

3-2006

## marA2006

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, "marA2006" (2006). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 731.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/731](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/731)

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).

=====

Chaining go the chances  
somber medicos align  
aghast at life's sweet spate  
'make light of it' the joke  
it is requires explanation,  
but joke it is, dear heart.  
The laughter later.

1 March 2006

## HEAVEN

As ever when you wake up from a dream,  
relief. And a little wistfulness.

1 March 2006

=====

Thor-wards a gang of girls  
mind on dissuading  
that grumpy mesomorph—

how can a little boy  
get so resentful  
and go on feeling it  
long after the battlefield is quiet  
and the crows have fed,

years and years and never  
with all his cutting  
does the wound ever work,  
they die and he feels no better.

They hope he listens as they explain.  
Unlikely. Beauty  
is one more thing for him  
to feel bad about.

So keep your generals out of the museum,  
keep Edward Teller away from the Steinway—  
beauty is the food of their revenge.

1 March 2006

=====

The fool thinks: I have thrown  
the stone of my love into the ocean  
to be rid of it forever. Maybe  
I should go to sea and find it  
to learn if it is really wet.

1 March 2006

=====

I am smarter than I think  
dumber than I look.  
Or you look, or you think.

Or there is no one here,  
just looking and thinking.  
Just looking.

1 March 2006

## TRACT

1.

The breath hasn't gotten ready yet  
to be long. I have to be wrong  
a little first a little while.

2.

Midday mating. Meet your shadow  
and become one with her.  
You lunch together then drift apart.

3.

I have made up these instructions  
and followed them all my life,  
still don't know if this is how the machine  
is supposed to work or what it does  
with all the days it makes.  
Is it a memory-maker only? But how it hums!

4.

The welcome light above the blue-tiled gate  
admits two strangers.  
And just when you think it's nightfall  
you have to stand up and name them.

1 March 2006

## CERTAINTY PRINCIPLE

1.

How be so sure a man wrote that?

Eloquent ugliness longs to that half-species

or idle in idiolect, ixnay on ovlay –

I want the gates of Golgonooza, I yearn to lick

their entrances, jasper doorsills, thrones of musk.

Ixnay on the uskmay, it sold out long ago,

busloads of them hurried to Juarez

in search of the Pre-Columbian Experience

on sale down there in heat in shadow and in hurt—

you'll never know the thing before you know.



2.

There are pictures of you doing it.

The first snowflake of the catastrophe  
floats pretty by the window in the dining room,  
no two alike they say, but this one particular  
is not even like itself, competes with its trace  
on my memory, my apprehension of the fall to come.

Dining room has such civility, bank account,  
shampoo. It's all right now. The years  
of awkwardness are over and the prints  
mounted on the wall, hang down  
from what they used to call the picture rail,  
tremble a little in the elusive draft.

Turn the page, we're done with language  
and all its cats for every room and all its rooms  
for every house and all its acreage to hold  
not much when it comes down to it, just  
an old picture of you doing it.

3.

They used to write books about the adventures  
of a coin from hand to hand, ridiculous.  
How many transactions this quarter had,  
how many lives it interviewed and left,  
each time giving nothing and taking nothing.  
Of course we want to follow it deep down  
in somebody's snug jeans, or fallen on the church floor  
when the old ones light their votive candles or  
rolling down the subway steps. See one coin  
see them all. We know their places,  
traces, Byzantine escapades, travels, exiles,  
deft predictions, taste of dark chocolate,  
ridiculous exceptions to an absent rule.

4.

Hold a mark a minute. Once

it meant a bread and butter.

Now stick it on your chimneypiece

alongside the African ibex in ebony

and the miniature fez from Fez.

You've been places too, lived

in other people's pockets, close,

close, felt their hands all over you,

slipped away in darkness and disgrace.

Nobody's different – you learned that

in middle school, how every night

the Same comes through the neighborhood

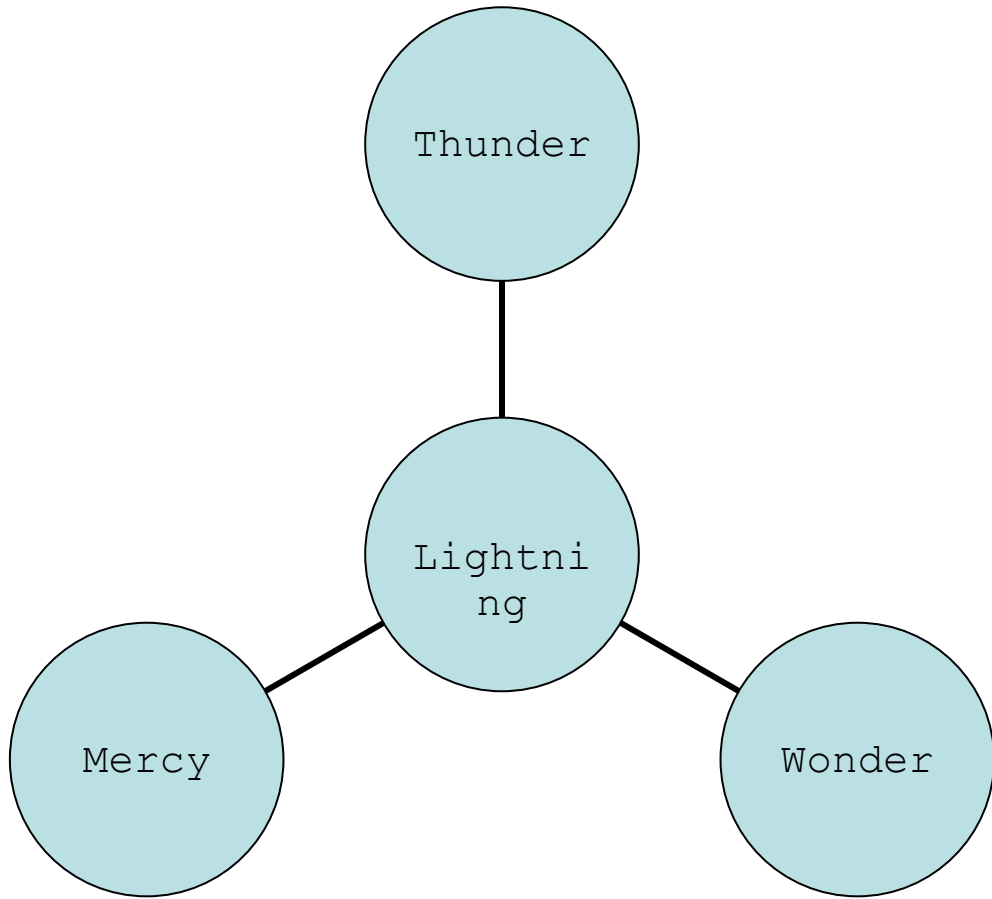
on average feet and slays the differences.

Wake now and give me all your memories,

mine I lost in Massapequa on a blind date.

2 March 2006

# THULE



## THULE, 2

But wonder comes after lighting,  
means desire is quicker than perceiving –  
we're always stumbling after, can never  
get there because by definition  
it's the next thing that's needed  
not this against which you rest now  
a moment or two exhausted,  
calmed for a moment by its cool surface.  
He suspected life is an archipelago  
of trivial experiences leading north  
to Thule, the serene warehouse  
of what we want before we want it.

2 March 2006

## MENISCUS

means little moon, a man word,  
a physics. Resist us  
when we try to use you,  
word.

Be one of those  
hard to have to dinner,  
never know where to seat you,  
hard attractive words  
everybody knows nobody uses  
eudaimonism serendipity aporia.

2 March 2006

=====

Why are so many  
love poems really  
written to the dictionary?

I want to suck  
your etymology.

2 III 06

## AFTER IT'S OVER YOU'RE ALLOWED TO SAY ITS NAME

Barrel-vaulted ceiling and a sparrow  
caught in on a draught. Window winter.  
See the bird flutter not too worried,  
birds are such philosophers,  
whatever comes in has to come out,  
back and forth and sideways through big room.  
Pompeii was like this, and Persepolis,  
lost places hidden even from the air  
until a bird looked in, a goat fell,  
a caravan came by and started guessing.  
Camels. History is such shit.  
Everything comes out. Later we say  
That was Byzantium or the War  
Between the States, that was October  
Revolution. The bird is not impressed.  
The vault is spacious, almost endless,  
warm enough at times and full  
of chances, the wise stuff it calls seed.  
Now tell me where I have gone and been  
and come back slow on aching knees  
after so long and never left home.

2 March 2006



## LA HISTOIRE

Everything used to work out right  
for us and then it didn't.

Silver

shadows in the airport, you lifted  
your dress briefly to show a bruise.  
Coffee not too bad, a shared  
banana muffin. Beastly  
time erasing opportunity.

The rented van smelled cool,  
the Everglades seemed innocent,  
all week we never saw a snake,  
let alone an alligator.

By week's end the bruise was fading,  
we never discussed how you came by it,  
it was just more history  
and we had too much of that already.

Nice to be down there  
where history happened if at all  
in other languages and not lately,  
and to people not enough like us  
for us to care. Then we too  
had to be not there.

2 March 2006

## READING SERIES

-- I hate it when X runs the readings –

she only brings her boyfriends or  
men she wishes were.

-- What's wrong with that? The only good

thing about poetry is that it comes  
from people – *straight* from people  
with no lies along the way.

-- But words are all lies.

-- Exactly – they only can become true

when you say them, say a lot of them,  
so each one rebukes the other  
and it's your own poor breath  
put to work to make them march  
forward over the deserts of nothing going on at all.

2 March 2006

## DIFFICULTIES IN DISCUSSING THE LAW

The astonishment of the beaver  
is not greater than the astonishment of light  
my Talmud,  
                  I began, no one knows better the law,  
the Dharma,  
                  whose identity I was positing  
when the train went by, the old  
excursion job with open sides  
I knew the names of the three trains on that line  
knew them and recited them  
when our minds went to the train but now I remember  
only "The Niagara," traveled them all when I was a kid,  
forgot the other two, my mind  
and all our minds went with the train,  
old summer train, down to its bridge beside the Hudson  
where the ferry used to take off  
then and not now,  
                  nothing now, just as I was lecturing  
to this huge room, and girls on the far side  
were opening and closing sliding doors noisily,  
and my point, they were trying to escape  
just as I was getting to my point,  
which was that just as the Jews were an irritant  
in the heyday and decline of the Roman Empire  
with their precious Law above and previous to

any mere emperor or legislation  
so also Buddhism in our own day  
can irritate and destabilize and console  
because of its unerring Dharma,  
primordial, a law identical  
with the fact of things,  
                    the fact of the world,  
and Dharma is the law  
but by then the audience and I were  
safe in our green elsewheres  
remembering this and forgetting that  
and riding on the significant colors  
as if they turned out to be the name of a name,  
laughing and shouting, the train  
that has no need of windows, no need of doors.

3 March 2006

## HYPONOLOGIES

1.

Meek telling.

Organ grinder.

Spelunker.

These. As well  
an ancient engineer  
with slide rule still

walked down the dream.

It was a one  
never came on

it was a pale  
economic indicator  
like an Africa

or a blue flower  
one time immensely  
popular see them  
everywhere and wake.

3 March 2006

## HYPNOLOGIES

*Notice:*

According to the rules of polite society  
you're allowed to make up dreams  
only when you're sleeping.

3 March 2006

=====

'S a good  
new year  
something happened  
something broke  
the dog barked  
the thieves ran away.  
Change pursues us  
thoughtlessly.

3 March 2006