

ROBERT KELLY

The New Fruit

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Hypnogeography

McPherson's Fortnight

Series One N° 1

FORTNIGHT SERIES ONE, NUMBER 1
www.mcphersonco.com/fortnight.html

Copyright © 1988 by Robert Kelly
All rights reserved.

No unauthorized copying or distribution permitted.

Published in April 2020 by McPherson & Company,
P.O. Box 1126, Kingston, NY 12402

“The New Fruit” and “Hypnogeography” are each borrowed for this occasion from the author’s collection *Doctor of Silence* as originally published by McPherson & Company.

The cover patterns of the Fortnight series have been adapted from the tartan notebooks created by Waverley Scotland of Glasgow in association with Kinloch Anderson of Edinburgh: ([www. https://tinyurl.com/slxqebq](https://tinyurl.com/slxqebq)) and available in the U.S. from our sister company, Waverley West (www.waverleywest.net).

This cover is Eliot tartan, and is reproduced by kind permission of Geddes and Grossett, Ltd.

CONTENTS

The New Fruit

Hypnogeography

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The New Fruit

It was the day in the long calendar when each person was allowed to design a new fruit. My turn was soon to come, and I was trying to turn my mind away from an alluring image of a cluster of soft blue elongated pods, like stubby plantains, fat fingers growing on a small hand. These were clearer in outer than in inner view; that fact alone, and that I had not built the fruit up from its innermost point (medicinal value) or its proximal inner (taste), had persuaded me that I had fallen for an obvious trope, in essence spray-painting a hand of bananas blue. No benefit in that.

Soon the flamens would be looking over their ivory scrollwork desktops at me, their eyes merely curious, their minds ready to binominalize, categorize and lexicalize the new fruit my mind would take from itself and offer, first time in the world, to them. Yet I, like each fructumittor, would suppose in that mere (I insist) limpid curiosity a certain element of amusement, disdain, even sarcasm, as if it fell to them to mock what it fell to others, on this one day of the long year, to propose. We live on a bridge over an unceasing river, dangerous the water, full of monsters and uncertain destinations.

Should it be blue at all? Blue had come first in my mind, tasteless in every sense, a blue fruit. This violation of the Color Code itself should have shown me that my thoughts were random and unformed. What

ROBERT KELLY

was the matter with me today? *A fruit is its consequence, its taste, its texture, its capacity to dissemble the infancy of the seed, its rind, its heft to the hand of the planetary types who hold it, its color before the sun.* I knew the text as well as anyone, and yet I was within a few moments of blurting out: let there be a blue fruit, its carpals swollen like sausages, its inner custardy and yum, with a taste to follow. What a gaffe! What a shame I would have been to my section. Yet someday a fruit could be designed, could it not, should it not, from the outside in?

But now the flamen addressed me: “Lucifer, what is your pleasure?” And I mumbled something small, reddish, roundish, no special taste, a bit mealy, the seeds will be protected over the coldest winter in Third Grade Planets, little seeds, pointy at one end, not too harmful if an animal swallows, a slight astringency in the flesh of the fruit, a slight caustic flavor to the rind, call it what you please.

Someday I will shape a lovely thing to suit myself, tint the light dark or taste the glitter alone of things, taste the inner pulp of color and know my blue fruit into the world.

Hypnogeography

West of Ninth Avenue the high bluff ends; the land falls away abruptly in a series of cliffs and steep hillsides canted just enough to bear grass among the pale scars where rivulets have scored the earth on their way down to the Hudson. To get there, they must cross the long grassy meadows along the river, the very fertile alluvial tract that stretches north the whole length of the island. Winding streams get there gently, and smooth, unbordered roads wander here and there, past small, neat farmsteads, taverns and gas stations. The light is sea-light everywhere, and clouds bank richly, picturesquely, over the dark Jersey palisades. When it rains, the rain comes sweeping in from the west, angular as autumn sunlight at dusk on golden Sundays. But when the sun shines it is sweet and steady, coming evenly down like a decent teacher in grammar school, fair to all her pupils. I like to walk around here, or drive the little roadster you can rent at almost any garage. The roads aren't paved, and we New Yorkers like it that way. This is farm country, and from its good black soil most of what we put on our plates is grown.

East of the cliffs, though, the city gets busy. Tall white buildings everywhere, hundreds of thousands of them cunningly nestled close together without each denying another's light. Crowded as can be, but the streets don't seem that way. In fact I find it strange how

ROBERT KELLY

empty they usually are, considering how densely built up every block is now. The banks are beautiful, and there are fountains in front of the meanest church. I'm fond of the lower East 30s and upper 20s, where small townhouses manage to skulk unbothered between clubs and foundations and sleek hotels operated by people who say they come from Northern Italy. The north side of Canal Street is lined with shops and restaurants facing the canal. People sit outside to watch the little skiffs and sculls nip along the broad water. But south of Canal, the land is more open, with broad fields and a good deal of woodland, little woods on low hilltops, and hardly any buildings. The dirt roads are dusty in the summer time, but vacationers revelling in the wine gardens and outdoor theaters and ball courts don't mind. In the shade of a big cottonwood I leaned on somebody's mailbox and watched a young woman get out of her car and go into the courtyard of an inn across the way. The wind fluffed out the tulle of her dress and I heard it sigh against her legs. How quiet it is here, and the wind itself needs us to make enough resistance for it to be heard.

This is how it is in my dreams. I mean real dreams, the kind you have at night when you leave your mind and body alone a while. For years I have been having dreams in which I walk around New York City, where I was born, and where I lived for the first 25 years of this life. The New York I dream in is a little different from what I see when I go there by train now, and some aspects of the dream New York is what I have just been describing.

It is not New York before modern times—cars run around, big Late Capitalism buildings abound in the denser parts of town. It is, as far as I know, not New York after some implausible reconstruction after some

ROBERT KELLY

all too likely disaster. It is just New York as it is, exactly as it is, in dream.

So what I want to know is this: all over the earth women and men are dreaming every night, and among all their other dreams of love and terror and monsters and mates, they have dreams of place. I want to know the places they dream. I have a feeling that the Dream Representation of place can tell us a lot about what we think of as the 'real' place. Smart people like the Highland Maya of Guatemala (I'm relying on what Dennis Tedlock told me once) are concerned not just with what a person looks like or does for a living, but how he 'represents' in dream. I want to learn, and want us to learn, how our countries and cities represent in dream.

With that in mind, I want there to be a science or a study. I have given it the name Hypnogeography just because everybody can figure that out.

What I propose is that all generous persons record their dreams [in general a good thing to do] when they dream of place, and that the records or recitations of these dreams be collected, examined, compared—that is, compared with one another and, when possible, with the undreamt 'real' place we find at the end of the road in from the airport.

When all such dreams have been assembled and overlaid, a truer geography will appear. I don't mean that the Dream Place is truer than the so-called 'real,' but that all versions of a place are needed to know the Place most truly. That's the goal, and this is the project I have in mind. And the mind is what we finally get to know, as dearly in need of mapping as any virus or nucleic acid strand. And how to map the mind, except by what we tell each other?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Kelly was born in Brooklyn on September 24, 1935. He attended CUNY and Columbia University, and since 1961 has taught at Bard College. He has authored more than 70 published volumes of fiction, poetry, essays and prose-poems. His 1967 debut novel *The Scorpions* brought him a larger readership, and in 1980 his book *Kill The Messenger* won the Los Angeles Times Book Award. In 1985, the first of five collections of his short fictions, *A Transparent Tree* (McPherson), received the Academy-Institute Award from the American Institute of Arts and Letters.

McPherson & Company has published eleven volumes, mostly prose, with two additional ones currently in preparation:

A Transparent Tree (fictions), <https://tinyurl.com/r6amfug>

Doctor of Silence (fictions), <https://tinyurl.com/umxelgn>

Cat Scratch Fever (fictions), <https://tinyurl.com/yxy55q5j>

Queen of Terrors (fictions), <https://tinyurl.com/ur7okuk>

The Logic of the World (fictions), <https://tinyurl.com/yxyuug97>

Ten New Fairy Tales, <https://tinyurl.com/v3z7bbd>

The Book of Persephone (long poem), <https://tinyurl.com/vrauww2q>

The Garden of Distances (a collaboration with Brigitte Mahlknacht), <https://tinyurl.com/wkgqyzd>

Shame/Scham (collaboration with Birgit Kempker), <https://tinyurl.com/vdnuu07>

Unquell the Dawn Now (a multi-media collaboration with Schuldt on a text by Hölderlin), <https://tinyurl.com/v5yxk8t>

The Loom (long poem), e-book, <https://tinyurl.com/v6etytg>

ROBERT KELLY

ROBERT KELLY, *continued*

When speaking about his influences, Kelly said “I want to say the names of the great teachers from whom I learned what I could, and still am learning. Coleridge. Baudelaire. Pound. Apollinaire. Virgil. Aeschylus. Dante. Chaucer. Shakespeare. Dryden. Lorca. Rilke. Hölderlin. Stevens. Stein. Duncan. Olson. Williams. Blackburn. I mention only the dead; the dead are always different, and always changing. I mention them more or less in the order of when they came along in my life to teach me.”

He has served as the poet-in-residence at many universities, including the California Institute of Technology (1971–72), Yale University (Calhoun College), University of Kansas, Dickinson College, and the University of Southern California. His fiction and poetry has been translated into Italian, German, and French.