

11-2013

novl2013

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novl2013" (2013). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 41.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/41

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.

=====

Well done, you Portuguese,
decision,

 the High Brazil
our land of dreams —
who makes it so?

Is there ever

 an answer coming,

 a wild goose

honking down the autumn sky,

 alone

for once,

 this inscription

left behind,

 a bird

at peace with the sky?

 Why cry, then,

rational animal?

 Why speak

if there is no one near

 to hear?

A question I ask myself

and have the sense that Pilate had,

the wit not to wait for an answer.

2.

**So the cities of the Amazon
lost under natural exuberance
will resurrect themselves
born out of greed and capital,**

**we'll come back to the buried
stone courtyards of the Xingu,
the lost agoras of an inconceivable
Amazon.**

**We are born blind,
blinded by what we see.**

**We think we are the first ones here
but every hill and hummock by the Hudson
shouts out**

**the agency of women and men,
or before even them.**

Before we were,

we are.

21 November 2013

=====

Merging

with the cloth
of mirrors,
the burn of will on will,

the wool of it

the workman's cap
rubbing on the collar
— sounds of far away
catastrophe, collapsing,
a bear in the cellar.

Fear

in all flavors of the calendar.

Unite.

Bring on the liquidation,
backwards into blue seeming —

now you know I was your mother
treat me with scant reverence
but don't take my tree away,
this little stanchion of my liberty,

my body

**from which you and everyone
alive proceeded
when you and I were Isis long ago.**

**No punctuation on this page
the furniture van arrives,
a deaf man with has sound implanted.**

**Or what can we do with ourselves
before we come alive,
before the rhapsody
falls out of the radiator
and the pussycat
answers us in Greek**

mê auton

**and not this either,

raptor, leave the sleeping muse alone.**

Or are you waking?

**Then squeeze
between the dryer and the cupboard,
linger where it is smuggest a
nd suggest
long memories of how**

**the world would be
and with thee and me,**

all human love is incestuous.

We are born of us and die into each other.

21 November 2013

THE DUCK

(Tarots)

The duck moves
without seeming to.
The white duck.
Moves along the pond
as if propelled only
by her own purity.
The duck, the pure
white of will
uninflected, the pure
going without effort
to be there. The pure
will. The white duck
as might be seen
in Regents Park
just past the Queen's
rose garden or at
the base of les Buttes-
Chaumont, a white
duck anywhere
by will alone,
no feather out of place,
body obedient
to the quiet will.

**The duck. The will.
The water knows
what to do,
the world understands
the purity of will,
we go and it lets us,
we are drawn
without effort it seems
to where we are bound,
moved all the while
by what Eddison called
“the policy of the duck,”
little feet paddling
below. To do
without seeming to.
The duck
rides the pure
energy of the world,
purity on purity, see
Malevich’s mystical painting
of the duck’s pure will
called *White on White*.
The world is wide,
the world to ride
and to be beautiful,
serene as you go,
soothing the souls**

**of those who see you,
the duck. The duck
means to be pure
as your will,
to allow the inherent
destination to sing
you towards it,
pure, the roses
seem never far,
not far the roofs
of the town,
the windows
of pure glass,
to live in pure will
glistening in sunlight,
sometimes crying out
abruptly, to warn us,
to show the way.**

21/22 November 2013

for Charlotte, on her birthday

=====

Where is the waiting and why?

A dragon does it

and the maiden only helps —

no need to rescue her

a knight is just an interruption,

trying to dissuade

a maiden from her own nature,

her inner fire,

the dragon in her earth.

The male wants there to be none of that,

drag her out into his world,

to put out the fire in her,

kill the quiet dragon in her lucid will.

22 November 2013.

TIME

Is it in the eye or in the world?

And is time itself allotted to us in quanta?

It all has to be done before breakfast,

for instance,

and there is never any time for time.

Let me one day sit down and watch time pass.

Or better still,

walk with it and find out where it goes.

22 November 2013

=====

**Modern society is a machine
that stops working
as soon as you start thinking about it.
Do what you please
seems to be the covert instruction —
just don't think.**

22 November 2013.

=====

**Are we going
or are we knowing?**

**Love me while you can
he said, before the poor
take you away
to be ministers unto them
in their misery —
too many and too many.**

**Are we living
or are we just giving?**

**Are we needing
or just receiving?**

**What he said
opened a mouth
in the desert
and the rain
wet our lips,
food happened to us
and we ate.**

**The desert was all going
and then we crossed
a sentence out
and settled down
to knowing
and we knew.**

**But then we grew.
It came to water in us
and plowing the earth,
and fish nibbled at our bait
till all for knowing
lost itself in owning —**

**and to own a thing
is to make it be
for you instead of
it being for itself and
you being for you.**

**Now we are only,
and only for our things.**

23 November 2013.

=====

**In the interminable childhoods
when nothing happens but the scrape of mind
and the death of distant relatives,
everything was outside and we tried to take it in
and do and go to that terrible sleep
called growing up.**

**There is a moment
when it could be different —
go to the woods and go on wanting

and never having and never be less.
Art is a little like that,
but not yet like that enough.**

23 November 2015

====

Things working slowly by the shore.

This is the heart.

Things found on the beach.

Each time you use a word it changes.

Nothing is ever the same —

that's why love is

so brave, so innocent,

always wanting

this to be this,

just this forever.

23 November 2013

W

[The Alphabet]

**Divide the W
into its component V's
and use them
to fly away.
A goose in autumn,
a tree branch
caught in the stream.**

O

**Pierce the O
and let its air drip out
until the wheel
is light enough to roll —

follow it across the veldt —
wonder will take you everywhere at last.**

N

**Lift up the toppled
member of the N
so three men stand
upright side-by-side.**

**They are your judges.
Each will speak in turn
a sentence beginning I.**

**I is their only names,
the middle judge slumps
sideways again.**

Just like you.

**N is the opposite,
the mirror that negates you,
makes you only
half of yourself and far away.**

H

Damaged hair.

The roof falls in

but the walls hold.

Hold.

Crossbar.

What

joins us together holds us apart.

How sad he is,

can't reach across

himself to her

or she to him or

o how humiliating

to be so close so far.

The union makes us weak.

M

**Miracles waiting always for
a valley in us to happen in.**

**Between the mountain walls of us
a delve where we are ancient
and we wait.**

**The miracles and us,
waiting for each other
to happen.**

**This is motherhood
surely, and music and murmur
and mumble and finally Death,
that mummet of all mothers
we barely hear her when she calls.**

P

It does everything.

It's a phone, it pours,

it carries Saint Patrick up the mountain.

It looks, though, like a sword

jabbed into the ground.

Good riddance to blade-work!

Thou shalt not kill.

Anyone anytime anywhere.

Peace, bro, peace.

L

**Leviathan? I can't even measure
a leopard's spots or cure
the poignant leprosy of old church walls
(as described in Leviticus),
I can barely love ladies,
I'm so lost—**

**but lately, lucidly, lovingly, lastingly,
licking each other's lips
a black flower opens in the loom of light.**

23 November 2013