

9-2002

sepD2002

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "sepD2002" (2002). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 978.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/978

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~fh

The brightness is related to the road
as the broken stick is related to the name

when we were in school they had a sign
that meant this they taught us till I forgot

14 September 2002

DEVEKUT

twqbd

To cling in mind to mind

to be indifferent

to deviation

because nothing goes and nothing comes

or everything does.

Go to the barber

to hear about the war

but what you hear and what you think

fall away like little hairs he clips

no longer part of your head

no longer your problem.

Wind knows. And never goes.

You think your brain's a dovecote

with a billion lodges

ready for the merest pigeon to politicize

in permanent reality in your chemistry

and I don't know, it may be so,

but when I say mind I mean

something I can't actually know

because it does the knowing

and who am I?

A kind of brother
in law of the real, a blind schoolboy
with a dead teacher.

But all the windows are wide open.

14 September 2002

REAL MEN

A real man is a girl in a cosmic sitcom.
With her absentee Dad who has a weird sense of humor
and a mother who stuffs her every breakfast
and dogs and cats and birds and the kids next door
and if that isn't bad enough sisters and brothers
and what is a poor girl to do. What can he do?
If she could take herself seriously enough
she could be a hero, an Achilles, but she can't.
There are too many churches, too many schools,
books, barriers, TVs. A real man is born
as a teenage girl in a world of grownups.
That's who I see when I look in the general's eyes
or the prisoners hustled from courtroom to jail
or the condemned man's last interview,
the suicide bomber's snug exploding brassiere.

14 September 2002

SELF

“There are only three or four places where Freud uses the word *Selbst*.”

– Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber*.

What I'm good at is turning
out lights as they pass by
then feeling good
about small issues and little things
tree drift caught
in a spider web say
or a winged maple seed
middle of a puddle fallen.

Beyond such, not much.
I'm bad at knowing,
remembering, anticipating,
controlling, dissuading,
carpentry and plumbing.
Not bad at lying.

15 September 2002

PSALM

His to do and who? Me, lamed
by wanting so much, hobble
through emptiness ever a glance
ahead of what wants to be there

because desire is no one's. It runs
me and runs the one to run to,
shell deep curve or bay takes in
my mere insect crawl, shell I am also

and a day fly crawls along the letters. O that
I could read with my body then fly
and get lost in the sky. Of which memory
is our nearest congener,

to be lost in thoughts is lost in Babylon.

Commentary. It is not known generally that your desire is not your own. We pass through force fields of vivacious independent Wanting, and falsely suppose that the resultant anxiety to do something or embrace something or possess something is our own. But we belong to it at such moments, not it to us. So desires, which most of us suppose the true will or voice of our own feelings (and those feelings in turn the voice of our selves), are nothing more than shackles and leg irons that an outer abstract force constrains us to wear, so that we stumble along in pursuit of its goals. No one will ever know who he is until he knows himself without or beyond desire. That is why certain great teachers of the past insisted on teaching Detachment. Not that desire is bad, or its objects unworthy, but just that desire is not our own.

15 September 2002

MANETHO

spoke of the first Jews as a rag-tag assembly of lepers and banished Hyksos survivors
drilled into shape by an Egyptian prince who took the name Moses

and what am I to make of that,
eternal Jewess, my life?

Dark of rain cloud but no rain

the scintillations the closed eyes see
are indoor chemistry,

not Sinai,

no commandments.

The tables

of the Law were the twin columns of Sephiroth,
Moses the man in the middle, the Leper King,
the rabble-rouser,

all the good and great

things you have to be
to lift a world of settled rational despair
into the ecstasy of exile.

Now our religions

are therapies for soccer moms,
the Black Hole selfishness of the average family,

so the sons and daughters of the star
need deserts again.

Where the bleak

uncomfortable condition arises

do something with it,

don't bomb that country,
listen to it. The wind has something to tell you,

a wind you can hear only there

where nothing is
except your anxiety,
the sharp ears of your love.

Can we lift the stone. Can I stand in the middle like him
letting the head's light find the groin light
down through the heart light and still

be here for you, whoever you are,
darling rabbi, darling soldier, darling wife?

And now it rains. I don't know
but I don't know I don't know

so there might be something left to be.

15 September 2002

(at a time when we dread a wicked government's desire to destroy Baghdad)

eigenkrümmig mädeldicht

erinnerungfest nieder dann wieder

sprengstöfflich leer

viehkantige leierleute

schlafen unter wortlaub

15 September 2002

AGONISTS OF EVIDENCE

we are, waiting at the foot of the text
that shabby county courthouse
where the perverts sit around
waiting for hunting season

an annotation seeking truth
has his hand in your pocket
this is a thievish season
a long farewell to all my

Lecture on Poetry

Take something and make it yours.
Take something yours and make it not

truth must have its quanta too, no?

What makes the mind's eye blink?

last night, before the rain got heavy,
a frog by the garage door
or toad, she couldn't see, big for a toad
far for a frog
and then the rain

from where water rises
from where the sky speaks

so is a frog a quantum
or a toad I mean
so far from water

is anything itself

not hardly or not long.

it's raining because it is the season
monsoon or equinoctials

take something someone made
and make it yours

if you do this for years and years
you'll get a little sense of what *yours* means
and who are you

take something that you've made
now make it mine

where I am anyone but you
but you don't know who I am

so your best guess is make it not yours

like this dollar bill lying wet on the ground
the one green leaf among the brown

it might be mine

take something that you made and make it mine
give it to me
it's all right if I have to reach a little for it
I have long arms

yours and not yours
vision and revision
mine and not mine
writing and re-inscribing

(see Moses come down the mountain the first time,
see him get mad at his readers and their idols,
see him smash his poems, see him climb back up
and come down with a rewrite,

see the noble prince of Egypt who revises,
see the poet who revises G-d)

when cars are moving on the street
do they mean me?

or you?

do you come
in quanta too?

are you true?

Are you the same as truth?

Is *you* the same as *truth*?

Pneumatic trucks softly slow big trucks in rain.

Does this observation belong to you?

This word?

No more than a frog does
to me or you.

When you hear something
does it belong to you

cars on wet roads, birds?

What is intellectual property?
the co-op truck arrives before dawn

if what you hear
doesn't belong to you
how can you give it to me?

does everything that happens to you
belong to you?

do you have to make it yours
before you make it mine?

these are the piles of stones
along your journey
the hard questions
between Jerusalem and La Jolla

go and come back

come home to me

Now a certain man went from his house to the temple
on the way he saw an animal he had never seen before and could not name

this animal walked along beside him
from time to time rubbing gently against the man's leg

when they came to the temple the man hesitated
but the animal kept walking and gave no sign the man concerned him

the man watched it out of sight then climbed into the temple
and all through the chanting and praying he could think of nothing

just about the animal he couldn't name and already he loved it a little
and tried to come up with some way to talk about it

so he could tell his wife if he ever got home.

16 September 2002

A PATH IN MAGHADA

It still is here
this going
that is a kind of staying
this walk

quiet through the green
chambers where the others
come before me
under lead under earth

and let me pass
that's all I mean
to keep moving
like being still

only my body moves
and that is all there is
but the part of me that knows
or thinks it does

knows someone
went up this path
before me a long time
this same forest

this everywhere earth
that guides my feet
did it guide him
or did he show

the earth itself the way?

16 September 2002

When I walk anywhere in the woods, mild Dutchess, wherever, I walk too in those, a path through the Indian trees, the Central Region, where the light went on.

NORTH LONDON

can it be that I own this small
intersection of trees and words and memory
called Hampstead where only one day of my life
I understood my place and my place
from Kenwood to Freud's house to the
creperie on the high street took me in

and Rachmaninoff was playing and the cold
wind walked under the trees in the Vale of Health
and far away the city of my imagination
suddenly came close, and I was home where I never was.

You have to be a foreigner to come all the way home.

16 September 2002
(from 11 IX 02)

Listen to me

I will never
stop telling
you and telling
through

I am your witness
and you are mine

of the living quality
I assure
you assure them
of me
we amplify

the world together
we decide.

17 September 2002

bat-Kol

ORNITHOLOGY 2002

for C.P.

cardinal sings it in the woods
be named for what you do

a red stone
a read stone

keep this hand
in my pocket

εξουσια

looks like the Greek
word for authority
(you have au-
thority)
comes *from being*

or out of sheer
being something
comes

keep this stone in my hand

the vatican character
prophesies my life

raised to the white samite
in a rigged election
I will Pope for a while
then wake

all my manifestoes
flock around the world
feathers of a furious
battle of crows and owls
I had in my sleep

I was the crows you were the owls
that is the nature of love

so much to say

but the word never comes back
after silence breaks and lets it out.

17 September 2002

MICHEL

Remarkable children our town
barefoot girls
walk through shadows
their feet turn purple
as if they'd been treading grapes

but there is no wine
the wine is all transmuted

mean sheep growl on the hillside
the sun cracks on our church steeple
and bleeds

 dogs lap the light
under the cracked horse trough

an old man passes through our town too
wrapped in a fur collar
though you and I are warm enough
we never go to Mass, we stay in the shadows, we watch

the old man passes
saying nothing
seeing everything

his quiet Jewish eyes
his heavy body almost asleep on his white mule.

17 September 2002

DOMINUS DEUS REX HORARUM

lord god king of the hours
give me a pension
just one afternoon

the empty hour
between the mirror
and the trees outside

when I can believe
in my own virtue again
made whole

by word
by watching
by emptiness.

17 September 2002

So much doing and no accomplishment
now for accomplishment without doing

presence uncontrived

I've spent my life
hungering to open
an unknocked door

17 September 2002

THE PROBLEMATIC

More problems would enrich
our friendship, deepen

the cars on their way to work
are hurrying through us

so long we have been on the way to each other

desire means to find
in you its destination

the population of me
on its way to our fabulous wedding

the embodiment.
Sun lathered castles
twilight mist
back of the head and genital

but the internal measurements of the thing
keep changing

that is why we
hurry to shelter in you
and more than shelter: here
sea ivory and bronze
a sort of Rome.

17 September 2002