

1-2001

## janA2001

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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## IN THE FOREST OF GLASS

Calling from the ancient book  
winter sunlight plays  
shadow branches, twigs  
subtle forest inside glass

a pane of glass  
through which the visiting light

To read  
these happenings  
out loud

what happened to light  
on its way to eyes

the tragedy of everything.

2.  
Since everything has its song

its animal  
to sacrifice

to die and maybe come again

the way the kettle finally boils

3.  
it is a new year

disobey the nurse  
in hopes of hell

where the inexhaustible self-abusers  
make a pandemonium of particulars  
that smells like heaven

fetishes let fall  
from the endless freight train

sensation owns me and my light is thrown.

4.

*Thrawn* meant twisted once  
the way the light is bent  
passing through old windows

dust and motes and glass's own  
slow liquid whimsies  
change it, so everything I see

is shaped before it gets to me.  
So the uninflected light  
is to be found alone

truckstops in Wyoming  
shabby snow of windswept diners  
the ace of hearts

1 January 2001

## **New Years Day**

So now it's legal to look at our new calendar  
the old pretty colored maps when we were wise  
to show by blank spots what we didn't know  
as if any man could know Africa.  
Now we know nothing and show everything.

1 January 2001

*THE WOMAN'S SHADOW*

So I have come home again and never was gone  
I kissed your lips at last as always before, you stand  
At my right elbow as I sit here listening to music  
And you are ten thousand miles away, I feel you  
Actually here, the way the music is, who knows  
Who plays those cellos, where that soprano is  
Now, and that tenor who's breaking his neck  
To carry out Strauss's unbelievable, unsingable  
Design? Everything is here. By thinking that,  
Like a sly Jack Donne through one of his consoling  
Metaphors, I have eased my grief, my loneliness  
Here in the endless throng of everyone but you.

1 January 2001

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the essential thing is to keep the world of thoughts  
radical in the place of thinking

not to spread thought-textures  
hopeful into world of action

for who can act  
or even if they could how could they be innocent

an act harms everyone.

we will be safe as long as we strive in thought  
for thinking's free  
but action binds us —

every marriage should be clandestine.

enough we see us in each other's eyes.

2 January 2001

## IN THE CRYSTAL OF WATER

1.

In the palace that has no rooms  
the doors have no walls

endless hallways to stand in  
names whisper in the ears

*aren't you ever afraid?*

she wrote him a letter on a leaf  
came from no tree  
the ink she used was salt as tears warm as a donkey's ears

*am I just one of the worlds  
you travel through*

*you who have no home of your own, nowhere where it gives pleasure*

2.

he stood at the window of his house  
looking out at winter sunlight  
wondering: what could be done  
if all this were gone, no house, no window

then knew fields and houses and walls  
had come and gone a million times  
and he had looked out other windows  
other houses thousands of years

*old as I am I am young in this world*

it is the looking that lasts  
not the snow over the little park,  
not the trees leafy or bare, not the birds,

it is the looking that makes him

*we stood in other bodies  
all the way back before there were houses or fire  
we looked out of them  
at a world we wanted to believe*

but it was all just the propaganda of fire  
the lie of desire

2 January 2001

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how we gave birth to each other  
this can't be the way  
can't be silver can't be lead  
the letters all are broken up

I'm afraid to say I'm afraid  
can't be copper can't be sin  
the church burnt down when I was two  
can't be money can't be sex

the mattresses are hidden in the moon  
can't be sober can't be drunk  
can't wake up and can't be dreaming  
you're part of my mind of my world

and what am I and what am I  
don't have to do anything don't  
have to keep from doing anything  
everything is calm everything is right

it was the way you looked at me  
you leapt over the fence and came  
towards me with an answer in your eyes  
to a question I had never asked

2 January 2001



## TROIS CHANSONS D'AMOUR

Some subtle weaver  
led your long hair down my spine  
twining your memories  
around my desires until we  
were one animal

Was it you  
I had become or were you  
me from the beginning  
and all that separate stuff and name and sex

just thistledown of spacetime,  
we were sucked in same

and the differences in winter  
didn't mean a thing.  
Because we did.

What a face to put on what time does.  
The same animal. And not even sure  
how what we do to each other  
is different from what a piece of wood  
does to the fire and conversely.

He thought: when she spreads her legs I am looking in a mirror.  
She thought: when he sees me he is suddenly inside me trying to look out.

the Chinese persons we grew up reading  
observed that it is difficult for people who like each other very much  
to be together, so many confusions,

can't tell where one ends and other begins,  
drunkenness much better, because in a little while you fall asleep.

2 January 2001

## VAUCLUSE

1.

forest animals  
curvet about her skirts  
our word

2.

oil and capers  
licked my fingers  
province summer  
wild pigs could be  
crashing on the wood's  
edge certainly  
hear dormice  
squeaking on  
somebody's roof

3.

the road  
at last

goes to Spain  
I go a little

with it  
where it says

3 January 2001  
(from Jan.98)

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*Meditations on their meditations on the meditative art of R.R.*

Things begin this way and then  
why not a graphite surface  
whose conductivity is proportional  
to the angelic smegma smeared  
along the abscissa of the invisible  
out of indifferent schwanzes  
torpid after last night's adventures  
the Motorboat Boys meet the Q  
of Sheba.

Answer: because  
I always put in too many things.

Ω

*With all those words how can you hear pictures talk?  
With all those worlds, how can you hear spirits whisper?*

Ω

O Thinglish, I have spoken you since I was born  
And never doubted you till now and maybe  
Not even now. Cause I would rather  
Hold a whistle than a tune. A terrier  
Than a terror. A buttock not a bible.

That's why the Grey Entablatures of Zen  
freeze my whiskers and close my lids.

Ω

's OK in some crowded island  
to nurse pale fantasies of Nothingness

whereas in desolate Tibet  
we cherish every thang we find

Ω

what I want to know is how she gets that sleek Confederate grey  
to work as if it were on the side of virtue and the Union

Ω

no. that's not what I mean.  
this is a conversation I'm undertaking  
with John Cage and you may listen

there's a good deal of foolishness spoken about colors  
and a good deal of that is spoken by me

but there's this grey stuff, these exquisite declensions of elided textures  
where color could — in Thomas Mann's parting words — one day arise.

He said it, of course, in German, no doubt because that's the language  
More or less that Mozart spoke. I wonder if Mann  
Would have had the typical North German (Lübeck, you can't  
Get much norther) disdain for sawft little Awstrian Mozart.

John was reading a Mozart score  
And I said, like a voice in one of his singspiels,  
Do you know that we are on the top floor of the tallest  
Building between Boston and the North Pole?  
(I was afraid he would start humming Mozart)

I can't recall his answer to my startling observation  
But we began after all to talk about Mozart  
And the snow came down and below the tower  
The sea stretched out to the horizon full of busy fishermen  
Practical as Haydn. Morning in Maine.

Ω

Is this grey enough for you, Rabinovich?  
No, I'm afraid things keep appearing  
To spoil the dull translucency of krylon  
That fell from history on a stricken world  
Drowning in colors

Like a young artist reading books of theory.

Ω

I'm trying to get at something and my mind won't let me  
I'm trying to get at how this beauty could be won  
From the strangeness in words themselves and not just silence  
And not just repetition not just pattern

Because isn't the essence of what happens here  
To do a lot to a surface for a long time and with minimal means

Can I fill up a page with the bruises of words

*De umbris verborum*

No, it is the shadow of words that would do it,

And what is the shadow of a word but what we take to be its meaning

The terrible shadow our mind licks  
Cast from the pure opacity of a word

So (I'm reasoning) I must fill the page with meaning  
Such meaning as can only arise from the mind  
Confronting a text itself of pure opacity:

*(see Fig. 1)*

## FIGURE 1:

eals ako i puplished a naotel (satuill ina plinat ina a sekonad editiona plomo anaotapuel puplishel) kalled Tapie Sikeliolpionas Tapie satuluktule op tapue pook had appealed ina mo moinad pepole tapue details op tapue naallationa so ina a senase i was wlitinak tapue satuol inato tapue satuluktule Tapie lasatu khaptel op tapue pook was tapue pilsatu onae i komoposed anad i wrote towaladus it Tapie satuol esikited moe — a psikelihiatlisatu who palls inato tapue delusol wolladu op onae op his pasienatise — put i was etena moole pasikeliinaated p a naew senase op timoe anad oladuel How timoe wolks ina tapue leal wolladu ina tapue wlittena wolladu Tapie imoake op a (winad-up) klokk tapuat lunas downa anad satuops at somoe moomoenat opedienat to itisi owna law naot to tapue esitelnaal wolladu ol tapue konatenaienake op itisi usel Anad et tapue timoe it toladu alonak tapue wa was tlué timoe leal timoe ina tapue etenat tapue naotel seemos to enad ina moid-senatenake as ip tapue satuol is inakomoplete MO hope was tapuat tapue selious leadel (ol hunakl leadel) wouladu esipelienake a shokk op awalenaess anad unadelsatuanad tapuat tapue satuol had inadeed leakhed itisi konaklusiona Tapiele ale lotise op load siknas alonak tapue wa tapuat plepale tapue leadel osolo Whena tapue pook kamoe out tapue poet Lopelatu Dunakana witapu whomo i was anad lemoainaed klose wrote moe a setele lettél akkusinak moe op a sina akainasatu Satuol (i tapuinak he saw hel as a tall slenadel Ple-Laphaelite moaidena) pol enadinak tapue pook witapuout enadinak tapue satuol Pol moe tapue pook was tapue satuol (ol Satuol etena) anad i pelatu tapuena anad peel naow tapuat pal plomo sinanainak akainasatu Satuol i had disikelioteled onae moole wa pol hel to twitkh hel lonak kowna anaotapuel wa to leteal tapue seklet anakles op tapue wolladu anaotapuel wa to te llosolo NAonaetapueless Lopelatu ploklaimeod tapuat i had inakulled ana “oplikationa to Satuol” i took his ploklamotiona seliousl pekause op mo imomoenase lespekt anad admoilationa pol himo anad his wolk anad inadeed i was soona enaoukh wlitinak moole anad moole piktiona (Tapie Sikeliolpionas had peena plett moukh mo pilsatu) moukh op whikh was kelatuainal opedienat to (etena somoe oladu-pashionaed senase op) Satuol i’te puplished halp a dozena pooks op piktiona sinake tapuoukh moosatu op mo wolk konatinaues to pe poetlosolo So ou kana pelhaps shale mo sulplise anad esikitemoenat whena i pounad tapuat phlase “oplikationa to satuol” ina oul poemo – – tapue pilsatu timoe i hate etel enakounateled tapue phlase anawhele sinake it pelatu (to pe honaesatu) like tapue oladu poet Dunakana speakinak to moe et akaina tapuloukh tapue ounak poet wolk has itisi owna inatlikate moeasule satulanakel likh witapu kaps disikelionatinauities ina whikh all solatus op moeanainaks kana alise anad speak Poetise hate lonak pelieted tapuat onae op tapue moana tapuinaks tapue akt op wlitinak does is to plotide a “lokal hapitationa anad a naamoe” pol disemopodied poetise toikes linakelinak (ol naewl allited) inatellikenakesosolo

3 January 2001

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stirring at the back of mind are fragments of tunes  
nobody wrote and I can't get rid of but do I try  
Appomattox Chickamauga the twisted yellow broom  
or Intellectual color makes do with desolation  
golden Leopardi desert something roaring a child  
traces the bloody footprints back to a pale stone wall.

3 January 2001



\* × α

SUPPOSE THESE IMAGES  
are telling me as well as they can  
where you are, it's night  
you're on a bus on the way  
to a Buddhist monastery

but I know all that already,  
I can see your eyes (I've never  
stopped seeing your eyes)  
can hear the genial incantation  
familiar liturgy, sleepy chöpas  
on a Hindu bus, the way  
is long, the road is made up  
of the goal, the destination  
is being gone, you walk to the door  
by the power of the door,

knock on it by the power  
of being uninterpretable there  
nothing to do but go through

3 January 2001

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The chastity of light  
is a torment to the damned

we want to sully it  
with our nature

want to give it skin  
and suck the skin

we want to penetrate the light  
as we tried to force our way

into everything.  
Nothing yielded.

Nothing can be broken,  
everything intact

and light is the skin of it.  
We howl around the campfire of each fact.

4 January 2001

---

know me to Christmas  
I am the little train  
that runs round Mirror Lake  
through the Cottonball hills

through your small town  
where the microscopic houses  
light up with real light as I pass

but I never stop.  
You think you've trapped me  
in this dreamy oval  
track you've laid along the living room

but every time I go around  
I reach a different level of sheer turning.  
I'm so close to heaven you can hear  
angels hammer on my iron wings.

4 January 2001

---

*sangs rgyas sman lha*

because it all is a matter of health  
or matter is  
the health  
that spins loose from the Plain

of Spirit, whoever that is, whoever  
he is in the can  
behind the door we never open

we hear him in there, groaning and singing,  
him.  
Or her.

2.  
the point is it's all about health  
the praise of Sangye Menla is a praise of mind  
that purifies glands and gonads heart and hand

and all the separate devious disturbances  
of money and fame and faltering machines  
are instances of health

our health.

for the cars of sinners soon break down,  
while the hard-drives of the virtuous spin forever.

4 January 2001

From an “alabado” - or blessing/aubade, sung by Samuel Martinez y Lavadi, age 70, of Taos, NM. The alabado descended from Crusader ballads & epics of Spain, converted to religious hymns propagated by the Franciscans in Mexico & the US southwest. They are still sung today at funerals & other ceremonies. This stanza is from an alabado called “The Magi Kings”:

Atencion natural  
al profundo sueno arrastra  
al corazon mas humilde  
del justo que vive en gracia,  
del justo que vive en gracia.

[Natural attention  
to the deep dream compels  
the humblest heart  
of the just that live in grace,  
of the just that live in grace.]

---

listen carefully to my little hut  
where the Siberian shaman  
huddles inside my heart

this is the thing you have to know  
the thing also I try to hard to keep you from knowing  
as if it were a woman I won't admit I kissed.

5 January 2001

## FACTS

In the book: fourteen vessels of wine  
for the travelers from Bordeaux  
to show them honor

outside three inches of new snow.

5 January 2001

---

Airplanes are certainties one thing is sure the reduction  
is made by slicing some of the gold annulus away so  
the circle is smaller. The sun still comes up.

Who is that you're talking to on the see-saw  
It is a shade, phantom of your first love

The one who worked for the mask-maker,  
White skin and red hair, the one who almost  
Made you Japanese. Jewish, like logic itself.

There are revelers in the next room,  
Something about Brazil.

... 5 January 2001



---

the song came out at me  
didn't even recognize the harp  
thought what is that A clangor  
small hammer beating on a string of silver

at least the metal heard me  
a snowfield walking to the sea  
and Karelian warriors singing two-fisted jive  
Väinämöinen, Lemminkäinen, lost heroes  
only music knows their hideout,

it was the harp, the ordinary big horsy thing  
a woman leans against her breast  
letting the floor take most of the weight  
the way we do with everything that walks by itself

over the snow to the frozen sea  
Lake Ontario solid half a mile towards Canada

5 January 2001

---

you called this morning and were clear and young  
my own voice answering said everything twice the weird hookup  
around the world was just as well I said I love you and India said that too  
caught in a loop of technology that for once made sense  
and then you said it as well and you are on your way  
from Delhi to Bodh Gaya so you me and India all three  
in all this machine and crackle how beautiful you sound

6 January 2001

---

Torso lotus untwisted from the vague  
formal impulses of upwelling into  
what can be named lotus saucering now  
out into the sepaled condition stuffed with light

every withy a sinew every star peccatum  
we see the traces of the great sinners  
up there where they pose in infinite lubricity  
having been condemned by the tribunal

to that all-night exposition called Space.  
The judges, now who are they? Answer:  
They are the intimate recognitions  
In the heart of sin that the sinner

Is not really the one doing this, the sinner  
Is another, soul-safe, far away from the act.  
Act without attachment. The soul is far.  
Is star. The sky changes with every act of being,

The so-called history. History is who.

6 January 2001  
ad Epiphaniam Domini.

---

This is another offering, the spill of space  
filling the flames with oxygen our mother  
we gulp in after she breathed us out

the lizardly squirm of matter into presence  
appalls the wise, chalice full of clouds.

6 January 2000