11-2014

novE2014

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1350

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.
ON THE DAY TEN-BIRD

As an eagle
the day
rare here or vulture
frequent
scoring the earth
with great wing shadow,

the day
Ten Tz’ik’in in the highlands,
Ten Bird, and here
among us high Scorpio,
last decad of it
when my friends get born,

I look
into the grey sky
thankful for such
honest love,

music many,
time voluptuous,
a renaissance in every nod,

all we do
is express time
and there is no time,
only space
who has no word
but what we say—

anthroponoetic,
the whole scroll
just for us?

How could it be
so simple?

How could it not?

16 November 2014
EXHIBITION GAME

the rubies aren’t real,
the clocks don’t run,
the roving spotlight
has been painted black.

I touched you
but you weren’t there,
the sonnet had a thousand lines,
you whispered in my deaf ear,
there is no music like turning back.

Turning your back,
dead leaves scamper up the spine.

It’s Sunday, November 16, 2014
we go to Mass in an apple tree.

16 November 2014
TRIBUNAL

In the mysterious academy
the fate of no one is decided.

Old men with long beards, weird hats,
make love to a complex idea
turning it round and round
in their fingers,
nails cut to the quick
for ritual purity,

when I say
fingers I mean the mind,
to the quick of the mind
the idea reaches,
they hold their breaths,
breathe out all together
a sigh like the first
word of something
or the wind blowing through an empty hall
all that stone
sounding
or an animal
outside the door.
This is how they study.
This is research,
    using arteries and lungs
to examine,
    parsing by breathing,
    decoding
the numberless mathematics of the Law.

16 November 2014
THOMIST ON THE ROPES

So imagine it this way, a wheel broken in its felloe, spokes sticking out off the plane and still we say ‘wheel’

we recognize said Thomas the essence beneath the accident and say ‘a broken wheel’ we don’t say ‘something odd, its purpose veiled’

life is a system of recognitions we guessed he meant, eyes clear or rheumy doing the best they can. But are we right and was he right before us? No system seems to last all that long. Consider dinosaurs for whom the system must have long been meant. And we in the anthropo- what are we to call the timeplace we inhabit?

Not ours. The outback of elsewhere, maybe. The lost mine. The tinderbox beneath the sea. The woman knitting behind the rising sun. We are nowhere and have nothing. Piles of ash.
Animal interlocutors. The fox knows how to look no dog remembers, curious but détaché, in love with his own apartness. The bird says don’t touch me. The fish says nothing in swift silvery monologue.

But all of them are after us, observing (as Rilke told us) that we’re intruders here upon a system that is someone else’s, we are at best permitted, fire’s tolerant smile.

We don’t need love we need a toxicologist to warn us off what does us wrong, or find some mithridatic nostrum that will keep us more or less active through the skirmishes until the jig is up. Our profiles cleancut in crystal, Memoria, then shatter and dissolve. Is that how it’s all supposed to be? The book doesn’t say, the same book we think says everything else.

Like the lion and the unicorn, the land itself is half real (if unlikely) and half imaginary. And that’s just this any island of it. The false is the enemy of the preposterous, while the true is not the enemy of anything at all.
LOVER

Examined by lamplight
the furry specimen revealed
only a docile nature.
Could it be me? Could your candle
have flickered out once too often
and now you had to go by oven-light,
rush-light, broken moon limping
through the window?

Was I even there?
Yet in my dreams I feel your probing
mind and fingers reluctant to take hold—
why should they touch a thing
they’ve never seen before
and do not understand, don’t want
even to know, yet there it is,
quiet on their pillow,

too big to ignore.

16 November 2014
There is left of us broken glass but from that vessel all-healing medicine we drank. So it is over. We are complete.

16 November 2014