

6-2003

**junE2003**

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "junE2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1013.  
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=====

Spill, as an aster  
in September will  
get around to blue  
and you know that summer  
has another meaning now  
and the frogs are silent  
almost and the owl knows,

spill, as if we still  
lived in such a world  
with animals and friends  
and the waves coming in  
could still remind us  
of an order out there  
to which we are radically  
foreign, foreigners,  
exiles, not nomads,  
of if nomads then lost  
in the desert of prophecy  
where no grass is

to feed our silly lambs.  
And there they are again,  
the breathing metaphors  
who live nearby, the snake  
at your foot yesterday

I was lucky not to see,  
the tent caterpillars who  
infest the high moors this week  
slim pagans at their spoils

and the lady across the street  
is doing laundry, toddles  
about in her pink muu muu  
in the cold wind, haven't seen  
one of those in years, sheets,  
pillows out to air, how busy  
we all are in this strange  
Portugal, even me, fussily  
hurrying to say this,

spill, as the light does and despairs  
of ever getting all that brightness  
back again, oikumene, the world  
inhabited by talking people,  
even barbarians have something  
to report, we need philosophers,  
to understand their crude remarks  
and make them ours, elegies,  
shopping lists, encomiums  
of blowhards dead in battle anyhow,  
whale expeditions, shopping malls,  
Shaddai in the sky and you in bed,

spill, as each word does  
the content implicate  
in all others,

spill, as each distinction  
makes all the rest,  
how could we be otherwise,

a man, alone with a woman  
a woman alone, with a man.

9 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

We come here to see  
the world doing nothing  
but being itself  
and letting us look

and so we museumize  
reality, choosing the vista  
with our feet, our boats,  
our little noisy seaplane

tottering down the wind  
bringing you to me and me  
to you in the special way  
called here, the island.

9 June 2003

=====

Thou more import than thee  
a swallow distinguishes this wine  
from that sky, a man mends  
a woman perfects, a wind  
seeks out the seagulls wake! wake!  
they cry only to each other  
lest in long sleeping miss the world  
comme tu me manques egregious  
foreigner -- I love the rain but miss the moon  
now in the tenth day of her labor --  
by these spectacles I discern the dead  
operating in our midst, shameless  
facilitators, scouts from new hells  
sampling our talents -- when a love  
is gone -- move to the middle  
of the bed and rock yourself to sleep.

9 June 2003

=====

I cast myself in the future I say look back  
and claim me as your ancestor  
since I as you have learned to do  
trust no theory but this risk  
this speaking out what comes to mind

disciplined to be different  
--neither confession nor construction--  
a shout instead from where the words live  
inside a biosystem -- you -- a man  
or a woman is a situation -- a shout  
from the alloy, a groan of the material  
deep in the cellar of our making,  
urgent, not to be resisted, can't keep  
from spouting out, misery, mystery  
of love, do this, think that, let  
it all go, hold each other hard  
crow call snow fall proud avowal so.

9 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

**HERE**

it is really not being in America  
or not America yet

the island where it could have been different  
401 winters ago

I see myself across the sea.

10 VI 03



=====

We look for something in the air  
a bird maybe  
with a flame in its beak  
to teach us fire

or is it otherwise, did fire  
always live with us  
and watching its tongues leap up  
taught birds to fly?

10 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

## **NOT ONLY THE BIBLE,**

*el-Bib*, maybe every  
myth tells its truth backwards  
or side to side like a mirror  
my left your right

our hands touch anyhow

but why don't mirrors  
turn upside down  
or do they so that too  
and we never know it

Myth is the cluttered closet of a people,  
leave it closed, there's mold in there,  
and dust, and sweet mildew,  
and all the ideas are old

but when you slam the door it wakes the dead

wake me instead  
a tongue in the right place  
a word understood  
no need to speak

\*\*\*

In the last section of my *Chansons de Printemps*, it asks: is the familiar exclusion from Eden story also told backwards?

The wall was built around the garden. But maybe we're still inside it. This is Eden, old and obvious and full of work -- why else would it be a garden, an orchard, a hard acre to delve and dig and sow and weed and reap. Outside Eden, we'd be no gardeners, we'd not be toilers of earth or sea or air, notebook and checkbook and miner's pick. Outside, there would be being. But an angel with a flaming sword stands there -- Manjusri -- not to keep us from the gate, but to show us --why else would the sword flame, give light? -- the way out.

Truth is naked. But she has her back turned to us. We may delight in the shapeliness of her apparency. But one day we must lure her to turn round, so we can see her face at last.

10 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

## **LINES FOLLOWED FROM DREAM**

I wear shoes that walk sideways  
that walk me cat-a-corner  
diagonally up the sidewalk  
zig zag slow, I wear shoes  
that don't get there ever,  
that make me dream,  
I wear shoes that are too big for the steps  
I can't go up easy  
I can't go down at all,  
my shoes have laces, the laces  
are alive, keep coming untied.  
I stagger from one building  
to the curb and back, I keep  
going, I wear shoes  
that are too small for the distances,  
I have killed my brother  
there is no place to go.

11 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

Watching things anyhow a cardinal I have to give you more of my reading  
but I don't read books anymore  
and it's hard to get the weather in an envelope  
but that's what I study, the clouds,  
partner, the airs barely visible  
that soar around the island of my head,  
the long science of feeling  
what it's like to be me,  
the smell of scotch broom yellow mad in June, the nameless gizmos  
that work the machinery all round me,  
birds and such, three old men  
last night with a twenty pound fish  
a fourth man was scaling and fileting

with gulls waiting their turn  
o seagulls I used to be so full of quotations,  
the sky used to be a book that fell  
asleep on my chest at night  
when I could read no longer  
and fell into the real world  
like an old heavyweight crashing to the canvas.  
But one night the dream ended and I woke  
and there was morning  
perched on the window sill  
and since then she has held me  
faithful, she has treed me and girled me,  
has fed me and eaten me, has wifed me and left me alone,

and the books flew from their endless shelves  
and scattered in several flocks  
mostly to the north  
where it is said that men still live  
with room in their heads  
for another word or two to come in,  
and here I am, thick with love,  
  
with many pairs of interesting shoes

11 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

but actually what am I saying  
goodbye to when I say hello  
remember I'm a Libra my hands  
are in your hands,

Ptolemy

called us *Chelai* the Claws  
of the Scorpion because we handled  
and we chose  
fussing around until we were sure  
and we were never sure  
so we buy a lot and use a little

touch, touch, in other words,  
and who will fault me  
if my eyes are dim from the beginning  
with too much beholding  
conning fair women departing  
over the lawns and a rabbit  
at dawn at his devotions,

I am the stars  
as you have come to know them  
and I have forgotten once again  
to water the day lilies on the deck  
but the rain will forgive me

I'm not the last man to pray to the weather  
that island made up entirely of the sound of the sea.

11 June 2003 Cuttyhunk

=====

When I breathe I hear voices in my chest  
far away they seem to be talking  
quiet voices of children  
doctor what does it mean  
I hear them inside me

you should try to make out  
the words they're saying

it's in another language

well go there and learn it  
it can't be that far away  
if you can hear it all the time

just when I'm sitting in a quiet room  
morning kitchens  
places like that  
and no one is talking outside me  
and I breathe

go there and learn that tongue they talk in

how shall I go?  
are there books that show the way?

You hear them  
it's your body



they're singing in  
you must have the map  
to follow  
or maybe you are the map  
and listening is enough,  
why dont you listen?

I hear them but my breath  
is louder, I mean they seem  
to be made up of my breath  
and I can only hear them when I breathe  
but the sound of my breathing  
hides what they are saying  
and who are they, doctor,  
who are they?

they must be the people  
you want to hear you  
the society you want to join  
--you say they're children?

their voices are children's voices  
I don't know what they really are  
maybe animals have children's voices  
or maybe things have too,  
or parts of the body, could parts  
of my body be talking to me,  
and I am the grown-up  
and they're my little children?  
it seems wrong to me,  
I think they're my ancestors,

I think my lungs are my grandmothers,  
maybe it's old women's voices  
that I'm hearing,  
maybe old people and children are the same,  
why don't you tell me  
who they are and what to do?

Go there and speak with them,  
or maybe just sit where you are  
in the quiet kitchen  
and tell them things, talk  
as you would with a foreigner  
or a real child, say  
what's on your mind, answer  
what you think they're saying  
and maybe they are saying that,  
maybe they will understand  
and then you will too.

But when I talk  
it drowns out what I'm hearing,  
what I'm feeling.  
Can't I get there  
by just listening  
alone, do I have to talk,  
I am so tired of talking.

11 June 2003  
Cuttyhunk

## **your shoulders**

your shoulders, your arm  
in first light the *sign*  
*of waking*

to be so close  
as we have been  
to feed all those  
birds together

12 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

**To know a self**

a tile a title

roof hard rain

ratcheting a word

through your machine

mourning-doves

castigate rain or

I still am here

am I still here

12 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

## ***Trüber Tag***

low clouds give way  
to high  
    color comes back

slowly the far headland

everything prophesies

now it is so clear  
the trees have leaves

listen to them  
    telling

12 June 2003  
Cuttyhunk

## **EVEN THE WEATHER**

even the weather  
is something somebody said

fore  
cast

saying closes  
what is said  
stays closed  
around the saying

becomes object  
not a “process  
in the weather of the heart”  
said the old young poet  
who still believed

it could be said.

12 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

rub them together  
like two sisters  
the moon rises

12 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

*for Sappho*

=====

in all that rain  
there's a boat down there  
the mist is rising  
the men stand  
outlined against  
the sea they're working

windows all a-steam  
cardinal scolding a tree

what more could  
anybody ask

12 June 2003  
Cuttyhunk



## **THE GULLS**

only earliest morning  
gulls walk on the lawn  
like nuns together  
slow airy breviary

the way we seem  
is the only way we are

12 June 2003

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