5-2006

mayC2006

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/739

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.
Some rain. Some hill. 

*Loma*, a hilltop or bare knowe. 

We have none here. Hear 
but some rain 
in and out. Waiting for all the trees 
have leaves. What else would they.

Water. I still think 
about so much wet, leaving lines 
on dust or paper, the stains of thought 
left in silence. She laughs. 
She has heard such things before. 
Breakfast on the moon, she thinks 
in other words, wear the wind 
for your pretty shirt.

12 May 2006
The next one might work:
there is an ear,
lay it to the ground.
A history of everything they ever said.
Nothing hurt or last to knock
an oak door in a Czech wall
is alchemy enough. Resound,
sister! I have loved you
with knots in your spine, have
taken the railroad of your thighs
to the end of the line, alfalfa
and rapeseed fields all round,
and a dry scented barn or godown
beside the track where maybe once
tobacco cured or crazy missionaries
sheltered from vile weather
and tried to sleep. No train
ever comes in the opposite direction.
Just as well. It would be death
to take it. To be born again.

12 May 2006
Nobody can ever know who they are by themselves
-- *Know Thyself* is not a solo flight

you know who you are by what somebody tells you
one day maybe quick in passing
or all night long it could be
their warm breath in your ear telling

even Buddha sat that night and dawn beneath a tree
and the tree told and the snake stood up and told
till he put his fingers to the ground and said
    Hush, I have heard,

now I know who I am.

If you look for yourself with yourself you will only find the one you think you
are already, the lost one, the reject, el desdichado
but if you look for yourself with the tools of the other
you will find the good one, the glad responsible one, the god.

Look at you with my eyes.

13 May 2006
(for Mary Reilly)
IN YOUR WILL

leave me either a million euros
or your Pléiade Racine. The swimming
pool without the house,
the water in it but not the pool.

Leave me your name
to toss around in my mouth
and drop once in a while in bars
to puzzle girls who never heard of either of us.

How woozy fame makes us,
the more people know me
the less I know myself,

leave me
your visiting card, your Vacheron
Constantin grande complication,
your box at the opera,
your dartboard,

your map of Africa
when they all spoke Latin there,
your badger shaving brush
full of your dead germs.

Leave me your mother’s wedding ring
in case I find a bride among the natives here
pale frightened women who remember you too well
stepping down from your sleigh, drunk and dangerous,

leave me your barn with the owl on the steeple,
is it still alive,
    leave me your luck,
leave me the handlebars of your Yamaha
to mount on the walls of my salon
so I can pretend I used to kill for a living
not just by accident, not just by paying taxes
like all the rest of us citizens,
    leave me

your passport most of all, I never knew
what country you were really from
or where I belong, the original one,
the one I see in your eyes
before you look away to take care of
all the other would-be heirs who want a piece of you.

13 May 2006
END TIME

    or classic
    schooner I’d call it,
mahogany
    one of those who spoke
with God in the old
days when God was a boat.

A bid
    for the valuable sea.
Troll notion
    from the known,
    hoi,
the little people are always with us
and that’s the difference on the sea, we
have to do the troll work there, the fairy
influence,
    the fee of earth
    must bring to water.

That is what Homer meant,
    the little people
of the sea are big, are nagas and tritons,
have no truck with us.
    Our elves we
must impersonate
    at sea,
to fit the slim malevolence of us
a chance to win.
Every now and then a pigfish saves.
Or Jonah comestible comes up
spouting his new-laid prophecies
   the seas confuse
until we hear.

What we hear is always mingled with our hearing,
that’s what’s so classic in the ship
the trim-coifed schooner
skimming over all that otherness down there
like a Scarlatti sonata, Domenico I mean,
chattering over a Spanish marketplace
bringing shape to what happens,
ordering nonsense to be beautiful

you think,
   for a moment
then by now the ship is into the horizon
and you’re left with the sea,
   no similes,
affectless
   riddle of the actual
never understood but stood.
For Jesus you say walked on water.

14 May 2006
LONG LEAF

to tell you

sister your day

narcissus bulbs lift their long
skinny leaves droop pleasingly around the
rim of the tall clear vase

where only a few tiny white
flowers persist

so late in this cool spring –

answers are all we ever really need,
answers and meat

because sometimes you want to make a flower bleed,
all that green to hide a ruby fact
you can't find in the heart of emerald,

your stone, lady, I promised, finally
found one I could afford,

I had worried about it years before,
when could the penniless fuck-up that I was
get hold of an emerald in a gold ring
he had promised, I had promised to my sister

an Indian emerald from the river sieved,
who knows what labor goes into this business,

making a stone talk,
how loose we live with contradictions,
there are two natures
      not one Nature,
the red one and the green one
and we live as patriots of one or other

or compromisers. Who still
are promisers,
      willing to make do
for the sake of the stone. I earned the money
meant kept the promise,
      God knows the quality of the stone itself,
can there be
a bad stone?

      Two natures. That is the secret.
Cuchullain’s fatal strategy,
      to stand with one foot in each
and try to fight,
      what could such a man do but kill his son,
his human consequence?

      Liminal man,
man between the elements you are,
say your prayers and close your eyes and try to dream.

14 May 2006
Rice and rarity.

Not to believe
what I believe,
crooked fish
and spill of other people’s money
along the common shore,
or credit,
or Bottom basking in memory of a mistake
or, The Real Made Rare.

Such dreams don’t have
Parliament morning full of mothers –
breathe, the air’s your only evidence,
God’s mercury,
not even one
but all of them,
become.

15 May 2006
THE INSTINCT

Who gives these ceaseless instructions,
a child in the park conducting
an invisible orchestra
he only hears.

Try to hear too,
a small one
but it fills the air.

To be music you need to know
how to take a joke,
how to dream all through breakfast
if they let you have one
in the pretty blue prison of your desires.

See the kid
wave his arms,
the pigeons semi-alarmed
rearrange their resting squadrons,
furlough from the sky.

See the kid,
guess the sound
he hears,
what has he seen
to make him hear like this?
Soon the voices come
     and he hears those too,
what is he doing
     in this little body,
a mind that rules the universe
can’t tie his shoes.
O music is a bitch, a Sovran
chorus of absolutes
     each one
disposed to rule
     every minute of your virtued life.

The sun is out,
     more smiles than frowns,
more grass than grief,
     what would you,
a summer day.

     But who can really hear
the music some kid hears in
what he doesn’t even know yet is
only his heart or
     something like that, a noise inside?

15 May 2006
PERSPECTIVA NATURALIS

Two scapes
of the risen amaryllis
divide like Aries horns
and cup between them
out there a tree.

True
botany is just looking.

15 May 2006
from/for Patricia No

The mouth she sees with

and every womb is foreign
we come from

when we let the mirror
warp till we become
transparency and nothing seen.

15 May 2006
He found it in a book.

he has had enough of it,
this knowing so much and you not being there,

a tree is always waiting
he read

the bark grows over and conceals
the beginning of our story

the vascular permissions

bone alphabet

I read in your blind skin

He leans against the tree
and thinks, this is bark, when
it is thick it is cork

the cork protects

(but nothing protects the bones
from themselves
they go on being
hollow, and very far)

he thinks of all the tunnels
the miles of hollow space inside her bones

a skeleton is made of dark highways
barely hidden by the pale chalk of the bone

but what is the blind disease
she read in the dark?

He thinks the blind disease
is feeling.

feeling along the bone walls.

And he too has a malady of the skin,
his skin is sick from being so far from hers.

(from notations a year or so back)
16 May 2006
make the King and Queen move
to let the others up
breathe me
the faces are all that moved me
stilling me in the morning a Red Ten
needed
a blue cloud
o you may talk about your India your ports of Spain, for me
there is no color like the dark plum
smashed below the wheel
and I have waited, haven’t you
for the stupid flag of our latest conqueror
to drag down among the deuces and the treys
as if this were not the game it is, oil into pockets and the poor go beg.

16 May 2006
But it wasn’t what I sounded
but what sounded me. A circus
of indirections, a ball
on fire. Through the outfield men touch
the shadow and they fall.

If they knew I was here
they’d be speaking German,
language of fear, ich liebe Dich
we say now, we used to say
little d dich,
and what about you,
do you hold me
in the immer, immer of your heart?

16 May 2006
On the esplanade of anorexic avengers
they stare dully out at the half-forgotten sea.

Crime is the lubricant of the social engine
so forgive me when I break
your window with my impetuous glance,

or gaze as they’d say, swayed
by ces dieux, cettes déesses
of the Sorbonne
who prance in the Luxembourg
midnight moonlight with barely an essay on,

just because the grass is wet,
because of many other normal hence peculiar things.

16 May 2006