

6-1992

junA1992

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "junA1992" (1992). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 1306.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/1306](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1306)

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).

A few nights ago  
out of silence  
came a small scream

just one  
an animal in the act  
of being killed

a squirrel in the talons  
of an owl would  
say such a word

that size  
that terror  
then silence as usual.

1 June 1992 KTC

Back in the world  
I travel

behind a big truck  
whose flapping mudflaps say

**BODY KING**

Latham

NY

I think I'll start a magazine called *Feeling*.

1 June 1992 KTC/WF

---

Cool and rain and grim at two p.m.  
it looks like snow  
the bleak  
feeling of a parking lot a winter evening  
waiting for my father Sunday night in '42  
the quiet endlessness of things  
and that the world is very big.

1 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*

# LUMBER AND THE BUILDING TRADES

*for Charlotte*

We take the tree apart  
and live in it

material our mother wood  
wit word

in Tibet they kept the Dharma pure  
because they had no trees  
nothing to build with but reality

— which is one of the ninety nine accurate translations of  
<sup>1</sup>*chos*, the Dharma that benefits everything that lives.

2.

We put pieces of wood together  
we still live in trees,  
monkey see and monkey do and vinyl siding

Hard to forgive a building  
    for needing to be built  
for not growing like a leaf  
    out of the invisible tree of Art & Skill  
or growing like a bird  
    or are we the white and shell of

turning our live energies to its stability,

*srog-shing*  
life-tree  
house-wood  
our vital tree

---

<sup>1</sup>Pronounced *chö*.

of heaven  
Osiris backbone  
in us  
our spine spine  
of an image

this life holds upright before us  
diaphane  
safe in the empty air.

1 June 1992 KTC

## WHAT IT MEANS

First sliver of the new moon  
up in pale dark  
over pink fleshy softness  
over mountain

frog calling from the pond  
and other answering.

2 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*

---

*for Charlotte*

Box turtle heading for the pond  
turtle sounds like *tö trel*,  
the "uncontrived" of mind

he walks by unconcerned  
but veers a little to the east

Lots of burdock to be rooted up  
the sun is out  
mud drying

Footprint of a fox.

3 June 1992



---

Admire the obvious  
while it lasts.

3 June 1992 KTC

---

It isn't anything like that  
It isn't anything like that.  
It isn't anything like anything.  
It isn't anything.  
It isn't it.  
It isn't.  
It.

(Asleep with open eyes)

3 June 1992 KTC

---

*for Charlotte*

A wrist worn  
with such offering

as might carry  
in a golden ear

messages of I mean me

by touching this alien  
breast I find myself

4 June 1992

## GEOGRAPHY

The point is  
my country is you.

5 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>A country yes, and the Queen thereof. But not yet have I seen, bright wavering in the clear wind over Buzzards Bay, clear colored in dawn light, your actual Flag. Though I have seen and loved the paraph with which you signed all your letters, the ones that trudged their way in the wallowing *Alert II* across those same waters.

---

*for Charlotte*

When I thought to make an offering  
the truth that came to mind  
was the whole stretch of the sea  
between your island and New Bedford  
and the wind coming in hard,  
your soft lips close to my ear  
admitting *j'ai froid* and I ducked  
back down into the cabin for your coat  
and came back into that wild sunlight  
to huddle you and far off to the west  
a rock with what seemed to me two seals  
grey and dry above the wave beat  
though it seemed to you seal-less, that rock,  
and it and the whole sea stamped with  
sunlight horizon to horizon one  
golden disk lifted up past the cloudless blue.

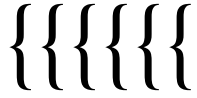
5 June 1992

---

*for Charlotte*

Below the purple flowers of the rhododendron —  
each one a mass of perfect  
five petalled trumpets pink to mauve to shadow-of-red —  
a purple finch is fossicking  
among the seeds.  
I see his head move  
quick among the flowers.

6 June 1992



Curly brackets of early flowers  
out to visit the world  
just at dawn

after the *tho.rangs*,  
before the waltzes.  
I woke as late as light.

6 June 1992

---

Ink  
is administration.  
Ink is politeness.  
Watch the river  
before it goes.

6 June 1992



After all the shakes and spaces and squirrels  
the car still goes the clock  
still jives the words  
keep getting old.

And even these  
I can warm inside my hands,

the left one a sweet duvet-cushy bed  
and the right an Abishag  
the Shunamite warming

language with the hips of my hands.

6 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*

---

I've seen two cats today  
a mile apart  
each one had a little rat in its mouth

and just as I was trying to explain this to myself  
without thinking about Signs  
just in terms of two days rain  
flooded burrows and slick silent grass  
I heard a cat-bird chirking at me  
from a tall old white pine

and there was nowhere to flee from meaning.  
And not much meaning.

6 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*

## THE MANY

The many  
things the many  
decidings  
the touch  
decoded through the trees

the union  
of our properties the sense  
to need each other and to tell

what we tell.  
The disaster  
comes slower  
to the country  
where stars are clearer

this mercy  
is compatible with mind  
I worry  
at the escapade  
of molecules

leave the subject  
out of all those sentences  
leaving the action alone:

pure school  
of doingness

the act  
stripped bare

the single miracle  
that has to be true.

6 June 1992

NEWS FROM THE NEAREST EAST

Identify the year.

Elect the next vector of dismay.

Pick his — always his — name out of a hat —

Shamir took his alias

from Michael Connolly

a respectable Revolutionary

not overfond of blood.

Heal me,  
the sky is going.

By now a mind  
has something to say to all the recent dead

whose irredentist thoughts  
become our mind

(as if the father that a lot  
to say finally to the son,

that infix, that afterthought.

6 June 1992

---

Have I touched it yet  
that place in the quick of my will  
where the future's stored

I would feel it  
almost like pain almost like rain  
beating in the window on an English night

and in the morning  
waking wary  
completely unknowing alone with the crows.

6 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*

---

*for Charlotte*

It might be and it might be  
measure of a lawn  
day after rain the warm  
night coming

Am I a pirate so  
to sail the weather  
greedy  
to rip the bodice of the sea  
and bare all her restless monuments

the breasts of light?  
I am a man in a small town only,  
kings and sons of kings hurry under the hedge.

6 June 1992

---

Can I catch this  
the coin of no one

your profile  
clear embossed  
on it, the one  
pays all my doubts

I was born on the skirts of a glacier  
I was forgotten under the mulberry tree from Japan  
the branches smelled of war and the  
house smelled of coffee and the clock ticked

People file in to meet the dying priest  
I wasn't born yesterday I was born tomorrow  
my feet in fat little brown leather shoes  
propped up on the whiffletree of a  
wagon carrying cauliflowers at noontime

and I sing nervously with a glance over my  
shoulder at the sea like an Irish god.

6 June 1992  
*for Charlotte*