

3-2011

## marA2011

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marA2011" (2011). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 210.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/210](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/210)

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](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

=====

Choose an alternative religion  
is for the shadows when  
something happens to the sun  
but when every day is fast who  
could understand to stand

there where no law has darkened  
the dream will every isolate  
will find his mate and mean and mean  
another thing choose this  
to banish all possible that  
this word has no plural do we.

1 March 2011

= = = = =

Swayback girls with country manners—  
a giggle is the shadow of a laugh—  
be first on the market and the priests  
forgive your transgressions outer.

What won't is what you say. Said  
vocables will haunt your habit  
creaky floorboards where your mind  
can't get a good night's leap.

We improvise theology, we swoon  
into cellar raptures of common touch  
and why not? The skin stays here at least  
hen northern trees wake up and leave.

1 March 2011

= = = = =

Not nature but another thing.

Idlewild where I grew tall

migrant flyway and the marsh was steep

a child walking in the fields

is always a stranger. Nothing makes sense

because what is close is also far—

I pick it up and crumble it in my fingers

or chew on the long stems but what does it mean?

I came I thought from another world

where meanings come first. then find the things meant—

mud, cattails, saltstained walkways, old wood, sea.

Later I found those creatures I called ‘you’

and spent my life assuming they were strangers too.

1 March 2011

= = = = =

But were they waiting?  
Would it change their lives?  
There is an insolence in time  
makes us forget  
the tenderest addresses—  
caresses—the coach  
with no one in it—  
rubbery lipwork  
of a drunken kiss.  
Beasts prowl the woods.

1 March 2011

## VIEW CAMERA, 8x10

*after Philip Whalen*

Trying to force the issue  
is not the issue.  
The old bellows cracked  
and let light in.  
The new bellows holds the dark  
but weighs a ton.  
Add to that the weight  
of what the lens detects,  
describes, inverts,  
apostrophizes on ground glass.  
Me, proper, holding my own  
against gravity, staring  
out the window at a handy tree.  
And who can carry us home?

2 March 2011

=====

Find me one thing  
that says It's me!  
and I will love it  
a long time, a little  
at arm's length maybe,  
think fondly of it  
but forget to call.

2 March 2011

= = = = =

How do we know what is false  
till we forget it? Then what is  
or is true stays in mind  
solid as a china doorknob  
broken from its door, still  
smooth from some of our  
fingers. Blue and white!

3 March 2011



= = = = =

Can you help me remember?  
Are you god, the tiny shadow  
of a distant bird moves  
fast across my table top in sun?  
Sweet taste of a shadow passing—

is that something I could dare?  
Or is there more, a fouled anchor  
a foundering longboat, a tide?

I went where the horses took me  
as far as between between.  
They could go no further. Alone  
I had to walk the rest of the way,  
walking is no different from thinking  
only it takes longer. And I'm still not here.

3 March 2011

= = = = =

Can you own this thing?  
Can you take it home  
and spread it on your sofa  
so the lamplight makes it look  
like part of your life?  
Waking is the strangest weather—  
is it still there outside?  
When you settle down to watch  
the crows in the bare trees  
is it still spread beside you?  
What new responsibilities  
have come down from heaven on your head?  
How tentative you reach out to touch!

3 March 2011

## LUTETIA

Walking towards the other  
side of something near.  
Trying to get around  
what isn't there—  
these are *operations*  
*of the light* we called them  
when all we knew  
was what came away  
from our mouths,  
when there was no science  
but what we said.  
That was a better time—  
pretty ships sailed the Seine  
anxious for ocean. We knew  
there had to be a salt  
somewhere of dissolution.  
Prayer wasn't enough—light  
has to be taught to break.  
Then suddenly we were there—  
an island a mile offshore  
full of chatty priestesses  
who took the shape of seals.  
Light glistened on their flanks  
and our vocabulary overflowed.

3 March 2011

= = = = =

Is there another me in me  
that could stand guard  
while I think myself away?

People are always frightened,  
always. You can smell it,  
see it, count it even in their eyes

blinking, fingers twitching.  
I too am terror. What if...  
Or what if not...?

But if I could only think  
myself away I'd find myself  
on the other side of terror

not even bothering to count  
or stand sentry. I would be  
the face of you when you're sleeping.

3 March 2011

= = = = =

It doesn't have to be long,  
it's still a river.  
Doesn't have to flood and murder  
as long as it reaches the sea.

3.III.11

## PLUTO ABDUCING PROSERPINA

I'll say it in Lain  
because she's in satin

she is I think my native language  
but we never think of him

it's always the beautiful victim  
holds our attention

never the randy monster  
whose whole more than human nature

is bursting out of him,  
his whole body girds her

lifts here knows her  
and in that single seizure

eternity possesses them both  
earth is heaven and heaven is hell

the two of them are victims  
of the blue flowers round her

the blue earth-speak  
that made her bend down

and made him leap out of the ground  
to make all the realms of being

suddenly the same.  
As now they are too.

3 March 2011

= = = = =

Arid enough for blue  
weather but the ice  
drinks the earth  
according to a better  
rule It all is living,  
  
sparrows and such.

I asked an earner  
what do you farm?  
he said a bottle  
of green wine  
a hill of white  
flowers one whole  
week and then never

I said you must be  
among the actual he  
admitted it

without punctuation  
we are lost  
the relentless ordinary  
does not pause



we and we alone

invented silence

we use it

the way the gods

use color

to make what appears

actually here

silent we listen to all things.

4 March 2011

## FORM

I carved the stone  
carved it till  
it was all round  
and showed nothing  
but itself  
not even a hint  
of any other form

and thus, being itself  
and only itself,  
is took on  
the shape of a woman  
all the salient and coves  
implicit, and she could see

but never me,  
never the one  
who found her form  
deep in alabaster  
and left it there  
to rule the world  
in quiet, that is

I set her free  
and from me must she flee—

beauty, what could it be  
but perfect stillness  
hurrying forever away?

4 March 2011

= = = = =

Dig deep in space to  
be more room for surface  
skilled the stereotactic  
basketwork of Form— this  
    be not woman and be not man  
be the sacred woven emptiness  
wherein a self could, or not, or hold or speak

this form speaks.

Space turns into meaning  
where meaning means being)

    suddenly a shape permits.  
Exists to draw us in.  
*What else is form for?*

We inhabit what we see. Whose  
can we be  
    now that we have seen?

5 March 2011

*(after Claire Woolner's installation)*

= = = = =

In fact  
there is nothing new.

This is the great  
mystery, the consolation  
time brings to eternity,

everything is old and all made new  
all things are used  
and used some more.

The Buddha came  
and comes again.

5 March 2011