6-1993

junD1993

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1274

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.
NUPER

You have the recency of me
your earthenware bowl
left out on the stone terrace
c caught all the stars.

17 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
Things come to life pens
fill themselves with ink
Southampton Row a nice
Jewish man sells you
a soft red sweater.
In our lingo that means
the sun is shining on the sea.

17 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
NATVRA ABHORRET VACVVM

When the land heats up under the morning sun
the air above it rises.
Cool air drifts or rushes in from the sea
depending. Noonday cooler than dawn.
This is called *Brise marine*. Breath of ocean
in shadowy close dingles full of twisted little trees.

17 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
To put it mildly, a log on the lawn.  
Shrouded bullseye waiting for the solstice—  
here is my mast, my sails  
are in these nylon bags, marry me.

In my proper element  
I will run about the bay all Thermidor  
with a gull on my mast and a hat  
on your head makes you look like a duck,

thank god for weather,  
the only vacation of the poor.  
And everyday's a holiday from yesterday—  
the sea is one fat consolation.

17 June 1993  
Cuttyhunk
JUST BEFORE LEAVING THE ISLAND

for Charlotte

Last night of the weather.
Later a time comes when the owl
Gives no answers, the snake
Does not withdraw in sluggish esses
From my nearby foot. I appear
No longer in the matter. In matter.
To undisturb the world of my passage,
Get everything she has to offer
Then unpiece it loving into clarity.
For you. For you. For you.

17 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
THE SIMILE

Like a Brahmin coming down the hill
a mild amazement
wound of cloth
around his head

and his hands
holding only
a bag of money

the sea comes in.

17 June 1993
Cuttyhunk, Barges Beach
Her mirror tarnished
some mist with Sun some
where up in it

and otherwhile a morning flavor
clings to the glials
along my cruising thought

a drool of pondweed where I fed.
All night the wordless revel:

Get up and walk the dog
—Don't got no dog.

It's a collie, do it.
—Golden, isn't.

It needs the exercise, like a foreign language.
—I forget.

But there is something that has to be done,
some mirror turned
to fetch the best reflection

No, you have to get up and write it down.
—What?

The book you've been complaining all these years.
—What book is that, o flesh?

The Mirror of Injustice you call it, or The Sword of Sullenness, or What Is To Be Done, or The Little Things That Make Life Hell.
—I know no such books.

[Rolls over, turning his back to the sun.]

They are all the things you've ever complained about, all your life long. Did you think nobody noticed?

—Nobody cared.

Nobody’s there to care, but everybody’s there to notice. Now you have to write it down, in messy blue ink on a diner napkin, the list of all of them.

—All what?


—They're all gone except the noise.

Write about the noise, call it The Book of Silence Lost in a Storm at Sea Far Inland Because Electric Weather. It hums like flies.

—How can I write down a reflection?

Use the glass that is your eyes
silver it
with thought

and let the quick shadows
fall on the stodgy page
we can read what's left.
Call it the names of everyone you knew.

18 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
AT THE WINDOW

Things fit by friction
to assemble.
Thick thighs, an apple.
Be careful, the world
made by looking
is a strange false city.
The senses
are not the evidence.
They are the crime.

18 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
The word trestle carries
black steam locomotives of my childhood
over shallow lagoons at sunset forever.

18 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
In sparrow quiet mist
churning at the heart I think
action is my shame
I am a carrier
on a warm sea
jets take off from me
to destroy the quiet
world of all that does
not love me. Anger.

18 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
WANNSEE

Whoever I am
I have always had the knack
of catching eyes.
They see me when I come in,
they are afraid.

They hate all the kinds I am.
They hate me for being circumcised, vagrant,
artist, sexed, unsexed, for being at peace,
for having no politics. For not being interested
in them—the ultimate treason.
Who does not share their interests
must be destroyed.

They could tell
I found them boring,
their bland sense of ritual and display,
their shallow histories, these
rustic Robespierres swathed in bunting.
Their cross was crooked, but they did know how to kill.

18 June 1993
Cuttyhunk
COMING BACK TO MAINLAND

dinner in
drove up to
Lowell
Laotian
beef Cambodian quail
trussed out
on lettuce
little crucifixes
the crisp revenges
of the orient

islands
are so cautious the
mainland
copious detailed
the movement
of things
interviews me

dratted summer cold
follows us home
kept me awake
most of the hottest
night this summer
naked beside you
my dearest
only at dawn cool
enough to rest
my head bothering
the pale geology
of your spine

I love the way you sleep.

19 June 1993, Boston
THE OLDEST PEOPLE

The drunks of Lawrence and Lowell
gaze from their porches out at the traffic
gentle muddy Irish faces waiting
for the violence inside them to come out and break their lives.

These are my people. Their skin is mine, we
are the colored people, the beef of Irish faces
pale only round the eyes with long desire foiled.
Patchy purple clouds, hot day coming, how wrongly
we are prepared for such weather, we Cro-Magnons
of cave and coracle. The body.
We have come to the wrong place, we believe
nothing, everything hurts us, a bruise sings.

We have come to the end of all the islands.
It is terrible to be so old in a new place.

19 June 1993
Boston
shadow answers
come from underbrush

a tree a seaside person
and in the hot interior
airless dry in shade
mustachioed on every branch with catkins
and leaves like bay leaves, not laurus

nobilis, a kind of tree,

the maquis

waiting for the eternal gestapo
everywhere.

Time is a valley of revenge.

Ballet of vengeance,
whose men run through the thicket
showing mostly the whites of their eyes

murder to heal murder,
a gear in the teeth of a gear.

The wheel of silence
that crushes the fact of things,

and the truth is gone.
Bousquet murdered to keep the old
truth from being new.
A tin box full of old matches
still can strike.

Soft fire,
she brought
a flute home
from the ocean

and played at midnight
a sad song on it,
Lament
for Limerick,
“my city, dying.”

Finches starve for seed.
The resistance
is everything.

Conjugations of arid minerals,
child us an ocean. Here spell, hydrogen.

Nitro breathe in, a blue jay lands,
some purple finger nails at the checkout
“my girl friend
did them for me,“
I laugh at her, she blushes, insists, “my
girl friend did them,”

summer Sunday,
blue flower of chicory

& Colour hath no Soliditie, is but a Sheen or
Circumstance upon an Instant scene, a Shewing...

20 June 1993
SAY WHEN

So that we know what we mean when we say when and the foam hurls over the rim down someone's chin a miracle that other people do it too. That we don't do this all alone.

21 June 1993
VEL D’HIV

Look round you
We have come here
For no reason
But being

We hear no other
Language but our own
For being us
The children scream

Knowing better
What it means
The steps are slippery
With our insides

We are quiet
With our business
The long forgetting
We were ever here.

21 June 1993
Mosaic of the blue jay's back window pane in where have I seen not so old cathedral lady chapel worship the history of what happens to the light Louis Comfort Tiffany.

21 June 1993
LANDSCAPE WITH PARROT

Everybody wants to see a bright bird sitting in everybody's tree full of yellow and red blue green a tropic tantrum of colors quivering in an otherwise mute maple backyard.

Feathers. Vibrato of or behavior of the light. We try to give everybody what everybody wants (sea-view guaranteed in Cancun says hotel ad) and walk with them along the promenade watching the shivery antics of the poor. O fear of law (people telling people what to do) and war (killing them if they don't do it). Universals are few but one of them is the bright bird everybody wants.

21 June 1993
The supervisor of bird baths
has a look at this one.
A parade of finches rehearses its routine.
Cars shout along over the hill.
This could have been the world,
a sick man studying his hands.

21 June 1993
Climb quietly towards me. The humid necessities. In dream she fired a dueling pistol straight at my chest. I took the ball in sternum or heart and must have died. She sighted as she fired. I saw as I fell.

21 June 1993