

1-2007

janF2007

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janF2007" (2007). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 670.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/670

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.

= = = = =

Catching up with what runs away
a stallion imagining a ravine

or conversely: we are stone too
a kind of stone that imagines
and all our movement comes from that.

2.

A whistler on the subway
rare. A hospital being built on the moon
I swear, I heard it in a dream,
to isolate the new disease.
Rubber streets and liquid air
and all kinds of new pain featured there.

3.

Today is Loki day. Distress of politics—
but Loki teaches that all political protest
only hurts the protestant. The one who cries
loud against injustice suffers it. Stifled,
stuffed into a cell, warmed only by own anger.

Today is Loki day and warns me: Love
the president while you have a chance.
Dream up new reality shows for TV
that leave reality behind: Rare Pets
and Sharing Life With Them. Life
with Leprosy. Selling to the Dead.
Then it will all be only your own fault.
You can live with that, speaking of living.
Blaming nobody, not even you. All
that lingers is the taste of milk.

20 January 2007

Biber, No. 7 in F Major.

1.

Oh and it did bird.
It did let me.
And I flew, I knew
where everybody
was coming from
and a little bit
I went with

over the beautiful forest
the simple lake
I was trying to make the world
simple as I am,
colors and appetites and quiet,

and nothing faster anywhere than clouds.

But they came around me
children and the shadows of children
stood near my cart
as if they'd been waiting there for me
some long time. Tired they seemed
but quiet, I don't think
I've ever seen children quiet before,
not even that eerie little rustle of feeling in them
that precedes and precipitates all speech.
This is their speech. Ripple-less and sweet
like closed eyes suddenly open and forgiving me.

2.

Then I was walking
and it isn't easy.
The dance took all my money
and I had none left for the hill,

dark of the moon this day
and steep of rock and hard of wind
I heard it sleeping all around me
as I tried to walk by,
nothing is easy on this planet

but at least the sun is in my eyes
from the top of the hill
where I stand and rest a while
and stare out to see another hill
and some man climbing it
and when he gets to the top
of that one he and I may take
note of one another, even wave,
and careful birds above us might
see this gesture and repeat it for us
wherever they fly off to today,
writing whatever they think it meant
on the patient ground with their quick
shadows. I will go down
into the street and read it there,
following crow calls to find my way
and learn the meaning of what we did and said.

21 January 2007

Biber, No.8, Bb Major

1.

(sonata)

how I finally sound
at the end of the forest
is another thing

I recognize me
from the beginning
a certain aspiration

a certain trembling
at all the God names
or all the ones

I slowly learned
to recognize in you
where else would

there be wood?

2

(gigue / double 1 / double 2)

make it slow
mark it
here's where you cry
again watching them dance
cochineal and silk
sad old names

your mother's grave
you never visited

how far away
any flower is

something spoiled
well yes lilies

on my table too
I excuse myself

you only visit
the tombs of the dead

Baudelaire in Montparnasse
Hannah Arendt up the hill

but a mother and a father
they scarcely die

I feel them closer now
than during the eyeblink of our years

together, now continuous as me.
And now you too member us.

21 January 2007

= = = = =

DENSITIES. Mean men. How can child overcome. Fear turns men mean. Of course the killed chicken running around the old man's kitchen he sold chickens from. War time. Feathers and blood. The raddled flesh of it later, yellow and purple, fat. No word to say.

That we do prey on one another or. Offal best, the scraps to scavenge, eating what falls. Killing less. A little more innocent. No blood more. Make no business of blood. Idle harridan, commerce. Having at least the merit of desuetude. More honored in.

Some morning you wake up and just don't care about her any more.

It is simple, like that. What you loved you loathe. Your proper meat discovered. Nobody says a word. Do as you please. Is there a will that tells? Does will talk?

Or only tolls, like a bell, after the deed. After the blow is struck. Hagen, was tust du? Was tatest du?

Who is the knife's teacher? We all know what it means to live in denial. To let oneself be aware of all one's misdeeds and all the wretchedness that one has inflicted, or seen inflicted, on others and oneself, to be aware of all that all the time would be to live in that agony of lucidity theologians called Purgatory, tormented by nothing but remembering. Where all the excuses are burned away, but it takes years for them to burn, and you hear, you would hear, in the hell flames the hiss and crackle of your own lies elapsing, your spins, revisions. They burn around you. Opinions differ about what happens, if anything, when all the excuses have burned away, and denial itself is denied. Some say that the excuses, though, like opinions, last longer than the man, and there is no end to their combustion. Others say they burn off like husks and leave new people where they had been. People you have to get to know. And do it right this time.

21 January 2007

Biber. No.9 a minor

1.

How close I come to you
I comes to you
we are creatures proposed
by what we say

see

that too, darling,
the Lydian caress
wraps round me
and I guess
it must be you

who else feels that way
that smile in the muscles even.

2.

Not now the stars,
pitchfork weather
but no hay.

Men has worked the streets like this
the scant millennia we remembers

before that, who shook the milk in the churn
who hammered old leather into new shoes?

Everything has been always.
And has always been.
Techniques alter,
the transactions are the same.

Here is food.
Here is a locket for your pretty neck.
I put a little bone in it
from an animal to make you love me,
love-bone of an old raccoon.
A bird will tell you when to put it on
after you wash the bone with milk
and leave it out just one night in the moon.

We repeat ourselves
till we finally understand.

3.
Gold. All the while
it was all about gold.

And then the flowers
every one its use
its tragedy, its dance
up and down the weary
towers we have made
of our bodies:

this body
is Babel,

language rose
arrogant
from upright gait

and scattered us
into the mere
conditions

but the flowers
—simples—
understand us still.

23 January 2007

DEATH AND THE COMMA

Death looked at the little curvy thing and thought, then said aloud, That's not too different from my famous scythe, a sharp little hook to reap a life. What do you reap, little sign?

<23 Jan>

Biber, No.10, g minor

1.

praeludium

Who could it be
standing on my shadow
such that his feet
occupy the space of its

What can he want
to say with my voice

hold with my arms?

2.

aria, variatio

As often as I go down these stairs
often and often the cool
whitewashed cellar walls
still seem to retain
the shadows of those personages
who left just before I switched
the light on and came down

Shadows of people who moved
straight into the wall
and left this space bare for me,

so here I am, or anyone is,
a sobbing Alexander on the banks of the Indus
on my own bare cellar floor
half earth half old cement
left desperate to know
where all the people went

who were here before me
who they were being
the ones who knew my house so well

from the ground up, knew it
and fled, laughing maybe
into a forest underneath the ground
such people know about
and left me alone
with all my shallow upstairs conquests

Where can I go now
except back up there
where the scarlet amaryllis
Betty gave us has blossomed huge
on its two foot stem and stands
blazing over the snow,
where can I go
but the world of windowsills and light
having only shadows to remember

however often I go down there
they're gone but the shadows
move more slowly than these men
women beasts the company
of ogritude and angels I suspect.

I desire. The grain
in the wood of our bright table
is laughing at me.

23 January 2007

Biber, No.11, G major

1.

A curl of smoke
from no fire
wrapped round the sky

it was a thought
feeling its way
through the world

like a girl on a bicycle
or an old man
trusting on a thick wooden cane

the stick has the shape of a snake
and it coiled too
around itself

her little ankles pedaling quick
the smoke of feeling endlessly achieving.

2.

What have we here?
An old friend
coming up the road
we see from so far away
it really looks like anybody
could it really be him
could it be so simple
as again?

There are no questions
darling there are only answers
how far I've had to walk
on this pretty road to find you

to tell you how rare
this again is,
how rare this dust

this ordinariness

o you have come then
my friend, you are with me
and I never even dared to want you
because we know where wants go,
they turn to stone
and encumber the earth

but you have come away
from all the entanglements
I wove for you with my doubts.

Doubts? You never
doubted me,
you always were
true to me, truer
than you know

because of who I am,
I am the first born,
I am the one who comes to mind
and you have always let me
and let me in

now let me in.
And pleasure in my company.

3.
Broad leaf of rheum
broad collard greens like fans,
a porch full of sleeping women
and one man wakes up

so many leaves, broad and slender
like the sounds of vowels
in his mouth as he begins to speak.

24 January 2007

12:48

Time for me to get born again
the mice are in the corn field stubble
undeterred by cold, I fall in love
like clockwork, I am Viennese.

This is what human life is like
as if I could speak of any other
with much authority. Only memory,
sad sly imagination of the world.

24 January 2007

= = = = =

Shall I outlive Achilles?
Anybody alive will die
not knowing when. And he
who spoke through Homer
after after, made him speak
of the vital difference,
better alive in any sort
than princely dead,
herdsman than hero,

or is that the propaganda
meant for the poor
who have no pyramid
for feasting or employing
arcane geometries to rise
at some angle to this
deadsome planet and
make space in heaven
for their very selves?

Shall I outlive Achilles
and all the men
who lived before me,
they all died, they all
will die, and I will be I
a while, no longer,
and then I again but who?
Am I Achilles now
who doth outlive himself?

(25 January 2007)

= = = = =

Reduction organ paraclete
means comforter the swell
means lift: *Sursum*
corda how can that mean
lift up our hearts
sounds like it means
I am above all this stuff
about the heart corazón
and violins, Americans
you've got to discover
the world in general isn't
interested in your emotions
your fears (Baghdad) your
loves (Jerusalem) your sense
of fun (Armageddon) your
piety (hell), they're not even
anymore fit for poetry.

25 January 2007

Biber, No.12 in C major

1.

Heart hammer
zither problem
the dance burns down
somebody open the sky

2.

How far have we come
from me? The stalwart
ash tree in the middle wood

in whose large shade
this dream began. And now.
In all the rafters
creatures stir—
this is not your house,

this is another man
he's coming over the hill
carrying a letter.
But from whom?

3.

o I read it already
the paper
left exposed all night
soaked it up from the crescent
moon lying on its back

the message. I read it
from the moonlight,
I knew it
before it ever got to be a word,
when the paper also was sleeping alone.

Only the hand was ready.

4.

So much suffering
ends when you take up
the paper now and read.

See, it's what I've been trying
to tell you all along.
It's from nobody. But even
nobody cares enough

to speak.
There are more words than mouths—
what else could love mean?

We read
and all that
but did we lift
this listening
like Corman's leaf
that measured me
for fifty years?

The delicate wrongness
of saying so.
Now the paper folds itself away and goes.

25 January 2007

WISH YOU WERE HERE

But where is here? It is the most mysterious place in the world. Unreachable, unvisitable, unapproachable. Can't be appropriated. Can't even be shared. Here. There is a place in the world. Here we are. But where is here? Having to write down this obvious tragedy makes me irritable. You can't even know where I am when I tell you confidently, lovingly even, that I'm here. Here I am.

25 January 2007