

6-2001

junB2001

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "junB2001" (2001). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 1037.
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But in the sad slow motion called Real Time a dirty
trawler and a dirty tanker crashed together in the bay
half naked sailors running around like crazy

blackbirds and grackles hop along the lawn in another
world the one called Here & Now zen preachers tell us
hardly anybody gets to live in though we visit time to time.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Motor launch slicing through the sun glare
Down there — that also is me
I mean you, deva, my oldest best confusion.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

ECRITURE

So I'm writing with a German pen bought in Italy
not last summer but the one before

now I'm dipping the nib in my black coffee
(I'm shameless) to get the clogged tip fluent again

I'd dip you in my cup too if I could
and milk the lordly essence of you out

for all to read, an Elizabethan tragedy,
night game at Fenway, your heart on my sleeve.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Afterimage of sun on sea
man walking to the dock
breakfast inside him
like a memory of liberty
a hint of his destiny

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Saul on his way to Damascus
could have ridden this wave of light
if all he needed was to be blinded
to everything he meant before

all his ideas and understandings
scorched out of his head

Eventually Time, the third man in our marriage,
would have brought everything back to sight

only now love would be named Jesus
instead of The Law. It scarcely mattered
after a while. Love teaches, love leads,
love kills. Love is a set of commas
that stretches out infinitely dividing

anything we mean from what we get.
And it was no Christian who wrote
the sun reached out and struck us like a sword.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Arcane measurements restore old sense of place
to be so many ells or rods inside you
so neither of us really knows the point of union
only that sometimes we fuse together then later
come apart with a grand glad memory vague
but adequate of our brief and everlasting work.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Some wanderer
at the door
a king you say
a boulevardier, a sheep
in wolf's Gore-Tex, a smile
in search of a face?

6 June 2001

All of these. Blackbird
singing from a dumb old song
be articulate from me

you are the repressed returning
my turtle dove my potency

all that. Smug charmer
of so many prophets, my Lou
Andreas Salome, how fair
the letters of the alphabet
are and stroke your serifs too

you mild inscription in a fever ward
Christ even our diseases are so old.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

(Prescription)

Eat herring
to help the prostate

Speak words
to spare the heart.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Public health amazements
of disease efficiency plague
was profligate and killed them all
AIDS so magically efficient
kills them slow and leaves ripe
for years as donors
to get the body's immune
system to do work for it most
efficient of diseases modern
technosmart malady infects
only the most active pilgrims.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

No hermit. No waves to hear
yet they're there.

Middle of the night in island peace
no lights at all

a dog barks uneasy at
what neither one of us can see
the other, villain of the piece.

6 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Will I see what I've been meaning
or will a wave ordinarily arrive

and have positioned myself on the other
side of everything, snug surfeited

a little sunburned, my desire
loose in my hands, a dowsing rod

trying to name whatever moves it.
Let this be you, a kind of answer

to a question we have not yet thought up.

7 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Already the undertakers are studying
to make me look like an ordinary person.
He doesn't look so bad, people will say,
I don't know what all the fuss was about,
two eyes (closed) one mouth (ditto)
and a sort of nose. What was he, a fisherman,
a minister? A crackpot scientist I think
convinced there was a Fifth Force in physics,
the one that keeps us interested in each other.
But we're not. He didn't know that, died happy,
or as happy as he could, considering he died alone
though in the middle of all the people he ever knew
and some of their friends too. Listen, his best friend
stands up to say the eulogy: He
was the one I loved, what more can anybody say?
And they all said that too, and went away?
No. They were silent, lingered with him, the sorry
effigy stretched in the pine box kept them together
after all. They said this and that, but stayed.
He had finally become real, that is to say
an object of fixed reference and shared meaning,
an entity almost fully known and named, like god.

7 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

But then the mail came,
and who was I? A starling
in Prospect Park, that's why.

Bronze panthers at the gate I rubbed
adoring the curves of their haunches
worn brassbright by incessant adoration
of touch. A hip, a geometric god.

7 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

MANUAL OF LETTERWRITING

“resigning from a post — Waiter”

Something about the scallop shell wearies me
The long traditions of béchamel, the night
Itself an uneasy patron, time keeps
Wanting something else from me.

Demand

Is different from desire, doctors declare.
I am tired of the sounds of words, of standing
While you sit down, the way you shift
On your hips and vulture up your shoulders,
I am sick to death of wanting you.
The food is my only friend and I give it all away.

7 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

SOLSTICES

Solstices stand on their heads when a man
Walks on the water of the sky

2

who are these people I have come
to a strange country where men hate rain
and all they want to do is lie in the sun
and would be dogs,

indeed a dog
is popular among those mainlanders
a dog and a gun

3

nonetheless Americans have small teeth
leave the signs of their hatred to the dog to the gun
and the wheel and what makes me so uneasy
in this republic is how long I can use
language without saying a thing

4

o my repressed return to me
it can't be all their fault
can it evening star Freemasons
my sweet new roses
clouds sky poses
gazes

at the plum version of a deep sigher
only mad make sense.

8 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Tell a scopic fixated
she isn't really there she's
over here a trace or aftering
on your brain's
disposition to interpret and attend

and alchemy is still green tea
a Polish answer to a Roman question
pronounced me with your tongue in my mouth

(the only way you can speak my language is be me)

8 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Sensitive afterload
fingertips dug into her hips
pulling the whole not unwilling nearer.
This is sunshine on the Vineyard Sound
dragging the headland onto the sea.

8 June 2001
Cuttyhunk

Apt to intercourse the flower the curtain rod
snaps a blue chalk line against the wall
against all the measures I am there

and years ago I praised your overmeasure
you thought I blamed now come again
past the rubber and the fire the measure

is a line we walk to get there
to mark the way between
the ice rink and the movie theater
between the sign you made and the sign you are
we will always be each other's measure

8 June 2001
Cuttyhunk