

7-2015

jul2015

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "jul2015" (2015). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1376.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1376

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**Bad times
in the poetry business.
What can you expect
when it's a business.**

19 July 2015

FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

The *religion of the West* (confluence of Judaism, Roman and Orthodox Christianity, Arthurian romance, Celtic and Norse myth, alchemy)

depends utterly on two Egyptian journeys: Prince Mse leading his new people, the New People, out of Egypt, across Sinai into the land of promise. Then the infant King Jesus being brought by his guardian parents into Egypt for safety, yes, as had been urged by the three Wise Men (lords of the *Eastern Religion*: a Hindu, a Buddhist, a priest of Zoroaster, those three). But more importantly so that the growing child could be empowered by the mysteries, still fluent in his time in Egypt: Alexandria, Thebes, Panopolis.

So from Egypt it fled by night, this Western Religion, and had to hurry back by night to reclaim the wisdom and sheer knowledge left behind in the Jews' hurried flight.

So the perfected Western Religion could move west, to the Isles off Britain, the coast of Galicia to

which Jesus's brother Prince Jacob came to bless the Atlantic across which the Western Religion would presently expand.

Al-Khem the Central Religion (Shia, Sunni, Sufi) called Egypt, the Black Land, silt of te Delta, tilth of the Nile, land of miracles, transmutation, alchemy itself. All of our love for chaning things into other things (fossil sludge into het fuel, stones into statues, tree bark into medicine, sounds into words) all come from alchemy, from Egypt.

To which each new-born prince must flee.

19 July 2015

=====

**I speak as a schoolteacher
though they call me professor and doctor.
They send me students who know nothing,
who've been through twelve years of servitude
but haven't learned that A is an ox and M an owl,
who don't know what a leper looks like
or how to enter the Forest of Broceliande.
I have to teach them everything,
first the letters then those numbers
by which madmen spell reality
and then the names of trees
starting with poetry.**

19 July 2015

APPROPRIATE SWIMMING POOL CONDUCT

**Keep in lane. Lap.
Leave the water alone.
Try to find the lifeguard
if there is one sexy
or at least interesting.
Leave the water in its place.
Dream only when your head
is above the water. Leave
as little as you can behind
except the essence of your joy
or whatever that emotion is
makes you flail about so,
feet splashing, water in
your ears, eyes, mouth.
Please tell e what it is
one lap at a time. Leave
the water in the pool
after you climb out and go home.**

20 July 2015

=====

**Birds landing on the rail
American history
Hamilton and ice floes on the river,
hawk on corn stalk
slow bend beneath takeoff —**

**the reciprocals
of money, the bank, white men
all over the place,
clean clothes are such an affront,
the wealthy slim the poor obese**

**what have we done,
fed them on Twinkies and no sleep —
you bet I'm angry
I did it too and I was done,**

**in like case the mirror and the rose,
the freight train and the wrecking ball
we build the world to smithereens**

**Artaud mad in Rodez
pioneer of an escape hatch
led nowhere, a drug
is one more commodity,**

**there is a way to freedom
but you have to take it all by yourself.
I tell myself that every blessed day
and wonder why I don't unpack and leave.**

**Into the paradox! Hermit in the crowd,
smile on the face of the Crucified
forgives me for squabbling so
over his lovely sky-blue robe.**

22 July 2015

=====

The sun is here
birds led her to me
you have to trust everyone
and here we are
illuminated
in my small *immensity*
as if she had been
looking for me all her life
and found me at last.
I shiver with the last
chill of dawn
and fall into her light.

G.U.

22 July 2015

=====

**When we worshipped trees
Adonis was the name of him
and Venus was the summer sun
who wore him out with light and love
till he spent all his leaves.
But thenil she came again next spring
and he was full again, and green.
There is no sorrow here,
only going, and coming,
and going on. Sun
in the leaves of our linden tree,
even now waiting for me.**

22 July 2015

== == ==

**I sprained my knee
watching baseball
or writing in my notebook,
anyhow I was just
sitting there
like a frog on a water leaf
then it hurt.
Vigilance strains the tendons
of the heart too.**

22 July 2015

=====

**One side is sweeter than the other.
Razor. I have resisted
the inferior caste in which I was born—
not at the bottom but way down the pole—
and affected the aristocracy of mind,
fooling nobody but myself
all these years but that was enough
to keep me and it going.
Sometimes as if becomes as if—
tel quel and here I am.
I learned all this while wondering
why my right cheek needs a shave
more than the left. *Not quite Christian
not quite white* it says on my diploma
but goof rnough for ordinary prose.**

22 July 2015

=====

**Seeing how big the page is
you naturally fit
the song to the space is sings.**

**So I'll say here
all the things I couldn't squeeze
into the measure
of the last nine weeks,
tufted titmice peck at store-bought seed.**

22 July 2015

PARERGON (1)

To lose nothing
to keep it all
not just in your head

but out there, here,
where the birds can shit on it
or wind blow it away,

it's not for real if it's not at risk,
danger is the key
signature of human art

no one's sleep *RMR*
but so few awaken
though weather happens to the heart

he said but meant the mind
I always do
prisoner of what sets me free

the language
I love to serve

**but as a master does
lifting a morsel to someone's mouth
to make sure they
taste the final sweet of it.**

22 July 2015

=====

**Un likely that I'd know
more than the dawn truck passing**

**who is she who drives so white
and why? Are there ghosts
in her garden? When she goes
to take down flour from her pantry
(flour, white flour) do they mock her,
sneer up at her from her dinner plate?**

**We all are victims of our crimes—
sin quick, remorse everlasting,
the bite of something
when I try to sleep
The truck is gone, I'm still here
drowsy with grieving.**

23 July 2015

=====

**Reasonable doubt
is there any other kind?
I have been wrong about everything
that came out right.
The night was broken with noises
I crept downstairs
to find myself guilty.
Soon dawn with bring
color to the flowers in the tree—
that may be, or seem,
a kind of forgiveness.**

23 July 2015

CREDO

**Build an opera house
the swans will come.**

**Plant a rose bush
and know it will talk.**

**Live a life in hopeful hearing
but never tell your whole heart.**

**Get out of bed
and hope for daylight,**

**call long enough
someone answers.**

23 July 2015

=====

**(f you sleep at irregular hours
they may send the wrong dreams.
You might not be ready for them
or be too late. You may dream
in the house of a stranger
and wake changed. Hours
are like that, like everything else—
each moment has its own meaning,
each thing its own word.**

23 July 2015

=====

**Yellowest corn beyond
all metaphor
sparkling hair she
dry anointed
the wound of my hand till
it dared ti turn.
Let the happen happen.
do not try to happen it.
Do not touch what touches you.
Dreams tell us that every night.**

23 July 2015

BEING IN TOUCH IS THE SAME AS BEING

**I woke with skin to prove it
and memory as index of the dark.**

**What happens when we sleep is somewhere else
it summons something deeper than we know**

**exactly, and there we are, changed
mortally by what we saw or felt**

**and the room fills up with strangers yet again—
there is no fact of the matter, only matter.**

**Only what we remember—and how long
will that last in this chattering world?**

23 July 2015

=====

**What do I want?
I want not to want.**

**Despondency is too easy—
strive, be difficult**

**enough to turn, turn
but not away.**

23 July 2015

=====

**Because of truth
we grow impatient**

**because of love
we live in towns**

**people all around me
want me to be gone**

**they listen ardently
to what I don't say.**

23 July 2015

[AFTER CALLS]

A different measure of things,
so much for thee
old tune of three

sang me two months
'beyond necessity'
except to sing

like any anti-Occam
as we call poetry,
the *multiplier of entities*

it sleeks the world
with sinuous unnecessities
proliferates exuberant

folderol like Bach and Michelangelo—
prove nothing!
demonstrate everything!

Exhaust the universe
with evidence
we all sing too.

23 July 2015

=====

**The motor gives way.
Something like silence seems.**

We call this Day

**having few words to decide
for us what we feel**

**there is a star
over every word we say**

sometimes it gives light.

**An engine starts up
it is the principle of the thing**

**to make things happen.
Rude awareness**

**bird on a roof
of nobody's house,**

money on the mind

the simplicity of food

**we own this place
but that too is a kind of renting**

**from landlord Time
who may have plans for this half-acre.**

24 July 2015

=====

**I'll need some help
to sort this out—
apartment houses
don't have fire escapes any more
how do they reckon
to rescue the middle class
from its inevitable predicament.
The poor have iron
stairways to the street
and iron terraces
to sun themselves on
and grow basil in tin cans.
One way or another
we're all waiting at the window
for the Holy Spirit,
her tongues of fire.**

24 July 2015

SOME SLOW JAZZ FROM ANTIQUITY

**This isn't me
this isn't what I meant to say**

**or even an escape from
what I meant.**

**Start again.
There is a lily
I have touched
with no hands.**

**That's better.
There is an engine
that runs the trees and me.**

**Adequate but vague.
Back to the lily.**

**Nothing belongs to us—
that's better still.**

**We belong to everything.
Now you're getting there.**

**You and me brother
and sister musicians
lost our instruments along the way,**

**that's why the club is silent,
drinkers look up puzzled**

**but the lily,
she spreads her petals over the whole town.**

24 July 2015

=====

All you need is flowers	A
all they need is sun and rain	B
all rain needs is birds in the clouds	C
all clouds need is sky to drink sea in	D
all the sky needs is you looking at it	E
looking at things far off is praying	F
but the sky is the closest thing there is	G
what I see when nothing is there is sky	H
if the sky had a name whose name would it be?	

25 July 2015

=====

**Eliminate the possible
and you have your answer.**

**A swing-set alone in a meadow,
the seat trembling a little in the breeze.**

**See it from far away like me
move towards it like a quick-step
like a middle-aged ballerina,
it's still too far, hurry and be close**

**the wind isn't one to wait forever,
there is a decorum in these matters,
in matter. Run now, leap backwards
onto the seat and it starts to swing—**

**how old are you, who owns the meadow,
can you feel the wind, does it lift a little
or hold you back, are you flying yet
back and forth higher and higher**

**is the arc possible, your heels in the air,
can you remember the first time ever
when time was born? Were you there?
You have to all these questions in the air.**

25 July 2015

=====

**Scrunched-up piece of silk
black, shot through with silver thread
ball of it in the hand feel of an old sick.
Memory has its lesions too. Emissions.
Losses. But here it is, whatever it is.**

25 July 2015

ZENAIDA

**The rain dove can
fly fifty miles an hour,
rose tint to its breast
faint in pearl grey.
You know him here by another name
and love the sound of her sad cooing
and you can't tell the sexes apart.**

25 July 2015

=====

**And of course, of course.
The mangle of sunshine
and the gush of shade
wrung out of the air
by the twist of light.**

**We live among the senses
in beautiful confusions
by which our investigations
(those love affairs) are sustained.**

25 July 2015

OPERA

**Ekebu — the knights are charging
out of the internet radio. Zandonai.
Whose name could be weirder than I ?**

25.VII.15

=====

**Bruised by paradigm.
To be Jewish in a pagan land
Kalliphornia, last bastion
of the efficacious grape, the poppy
scarlet with dreams,
of goat-wit guys,
hierodules, magic random chicks.
The law is a dried-out sediment
on the other side of the day,
of the bay, you must water it
with sweat and spit
from a tarnished silver cup,
it soaks up, loosens, comes to life,
the law gives life.
Come home and be a rabbi,
wrap your loins in storm cloud,
the whole world will be your mikva,
come and get wet.
And yet the pagan wine
leaves tattered dreams,
gothic ruins, foxes in the vines,
and you have heard this so many times before,
the law is simple, the law is made of skin.**

26 July 2015

=====

Exhaust the evidence
keep saying that—
what must I mean?

Is it like 'write
everything' of years
ago all over again?

Phrases recur. Valéry
wakes up at dawn
and writes down what I will later think.

I sleep again, he is awake
enough for his *patrimoine*,
his workshop, his dreams.

26 July 2015

=====

**Wrong. To wake with worry.
There is no story
to console or excite.
Only vignettes of some future
eliminated by the vey
act, fact, thinking them now.
Sacred law of unicity.
Things happen only once.
If it happens (you reason) in your head
it can never happen out there.
Pray that you're right for once.**

26 July 2015

=====

**Tell me how it means
the engine not running—
run out of *is*, must use *am*.**

**The imperfections of attention
are revelation.
How is that? Absence
sings louder than presence.**

**Woman alone at table. Brassai.
Stone wall ill-stucco'd. Atget.
The walls still scarred with bulletholes
when I got there. War
is never far. Use *is* not *are*.
But I forgot, we're out of *us*,
have only *am*.**

26 July 2015

=====

**Sometimes I think nothing happens
just the flower on the bush
after a little rain. Just this enough
for eight billion souls. And some rice.**

26.VII.15

=====

**There are certainties too
the mind hovers
around the feel of them,
they allure, evade, flirt,
recede. But still are there.**

***The things that think the mind
you want to call them,
irresistible, ungraspable,
so terribly near.***

27 July 2015

=====

**Sogns of a self?
A kind of glare
off the sea,**

**who knows
what moves in that light?**

What can liv e there?

**The crow is calling.
In this country we use a different metaphor,

and calls again.**

27 July 2015

CROW TALK

**Four times.
Thought he was calling me.
Five times.
Four again.
Once, softly.
Once again.
The transmission is complete?**

**The battlefield is empty.
They have swept the wind
clean with their wings.**

**Fur again, closer, louder.
This I have been give.
This I believe.**

27 July 2015

== == ==

**After the operation
rode home on sunlight
and she drove,
the glide of light
carried me
car-wise into magic,
home to herself.**

27 July 2015

KHEM

meant black
silt of the Nile,
the black soil that age after
age sustained fertility
life in the plantations of the Delta —
the black silt that is the original
faeces of the alchemists,
warm wet earth from which plants grow, in the
laboratory to the warm wet manure
normal source of our slow fire.
Every dung its own heat —
importance of the horse as symbol,
the horses that pull the triumphal chariots
are the horses that give the slow rich fire
that slowly cooks one element
into the higher octave of itself
dazzle us with sudden gold.

27 July 2015

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**like a car stripping its gears
stuck on the sidewalk of Paradise
with no word to answer theQuestioner
that big blue thing disguised as the sky.**

27 July 2015

[NB 380, p.170]

== == == == ==

**The stone
from the sky
that became the human eye**

**deep-instructed
to see a world all round it
and call it real—**

**this stone so precious
sometimes remembers the other
and we have only words**

to give what it sees to one another.

28 July 2015

=====

**Cheerful as an ice floe
busy as an island
we are visited.**

**A prayer-wheel or spinning top,
friend lying on the grass,
the conversation is continuous.**

28 July 2015

== == ==

**Morning is legal where we live
first some birds then sun rises**

**then the cars come out trying to be
elsewhere, our deepest need.**

28.VII.15

=====

**From the is to the island
contradicting Donne
I will be difficult, sinly,
reprehensible, with studge—
people look apathetically
at every dictionary
not realizing what a brothel
it is inside, temple, stadium,
balloon ascension for a thousand years
over our little town and no pain.**

28 July 2015

KEEPING THE WORD

1.

Amaze outdoors
ascension day all summer long—

sometimes the color
explains the day best:
woodpecker, analog, Herodotus
in Egypt keeping secrets. *Picus*.

I promised, I will keep my word
though I spoke it
when I was a different man.
Mitra, lord of the contract.
Agree with being me.

2.

Where do you keep a word?
Where is splendor? *Zohar*
I want to say, but does it mean
as Dante insists, *reflected* light,
such as when we watched, say,
Anita splash in the Roman fountain
our faces too were wet with that light?
I don't go to the movies much anymore,
though there in sharing folk live *in splendore*.

3.

**If Dante's right. Or Arabi
born yesterday, who taught him
(all of us) more than we know.
When you read or hear such Masters read
what they tell you isn't
right there on your lips
but squirreled away
deep inside you, right
where your childhood lives.
lives on still, where all real
knowing lives to be known.**

4.

**Someday have to start living,
stop listening? The screen
grows dark by itself all too soon.
A blond hair on a blue sweater,
river in the desert, arroyo,
a sum left over on the blackboard —
please believe me
so I can believe myself
again, the word I stand by,
does it stand?**

5.

That is our religion,
a word intact.

I wonder what the word 'word' means —
is it weird, or fate, or worth,
or does it mean like German *werden*
to be or to become, sign of future,
sign of passive, or past, *geworden*.
We know what it tells us now
but where does it come from
and what has it seen along the way
that we should know and reckon and accept
if we mean to stand by it,
this sound that once
long ago came out of, was it my,
mouth?

6.

So if fate
comes from *fatum*, 'something spoken'
then the dictionary
is the Book of Fate.
Or any book is.
Any word you speak
stands by you ever after,
walks by your side,

casts its own shadow.

7.

**The shade of a word!
Sudden excitement
at such a possibility —
to watch it move
separate from the word itself,
shaping differently, blending
with shadows of other things:
a dance of origin and dispersion
of meaning. And then
that in the heat of the day,
heat of argument,
that I would go and stand there
cool in the word's shadow
and hear *the difference* speak,
the luminous, the calm.**

29 July 2015

== == == == ==

**Or I can see
only when I stop thinking,**

**touching with eyes
the mind closed.**

29 July 2015

== == == ==

**Cast off into some sea.
the nautical image
in the swimless day.
I wouldn't last five minutes
in the whelm of her I love,
the sea makes
sheer visitor of me,
one who only comes to see,
the healing seen.**

29 July 2015

=====

•
Man reading a book.
Woman staring out to sea.
Wanting nothing but to be everything.
Everyone. Old radio
color of a woodchuck
and warm like one —
in the old days
one had to heat the word
to make it speak.

29 July 2015

== == == ==

**Alana dyes her hair
settles on a couch.
The camera crew
worship with their instruments
what they think they see.**

**2.
Later the picture,
very small,
accompanies e-missives
from the sponsor.
Sponsor means spouse,
the woman sitting by her word,
legs crossed at the knee,
chaste but powerful.**

**3.
What have we learned
from this picture?
Not all movies move.
A fire engine passes —
not every catastrophe is close
I pray. I look at the couch
she sits on and wonder
what it thinks of what it bears,**

**4.
Holding the weight of form
of all whoever rested,
furniture is the graveyard
of our whole past life.
Not lives. In this town
you only live once.**

**That's what it says over the door,
dawn over the depleted casino
lights as bright as heat can make us.**

**Why do we look at each other's faces?
Who do we think we are?**

29 July 2015

=====

**Empty glasses in the sink.
And they too are words
we listened to, doubted, believed.**

**I want a girl as smooth as glass,
he said, transparent,
cool and diamond-clear.**

**They all are, I explained,
you have to teach your
fingertips to understand.**

29 July 2015

== == == ==

**I deem the day be
clearer than it is.
I will the blur away.**

**Can you tell north from south
with your eyes closed,
you can be the Emperor of China if so,
or any other Tarot card you choose,**

**or even a bird, a floater in mind's eye,
a river that does not come back
or a handsome schooner
hurrying your way,
sails billowing forward but no wind.**

29 July 2015

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**Something long. Something wrong.
No easy breakfast.
Bird cry. Identify.**

**Every percept
is a challenge.**

Know me, everything says.

***And some say Marry me
whether you love me or not.
I am all there is.***

29 July 2015

=====

**Reveille. A bugle
is a trumpet with no hands.**

**Writing my way back to health —
for your sake too.**

29.VII.15

== == == ==

**I forget the phrase that woke me
not sure it will come again
but a word's enough to rinse a man
from sleep where no words live**

**until they do. A word is the same as a day.
Now I must remember:**

**Day or Daytime was in the phrase;
its target or predicate, something said
or learned about the day or its light**

**or the time we share with one another
outside of sleep where all the others
are masks — or maybe strangers, lonely
blue strangers we'll never meet again
and maybe they're the ones who word us.
Wake us, into the soft dawn-light, soft
as the hibiscus by the window pale
in a world of comparisons.**

**Waking up is thanking someone.
The music changes, why flowers
leave colors, *die blaue Hortensia*, why poems
have flowers, words have mornings**

**and everything wakes up together.
That must be what, or part of what,
it was trying to say, the phrase that went away
and left me alone with the day.**

30 July 2015

=====

**1.
Things that look like things
but seldom are.**

**We recur
out of necessity, we accept
a string of beads
from a woman's hands
and have to deal
with each bead. Each day.
This is called praying
or distancing the mind
from its usual tricks.
Rescuing the mind
from what it thinks.**

**2.
The absolute
comes in small
doses also,
no trumpets or sunrises
needed. Here,
one little item**

**much like another
but curiously not.
This little difference
is the gap. Door-
way out of the world.**

**3.
The door Christ said He is
is always open.
You do not become a door
to keep people out.
The gap between
one perception and the next
is the door to heaven.
Doors everywhere,
some of them have names,
some formal frames,
but all go through.
Go through.**

**4.
Leaving is loving.
That's what I meant.
You leave the dream**

**to love people
in the ordinary day,
that magical condition
always talking. *Between*
I keep telling you
is the doorway.
I want to be open forever
then sleep comes along,
silences me into pure listening.**

30 July 2015

=====

**The unpermitted
the sagacious
table crowded round
with talkers.
Who needs food,
to experience one another,
that's all, never
to possess.
Possession is not permitted.
Being wise with one
another. Rarely
before midnight.
And only the table remembers.**

30 July 2015

=====

Gapsody

**sun softening through haze
sifting its way.**

Her way.

**The claim of language
on things. This person
in the sky.**

**There is a kind of dream
about being quiet.**

But then everything speaks.

30 July 2015

== == ==

**Too long without a word
I speak, too long
listening to the empty
hallways in my head, how
the mind investigates each
sconce, doorway, transom
and finds nothing.**

**Too long without a thought
to offer or share or deplore,
too long without regret.**

**This afternoon
apostasy of doze.
Next door a car starts up
with a mind of its own.**

30 July 2015

== == ==

**How could the razor
shear the sea?
How could one blue thought
imagine me?**

**Is it all after all
a matter of rhymes
we have to find
before we are complete?**

**The languid poetry of old
did that secret hold?
That not in words
but actions must discover**

what links with, limbs with, what?

30 July 2015

=====

K.L.I. 1936-2015

**The last Freemason died today,
carried with him
into the Familiar Strangeness of afterlife
the secrets of unsatisfiable yearning
pothos, his word, from which
his architecture grew.
From absence alone
he made deep song.**

30 July 2015

=====

**Left lingering
as if a storm cloud
never moved from horizon,
menace only to remind.**

**How can such things
rest among us,
savages we are and they so calm?**

**What do we really
think of trees?
Is there an urgency
even we can feel
in the slower things,
tortoise, bedrock,**

**bone? Again and again
I wake to want you.
This must somehow mean**

**if only I were quick enough
to catch the thought's shadow
before the blaring
sunlight of language
unshapes it into oneness
with everything besides?**

30 July 2015

BY A WINDOW

1.
Tense. Or close-
grained light
around the rose—

light is the first Talmud
commentary
on all things we can see

and every distance
sings a different touch.
Rose or no rose.

It's rhat there's a rosebush where I wake,
Hibiscus syriaca, rose of Sharon oldest
immigrant flower, make me at home
near you, late summer be kind.
Not a rose at all.

2.

**Every thing is a flower
I think, every
flower is a difference,
a dependable apartness,
voice in the desert, friend.**

3.

**Tired of our caresses
the light drifts away,
the dark comes
to make us its poets
in dense dreamery,

so a voice in my hand
lets me be
what dream commands
and lets the light
explain it all as if
I were the one it means me to be
until I am.**

31 July 2015

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**Abolish the absolute
again thing by thing**

**let the plenum fill
with difference,**

**the pleroma is everyone
not one, I'm sorry**

**if this sounds critical
or philosophy, it just is**

**because the unimpededness
of mind welcomes no limit—**

**light thinks its way everywhere,
leaves us, links us, lets us go.**

31 July 2015

THE METHOD

**Natural exhaustion. Measure
the stream
fluent from Anatolia,
a formality of images—**

**Stroke a tree. A human is a T,
all spine and shoulders,
arms and no head.
We are nothing but trunk. We tree.**

**31 July 2015
Weys Corners**

EATING OUT

**Cool spacious quiet
like a table on a mountain
with mountain folk to serve us—
there would I dine**

**and all our food would taste
of what we liked best
but be quick and lean as water
and stroke us all the way down,**

**the air around us darken
blue into saffron into rouge
and a chill walk up from the valley
insidious as music**

and we would be ready for the night.

31 July 2015

SCHWÄNE

**Swans on the Landwehrkanal
under a blue bridge.
What more does a city
have to explain?**

31 July 2015