BLISS

Robert Kelly

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/433
BLISS

for Charlotte

A cup
would be enough

it isn't
is it

anything purports
to contain

even the sky
is suspicious

this is the last
transmission

jumpstart
a blank road

stones
in some row

circle
is our loudest

music mist
over her plain

how much
to mean

to dare
geese over houses

they buy fruit
to leave

in their lover's
fridge the fall

was something
like this

something bought
not eaten

left to turn
in the dark

2.

did he love her
for nectarines

comely squashes
swampy colored

did he smile
into the freezer

because her chosen
frozen mocha hid

oreo-cumbered
against any lesser

loves the ants
of his house

know plenty
the women at the door

are enthusiastic
for a gospel he

can't even
see so busy he is

with wanting her
the eater

of such sweets the
drunkard of his
ecstasy expressed
all he wants
is to be her wine
the oboes
of Berlioz
remember a sadness
previous to any
actual experience
a grief in going
purely o
touch me
the world is always

3.

Recusant hours
but he comes
lime wall
pit digged
to receive
enemy earth
everth prey
this body
heart
yield
as by trench
irrigate or relieve
a philosophic powder
stronger than war
this is the key
the juice or sap

halting from the flower
to stoop
to one of yours
in stone
displayed o marbres
d'Aragon or force

a fiercer tawny
topaz you

specify
color alone
dissolving spring
are they ramsons

some heard
under bass or

horn my shivaree
do a lot to me

a lot of little
understandings

I want to feel
your invention

mirror of color
formally acute

even a fingertip
entering a valve

muffled cry
shinai or shawm

double vibrate
in tickled lips
lead this only
these

a breast to sleep on
infant afternoons

a preacher
shouting inside a ripe fig.

4.

Having listened to
everything heard herself

because of you
my branch

because we tree
we stand

in us
by the war

memorial haze
to hear in each

red leaf remembering
life is nude

in the pure speculum
of consequences

a thank
is not so sere

to offer this
unremembering absolute

in breeze you come
as us
I wait inside us
for the ordinary
by the town hall
a green bus
clouds abrogate the glare
we dare
alchemic speculation
you I dare to tell
the final truth
appearances
no part in part
no mechanic fret
ros lunae
or midnight dew
ignis sciens
gumption of the wise.

5.
How many
have I peopled
beings questions
from the root
a purity
hot rain this jungle calm
an orange
cut in half
some night before
the little drying out
of its moist aggregates
segments of a geometry
a little shrinking
from plump truth
map of how it is
to be here
on the low table
at the Virgin's knee
her eyes
are elsewheres
vexed art
to weird our watches
all through the night
to taste
the moon
interrogate
eccentric planets
tell a child's
skin from his mother's
made him
and call that science
vanity of the natural
I'm afraid again
you need me out loud
the clock
my only landscape
night stifled
but we spoke
garnet
I think we meant

lucid afterglow
cyprian haunches

turned from the door
morning part

news of to stay
launch a city

into this business of again
I feel slipping in me

distancing
and what I do

this natural revulsion
called tryst

and by its boat
we barrier

and by its barter weave
insolent destinations

among all too proxy
close the stars.

6.

Things that live in grass
not pasture and not wolf

but it's pasture
in the far sign go

measuring a centaur's
double knowledge

and a hard hoof
we turn out after all
to be about going
"mysterious
as everybody else"
a wonder

your questions
got inside me

hope has a way
of inference

love a way of drying
bold flowers into stable autumn values

a newspaper
entirely quadrivial

night-watching
splendent mirror talk

we understand by opposites
you left my right

thin rain
the discerptible

the sea
is falling apart

its consituent memories
itemize concrete new-laid

with stipple soon continuous
the drops

from the heart rise
an incredible candor

to seek a transpersonal destiny
beyond the roof of your head
springs it
on high

lamp leap this arrowing whiteness
heart-of-sky

a letter
from everything it's ever been.

7.

In a woman's own
house she sleeps

perfectly the dawn
understanding light

hocus pocus
with thin curtains

till day is there
indeterminate

a grape plucked
from a sleepy bunch

day after day
this same sweet bed

dateline from battlefront
incorrigible analyst

these facts are served
and in mahogany

a vision
and Empire's end

to come again
the fans of war
it is you
wakes him in me

emperor till the end
a nobleman and thief

one does what can
be corporal

amend our island
I am honeycombed with losing

only a year
in the filigree of shade

an average skin
a so-so autumn day.

8.

One after mirror
mount cloud

in the valley close
furnished with despair

cloud ceremony
on low mountains

that the tale
is a question

isn’t it
all midnights

after answers
all the arms are

the more it rains
the more
adequate occasion  "very unique" hard

imagining
why I was so dumb say

as to say celebrate
some other liturgy

work of the bed
imagine it three

funiculars to the top
Mont Blanc

between three and two
you enter Italy

then the small ascension
no bigger than

a family
over a sea of crevasses

goes silent
into what is seen.

9.

From the bowels of the temple lifted
the smaller veil of intimate feeling

and we were naked before the god
secret baptists up a Kentucky hollow

in the coal counties east of the sun
and no horse can tolerate the green air

no horse but one and we ride
the pale each other through breathy trees.

10.

The closest to rain this dry time
dissolves mist now in light

my cold hands
wait for you to wake

these are dispersions
winter everyone expects

ski magic Tuscan cordial
Murano glass that waits for me

to wake
the calendar

bed of water
sleep of sail

who are you
scarlet friend

whose body
do I inherit

from the world of doubt
just before dark

another valley showed
clear before us

north before we fell
among hemlocks

dinner hour
on nearby planets
I heart your hand
remembering an epergne
full of fruits arranged
suspiciously like landscape
Joos Van Cleve again
here is the mountain here
the valley of melon slices
tumult of blue grapes
year after year
risk each other.

11.
Saying is so what isn't
who is always running his hand
over promising furrows
in whose ground
thumbing the friable
against his palm
crying like a bird
Is this you? Is this you?
fragrant acacia
wood ark unsealed
between wings
repose
only a question
but a gold one one
smelling of ambre and the dark
here
is the mountain maybe
the tongue of larks

as if music too
counted her ear-rings

before an impossible departure
into a far continent

to hear by piercing
the sea

this hole is called an island
we linger

to understand
ourselves when there is at last

nowhere but ourselves
to go

patient for outflow’s
end anxious for elm

telling this over
a bard among

hazels
clearing her eyes

limited lightning
transmissions silk

soaked in oil imagine
a dimmer earth

over Neptune
precisely invisible

as a blue heart would
in the forest

of elsewhen
a cavalier
nibbling on the ferrule of his lance
Splendor Solis
this was called
a book open to the sun.

12.
Should investigates
solvents
alcohol ether acetone
what can dissolve
the other
weather
Lenox and leaving
or seeming to
how ordinary a measure
as a bus dissever.

13.
I am two
hundred years old
a linden tree
grows out of my mouth
every day
is valley times
and the blue tea
turns in my hands
into that oil of light
I knead you with
caress you bliss
you happenstance of blonde

you ardor order
you supreme you "cellophane"

queen of the Elizabeths
my archipelago you flow

up the out stairs
in warm light

audacity of love
immeasured by burgoyne roses

a stroke of witness
consumes your stare

wood wed
journey to the Fact.

14.

Name it
till the table

drinks the knife
the deaths

are copper
the deaths are malachite

snug in the bleak
of schyst this mica is

an alphabet
of departures
these roses last sunlight
cracked tortoise shell

room to move in
open on a warm light

cat stretched
along my belly chest

its face
abrupt my chin

saying that musical
nothing they say

from which an answer
comes back as you.

15.

I don’t know what to tell
the world is glass

I think the bliss
dissolves upward into the previous condition

to which all roads insist
a color is permission

god scale on the risen tide
succinct of marvels

a corpse at the door
remember the simple blessing yellow rice

in the auguries of your eyes
I saw once all mystery unravel

I looked down into your skies
and said *This is the place for me*

there is no bell
no limit to union

nothing answers
but it answers

trumpets and clarinets
preposterous militancy of song

not know
enough to go

as if music could release me from
the spell of my attachment to

all such blue distant cargo
by suddenly stopping

costal shipping
cluttering blue attic

go deep upstairs
in the grain of our wood.

16.

Can it come again
the momentary certainty

this conviction
gull catch fish

open mouth
never doubt

the autumn was still fresh a mist of sorts
over your prophetic mountains

this hill
be home

my Dordogne entrances
surveyed

in straw they destine me
in bottle dark

that garnet electuary
makes you "just a little drunk"

whereas a native
of those old rocks I am

false fine courteous alas
by love one day be tamed

a shepherd hoisted
from his talky valleys

nightmare of abandonment
they flee from me

that sometime
were all my time

and I have leave
to work my spells

on some other auburn
autumn o do not go

bliss
is always motion

whereby a ball
declines to roll

this wheel won't run
because of rule

because of you
wait in lucid bliss

called "missing
you" the way a heart
continues to express
the burgundy river

no matter what the mood
as from that muscle risen

(rising) out
of the central mystery

(Wall of the Insane Woodworker,
Seventh Column, Piece of Water,

Diamond Elevator, Queen of Topknots,
Naked Arrow, How Far is Up

shoots out of the top of the head
I shout to you

no going whatever we
are one place.

17.

When you warm my hands on this
remember the monument

doesn't remember the stone
doesn't remember the street
doesn't remember the hands
roughed this out of mind.

18.

Of course there are measures
deer fleeing into the woods

or midnight raccoon passing
I turned back to watch it
but saw the shapely outline
of a tall person crossing

the road in the clue of midnight
starlight we children

of Orion it is a standing
that we do a shadow

a forest of particulars
time and again the

vanishing
to pronounce

our eyes alike
the breath is an island

in which words grow
old and finally make sense

finally someone comes
it is home then

the color of your eyes
imagining the other side of time

the subtle dance
where going becomes coming

who was crossing
the road no animal

no wife a shadow
born of shadows.

19.

Write it write it a word
on a tree
back to me
writ on a leaf

and signed September
we are going

into the going
and all it needs

to stay alone
the night

listen
to the xul-animal

evading outside
your guesses at identity

the children
of the moon

descant their madrigal
my arteries

seize this opportunity
to importune

write it the rock
is transiency

the torch of the xul-animal
awakens some sympathy

in the rat nest of the abandoned
a relentless mercy of the mind

interrogates my mirror
suddenly fragrant

the bread of light
tells you to eat.
20.

Meeting in the core
because a Roman

answered
the meekest night

babbling Lesbia Clodia Lydia
pulcher pulcherrima all

that sweet boloney
near Sirmio I waded

in the brittle pool your face
remembered me sudden

a smile among colleagues
under the sheets

in bed emulsion
even-unioned

name of a mountain
I borrow my mouth.

21.

[Charlotte translating the *Aeneid*]

How much you knew of the old book
where upriver the fronds hung low

over the descending yet hardly moving tawny
river from the springs of long affection

this water knows
you saw beside the shimmering

far back in the beech woods
where word becomes flesh
not once not just once
over and over again until the world

just as we say it
and we with little effort

(for you were reading
the old Ausonian book
upstream into Shawmut
upstream into my hunger)

for you were carrying us
into the golden Saturn landsat shimmer

of cities that would come and go with us
hardly daring even to be

everything said
becomes flesh

we world
and the pale wild pigs

played and snuffled
anxious for beech mast

a place
consenting to be.

22.

Someone else's
become land

old orchard
scratch of thorn apple

gouge at eye
against this
magic going
why magic? a light

inside the stone
shows the way.

Dark going
downhill.

Fern.
A thousand

seedlings of such pine.
And by the flat rock

armored
in the presence of a choric god

make offerings
to any wall

a wall
is wise.

Now after all that
our crows contend

the silence
you keep in woods

should be kept forever
after about

them.
Do not read this page.

23.

Is this a word
say it
the page is blank
I read

like a goat
nibbling chanterelles

the roadside
is Paradise

the letters
specify the same

a fish
in the gloaming

rises
to the white

fate,
the ruler

of such a country
wears a sad

green crown,
something torn

around the edges.
Eyes. Eyes.

That was a Grail. Another destiny was the small objection, like
a window set in limestone, lepers look through it at an
untastable sacrament. This mass. These restrictions forgive
me.
A merchant with his stock of wine, a far-off dog complaining.
Come with me, the road is hard. Yellow remembrance litters the
sky.

24.
What won’t yet does

neither answer nor question

but complete like a fish

say a wall in France

a dog
a dog

I have never till now

stood in me barking

the clamor road uneasy sun

old books unread certain fathoms

in your sea I am translated

that’s all the poetry I know

dapper prose of calendars

branchwise a chickadee.

25.
The list
of things

Loires we must chateau
the moats

the battue
of dead rabbits

the merciless
trees

advancing geometry
the Regular

I will not give
in ever

never the names
alone

we will remember
the arguments of light.

26.

In the deed
was a conviction

in all my confusion
there was nothing to see

there was a city
held us apart

we met there
in the blue of rain

in another country
permanently here

commonwealth waiting
in the dark of need

where you lived
in sea trough and wave hurry

knew me
where the world was.

1992