

1-2002

janA2002

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janA2002" (2002). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 925.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/925

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NEONATE

With the humility of an ordinary mirror
I begin to blow oak leaves up the hill
no it is a swanboat though tenorless
an opera though musicless, a mute with words

all the least things I am are you tomorrow.
Happy who year honey and an egg of space.

1 January 2002

Now that the music's done
I call the chancery

Revise the constitution if you can
this year we will be human

we don't need the shadows of ideas
but this time don't get rid of them

by turning off the lights.
This church, keep the year open.
This girl, let her keep her man.

I lost my place in the hymnal years
and years ago but I still love you
is anybody home?

1 January 2002

BAPTISTS

Offering a white almond almost a new religion
when can words be solemnized again
means holy marriage betwixt
mouth and meaning, father and mother,

Elizabeth stepping soaked from the Jordan
adult christened in white robe
the wet cotton speaking on her skin
and I'm a radio knows how to hear

this intimate nowhere only words can touch
and having done so leave us just as far.
It is strange to think of sacrament
but there's always something going on

some symbol happening to skin
beneath the gorgeous tragedy of what we see
this mediated touch between us
lost in the saying so.

1 January 2002

The way ink makes paper crinkle

I like that
to tell by fingertips alone which
page is worded and which blank

so can hear a little bit with skin
alone the rustle of words
I would not have understood
if I had read them
with ordinary eyes in any language

language being what we are given
to shelter us from understanding

or defang the verity of actual life.

1 January 2002

Get from here to there, count syllables
From cocktail to Jerusalem o you old words

Don't you know that smoking and thinking
Are old hat now, like hats, like being old

Like going anywhere so you come back and say
I have been to the place where Jesus died

I have counted the waves in what they call a lifeless sea.

1 January 2002

More branches fallen on the lawn.
Who wants to hear about my trees?

1.I.02

I chose a child's pen
To be born again

It is dangerous
To be the first one up

All alone with the sun
And no one to tell.

1 January 2002

Catch one more tune
Before I let the morning go
Into the snooze of sunlight
Silent as money working.

1 January 2002

Too breath
the little
smart stars
to recite
forgotten information
the burden
of the imaginary
is very great

all those lovers
powerless to call
a simple telephone
all those towers
can't even fall

locked river
mind amber
river's heavy
presence presence
of absence
palpable

you can take
all the properties
of anything and
unimagine them
all but the space
it occupied,
space only
you can't think
away does every
breeze have carnal
knowledge of trees

I.K.

my trees
my fallen branches

he cries out
like a congressman
suddenly caught
among the truth
the laudable
absence of feelings

but this morning
is terrible
in what I remember
the absence of gesture
what did I know
in the night time

and fail to do
something simple as
years of failing yes
to say it sitting
in a wise old house
waiting till the time
is right

it takes
a long time to time
the actual
to attend
in the cockpit
of desire
the radar of the heart
that habit

to know the time
to sit at the controls
controlling nothing
presiding over
the silences of me
in a high tower
imagining a world
mine to eke out

magus and poltroon
a man far off
praying to what he wants

to manifest
in the commodious instant
eternally caught
in the vow of now.

1 January 2002

DUTCH POEM

Brine ale Deventer
In winter Erasmus
Polymath studies
Rhododendron quill.

2 January 2002

Winter writer
the blue
herring.

Sea me,

Fish.

Not much
is wasted there
you mortar and you pestle

irresolvable, parse.
Brine. Wide city
with no wall
nude terrestrials
shadow of a broken
sky no one fell down

apple pleasures
lewd semaphores
of wind in wheat
hurrying secretaries
study screenplay
parks benches stymied

marriage is everywhere.

2 January 2002

WINTER OLYMPICS

Does a robin know
how long her winter

tailbone in grease
slide home on they's street

sleek with weather I lend you
I still believe in trolls break bridges

your money falters but I catch you
coins long gone

your eyes
their pockets

because you represent me as a man.
Dream horizontal pleasures.

2 January 2002

The sun rises long after it becomes light:
You could see I'd be somebody before I was anybody.

2 January 2002

AUTORITRATTO

Malevolent upstart this would-be monk
Glories in god's weather and forgets the mail.
If you can't answer your letters
It means you actually must live in jail.

2 January 2002

MY FATHER REMEMBERS LENIN

A man could be a lion or a sleeve be tight
Skin on a herring bark on a tree
Metaphors if perfect fit yet I don't know
I think I fit you better than all that

Who you who me the hammer
Speaks the reasonable Russian of his later years
God is lonely God's cry distracts us
From our natural state. Sleep now,
Your arm is paralyzed, the sky is sick.

2 January 2002

BERLINS

1.

I thought it was a love song is was communism
the girl in the Tiergarten was just propaganda
when you think about it only money tells the truth
how could we come so together yet live apart
money knows, each soul a different telephone.

2.

that day you were blonde in black a book
on your lap you pretended was me or by me
you never looked up from the zoo to the tower

what did you think you were proving
not talking to me do you think this is theater
just because I'm going to live forever?

2 January 2002

dark spruces hemlocks love you shield
me from daylight keep my windows safe
from the false images of what passes by
we are protected by what simply grows

2 January 2002

ton thé t'attend

but don't drink it
ever

the more you buy
the less pretty you are

don't you know that yet?

Don't hold your breath
Like that I might be right

I learned my rule
from starlight

I read the word
sun spilled on the earth.

3 January 2002

I am an empty room
waiting for a wall

a fly come sit on it
and tell me what he sees

only the actual eye
can tell the whole

fable of what goes
on in emptiness.

3 January 2002