

11-1994

novD1994

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novD1994" (1994). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1243.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1243

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.

These instruments I carried with me:
a lake full of ducks, a lion
looking in at the window—

and another lake, they told me it was full of milk
and made me remember
what it was like to be there

in a pearly timelessness that suddenly
turned into time
and I was here

here where their words can reach me,
where language rules
the wordless images and lights of mind.

26 November 1994

Be careful— this is a day.
In the dream, she looked at my hand
the pores' reticulations and
aren't you worried? This is allantoin
shine

she said (shine like something Greek
in something sky, an ancient slippery meaning
turned into a god)

a star-cluster
divvying up the dark
and telling, always telling

this same scary story. Aren't you worried?
Isn't it cancer? It is skin, I thought,
human, mine — and that means trouble enough
already. It feels for me, it writes
in delicate contours of confusion
the fragile mapwork of my life.
Unreadable. Unrememberable. There.
All I am is where it's been.

She let go of my hand then,
interested in alternative pathologies
and left me to go on sleeping.
And now it's morning
and I'm free to analyze
what I please,
my gold wedding ring or its finger,
the tautnesses and puffinesses of hands,
the veiny alphabet that plays blue below my skin,
all this language, really
sleep ought to be a refuge from such grammar!

27 November 1994

This is supposed to be in a box

This is also you

These are the authentic instances of what we need and then
some more to bother us with painful Verities, o lady of slim
solutions violently understood.

27 November 1994

The insupportable magnitude, a newspaper
flapping by, all these informations laid
arrogant against a feather, and a feather
weighs them down, a feather clanks the scale-pan
hard on the sandstone floor. Millennia pass
and I have come to you again, a notch
between Overlook and the next one north,
the wind comes down it hard all year long
and tonight the first real snow, the sleet of it now
hissing through the rhododendrons, listen to it,
hissing of the wind out of a crack in the texture,
womb-word, delphic spin. I think all that
happened is this: for a long time I wasn't born
then I was born in the space world: rivers,
mountains, plains. The shape of all this
is what I mean by thinking. My mind is only notice
and notices this. A wind down the rock.
Dark water birds scooping down into sunset.

27 November 1994

APPALOOSAS

all the way,
I am an ignorant apostle,
all those horses hurrying into the vaguest prairie,
yellow-weed and stock-salt,

so many word I don't know the things of,
so many vice versas,
the tiny intersection
of named things I know,

sliver of the real.
I would be a horseman of identities,
naming fiercely with the word I art.

2.
But that is I art, selfsay, glib as Camel smoke
drifts across A,
say, or any saloon you choose
to sweat yourself
pale with desire in,
mahogany bar as big as the horizon.

3.
I would be a horseman of the nameless steppe,
coughing, and the horse coughs too, in woe wind,
word-wind,
past the bauxite mines of Bel Phrati,
the uraeus foundry at the mountains past Rivery
where naked men and women of my tribe
beat the Nile with saplings, and despair.

27 November 1994

WAITING FOR THE REPAIR MAN

for Charlotte

Snow and freezing rain and rain and now *es nieselt*
over ordinary space, this magpie place of ours
with spoons and fortresses. Now and again I wake up
wanting to bring you some good news, nothing abstruse,
not history except as cheese is, something
that takes Time and includes it in itself
and nurtures us. Maybe it's nothing more than breakfast,
choices of juices, or a city has endured a siege,
or skunk tracks (little fingers) make for the woodchuck's
hole next door in snow. The snow. The occupations
of ordinary space, the who and what and where
but never why. Pointless as a rose,
actions endure our scrutiny. Easy does it,
the squirrel finds some food, the snow celebrates
its temporary ewigkeit of sanctity, eternity,
cars go to work and leave me not much to tell you.

28 November 1994

for Charlotte

**There is a glory one under
stands, there is a captain
whose little ship is
always ready to depart,**

**I love you,
it is winter,
the impossible roses
are ready to fall**

**and an empty glass
holds all we need
of light—
margins, margins.**

28 November 1994

And now one moon has entered the earth
playing that singular banjo she is
all the way down

you and I have heard such plucked
cloud cover, the stream large today from snow melt,
warm sun around, trust me with the weather,

the moon (I was saying) is silent down there—
one says: a month has passed,
another one ready to end, really, there's something French
about it, so orderly, fluent, prejudiced
they fall, one after other out of our sacred bedroom this.

29 November 1994

TWO MONTHS

1

Resisting the same war as before. Item:
resistance is always in fashion. What is more:
resistance makes the father riper, the mother more.

So by spectacular actions (“diseases,” the man said)
the republic knows itself anew:

an act is glass.

Everybody who does anything
at all we admire. Therefore we behold
with mild delight the celebrated faces on TV,
content to gaze on ourselves so reflected.

The body is a leather mirror.

(28 October 1994)

2

And now one moon has sunk into the earth
playing that singular banjo she is
all the way down

You and I have heard such plucked
cloud,

the stream large today from snow melt,
mercy, warm sun, trust me with your weather,

the moon (I was saying) is silent down there
safe in all the entrances,

we say” a month has passed, another’s
ready to go down,
 really, there’s something French
about it, so orderly, fluent, prejudiced
they fall
 one after another out of our sacred bedroom,
this.

29 November 1994

HYMN TO PERSEPHONE

Scratching the old itch, the one
the sheriff's posse took away, the one
with horse hooves and salt on its tonsils,
the one with sand,

we have come hard
into the valley of the city. The comfortable
despairs of learned men are our loveseats,
no fear, fear is born of desire, no lust,
lust is born of stars, the stars burnt up,
we will do it again till we get it right.
Heather. Sprawled over the delve, dew-drenched,
little river with such murky swans,
ferns. The smiling mosses. End of her year,
Persephone, here in this glamorously dismal place,
the moors of mind. Where everything that ever grew
knew its name and kept me for its servant

to write its horses down. Keep track of pains.
From the extracted wisdom teeth a green light glows,
no, more pearly, no, more winter evening aqua
like an early evening star without the star.
From the amputated limb a sort of song.

Sings of omission. Valleys, waters, heather, heath.
Swans, buds, beds, beads. Box, beaks. Books.
Aga agate nobody's daughter. Smile at me,
rivulets, you run free from a pain we share.
No pain, pain is born of pleasure and I please you not
except I would, I would be wonderful in this place,
scratch your least itch, world, my tongue

delicate, not very wet, behind your warm ear.

Picked out in throne work as thin as
made me easy her name
made honest as we, paltry, helped to make either,
what bother, gentiles of mountain, who

is bothering me now?

Sunrise as the surface of her body.

Fine faltering dry needles of the fern fall
loose as scratches on the table under red roses,
your birthday body, Paris, your charming buttes up there
where the senators admired artificial mountains
thousands of years later.

It goes well, sister.

God made water, only water. Who else would think of it?

30 November 1994

THE CLASSIC OF CHANGES, 1

The extraordinary clamor the heart makes
when it wants something bigger than its valves
and then it's Wednesday (the god is hanging
peaceful on the tree of his experience, hung there
by his own will, the knot of his red silk tie
from Turnbull & Asser knotted by his own hand,
a middle god between the vast lucency of mind
and these low habits disguised as my skin).

Heart? What a strange word for what we want.
The Superior Person ever in his actions conceives
hardly any abstract pattern to his deed. He does
because the doing fits. And then the slim canoe
plies down the squared-off water mile of Alu Waia
past which les jeunes do baseball in January.
It is all gold. It all is gold. The Superior
Person writes his name on the wall, using shapes
of the shadows of the yew trees outside
tossed in by a winter sun not long for this world.
The Superior Person agitates for a share of the copper
mines so he can offer the smelted ruddy stuff

to some local and neglected deities. God again,
they will keep coming in, they did not make the world
but seem to be more at home in it than we. But we move.
And meantime metal matters. The milk you pour
directly on the crumb of earth, and after many years
you teach it how to speak. Earth infant comes to terms.
This is for certain.

Language is milk.

The Superior Person performs ceaseless benefactions.
(Actions you see and do not notice.) Not even birds
do. Or the weather. Or it is that whitish language
Berlioz heard among the dead and copied down,
strong syllable, few clusters, like a guttural
and influent Hawaiian. They made him translate it

into French so the living could chant it.. The Superior Person translates nothing. Things are just as they are, beyond hope and despair. He is not even listening.

30 November 1994