Dark. Cark is what care does
or did when we spoke English, there
or anywhere, real estate men in funny clothes
buying the ground out from under your feet
but what were you doing there anyhow,
wouldn't you feel more at home in Switzerland,
a country that is feminine in most languages
but we have no sex in ours?

26 September 2003

LOW FINANCE

Persuading people to give you their money
is probably why we have money in the first place,
cheat and be cheated. It's hard to cheat a stone
and you need a small army to steal a farm.
But money unhinges our relationship with things.
We want their oil, they want Madonna,
a want once acquired hardly ever goes away.
To hear a voice that's not your own,
to go somewhere your feet can't take you —
all the trickery amounts to that. For that
we weave our flags around the fallen.

26 September 2003

CORVIDAE

Imagine the sudden rapture
of silence when the crow
falls low from the cloud
and the hawk flees so the air
is monstrously clear.

They protect all living things
and guide your feet
if you'd only listen. Deaf,
what I miss most:
wind chimes. Crow caw.

26 September 2003

TRANSLATION CONFERENCE

A plane, as of being,
being there. In the old
seminary Morningside Heights
morning after morning
I took the paper cup of coffee
the vague sweet roll
out onto the winter grass
and talked to the scholar
woman from Wales in the cloister
garden, a reformation
garden with no herbs
no flowers and I thought
about somebody a lot
and now I can't remember who.

26 September 2003

THE MURDER VICTIM LEAVES A CLUE

I last long enough to tell who
killed me, but what does it matter,
my life killed me, time
killed me, the telephone that rang
killed me, the telephone that didn't.

26 September 2003

DREIVIERTELTAKT

So much as some of a waltz of it
casting outside the highly polished
escape machinery the ancient
clockmaker kept fixing every dawn
so that something kept coming up
out of the sea annoying him
eventually with its blue the way
a musician is secretly vexed
to recall that inside the wood of his violin
a tone is waiting and has been waiting
since the beginning of time or maybe
just the felling of the tree, a sound
peculiar to the wood itself that has
nothing to do with him and although
he owns the wood and plays like Lucifer
he can't ever get that tone to sound
or use it up. A sound belongs to its thing
and music belongs to nothing —that's why
it never lasts and people go on dying.

26 September 2003

Measure measure
then forget forget.

Love love,
that's all that's left.

27 IX 03

SLOW RIPENING THE PEOPLE

Too many turns for one street
so the neighbors sit around in bars
or fountains pondering the light or dark
how much of each, there's always
a scientist in every group,
a traveling man, a stay at home
a priest. The women are far
more different than the men are
but seldom show it. The town
is your town, the money
on the marble table tops
is mine, weird bills and worthless
coins, the waiters move
sleepy-eyed through unending rituals.
Everybody has something they're running from,
we are ennobled by what we can't make work.

27 September 2003

It's so stupid to be in love again
but who would I be if I weren't?

27 IX 03

IN THICK WOODS

In thick woods in tree fall
and wind-felled trees to walk
is mountain-climbing flat
machete-less to move
accepting the no-road as my road.

I'm not as afraid as I used to be
I think. The history I compose
has everybody in it, but all
the names are changed. The firehouse
is the cathedral, the buildings
are built of shadows,
when they fall down they do not hurt,
Job's in-laws are not crushed flat,
through Milarepa's emaciated
ribcage cold wind pronounces
painlessly *something else*
is always on the prowl,
keep your eyes on that,
the katydids' incessant whir
means everybody's suffering
and everybody's somewhere not.
Shadows kiss your skin
and stay, no matter how ugly
I become the same wind loves me.
Do I love more than you
what happens? Or are you

the one who made this tangled
mess around my life, burst
pipes and noble walnut trees
and underbrush too thick for foxes
but not too thick for me
married always to the intricate?

27 September 2003

THE DECADES

What silenced Yeats
encouraged me,
the fall of appetite
the public voice,

the way what I had said
comes back subtly
from mouths hard pressed
to say it,

the glamorous interruptions,
the peace of God.
When I'm happiest
I cannot rest,

and when desire least
grasps what it conceives
the shock of loneliness
speaks a crowded word.

Enough to say to
divide between us,
no loaves, no fishes,
no miracles

but in your mouth the taste of me.

27 September 2003