

12-2009

decK2009

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "decK2009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 605.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/605

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.

THE BRUNO PROJECT

Assume

the ads are the real news.

History of my America exclusively
from ads in the Times and the Daily News.

Ignore the things that are happening
and concentrate on the images
meant to construct our identities
as consumers, believers,

citizens

we may find there's no history at all.

27 December 2009

= = = =

Drop in—

a lovely word

(arrive = to reach a river bank

drop in = to come down from heaven)

Praise God for metaphors above all

they can turn stones into bread.

27 December 2009

SNOW

good day for the Lares
the Domovoi
the children
squealing to no school
to consult
the delicate
structures of our liberty
as if this day
will be the only one
at all,
luminous, pallid,
old dust of heaven
making us new
before some somber
afternoon of sunshine comes
to mortify our own
quiet light
into responsibility.
Gods give such journeys
a day is.

2.

But there are no children
on this street,
I stand alone
armed to the teeth,

impaling snowflakes
one by one
a lonesome musketeer
trying to be at home

for the sky is here.
that's what all this means,
a terrible atonement has ensued
and we are rapt
in the original chill of Paradise—

no we, just me
aforesaid,
watching pretty snow
sift down on pretty parks.

3.

Now find an answer for your answers
now solve the multiplex identities
ill-concealed by your pronoun *me*,

you know you're me
when you read this.
I have discovered your secret,
you plead guilty
to all my sins.

Language is like that—
the road is black rubber
everything else is white.

28 December 2009

= = = = =

Is there a water that evaporates
less slowly than water?
Chambers full of air
that rise through the air?
Pockets full of quiet fire?

We've lost the face of love,
only the torso is left—
we build our conception of culture
on the guesswork of trying to reckon
what that face was like.
And whose face it is.

28 December 2009

= = = = =

Overweight at the doctor's office

underweight at home.

C'est la vie d'un homme sérieux,

a well-dressed importer of mountains from the Grisons.

28 December 2009

= = = = =

While I've been writing about it
the snow is dwindling.
Is there a moral here,
description is banishment?
Kafka's careful delineation of
his Odradek apotropaic?

28 December 2009

= = = = =

At last he had time
to look at the sky.
And the sky looked back.
A secret understanding
between them formed,
dissolved, then fixed
in place again. This
was only themselves.
Timeless information.
Even if he worried,
it said, he could find *this*
inside the worry.
He doesn't even need time
to do it. But he had time.
The sky was very close now
he could feel its breath
on his face, almost he thought
their two breaths were mingling,
that would be strange.
Sharply he inhaled, took in
what he could of that far breath.
Now he had something he could
say, later, if needed, if anyone asked.
He could say This is what the sky
would say, then say it.

28 December 2009

= = = = =

How strange to go to the park,
the park should come to us.
The park should always be here
where we need it, be a part of us.
Or we are just a busy part of it?

28 December 2009

THE DEATH OF SHAKESPEARE

People think he went out turbulent
half-drunk and raving, surrounded
by all the creatures that he'd given
voice to and to the world, Hamlet
tragically dithering around his bed,
Viola primping in some borrowed jeans,
Othello staring at his useless hands.

Not so. Shakespeare stood up
not drunk at all, clear-headed,
morning, and walked outside
down the street and through some trees
that stood there waiting for him
hundreds of years. He thought
of how empty the woods were,
nobody around. He had used
all the people up, characters
they called them, persons
is the word he liked, persons
in a play no different from
just another part of this.

Nobody around me, inside
or out, he thought, nobody
to talk for, or make another
see. Or be. Just trees and me.
He knelt down then, not to pray,

just to be closer to the ground,
eyes grow dimmer as the heart
grows keener, he saw small
mushrooms, a beetle, a leaf.
What kind of leaf is this
he thought, and realized
at last I do not have to know.
This is where the names
all end and I begin, he thought.
They found him there and with
some mixture of grief and
irritation brought him home.

28 December 2009

THE WORK OF THE MONASTERY

One of the things we do
is protect the valley from natural
and most man-made disasters.

The former more reliable
because the earth gods are more rational
by and large than human mortals

more alert with intelligent self-interest
and the obligations of guest-friendship—
we walk around in their house

and if we behave correctly
the gods are peaceful with us
and the earth sleeps well,

dreams good crops for us
pure water from the sky and the rock,
lets us lie down and think

undisturbed all the images we love to mind.

29 December 2009

COSMIC EVENT

Asking and not asking
getting and not getting
staying home and going there
she answers the phone she
answers she is alone.

29.XII.09

SAMSON

1.

Samson sits down to analyze his situation.

Strength without wisdom? No.

Marrying out of the tribe? Maybe.

Marrying at all? Yes. The mistake.

Desiring the other? Yes, yes. Mistake.

2.

I am the first homosexual, he reasons,

I must be my own other.

I must love what is my own.

I am an alterity animal

and I have tried in vain to be a normal man

and trying to keep norm destroyed me,

she cut off the long tresses of my difference

because I was woman because I was the Sun

she makes me moon she takes my light away

and I pay for my strange husbandry now

by consorting with oxen and other slaves.

Sometimes they are compassionate and let me sit

and reflect, so clear my thought, my blindness
keeps my mind on my mind
which exposed to brightness is antic too much.

So I will use my notable strength surviving,
reviving, in inmost observation. I learn
to welcome this horrid darkness as a new gender of light.

3.

They are not harsh, by their strange blonde lights I remember all too well
unfolding in her tresses. Somehow I do not want to use the word 'hair.'
They treat me as well as they would treat one of their own, given equal fear.
They even talk about making me a citizen, granting me the same rights they
grant themselves, paltry as they are. That would include the right to laugh at
me in the same way that we all – openly or covertly – laugh at our fellow
citizens. Normal citizens survive by ridiculing one another. Me they would
mock for being blind, for having lost my strength in the lap of my Irish
whore. And for something more I've never really figured out – is it my race,
dark and circumcised, or is something else, something they read in me that I
can't read in myself, a radical fault, a folly built in?

One way or another they'll ridicule me and I'll let them. I won't skulk or act
resentment. Then, at a certain moment (the one that French prisoners around
me call *the willed moment*) I will calmly stand up and tear down their
society, destroy the underpinnings of their commonwealth. I'll spread their

columns wide and make them gay. Violate their terrible normality that makes me shudder as I lie here in straw and try to sleep.

They are Celts and hate mockery more than flesh wounds, so I will mock them, and out of my inward vision I will lampoon each of their pale flat faces and their flabby hams, I will laugh in public at them, speak sardonic masterpieces of prophetic jive in the cackling Hebrew they'll never learn, then I'll tell them in their own slushy language that even the blind can see their foolishness, and even this chained prisoner, mind at rest, is more free than they can ever be, slaves as they are to their ridiculous fishy gods and slippery customs.

I am a man alone
married only to myself
my private sun in my own sky.

Their society will crumble from mockery,
exposed to the light of my darkness
it will shrivel and rot and be gone.
Exiles, they will be sad westerlings forever,
no home but their own bodies.
I will pull down their city without touching a stone.

29 December 2009

= = = = =

No one guesses other
always same. Some
rise like weather
or rive like wind.
Body is a strange trick.
Cloth stained by soul.
Nights you wrap
me in your shroud.

29 December 2009

OF RESPONSIBILITY

1.

Am I here to account for something
some monkey did, lofted a coconut
and dropped it on a parson's head,

nature is naturally anti-clerical
since clergymen destroy religion and
nature is naturally religious.

Nature I'm trying to tell you speaks French
better far than I can, and though long ago I had
a decent what they now call slider

then a fast low curveball I am no monkey,
every coconut is safe with me
and I will never climb a single tree.

2.

Read this as a confession of sorts.

I am What Is Wrong With This Picture.

Time will take care of that but till then

(but I thought time was always now?
time is *then*? Then when are we?
And when is now?) I try to pass

unnoticed among the citizens
by talking at the top of my voice
and waving my arms in the air

like local weather. And just like
weather, everybody talks
about me and nobody understands.

3.

When the tiger mislays his forest
he is a shabby beast, a danger, yes,
but one that everyone will kill on sight
automatically. Yet how great
to be one of those, beautiful,
colorful strong, everybody's enemy!

29 December 2009