

9-2010

sepH2010

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, "sepH2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 129.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/129](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/129)

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).

= = = = =

The angles of our telling  
rehearse a testament to come.  
It's the way the grammar fits  
on the blackboard, the teacherly elbow  
guiding words into nothingness,  
surprise, a line made sense.  
A circle talks. They sit in themselves.  
All round the subject objects swim  
daring one to take hold of them.  
At most a sentence is a drunken party,  
fisticuffs and pregnancies ensue.  
You who were here before the Bible  
wrote its puzzling news into the moral world  
can remember when a sound was still unbound—  
a bird might make it, or the falling rain  
that woke me at first light before I too  
fell gladly back into a wordless sleep.

27 September 2010

= = = = =

I should have been a sonnet  
but I flinched. Motorcades  
dragged African presidents  
from site to site. The zoo.  
The waterfall. The mosque  
made entirely of glass.  
Culture is all too like grass  
it takes over everywhere unless  
you work to keep it down.  
Children write messages  
on chain drugstore walls  
and every one of them seems  
somehow to be about you.  
That's how you know you're home.

27 September 2010

= = = = =

Some times are mid dales  
a muzzle for the mood  
and winter coming

but in this small

the back remembers dreams—  
lie there and listen to the spine  
today your only clarinet

a leaf

outside your window lets  
raindrops drumbeat on a lower leaf,  
lie there and be music.

28 September 2010

= = = = =

How much is left  
of what I never had.

The river. The green  
heavy walnuts fallen.

Steam on the windows. All  
of this is mine.

Or I am its. Identity  
is a kind of liquid

fills every crevice  
touches every part

of everything. Evaporates.  
But still the rain falls.

28 September 2010

## CAMILLA

More of these to qualify  
long muscles of the lower arm  
little rain I love thee  
that wields the short-sword  
whoever first used love  
as a verb connecting one  
speaking subject with  
a distant unresisting object?  
In that moment was illusion born,  
Palinurus drowned, Aeneas  
waddled up the shore in brazen greaves.  
Uphill, the last decent woman in Europe  
sharpened her spear against him.  
Her horse whinnied in despair  
knowing full well the fates the local  
ravens were chatting about, ravens  
and crows, every morning,  
you still can hear them, telling  
who love whom and at what cost.

28 September 2010

= = = = =

Broken tiles  
reflected in someone's eyes  
the blue of Samarkand  
arrested by rain—  
stalwart tree  
the sun-soaked lawn  
remembering.

29 September 2010

= = = = =

In Sarabande City the traffic's slow  
the men wear veils to keep from seeing girls.  
We are all lost souls looking for hell  
but never finding the way. Heaven wants us.  
Heaven is hungry. We feel our way along,  
what else are bodies for but to find  
whatever's there outside ourselves, *this thing*  
*we did not think* and yet is here.  
The actual. The dance. Or is music too  
the last of our self-deceptions?

29 September 2010



## TRISTAN

I want to know  
what your body knows  
the fall from grace  
into certainty  
is that it, or truth,  
or just being here  
with me utterly  
yourself like a flag  
in the liveliest wind  
never changing  
its colors. I want  
to mean it the way  
your body does.

29 September 2010

**BY THE METAMBESEN**

Let the rain interpret me  
tell me whose birthday  
I chose to be alive  
whose property this is  
falling down to the river  
first deeds written in Dutch  
and why not, English  
is a second language  
for me too, or so the maples  
tell me, those redcoats  
coming through the pines—  
half a century lived here  
and never at home,  
always new, loving place,  
still trying to find my  
way here. That's just personal,  
mask-talk, not the real word  
that comes through us  
despite our language, despite  
experience. A man's no more  
than the fipple of a savage  
flute and knows not ever  
whose fingers stop his tones.

30 September 2010

= = = = =

The hold of the sky  
the *in-between*  
is all we see,  
the being we call blue.  
Almost by accident  
we live here too.

30 September 2010

=====

Caught from the commerce of the air  
a pilgrim manner—  
you have to keep moving to stay still  
quiet mind, every footstep  
brings you home, the woods  
are full of dreamers just like you.

30 September 2010

= = = = =

In the car to the airport  
for the singular departure  
one among so many  
only the rain held your hands.  
Later you look down and watch  
the red emptiness of Arabia  
give way to a sea-colored sea.  
Why am I going, you ask,  
where is there anywhere to go?

30 September 2010

= = = = =

The pilot before the scary ascension  
shows in the vee of his open tunic  
a holy medal on his chest  
pressed against his sallow skin—  
that uniform we can't take off.  
We smile at him because he smiles  
we hope at us. Happy about something.  
Important at take-off to think of nothing.

30 September 2010

## APPROPRIATION OF NO ONE'S OWN

I stole your man of shells,  
Shellycoat, I took the image  
and let go the meaning.

These are the parallel texts—  
fifty years ago Walter Ritter's  
long-torso'd wife  
reaching up to fix something on the wall

fixed an image in the mind.  
Carol was her name. Nobody is called  
that anymore. The shape between  
her lifting and the wall,

the all that was not wall.  
The sickness of memory,  
the beautiful scars.

Fifty years later a beautiful  
woman tells me a Scottish story  
of a voice from the river  
that laughs at midnight,

a voice that leads men astray  
and leaves them benighted,  
lost and cold. In the very  
same place to which memory leads.

30 September 2010