

4-1993

**aprB1993**

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprB1993" (1993). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1262.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/1262](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1262)

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](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

## NOW THE DAY FINISHES ITSELF

Fish are born in the quick Metambesen  
men mourn for things they never loved.

There is a mystery in being certain  
even though we failed to see the first woodchuck today  
as I had promised  
reasoning from Sun.

Like any Apollonian. Late to class  
for forty years I own  
the other moiety as mine,

the chaste Irish drunkards are the real Apollos  
and the businessmen skiing at Aspen  
each on his own expensive set of slats.

While the Dionysians slump against the wall  
feeling the grateful pressure on their hips  
of ordinary gravity this lonely earth.  
I don't belong to anyone.

8 April 1993

## EARTH WEEK

I knew an Earth Day once the festival  
gave kids one more chance to twitch  
as usual beneath a blur of sound  
scared the snakes in their secret caverns  
you could hear it across the river and the birds  
fled down the noisy sky.

Is this what you mean?

And men talked, the older the more so,  
old words and lots of them, ideas, opinions,  
so many answers and not a single innocent question,  
talked and told and lied

and then more music came,

is this what you mean?

and sad middle-aged hippie women

sold mass-produced handicrafts from stalls,

is this what you mean, a ceremony

to make us feel good about our habits

by pretending they are somehow good for earth?

How can the earth take pleasure  
from what drives the crows in panic  
and makes all the deer run away,

is this what you mean, to bruise the earth again,

with one more local bosnia,

pollute the silence of the actual,

bruise the order of animals and celebrate

one more loud unconsciousness?

Listen, if it scares the snakes it hurts the earth.

9 April 1993  
Good Friday

## SOLITAIRE

the bad cards the boys  
playing cards on Holy  
Saturday blue-violet  
veils on all the statues  
the grief that no one admits

we were born with  
it, it will never  
be less than ourselves

a few of them believe  
that there is nothing  
and we can find it

that there is no one there  
and calls their names

They hear the sound  
far off they are patient  
they let the cards  
fall through their hands.

10 April 1993

## EASTER BORNING

Fates  
of being new,

to be born in an empty world?  
and who is speaking?

the sky. Have it begin with the sky.  
Where they come from. Here they are.  
Again. The travellers who are us  
after we forget. From life to life  
imperilled by meaning.

11 April 1993

---

*for Charlotte*

There is a measure  
a meadow  
waiting for my false and true actions  
pleated like a white skirt of a woman  
scrambling down warm rocks above the Cornish sea

and all actions are folded so  
*pli selon pli*  
and sometimes the first intention  
sticks right to the face of the last result

like blackberries  
you have eaten and long forgotten  
but the soft skin beneath your lip remembers

Something kisses me  
the Bull strides along the sky the hero  
falters and sleeps and dreams of an anguished ceremony  
by which he became a man

but he is not a man

a heap of stones  
piled up in the sun a word  
or name that men repeat

something in the mouth  
not much more taste than wind

And all actions are folded  
no way to finger them apart

the pleating of consequences

does not have a natural end

Something kisses me  
and the sunlight  
sways like a pleated skirt over the sea,

we see through the cloth of things to the contours of  
the sacred body of reality  
shows through like muscles through thin muslin

only if you know the original  
do you know what the shadow means.

12 April 1993

---

Quarry of the day. At bay.  
Being good to people.  
As if a word had something to say.  
The forest. People who are green

the way it shines when they come  
out of the woods. At night they seem

and all day long it seems enough to look,  
touch is that membrane you think

unites you but I do not touch.  
I am not sure. A day  
is something bright and hard and arrogant  
but never sure. People

who are green. Being good to them  
as they move away to where they are.  
Kissing their shadows  
would be a new idea,

maybe a valuable mistake.

13 April 1993



---

It doesn't get easier to say the simplest things  
but it gets briefer. It doesn't get truer  
but it gets more obvious. Eventually  
the thing is before you, or even me, like a cup  
with something in it. This is the moment,  
to decide. There is drinking to do. Isn't there.

13 April 1993

THALES, 4

*for Charlotte*

To be at the edge of things where the members  
of the oldest club leap and amuse themselves in the foam  
constantly evolving to the Sunlight state and constantly  
falling back into the airy measures of the dark—

*moi*, I can't breathe in all this light— bask like a shark  
shimmer like the whole broad sea  
unconfused by whitecaps, *moutons de la mer*

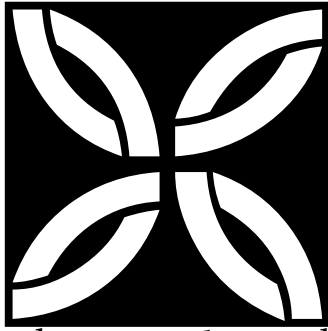
water is caltrop it gets you wet no matter how you hold it  
it sticks to you it changes color it makes dull things shine  
makes old men's hair come young again

and how the pebbles look when the spring freshet  
gushes down the dirt road by the sewage treatment plant  
and every granite's jasper and every jasper is a ruby

what I'm saying is Water is a network  
meant to catch us  
it folds us in Aeschylean meshes  
and we are lost

lost in the rhetoric of being loose, lost in liberty.

13 April 1993



There are persons near this Celtic feeling

who remember without a hint of bleakness  
the powerful sunsurge on the Severn.

From which she came  
mounting the shingle with a swing of green

as if the orient had recalled itself incense by incense  
in the swing of her pale hips inside the afternoon

bearing testimony: from the river: those who stay  
and those who merely remember.

13 April 1993

---

*for Charlotte*

A call like threshing you say  
from unseen  
flat along water  
among marshes low tide  
bird hidden or hiding  
in scrub shallows brown  
spiky uprisings

among the names a simple

and later see them ducks or ducklike  
waiting in the far  
what the quick wind  
scours  
    shadow under weeds that are not weeds.

13 April 1993

---

Set the calendar in motion.  
Divide the sea. There is no storage there  
and everything in use. What we disremember  
is Osiris there  
and regulates the hymnody of thought  
whereby ideas and images  
arise as the mind.  
What we call the mind, this Africa.

14 April 1993

---

What the young poet will wear  
will be hair, what the older  
poet will put on  
will be opinion.

It doesn't do any good, they see  
right through us to the glee  
inside, the faun-foot unpersoned amorality  
delighting in the thing of things  
and fiercely hiding.

15 April 1993

---

Virtues of a broken thing  
a taste of burn  
morning in the not yet rain  
translate from the Pali  
*everything we speak of is imperfect*  
*& all imperfect things are marked by suffering*

scraping the burnt toast  
I retreat fifty years to the kitchen in Gerritsen Beach  
the house is empty  
my mother is dead

for half a century the same  
sea gulls have wheeled silently above this house

whose address is lost in misery and history and light.

15 April 1993

---

The beginning says Rabies the end says Rage  
these words are related like Yewtree and If  
across the separations we endow with water

this is a staircase leading to the static  
I listened to all night from Cinicinatti  
thinking it godly on the warm brown radio

when a high mass from Boston answered the night  
reasoning It is Christmas the life around us  
congests with literal-mindedness

and all these people we see hurrying in the street  
rain or no rain are in fact sinister  
translators searching for some primal certainty

they can market as an Equivalent *ohime* there are no  
equals signs built into this svelte cosmos  
no room for indentities in this joyous vast.

*answering the quick thought of Lee Ann Brown, hello* 15 April 1993.



H E D E R A

*for Charlotte*

What is written as stone  
tells only the story we imagine  
whenever any word is read,

is red or green with age, the cutmarks  
of the mason's chisel fresh  
forever after, a word

can't lose the cut that keeps it from all others  
so we read it stone by stone  
this pier this transept

carrying the bulk's weight  
over the equal-minded planet  
up towards a pale sky. Martyrs

remember what it means to bend  
offhand and pluck a flower  
while the mind is busy with God or such

and men are watching  
poised for the kill.  
As this tiny blue ground-ivy

with the intense pungent smell  
today by the old brick wall  
of the movie theatre

blue against red and the light  
fading. Why have I plagued you  
with description, you who are stars

notched in the blue gloom of my mind  
and ardent, lucid, forever?  
Is talk worth so much?

Was I even listening?  
I imagine the Parisian inscription  
you read to me from H.D.

and her words fade  
into my memories of the place  
jostling with Japanese tourists

cameras flashing at the consecration  
some old French priest keeps  
kissing the consonants of praise

while the bazaar shivarees around him  
under the arcane inscriptions  
we never will condescend to understand.

Not far from there you sat on the rim of a fountain.

15 April 1993