

11-2011

novG2011

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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

 Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novG2011" (2011). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 48.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/48](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/48)

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).

=====

My own life (the only one I know in any detail) is interestingly insofar as inspecting its years, its phases of attraction and aversion, attachment and farewell, might reveal something about the way life in general is—the gears? or meshes? or circles? or cycles? that make us intersect with one another, and with the deeds suddenly possible that we do or leave untouched. What kind of Venn circles or histogram could reveal at last to a person the shape of what he happens?

24 November 2011

**The color of a number is a clue.**

Is not a color.

Is not a clue.

Why is 7 red? Because it is 1 come again?

1 is red and 9 is violet.

Below and above, and so it goes.

Until you tell me  
(this is a love letter after all)  
till you tell me  
why the light in the deepest  
heart of a diamond  
is blue.

My mother's modest diamond ring  
taught me all I know about  
the mystery of a deep light  
a light I have to follow.

About blue.

It seems to me I said it or it's been said before  
"light decides."

I'm getting nostalgic for light—  
not like a blind man  
but like a man who sees a woman  
across the border in another country,  
a woman relaxing on her lawn  
or filling with black oil seeds  
feeders for pretty birds,  
strange birds,  
the kinds we don't have here.

I sit in shadow and watch the new sun  
make its slow move across the public grass.

24 November 2011

## I AM A VECTOR

The word *I* is a vector  
it carries in its rat nature  
the plague of meaning  
out into the quiet of the world

such a simple vector  
carrying the almost infinitely  
adaptable micro-organisms of grammar

through a storm of sound and its shadow, writing.

24 November 2011

## **SORT OF A LETTER**

Why are you far? Caught in the desert in a web of words, the all-night dope jabber than never reaches dawn? Your artful silences are a banker's fraud, he's got all the money and still wants mine. You have all the words I gave you. Or you gave me. And I can't stop talking. Is that what you want? And you say nothing. Spill the fucking beans, for Christ's sake, lift the window shade and let me see you do it. Wherever you are. Stop hiding in the moonlight. You hear that cry? That's me, I'm breaking in the back door, shoving my way in. I don't care who you're living with. Or I do, and I'll get even, but that's not the point now. Nothing makes me madder than silence. It makes me crazy. Tall Irish slut with fascist tendencies. Really, I hardly know you, even after all of it, but I have a right to be wrong. I'm being generous, I'm giving you all the explanations though you're not entitled to them. As a matter of fact I'm not entitled either. Neither of us knows much about the other, how could we? And what is there to be known? People are not that different, are they? Some are near and some are where you are. So what, so what, it's Thanksgiving and I'm glad you exist. Which is more than I can say about you. Or maybe you are. You sign your emails with x's and o's—x means you cross me out, o = zero = I mean nothing to you, or, since x stands next to o, I mean next to nothing to you. 0 = zero. I love you, everything gets confused in sunshine, smell of your clothes. Slapped you so hard there were bruises on the palm of my hand. I'm so delicate, really, but nobody knows. So thin, my skin.

Across the road two trees are growing. They started from one root or however that works. They started out touching and grew further and further apart. I hate looking at it. At them. Always further and further apart. Their branches still interweave a little high up but their bodies don't touch ever again. And when there

are leaves on them (there are no leaves) you can't tell the leaves of one from the leaves of the other. That's how I know you love me too, despite the shitty x's and o's, the breathless silences, the map we tore up to slay the distances, the wishing well that ran dry, the four-leafed poison ivy rarity we found growing by the stone, the late-night radio, the smell of gasoline.

I want to drink your word. There. Silence is a common thing, an Irish trick to win a shabby game, a profanation of the world's song. Silence is a con man's ploy, an art gallery's cunning, selling nothing for something. Come home to me while the euonymus still blazes in the hedge, don't let winter hurt me, you don't have to say anything smart, smart as you are. Just keep talking.

24 November 2011

## THE GAME

Discover while you can—sequences  
of interlinear affection—me on you—between  
the languages of our separate desires—what this

weird meaning is—the buckboard in flames  
and the prairie worried—artesian subtext—  
the sweat where throat means chest—*einander*

one another means another—zeppelins  
over the Bodensee—bottom of the world  
lets us go flying—flying—you on me—

we're home now—no more weather—  
we are interruptions of each other—  
river of us as we are—game no one ever loses.

24 November 2011



= = = = =

A sign hoisted on a country road  
God Sees Your Cigarette  
a lady deer stands by it  
waiting to cross—you drive slow  
for her sake but this just makes  
her wait longer—nothing  
you do is exactly right,  
smudges everywhere. How much  
you can see when you're driving  
if only you were looking.

25 November 2011

= = = = =

Of course we like things that work  
that come out right  
like crossword puzzles or Agatha Christie.  
Our *kleinkunst* called Fiction  
exists to simplify the world  
or make its irreducible complexity  
at least beautiful to contemplate  
the way music charms our ordinary air.  
We swoon so easy! Eager to  
pass into rapture! Anywhere but here!

25 November 2011

= = = = =

Across the road  
men having trouble  
putting up a sign.

*Mes semblables, mes frères!*

25.XI.11

=====

Losing on the way to finding  
that's what the bible's all about  
I learned that from Charles Ives  
and Ben Whorf helped out too.

25.XI.11

=====

As if I could ever be other than American!  
I'm more American than the Pope and the  
Beatles and the pepperoni pizza all put together.

25.XI.11

*[dreamt at waking:]*

Heard by someone passing by  
The cry of someone left to die.

26 November 2011

(SAPPHICS)

Calm wait of weighing out desires  
abscond from perverse present  
into ordinary now being here  
love what is near you

orphan skills beset your hands  
sometimes to stroke a lover better  
examine this so breakable being  
only to hold one

beingness breaks mourning always  
that's what tries me to tell you  
love what happens itself to you  
sleep with the future.

26 November 2011

= = = = =

Mixed signals, Lydian.

Your slender waist

or touch her Etruscan skin

soft but thick

against the slanders of bumbling time,

she's a painting on the wall

that keeps its colors for two thousand years,

of calm beautiful persons

making love with their smiles across

the enormous room,

the world is a kind of gorgeous tomb,

run your fingers over her skin

or over the smooth old fresco,

no difference, we live forever

somehow, enduring, enjoying,

the conversation of such silence.

26 November 2011



## POUR MES ELEVES

Can they see the darkness in me  
this lump of lead not yet or ne'er  
transmuted, can they forgive  
the common coarseness in my desire  
to speak itself in touch and telling—  
I come towards them stumbling,  
the whole of my being in my hands  
trying to catch fire from them,  
fresh kindling from the very new,  
the ones who are new to the job  
we try to do forever. Can they know  
how much the least touch or tenderness  
means to me? The word  
has its own midnight in it,  
love is like that, one word at a time.

26 November 2011

= = = = =

Everybody has a way of doing it.

Fish in the trees.

The stone starts to sing.

A hand trembles to write the truth  
and the king flees his country by night—  
dawn and no despot!

Except time. And desire. And doubt.

26 November 2011

= = = = =

*I wish I had been born in the Moon.*

—Sterne

Phone lines though are  
kindly perches for small birds  
but I have more than once  
seen a red-tailed hawk  
so common in these parts  
perched on one too  
waiting the moment for the kill.

For this is America the Rich  
where door-busters and midnight sales  
take the place of ceremony and prayer.  
And in the churches people sit  
to be entertained by preachers  
who make them feel good about themselves.  
No ritual to distract them from their dreams.

But on the moon we would sit quiet to hear  
carefully the rushing maybe waters deep beneath.

26 November 2011

= = = = =

In fairyland they don't grow old  
that's how you know you're there

*I have been and never told*

Even you don't change at first  
only when you leave that realm  
do the grey hairs show, the limp comes back

*I have been and come and never told.*

26 November 2011

= = = = =

Things come closer now  
they stand watching you

you hide with a towel over your face  
can't see them they can't see you

when you look again  
the Pyramids are gone

and off on the horizon you see  
the great haunches of the Sphinx

moving fast, rippling  
like heat shimmer on hot sand.

26 November 2011