junB2013

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/217
Print the bulletin using invisible ink that way we’ll never know it’s now.

3 June 2013
The rain lets up.
The light lets down.
Clouds are shifting their colors now,
bands of silver, bands of lead.
Everything shows its shape —
a cloud is a crowd, *turba*,
a population of quiet selves,
flashmob in the sky
only I can hear them sing.

3 June 2013
THE JUNTA

Every day the government is overthrown. And no one notices. The new rulers mistake themselves for the ones they displaced. This makes them uneasy, weakens their focus, makes them vulnerable to the midnight colonels who sling them out of office killing one or two to preserve morale. Nothing changes. Tax collectors chivvy the poor and give most of what they mulct to some proper agency. The world runs on honesty more or less. The scared faces look out at the palace windows, those faces do change. But their expressions never do.

3 June 2013
Idling
to come me back
to breath’s life

o squeeze for me
the dimpled cloud
your lover takes
for a woman, a One
to his sad Two.

Because I too am lost
at the end of the world,
the whole of my time one
wave crested and fell.
When the heavy moisture in the fog
condenses as drops of water
the rain comes down, the air clears
a little, you can see
the ocean from the hill.
That is me, maybe,
looking, maybe,
the world will end tonight.
We feed birds in winter —
what more can we say?  

3 June 2013
Hebrew God and me
are one same thing
playing with a little alphabet
making things up

Pay attention pay attention
it’s the only money you’ve got left.

4 June 2013
(dreamt at waking)
Dear friends
I owe you my silence.
Every word you don’t hear
from me is a healing
prayer for you and for me
to bring us all alive
and I can come back to you
full of palabras
and be yours again
and mine and everything.

4 June 2013
Things make me
happen to see them

all night they get ready
a brand new sea unfurling at the shore

open your eyes and a new one is already there.

Skin of the slow waves, the sheen.

4 June 2013
Try to connect
but there is no mainland
only one more island

some of us are forsythia
lilacs or grief
I am a thick dark hedge

walling in a lost garden.

4 June 2013
LOBGESANG

But to praise
no object’s needed

praise, just praise,
praise is all agency
leave it to the world
to take it in,
wrap itself, themselves, all
selves and selflesses,
in your warm praise,
and praise is all I ever mean.

4 June 2013
SIGNATURA RERUM

The orange-breasted oriole
is fond of sucking oranges.
Leave a slice or even half a fruit
out on the porch rail and see.
WAMPANOAGS’ CLIFFS

Across the sea, white as Dover,
speaking their own
language again, or trying to,
it is hard to be one’s own.
The sea is such a fluent
separation. Things
rinse off their words, stand
naked in the foreland wind.
I say: two yellow
goldfinches at the seed.
But what is the true
name of what I see?
The cliffs. The understanding sea.

4 June 2013 (end of notebook 357)
Nothing happened
but it reminded me
of this self who
wears eyeglasses and shoes,

this worrier on the shore,
this immense sea.

5 June 2013
All in a line archipelago Elizabeths
curving back to solidity
was it a dance your mother taught you
while you lay on the daybed
half watching half
dreaming of Fragonard?
Everything is far, can’t help it,
we are people from the shore,
riverside, don’t
get too far from water.
Everything is far
but water is the same as you.
Remember your skin,
water-colored, seen
through a foggy window
or winter glass
the steam that living people
give off in the winter gloom.
Yes, dance. I come up
close behind you to breathe
air in your hair
we choose
our environments
to some extent.
2.

Bleak admission of omnipotence.
You can’t make me dance,
I am a sideline philosopher,
failed missioner in Darwinland.
All I know is sitting still.
What you can do is make that enough.

3.

Yes, dance for two
the way the ocean does
never unpartnering,
always stepping on my toes.

5 June 2013
Balkanize it —

the new empires, like the USSR,

the PRC, the USA, names that are

not names

scary acronyms

from a sinister notariqon,

o let them be small.

Let us be small:

bring the old ones back, Ottomans, all

these squabbly Arab states should be

vilayets of the one true Sultan,

lord of the East.

And the Hapsburg house restore,

old K-und-K from Switzerland to Istanbul

from Poland to the Po

the great fuzzy music of Vienna

rule us.

I believe in Bruckner, Mahler, Strauss,

no more New Jersey — New Sweden be.

Making the old come back

and dismissing the new —

doing that over and over again
till we get it right at last.

Let America begin at the Hudson,
let us meet the Vikings landing,
fill all the isles and crannies of
    Massachusetts and Providence
and even Connecticut,
    Vinland the Good.

5 June 2013
DUETS FOR SOLO VOICE

1.
Why should touch mean so much?
Will I ever understand?

2.
I don’t want to breed with you.
Breeding is an abomination.

5 June 2013
I begin to think the sea
remembers me.
No part of the equation
makes sense but the whole
expression yields a fixed
quantity of summer stars
just out of view behind
the cloud bank over Nashawena.

5 June 2013
All the people in this world
waiting for me
she says and me too,
moi, the horizon.

5.vi.13
The wall likes to wait.
The will likes to want.
Measure reaches its own limit.
Then there is more.
The other side of this.

As if a radio were always playing
there, Schumann or Dvorak
maybe, just past the edge of hearing
but you knew. We can tell
when those things happen.

There is a barrier called a street
a wilderness called your house
I think of you in a faraway market —
fruit presses against you as you squeeze
your way through the tropical aisles

*man with melon* is the song’s name
it presses against you too, a wall
is always waiting for you to be behind it
beyond it with your numbers and scissors
and rulers and string and you’re crying.
You lost me somewhere along the way
or maybe even I was the way
like a far better man long ago
but you know how things have fallen
from the high selves we once were, walls,

walls like garnet, bricks with mortar,
a wall like a regiment
powerful women marching to the capital
demanding an end to will-less wanting
corporate seafoam trash burning in street.

6 June 2013