

4-2021

**aprB2021**

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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### Recommended Citation

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## REGLES DE JEU

An irrepressible anxiety  
expresses itself as game.  
What game? It begins  
by finding out its own name,  
its rules. Who are you  
today? What is it like  
when all the verbs  
are taken away? Cloisters  
open, columns fall,  
no prisons at all? Where  
do you put your feet  
during play, and where  
are you standing  
when the game is done?  
No mattress, no matrix,  
shrill finches out the window,  
something to go on.  
If you could only hold

**AprilB 2021 2**

**the moment at arm's length,  
turn it in your hands,  
study it to pieces and begin.  
Then you can begin.**

**27 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**I would have more to say  
if I were me. But I'm not  
myself now, just woke up  
and most of me is still that  
fraternal monster of my sleep,  
and what does he know  
about the morning? But so much  
he knows about the dark  
I am afraid to ask. So I confess  
to silence. Forgive me this once.**

**27 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**Who comes so early  
to be who I am?  
That's not what doors  
are supposed to be for.  
Early, early, coffee, coffee  
real plum sucked, plucked  
from imaginary tree.  
All the palm rees of Pennsylvania  
shelter me from morning,  
oil on the table, fork in drawer,  
how could this be morning  
with all that light? And me,  
have you found me yet,  
I ache with not being known.**

**27 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**I steal the tree  
I stole before  
the fruit I leave behind—  
it's its uprightness  
that i need, the sense  
to stand and let  
all your lovers go.**

**27 April 2021**

**=====**

**It's just a little notebook  
it can;'t do everything.  
Oh yeah? Hava look at this.**

**27.IV.21**

**AprilB 2021 7**

**= = = = =**

**A distant presence  
you feel as you read,  
car doors closing  
in a neighbor's drive,  
someone's breathing  
in any empty room.**

**27.IV.21**



**= = = = =**

**Quacking below  
where the stream  
ponds out beside  
the terrace where we sit  
tossing bits of what  
we eat down there  
to feed what we might  
love or like but can't  
actually know. Oh no?  
Believe me, love  
knows more than mind.**

**28 April 2021**

=====

Music, sublime addiction.  
What comes next?  
The ampersand built it  
to all our knowing, wanting,  
sense of need. How many  
notes does it take  
to say a tune? Are we caught  
in someone else's melody?  
O harps and drums  
and women's voices.  
the whole sky can't hold them.  
pang of the insolent guitar.

2.

In this [rt of town  
dogs play the banjo  
and bears blare out  
Bruckner from old

**;loudspeakers with paper cones,  
twelve-inchers, remember Klipsch?  
In this part of town the porcupines  
trot along marimbas  
and elephants moan Marin Marais.**

**3.**

**We need space between us  
and music won'tt allow it,  
we need to touch each other  
but only music touches us.**

**4.**

**Then that painful relief  
called silence comes,  
when music taunts us,  
tempts us to want more,  
all the old technology of repetition,  
keyboard, needle, reel of tape,  
glowing tubes, a fipple**

**AprilB 2021 11**

**pressed to our dry lips,  
make yourself heard, blow  
baby, blow, and wonder  
what the trees think when we sing.**

**28 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**Sometimes I think it is  
some other month  
but still today. Numbers  
get in the way.**

**The absence of evidence  
is evidence, as the lawyers say,  
those criminals on the other  
side of crime.**

**Believe  
the no evidence, let me fear  
all by myself a snowstorm  
on this summer day.**

**28 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**I've forgotten my Latin  
Greek and Tibetan,  
I guess that English  
will be the next to go.  
Then the trees will  
sleep in peace in me,  
beech birch poplar elm.**

**29 April 2021**

**AprilB 2021 14**

**= = = = =**

**Everything elsewhere  
and here I an--  
only a king could  
rule such vastness,  
space rolls out from my hands.**

**29 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**The conversation  
goes like this: field  
full of flowers. Squills  
have faded, jonquils  
persist. The mower  
is careful where he goes.  
Mows. Yes. The book  
is boring though, as so  
many are when your mind  
is on something else.  
What. More than I can say.  
No one is waiting.  
And there is no gate.  
I think there is. Then  
go find it. I think I have.**

**29 April 2021**



**EXERCIS**

is such a strange  
religion, to use up your breaths,  
steps, lifts-- they say  
it's good for you, but all creeds  
promise that. Run panting  
along the road, lift up  
twice your weight in steel,  
gallop with a dozen others  
on rattling machinery. This  
is virtue. In a way that's true,  
virtues from Latin, means  
the quality of a vir, a he-man,  
not a sissy or a frow. I grieve  
for them when I see them  
Sunday morning sweating  
jogging in their endless church,  
sometimes with A nimble  
acolyte dog trotting at their side.

29 April 2021

**= = = = =**

**Spirit shouts out of matter  
Don't you know me yet?  
I have been talking to you  
all your life, you have heard  
and thought I was some other  
but I was this. And this. And this.  
And everything you ever saw  
or touched or rested on,  
all of me everywhere is telling.  
Rejoice, child, you have been told.**

**29 April 2021**

**THE EXAMINER**

**could be a paper  
could be a woman  
with a marking pen  
in front of a class.  
Could be a bank clerk  
studying accounts,  
an art historian guessing  
at provenance or forgery.  
Could be the doctor  
gazing at my skin, fear,  
or at least anxiety in  
every examination, takes  
the anima right out of you,  
o where can I rest unseen?**

**29 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**When all the trees  
have puffed out their green,  
one stands leafless proud.  
This is the poet, in shabby grandeur,  
shouting this is who I am  
not just something I do.  
O poor dead tree,  
the neighbors say,  
I am not dead, the poet tree cries,  
I stand for nakedness and truth.  
A little ashamed of shouting,  
feeling a need for friendship,  
little by little lets a few  
leaves come out.  
And then some more. More.**

**29 April 2021**

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## **SPOIL THE ROD**

**Let there be no punishment  
and who knows?  
Crime and sin might  
vanish from the world.  
Pairs need each other  
to exist at all. Banish all  
the vile dualisms from the earth.  
Only one pair is needed,  
woman and man. And I'm  
not sso sure about the man.**

**29 April 2021**

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**= = = = =**

**These moral musings  
annoy. Like mice  
in the bedclothes,  
kibitzers by the chessboard,  
or at least a dog not near  
barking in the night.**

**29 April 2021**

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## ODE TO THE OTHER SIDE

like Wordsworth crossing the sands  
hearing vaguely  
Napoleon is dead  
from a stranger on his own way  
from the mainland. Or  
shadow of the tower at Winchester.  
Or the lady from New Hampshire  
who took care of me, see,  
here she is spinning a wheel  
the children play on, even me,  
see, here is a map of Thailand  
with the popular beaches  
marked in red. Or on the radio  
a sonata of Scarlatti, remember,  
the steps of Whitby, Caedmon's dream,  
or was it a dream, or my father's  
black Pontiac, yes? Or the moon  
on nights like this mist and rain  
and still it wanes brightly ovrthead,

**AprilB 2021 23**

**see what it means? Or the mosaic  
wall mostly sea-blue  
in the cafeteria on Flatbush,  
buses pass, persist, they let you  
stand up as you ride,  
some of them, leather handles  
slung down from the sky.  
Or a lock of auburn hair  
they claim was mine,  
or the wicker basket with apples,  
I never much liked apples,  
too simple for me, I wanted France  
and model railroads and a cup  
shaped like two joined hands  
as if one drank from someone's  
generous giving, but whose?  
Or the turtle in the garden,  
tortoise really, or the cliffs  
of Donegal, or DNA or alphabets,  
or that girl walking in the rain,  
you knew she'd be here,**



**AprilB 2021 24**

**or what Wordsworth rewrote  
when he got home, Dorothy  
staring out the window,  
or a child playing with string,  
it can go anywhere, fold in upon  
itself or open like the rising sun.  
Is it time yet? Have the Sxons landed?  
Always something more to be said.**

**29 April 2021**

**= = = = =**

**The phrenologist  
felt the bums and ripples  
on the Moon, decided  
the orb has a headache  
can be cured by visitors  
in person or through poems  
scribbled on; y by moonlight  
then left lying on the lawn—  
but the writers are allowed  
to memorize them and write  
them neatly in books  
when they get home.**

**29 April 2021**

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This is different,  
this is forgetting.  
The ceremonies of sleep  
all cjamged, memory  
ungrammatical, sacred  
texts scattered, lost.  
Or this is waking.  
This is trying  
to be me again, the one  
lost in sleep. Or was he ever.

2.

It is over. Not a dream  
but an erasure. Where  
did the dark go,  
what did it take with it?  
Maybe it just got  
tired of being me.

**There was a religion  
with four parts to each day  
and some small text  
laid down in it, physically somewhere.  
had to be done and I hadn't  
and don't even know even now  
what it was or how to say it  
or retrieve each one  
at morning and offer it to birds.**

**3.**

**Why do white cars scare me  
as they roll down the hill?  
Are they like strokes, erasing  
memories and liturgies  
hurried into emptiness?  
Or is it politics again,  
white supremacists  
busy erasing the other?**

4.

Where is my religion,  
my comfortable coat,  
my sweater?

What was the word

I woke up conscious of forgetting?

*Fear is the Same* is the name  
of the book, a crime, a quotation,  
what does it mean  
at morning,

when everything

has to take on meaning again,  
all over again,

milk the cow every day,

I learned this as a child,

the cow must be milked every morning  
even though I never had a cow.

5.

Chessboard with no pieces on it.  
That is a comfort, sort of,  
chessmen they call them  
though some are horses  
or even elephants, and the rook  
is not a bird anymore  
but a rower where birds might live.  
And best of all there is a Queen.  
The board is empty, no war,  
no stylized aggression,  
smug rejoinders. The game  
is somewhere else. Or not  
a game at all. A hedge  
on a dark lawn, a broken mallet  
on the green, a rabbit asleep.  
Hard as I'm trying I'm  
still not me.

6.

Did I have reason  
for not walking  
out in the rain?  
All day in the house  
and when I tried  
soft rain sift sifted down  
as if to say no matter  
brother just stay home.  
Was it wrong to listen,  
to linger? I have waited  
ob the words all my life  
and still try to listen.  
Rain is *Ra in* — stay inside  
and let the sun follow you home.

7.

Specious argument  
but a vague comfort  
like a table set for dinner

**AprilB 2021 31**

**when you're not the least hungry.**

**I have been imitating**

**clouds too long, my meaning**

**lost in the laundry.**

**Try to wake. Try to spell it right.**

**30 April 2021**



**= = = = =**

**These are not the people I mean to be  
or have around me, words quivering.**

**May Eve and ancient terrors  
calmed into legends and little  
rituals, only my fingertips  
remember the old fear,  
tremble a little as the sun  
pierces through cloud  
a moment then gives up.**

**It's only morning, and the real  
Walpurgisnacht comes at night,  
tonight, bonfires, and who  
will our witches be?**

**Magic is all about symmetry--  
hide these words  
so they can be understood.**

**30 April 2021**

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I don't want  
what I want!  
That is the miracle  
of morning,

I think of something,  
yearn for it,  
and then the wearing  
dwindles,

only  
light is left.  
The eyes of Athena  
saw my wanting away.

30 April 2021

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The poet's task, of course, is to bring order out of chaos. Chaos is the Mind, the great yawning emptiness (the yawning gap, *ginnugagap*, our ancestors called it), the great Nothing from which everything comes. Order in the poet's case means *ord-er*, the word itself as agent, we put a W in front of Nordic *ord* to caress it with a whisper.

Order out of chaos -= word out of mind.

Order is the agency of words, the poet obeys the *ord-er* and speaks the words that come to be spoken. Say them, play them, they are your fate, *fatum*, 'what has been spoken.'

30 April 2021

