

11-2005

novI2005

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novI2005" (2005). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 821.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/821

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.

Rain day but no rain

Om day but some Om

Sunday and no either

Woodpecker woke me, said

Serves you right

if you lived in the City

I would be a human

disturber of your meaningless repose,

a drunk in the street,

a girl at the door.

Now it's left to us unintelligent avian messengers

to rouse you – think Hegel,

think Parmenides, arise!

Bootless errands in a sleeveless time

await you, camerado,

a bolus of understanding

threatens to choke your morning wit,

wake up and scorn me,

I am a bird.

Or inscribe me

in the universal lyrical museum

of particulars, like Rosenzweig

told you, one

blessed thing after another

until the song is sung
all the way to the end of things.
The detail of the detail
is salvation. Otherwise
we have only epic – which means war.
The camouflage of simple words
weaving together in the trees
– branches now or leaves a-later –
to draw the lyric eye
into impenetrable fascinating
complexity catch you – and no more war.

27 November 2005

=====

Straighten out the sun
there are many
and lay the moon aside,
you have fingers to feel
your way in the dark.

Touch it, the famous thing
you're always looking for,
now that the sight of things
—including the sight of the thing itself—
no longer distracts you,

don't let your hands be asthmatic,
reach out and take hold,
land on it the way your immigrant
ancestors landed glad excited
in a new world. You belong there.
Be definite. Every inch of you
lay against it. It is almost done.

27 November 2005

=====

Late enough to know better
but still talking. Still
the laconic goat browsing
on the Attic hill. Who
can help being in love with language?
Without language there is no love.

27 November 2005

=====

If you can spurn me the sparrows will get you
because we are dust basically, daughters of dirt
irregular in our assignments, orderless, vague,
leaping the gap gaining ground on emptiness
always, till every one of us understands
the need of nodding yes to our neighbors
even with desire dazing them to demand us.
But late we land in that lake of permission.

28 November 2005

[*sloka*]

Heart felt the volume of its own enterprise, so many years long
driving the river of blood through the self-knowing animal me

28 XI 05

=====

Straighten out the mind pool
the thing-that-forgets
is the Mother in her Tent
(caravan. Yurt mother. Pavilion
pyght and she in green samite
waiting. Or in the tepee,
quiet smoking.) She alone
is privileged to remember—
the mental trace of what is not here
except in the mind. The mind
is always here. The atmosphere
also is an inference from we breathe.
Bad logic lights the world.
We are the only animals who
know how to forget.

28 November 2005

PATCHWORK

Feel soft of fur.

Feel lost of feeling. Her.

A climb-tossed tower

overlooking nervousness –

shy men interrupt

confident women –

abrupt intercession

amateur lawyer

sheep in clover, why, just

tell me why. It's so easy.

It's like a sparrow

twitching in the dust you made,

o Lord, your wife

is on the sparrow, flies down

to aid us. Viens, viens,

Vénus, only to gods

can we speak as to a child

or intimate, fight alongside me –

(when were the first pronounceable

commercial acronyms – Socony,

Esso, Conoco – introduced?

What is the earliest acro-company name?).

come be my good company

be at my side or in front of me

kneeling before you

praying with all the agencies
of my speech rehearsing
endlessly the simplest script
I need to you-morize
in a me-less world to say you
a quiet wet internal telling.
Wake. Half wake. Rise.
Half rise. Walk. Half walk
across the bedroom to the church,
half marry me. Live half forever
plus three years, then vanish
in the sky over the road somewhere
while I stare up at you vanishing
and you stare up at me – look,
we both are going, look, we are
each other! ozone smell, thrill
of our nervous disciples, all
our difference blows away,
lost in light, rising
I think I am held safe in my arms.

28 November 2005

AISOPOS

Lion hide bone dim hunger
body from time would be
(trochaic trimeter isn't)
haunted by instinct
hatred by opportunity
hummingbirds eat color only
all the rest is voided
(rest means the lyrical matter
of the world, the things
one by one that make
the song sing) –
 a hole in your ear
 lets you hear –
this is a praise of Lack.

28 November 2005

IN THE CIVIL FOREST

(for Bob Coover, reading)

The troglodytes are sound asleep
but the eager bats twitch intricately
seizing with juicy jaws. Bat spit
drips through the forest dim,
the mist you see come up at dusk
is that, just that. Effluvium—
the rivers that flow out from us.
I wanted to be a sonnet, neat,
logical, with a spasm at the end,
orgasm. Then shadow, fifteenth hole,
sleep. “There are no limits,” only aporias
—untransactable boundaries, no-go,
solutions that don’t work, music
you can’t hear, skin you can’t touch.

28 November 2005

THE STEAMBOAT

The steamboat comes alive, it is an animal
now, amphibious, wet and sly.

The wood turns into meat,
the mighty Ruhr-built engines become
one single messy wet and thundering heart.

The deck is skin, ladies in long white dresses
as painted by James Tissot come from somewhere
and still stroll along it, hoisting parasols.

The boat-beast sails along towards Christmas
and the morning after, everything forgiven.

28 November 2005

A PENDULUM

is enough to have, one pendulum.

It talks clear enough for a man.

It points shyly but insistently

to the center of the earth,

quivering as long

as you keep watching.

When you go away it stands still.

Then everything is here.

28 November 2005

=====

Remember,
I listen with my hands.

Later I wonder
did I really mean

listen,
I remember with my hands?

28 XI 05

HOST OF THE BEGINNING

A reed. A scarf.
around the day.

A loco lady – young
but stocked with years
beaucoup. Wise
domes over flat spells:
a city.

Lift them,
like a bra. Lift it
like a last drink
before the white line
along the dark
that leads you home.

How does the line know
where you live
but it does, it goes
right there.

And how
does the hand
know how to find the skin?
Is it some dumb dance?

Axes chop wood
but live in crystals,
how can we live
in such complexity
of what things mean,
cleave means stick
together, means cut apart.

My personal hand
trembles with ambiguity and you.

29 November 2005

WARMISH FOR WINTER

Thank you, weathergod.

Thank you, Madman,
day of the day.

There are alchemies
no alchemist discovered.

Stars no astrologer
smirched with interpreting.

There are hillsides in you
no one has even climbed
or bellyflopped down in winter,
real winter. We come back
always to winter and to you.

Sometimes I'm a brothel with no beds
or an Olympic pool drained of water
but I'm always thinking of you.

And you have your dearths too,
your meagernesses
but I am much too much a swain
to say them. The hills in you,
though, I do praise,

I call out to them
to let me climb at last,
let them call out to me,
bid me ascend

in you altitude by
altitude until
I stand on the highest of them
maybe, and call you
at last by your proper name.
And I do.
And there also be
mountains beyond.

29 November 2005

=====

Images

come when they
want to.

The rest is glass.

29 XI 05

=====

Not that sort is our intercourse

but a string.

So much violence in a string,

war in a cork,

heaven in a handkerchief.

Ah me, the things we need.

Even speaking Japanese is no help,

you still pay taxes, you still sweat.

When it comes down to it

I have nothing much.

Imagination is somebody else's

memory working in me.

A vividness, a feeling from inspecting

empty milk bottles on a brick stoop at dawn.

29 November 2005

HOW HARD THIS STORY IS

Why can't tell what story. Even now it is in the endgame of beginning, and when that island sinks, there's nothing to be but the story, that is, the sea. The sea is the only story, even if it has to come in the form of a flower – the one called oldmenareyoungagain – or the weather's petcock unslipped from heaven, Deluge, or a bunch of greasers climbing up a wall – Troy. Troy is the only story, even, all the Troys turn into Story, that should be clearest to the most astigmatic, the heartfelt loser who loves to listen with fat lips. Blabbermuse. The only story is the alphabet, we sit before the slate and watch the world begin and end over and over, alpha and over, over and ómega. There's always a few more letters left, noir sur blanc, hand on hip demanding. Spell me a story, laddie. There lasts a lost that loves a lassie, ladle me some on that. Now sell another. Well in this one there are two and they do three things till one, but this is another one, comes along and sells them six days from whose day? Riddle. The riddle is the only story. We look at this and think about that and have no way to ease our minds but tell a story of how it got to be so. Easing the mind, that's what a story is for

30 November 2005.

ON THE DAY *IK'*

and the wind was wild
when *Ik'* came in, last night
the Wild Day beginning. *Immanum*,
Verne's word, untamed, out there
singing round the whole house –
the *other*. Wind is the breath of the other.
That's why it rouses, but uneases,
haunts, harries. Mistral, sirocco,
Föhn. We can bear only a little othering,
then go mad. Run wild. The sun
comes out trying to calm us.
Sometimes we sink back relieved,
eased by the sight of our shadow.
My shadow is the other of the other,
but on my side, mine. My ally.
No matter how hard the wind blows
it will never blow my shadow away.

30 November 2005

koiné,

the multiplex
the keen Whateverese
of the Empire!

Jesus spoke it,
Pilate, Julius
croaked it as he fell,
kai su tekne, even you
my son,

but who listens
to what any emperor says,
his words are weather,
we wrap our cloaks around our ears.
Usually the emperors spoke sex,
spoke murder. spoke fear.
Then the outsiders came
who could not speak at all.

30 November 2005

=====*(Koiné)*

Then there was the radio
so many thing it was saying
on the summer nights of Eastern
Parkway, Gabriel Heater,
President Roosevelt, Kwajalein.
Good news tonight. And the birds
twitter their Yiddish
loud in the trees above the benches
blessing us – what could be
a better grace a better gift
than some sweet words
in an unknown language
spoken straight to you?
The unknown word
that finds the heart. I yearn
for that, the lips of mystery
warm, wet any my ear.

30 November 2005