

9-2002

sepA2002

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "sepA2002" (2002). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 982.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/982

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THE MESSENGERS

And then we were home
a bird looking in the window,
ghosts, half alive already
where men live, real men
whatever they really are, you read
about them in fairy tales, they live
a year and a day and their house

sails out to meet them
runs along the side of the road.
The house had us. Strange
to be swallowed by miracle,
curious holy rabbis re-
arranging vowels as they sat
feeding birds under oaks
but we hid under beeches
laymen full of greedy consonants
buck suck truck luck
lucre of the mind, we want we want

but the beech trees were holy too
and made us hesitate
smooth bark a girlish tree
for all its big and we could sleep
beneath the copper leaves a night
two nights and reap a dozen dreams
sonnets algorithms a weathertop
till our words were finished
and rain came

this is your week
(or work) they said, you're real again
this time you are musicians
go find a city and teach it what it means
when people want other people
then make them think instead of want,
this perturbation we teach you to induce
will be the seminal neurosis you can build
a kingdom on

so we saddled up our harps
wary for we had heard all this stuff before,
music and measure and things you can't eat
but women praise you for

o lovely scarcity
that makes us lie beside each other
and make happiness out of cold invisibility
this human night

They issued us
a scanty stock of vowels we had to use
and use again to string
all manner stops and fricatives upon until
the vine grew heavy with our pronunciations
and the city comes awash with speaking
and every blessed thing they say
reminds somebody of somebody else.

1 September 2002

A bird looks in the window.

Worry. They see me
where I have hidden
behind glass. Hidden me
and hidden something
else. Who can tell
what is missing from the world?
This bird on his way to heaven
still finds me worth
a moment's glance.
Who knows (he thinks)
when it will help the Mind
to have seen this man.
No one ever knows
who benefits, who blesses
just by being there.
We help each other
through a world without
the slightest accident.
Everything means. Everything
supports the other.
I would say we are a vine
forever except we are the fruit
everywhere and the vine
nowhere. The bird
dignifies me
by his observation.
With me in mind
He came down from heaven.

1 September 2002

SYLLABLES

Know them better
the beads fall
from the old woman's hand
history of religion
it's the eyes
you go by you can tell
the god friends from the high ground
who teach us to dwell

eskenosen set up his tent
he amongst us
until we were not sure what he was
or what we are

the confusion is useful
fruitful

in the year
of the fructiferous incarnation
we are a current
the passes through things
lysing them into their
differences

their 'selves'

sodium
chlorine
hydrogen
oxygen
silly names of our lovers
hard to keep from laughing

Monica Miriam Molybdenum

God sent them to wake us

or at least teach us

a nobler kind of sleep

muthoi

 this poetry.

1 September 2002

(displacement)

nothing worth convection
the broad mortised armoire
stillborn from the joiner's
sleep I keep a residence
down here with cannibals
because they love me and
all do who take me mortal in

no time with convocation
though proud morticians are mired
stallbound from the jouncing
steed Y koop u rosydonco
down horo wyth cunnybuls
bocuuso thoy lovo mo und
ull do who tuko mo mortul yn

(1 Sept 02)

PROOF BY EXHAUSTION

How close we are to the fact.

Tell me. Why you?

Why does the aqueduct always

Go through your neighborhood

As if the balances of water

Made a special song for you

Rushing by, try to get your attention

So busy dreaming who

Am I touching you now?

2 September 2002

NIGHT PRAYER

Rosary is an autumn mouth
a bare repeating of dry fingers
somewhere in the mother tongue

a bird the color of its seed
trouble heaven with lewd ascensions
the clock of ordinary desires

another time we work the texture
of the word to bring
birds down out of the air

they fall through the breath
of our vowels
blue-mouthed reality around the lips

your lips saying whatever you choose
a little message left at midnight
while my memory burrows in your hair.

2 September 2002

CAVE

I think it has to be risked. You have to know what I think.
And the thinking is a cave, a slender dark declivity leading in
to a much larger place where things happen. Where we do.
You have to know this, to keep me from saying so.

2 September 2002

THE HUSBAND

Things are so far.
Who will be me
when you're there
standing early morning
in front of your house
when a little mist
makes the meadow
sea? I want to stand
before you always
mocking the distances
respectful of the small
separations you keep
in your heart
determined
not to be me.
For all my travel
I am your home
insisting on this stone
we share
and on it a house
and in the house
a table our hands
join there
a glass a book
an empty plate
a bed in the corner
of the room
like autumn thunder.

2 September 2002

HOW MUCH LEFT TO TELL

Never too many philosophers, too many
midwestern afternoons.

I hear you because of your goodbye

so lingering, so drawn to the finest
missing a friend under the grey mountain
we all climb

or try to,
the sound of the prestigious violin
silences

but your string sounds
something just this side of forever

this side, where we can meet,
where we can believe
all the things we hear in the dark.

3 September 2002

(thinking of violist Markka Gustafson's performance at Fred Grab's memorial)

who could be the names
of these flowers

 a crow
takes off from a tree
a yellow leaf falls

that's who we are

3 September 2002

The road empty
shadow
across it

telling lies
among ruins
I love you

3 September 2002

GHOSTS

But who can answer
when the rock is sign

oxygen hydride
waiting below the cliff

all these answers
turbulent

water makes wind
wind leaves earth

all that matters

listens to me

white veins in red rock
spirit house here
we keep our ghosts

the ones who died before us
yes but also
the ones we'll one day be

we talk to them now
and they listen

the ghost of a dead person
 is called a spirit
the ghost of someone still alive
 is young and small
 and often hides
inside an element, a piece of tin,
an aluminum kettle, this
little red stone
holds a whole heart.

3 September 2002

into terrible heaven
durable ascensions

4 IX 02

αγγραφα

this is the unwritten book

you hold it in your hands
you seem to be reading it

but it is not written

you think you read *it is*
not written but it is not written

Written meant to carve or scratch or scrape,
what did reading mean,
what kind of wrestling with or wresting out

reading now means to
write an unwritten text
from no words. No.
What is reading?
Read a wordless text
into human argument.

You read it but it is not written.
No one said this.

Sometimes be glad alone.

4 September 2002

LIFTING THE FLYERS ON A BLUE CURRENT

The naïve animal believes it's me,
Sanhedrin among humans, a tree among fowl,
where will you go to hear
your lover's name accurately pronounced?
That's not your language it's just your tongue
and the sounds of Work recede
across the muddy colors of the lawn.
Ozone. Giving is care.
Water was so simple once, it's own day,
Urina caelestis, the dawn of rain.

I'm hiding you inside my breath
he happy in the doldrums of my mouth
warm and wet and not much breeze
till later, hours into longing, you'll see
moonlight's sparkling maybes
from the comfort of my caravan.

We will get there. We will conclude
a pact with ocean, we will war
against stability, we will be dumb
as only people stretched out in the sun can be,
only a little hurt

any more

we hurt each other

like a crucifixion in a museum

on a wall and old and delicate, not on a hill, not now,
long ago, no flies amazed at all that blood.

Do not forsake me. That's my job,
the studious abandonments,
 the atelier
fled by night and not a painting left,
was I a picture in your locket ever?

If you fall in love with an image
isn't it enough to keep the image always,
why the table and the grapefruit and the pee stains on the sheet,
why the moon and cat?

 What am I saying,
 O please don't tell me,
I talk to keep from knowing,

to keep from hearing.
I hope there is a tiger in your life
like you in mine. I hope there is a jungle
where we both relax,
 spirits without pronouns,
cool among lianas, with something to drink
with honey.

 When you look at a man
and compare him with other animals
you see what a strange thing he is
tiny mouth for all that meat
all awkward hands and feet,

all about fiddling and shifting
restless, burdened with anxious skills,
what a funny looking thing he is,
twitching restless fingers
eager to do something to something,
restless feet all ready to run away,
the round head swiveling on its unlikely
elevation, like a lantern walking
 but with such little eyes
and still I want to come home with you tonight.

4 September 2002