

7-1992

JulB1992

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "JulB1992" (1992). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1300.
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for Charlotte

Going nowhere but to be
I find this ivory reminder
a chesspiece made of cloud
beat this dog all ownership
is a dish of tainted food.
This canoe repels the sea.

This travels. From Schaffhausen
where the Rhine resumes in spray
to the mud cliffs of Norfolk one
molecule of water turns
the whole sea blue. Do you
know the last invader,

pale one, the promised person,
it is heavy to walk up this hill.
Wait for me in glory the game
calls us singing with incense
hand on my hip morning-drunk
everything possible ocean of mountains

we go four thousand miles to sleep.

18 July 1992

[ANOTHER PRECEPT FROM THE LOST]

To use the simplest punctuation
and keep watch.

18 July 1992

There were terebinths
and through the window
desert atmospheres sifted in

and there were terebinths
against the blue and Miriam
doubted her lap doubted her arms

and the terebinths spread
dry shadows on the sleeping goats
the bitterness of bark

the terebinths hold up
the lost sweetness of dried roots
catch the air at the back of the throat

terebinth the pungency the pain
of feeling you were born
in the wrong place wrong time

and there are terebinths
you smell on the hot wind
scatters the pages of your book

terebinths and a feather
terebinths and the skull of an ox
terebinths and a dream of water.

19 July 1992
for Charlotte

