1-2007

janC2007

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/668
ШОСТАКОВИЧА:

3. G Major

Palm trees here?
In Thulë, where
not even shadows grow?

Yes, said the Wolf,
a tree, with real
dates growing on it,

I have one in my mouth now.
kiss me and I’ll transfer
the bliss of it to you

for your whole life to swallow
kiss by kiss,
isn’t that a nice tree?

Can we do it
without kissing,
without the registry office,

commissioner of oaths, priest,
parents, dancing after,
can we just do it as a taste,

a simple taste of each other?
You’re right, Wolf said,
no need to marry me

I am just a smile in the snow
with a sweet mouth
and nothing after,

my palm tree though is just for you.
ШОСТАКОВИЧА:

4. e minor

Scatter slowly flakes
an oat or barley light
on little pond
drop
       a pebble in
the ripples end
in time, time
is rigorous,
you will never,
love, never
get away
from number,
my other name.

So here we are again
watching the unseen

listening for the earth itself
to sob out a little remorse

for what we feel—
all feeling is suffering

she knows that but never
once in all these years apologized.

Unless you count spring,
another rigorous arrival
in her counting system

will you go on
waiting with me forever
for what never comes?

that is the best kind
a waiting
that is gentle and pure

never impatience,
no big words, no mysteries,
just a one and a one

together
some water at our feet
the mercy of merely this

sustains us
word by word
we tell us

all we have to know
barely daring to breathe
the easiest words out

And then it sparkles
over us, it is night!
And stars piddle their light
down so we can watch
their ripples too
reflected, wave in wave,
a flag at the back of the mind,
new ideas! roses even!
put on your sweater
darling it is so present
here and everything
speeds up around us
like wind and sky
running right through us
and deep inside us
is the only away
things run to when they
while we sit calmly
listening run away.

7 January 2007
ШОСТАКОВИЧА:

5. d minor

Where have I lost the little thing
the soft remembering
like the rooster standing on one leg
beside my grandfather’s barn?

I never had a grandfather a memory a barn,
something in my left hand kept beating on the Sun
to make it run,

       or rain, it does,
       here on the pale
       sprouts of my wishes

to make them grow
quicker than ducks quack
in clement lagoons
and the young priests run by
gashing themselves
with prayerbook words
crying out in all their
tongues Forgive
everybody everybody
forgive everybody
then we will bleed no more

but all I want to listen to is rain.

8 January 2007
ШОСТАКОВИЧА:

6. b minor

Let me explain.
I am chalk,
I write with myself
on simple blackboards
in the little schools
in all the valleys
where you were never born,
why it’s so hard
for us to talk

you had no chance
to know me,
learn all I learned
to put into words
and set before you

but you wouldn’t look
because you weren’t born
where looking is
where one submits
demure to the words of the other

you come from somewhere else
a leaf or its breeze
left you for me to find.

What’s this?
The woman’s mind
in a tree’s body, no,
a tree’s soul and a bird
is on the branch,
what kind, no, a song,
a wolf’s mind
in a woman’s soul, no,
a woman valley,
a woman walking
towards me, shadow,
shadow, why did
I think it was a child
found under birch tree,
pale skin pale blanket
no child, a woman
come walking
towards me, she
took our time
and turned it round,
this terrible world
where we have
only each other,
where only our enemy
really cares, really
loves, only this
face looks so blankly
into mine can
make me free,
I am lost in the woods of the other
not even a flute to call my own.

Walking is good
touching
the trunks of trees
going by,
wonder why
it’s not enough
to be me,

where is the other
side of this minute
I have never gotten through
all the way to the peaceful
valley they claim
lions and lambs together
wolves and cabbages
they say that on the other
side of caring more about
what you’re thinking
than what’s in my
heart angry
lover endless wood.
8 January 2007
UPSTAIRS WINDOW

I see the stream
quick whitewater
bend. If a canoe
came by I would
see that too.
If you were in
the canoe I'd see you,
I would wave
but you would not
see me. A window
for all its brightness
is one more wall.

8 January 2007
If I’ve told you once
I’ve told you a thousand time
women are not made of wood
or even woods. A wolf
has to be somewhere else,
someone holding his hands
up, surrendering to the sun,
like an Egyptian ka,
surrendering to life itself,
someone. Like sunlight
blinking on a euro coin—
both are needed, bad,
sun and money. Otherwise
the window looks out
only onto another window
looking in and the clothes
never get fresh air,
do you understand?
Wash your toes,
oil the table top,
scour the skillet
with kosher salt—
this is life
we’re talking about.
What else do I need
to keep repeating?
Keep your feelings
to yourself,
those unwanted
unwelcome hands.

9 January 2007
8. f♯ minor

O it all is here
plain as a tiger
to a scared child
at the hour
when menacing animals
are standard
by the bed

it all is here,
spring brook
and what it does:

help help me along
help me help along
the road is lare
help, the road is long
I mean help
the air is hard, help,
help me breathe it,
help me help it help me
in there is an air here
so long and lare and say it
help me bear it
what the road says
is hard to, help me
tall and slender
help me little brook
help me help me
like skin although
no skin's here
there help me bear
what isn't road
isn't someone's skin
the road is someone
else's I can't help go
help go, help road,
help bare, help long,
help long bare skin
help air, help the air
bear it help me hear it
the air says it, there
is an air here, lare
to say it

and then you answer
things are changing
isn’t always always

it’s right now too
the time to help you
is always always

but this time is bare
this time helps you
only to hear all

the rest is road
along law along
say it louder

the way a road
says it, helps you,
helps you along

nothing louder
than a road breathing
help me hear her breathing.

9 January 2007
9.  E major

Where are all the ships coming from?
The waves bring them by themselves.
Deep down in the sea is a place called China
and it puts the water into a trance
and tells it what to do.

Salt
is the instrument it uses. All over the planet
saltless freshwater streams hurtle
oceanward with all their force to taste
swallow incarnate this Salt

and be consumed. The ships you see
are just the things the ocean dreams.

Trying to make us see.
Trying to make us want
what is not here.
What we have to bring
from far away
to put into our mouths

or that we have to go to
our poor slow selves
over the lifelong sea
to the weird island
where they keep
the one thing we need,
that strange other salt.

9 January 2007

10. c# minor
This is your last chance to listen. 
Listen means run away.

The rivers will never catch you, 
the Rabbis legislating your body’s flow 
of blood and milk. Run away 
means listen to what no one is saying.

Run away means climbing by night 
between the lines and running 
naked beyond language. 
Beyond anybody’s meanings.

But language is a dog and tracks you down 
always on your scent 
sometimes close to your heels 
so you can hear that familiar snuffling 
all the words in the world 
dribbling from its sloppy mouth,

sometimes way back there in the forest 
you know it’s coming, you only know, 
and knowing is the awful thing that language does,

knowing is the shadow of a thing before the thing, 
or the scent of a woman you will never meet 
though language always claimed you will

back in the days before you learned 
the only way to listen is to run away.

You saw a movie once of her doing it 
and she was pretty in a way, 
you could almost smell her, and you knew 
that if you could run faster than language 
there would be no more time, 
that words are all they really have to catch you with, 
words those terrible laws,

and you could run right out of your own story 
and be with her, and be free. 
But these are words you have to run away from too.
DAY OFF

No one to hurry me along ha!
just the emperor’s march internalized
a dissonant Radetzky driving
always deeper me into valleys
till my words can’t find anymore
sun. Blue soldiers in red coats,
play of order hospitalled in dream.
No more killing. No more arguments
over breakfast. Prater or Bois,
your father or mine, which tyrant
worse. The whole world is a park,
I use words really to estrange you,
send you back to your totalitarian
roots. Us both. Because you
are always the authority, power &
glory, you are what the world’s about
I have to slave and scheme to replicate
a 3D shadow of to live inside—
your backyard is the only park.

That’s the big secret. Eve was the snake,
the snake was Eve, Adam’s apple
was his eye, he looked on her
and found that she was you, the first you,
she was other. And he was afraid.
From this fear of his, God was born
and other voices spiraling through Eden.

And now you make it snow to slur the green
but it still is some kind of parkland
museum-quality, mis-en-bouteille
in the mind’s vineyard, nothing missing ever,
just the world wrecked by bad grammar.
Quick! A language with no pronouns and much wine.

10 January 2007

2. A sleeve as long as the afternoon. Relax, your wrist’s in New Jersey but nobody’s going to ask you the time.

3. You’ve gotten here now put it on.

4. *Mode.* To dress in the hour and the place. Else nake yourself be.

10 January 2007