

10-2011

octA2011

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, "octA2011" (2011). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 69.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/69](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/69)

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).

## OCTOBER HORSE

Often October. The given  
gives in its turn. Blood  
from the slaughtered horse  
sprinkled fertility ah  
the virgins. The gulls above  
create the sea, Easily  
we remember what is to  
come. November,

The lost returns. The churn  
that made the earth solid  
still plunges in our milk.  
Mind. I keep happening. God

happens to you too. A way  
of being in contingency

aloft. It all follows  
rigorously, proves the sea.  
The death of one thing  
is the life of another, weary  
are we ever of such truth

But am I even listening  
to you. There are needs  
I dare not feed so busy  
am I feeding them.

No fall of a gull will ever abolish the horizon.

It is given. It gives me to you.

1 October 2011

## THE ENEMY

Remember Sir Garlon in Malory,  
the knight who rides and smites  
invisible? Well, he afflicts me.  
I move and every few steps  
he strikes me on elbow or knee,  
no vambrace shields me, he cuts  
at my fingers when I read my mail.  
The doorframe bruises me, the leg  
of any chair is fanged. His horse  
wheezes when I hear my breath.  
And when I wake in the quiet dark  
the softest sounds a house knows  
how to make are surely him at work,  
sharpening his sword at me.

1 October 2011

= = = = =

Let the parson call  
the streets are empty  
we are masks  
through which another speaks

a bell is ominous  
means time our blood  
is dripping out somewhere  
from a cut we never felt

or this is feeling,  
this sunshine road  
and trees not a man in sight  
and the immense air.

2 October 2011

=====

In the Year of the World 6015  
when the whole world was at war  
and much rain fell  
a man touched a woman's arm.  
The market tumbled 8% that day,  
sweating football teams contended.  
There was a feeling in his fingers.  
Where does meaning live?

2 October 2011

## **SET THIS PLEASE TO MUSIC**

If you look you'll see  
if you see you'll find  
if you find you'll have  
and what then? Look again.

2 October 2011

= = = = =

A tree set to music  
comes up the stairs

I can't wait for the past  
it dried up long ago  
if it even ever was

one more dream  
only the guilt is left

the guilt is a flight of stairs  
the burden, the long mistake

spreads its terrible silent leaves.

2 October 2011



= = = = =

Feel the fierce hand  
that means no harm.  
Everything is exploration.  
Every person a long unknown.  
Tell me I'm all right.  
Tell me the jogger passing  
isn't really running away.

2 October 2011

= = = = =

A walk is a prowl.  
We go in search  
of something missing  
from this forest  
we will never find.  
But you never know.

2 October 2011

= = = = =

Being sure to have said less  
the painter unspeaks the wall.  
Five thousand years of graffiti  
—those footnotes of the real—  
are hidden now. *I carved  
the name of who I loved  
and who I was who loved her—*  
now only the wall knows.  
Someday Time, who does us  
favors too, will lick the silly  
paint away and show us  
what it always means to be  
us, insecure, baffled even  
by the names we bear, the names  
we pray to hoping someone's there.

3 October 2011

= = = = =

Unhinged cloud

its door

swings open

where would I put

this other life

but then I hear

my own name

someone calling

and this is earth.

3 October 2011

## CHEMIC

I can't have everything but I have everything  
a schoolboy listening to Sibelius, an old  
man listening to Ornette, a girl eating peaches,  
peach gum on my fingers, tall other trees.

Hills of Petaluma. Chapped lips. Tulip tree  
tossing in the wind. The wind. I summon you  
to bear unfeigned witness. God is what  
keeps waking up in you. A kind of rhyme.

Woman on motorcycle. Amarillo. Yellow. East  
against the course of sun. Empire. Mudpuddle.  
Glamorous sunlight poured over uneasy trees.

2.

All that agitation, they're hurrying me along,  
say everything, say everything, get it all in place.

The pillow fight in Canaan, how I sat once  
on the curbstone in Atlantis while the soft  
cloth chariots rolled by and green things sang  
on rails. How sick I was. How libido  
is a mad jar sometimes can't unscrew.

Mahler's China. Blue rain in the Prater.

Love is something can't be made. Hymn  
to God in My Sickness. I can take strength  
only from saying quietly the names of things.

3.

Thinglish my mother tongue! je vous salue!  
 an opal crescent in the dark half-moon tide  
 the muskrats in our pond all gone  
 but the bears are back and foxes many  
 and the Queens of Egypt pose in drenched chlamyses  
 to demonstrate the contours from which we come,  
 the body is absolute geometry. Wave break.  
 In silver almost city light a corner is a precious thing  
 or alphabet of birds—you could spend all day  
 writing down what they fly—dress well and children,  
 a kind of ballgame, there are tealeaves in your hair.

4.

I wanted to be part of myself like a post office  
 part of the geography, look for the cantilever bridge  
 over the mild Delaware the cathedral is coming to visit  
 long-grain rice spills out of Aladdin's attaché case—  
 theft is the ecstasy of law, the cavern is empty,  
 art is fled, leave your heirs the old stuffed crocodile.

5.

I took the mass of ordinary lead **Pb**  
 and set it on a porcelain saucer in my mind.  
 Then in the hour when the crows fly up

concentrated my mild attention on its luster—  
dull peaceful grey. As I was seeing,  
the lead was responding to being seen—  
things do. So it wasn't long before  
it shouldered down and began shrinking,  
its mass moving lustful in upon itself.  
Watching made it go faster, the shrinking  
mass took on a cubic form, denser,  
the plate cracked from the concentration,  
such weight. The cube glowed now, turned red,  
then white, then red again, finally yellow, deep.  
It was small. You can do this too. Pure gold.

4 October 2011

=====

Confabulate against the feelings and  
make poetry that way.  
Natural bilirubin, sexy as a nurse's thigh.  
Your backbone is a cloud. The sky's  
insides. Unpack the air. Mostly nitrogen.  
Carbon Oxygen Hydrogen Nitrogen  
are always pursuing the millennium.  
We are born for each other. Never say we.  
August flowers till October. Not a second left.  
Will I get it done, will anyone?  
Libido is a bell, is bronze, a bronze bell cracked.

5 October 2011



=====

Being friendly with disaster  
 that *wrong star* shone  
 through woods and traces, waiting  
 for a tune—you too—to take  
 you home from out contingency—  
 a sparrow did its song to call it—  
 you hear their counterpoint as squabble—  
 who are the Agreers of the Day?—undaunted  
 you put up with the ordinary light.  
 Hibiscus all blasted by the cold last night,  
 weather loves us and the festival begins.

For I was one of them—an idle eagle  
 till business passed him over us—a trade  
 we follow bringing crystals home—heroic  
 fantasies of contact means connection—  
 an arm just touched unites the soul—  
 as if there more than one! absurd! we share,  
 pale flank acceptance and a world to make.  
 And swans too on my mother's little river,  
 a decent place beside the way to go—  
 everything on dishes except the sea itself—  
 two room apartment on the side near the moon.

6 October 2011

## **NATHLIE (Untitled 11-06)**

An arrow says.

An arrow says: a stick points both ways at once  
even when it points the other way.

An arrow lets music happen to space.

How. How does it do that.

It leaps. The French say: il saut aux yeux.

It leaps to the eyes.

The in eye, the out eye, the other eye,  
the eye that hears music.

So it is a table. A drum. An eardrum.

So it's a table, small, the people around it  
find their knees touching under.

Unseen limb of the other

a table hides.

A single mark on a piece of paper  
is a lock, Look lock.

Open and go in.

The Ancients knew it  
any mark was a seal, a sigil, a way in.

Here there is a hard mark and it opens.

Far away is a wall in a room

and a painting on the wall.

It is a painting of your mother

maybe, or my mother, my poor

mother,

                  a mark is a mother,

a mark is a mother.

...6 October 2011

## BEFORE THE IDES

Calpurnia's cousin warned her first—

we don't need soothsayers we need family.

A pot bubbling on the stove means death's riding by,

moth round the candle means love's in trouble,

a puff of hot wind a mad dog in the shadows.

Be afraid. And then get rid of fear.

A horse is always horrible, birds talk about you

in foreign languages, every night deflowers you.

Wake your husband early, give him your fear,

he'll send it to the garden to play with his own.

7 October 2011

=====

Stay in a place  
and make it  
love you.  
Wouldn't that be best?

7 October 2011