

11-2000

novE2000

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novE2000" (2000). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 1095.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/1095](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1095)

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).

That all  
I could want of be  
she is

how stretches  
to take  
me everything in.

20 November 2000

---

The engine running but the car not glad to go  
idling is a custom of the mind before the Muses  
austerely slit the openings and all sky breaks loose  
incarnations of tumultuous precision (art)

tracing just the shadows of their lithest movements  
which are always (cave after cave) the movements of the mind  
in the mind like ice in centuries the glacier man  
we saw sleeping in Bolzano stretched on the left side

or did the axis shift again and Mussolini's triumph arch  
welcome the Saxons it was built to spurn from where the south  
speaks Latin and is pure and here the Muses wander  
naked chastely in the decent pine woods because blood

takes on a different taste in Germanies the schist the oak  
marvels of recidivist theology until the God  
is born again in waste and word and wood and bell  
the ceremony of inspiration drips with oil and wax and ink.

20 November 2000

---

As able as we often  
And then the truth of Whom  
Begets us again

And we are born  
In the woe of a barn  
And our mother a girl

Our father a wish  
And what kind of hands  
Did he have

To carve a boat  
From balsa wood  
To open an envelope

Gently with a fingertip  
Seemingly without  
The least curiosity

To find what anyone  
Might have written  
Or might be inside.

20 November 2000

---

On the way back from somewhere  
I happened to look up there  
Where I thought the pine trees are stored  
Then what I saw

Straight above my head was Pleiades  
The maidens who rule the sky's far mind  
And take our thoughts away and give  
Them back changed

These are the stars Tibetans call the Six  
Thieves because they cure us of  
Anything that is only our own and  
Make it everyone's

The way the Muses who are various  
Bright colored and nimble both in hip  
And wit can make a sleeping child  
Wake up with poetry.

20 November 2000

## OLD PHOTO

Then could this really have been me  
this snapshot I took at first for a view  
down Millard Canyon into the firebreak  
where the trees step back and the eternal sunshine  
shimmers down the boundary of Altadena

this rock is my eye this stand of chaparral  
my mouth open again and what am I saying  
I hold the tired Polaroid up to my ear  
it squeals like dinner plates under wet fingers

it grunts like an oil burner in the cellar o God  
this once was a man like any other child  
and now it's one more snapshot of the world

full of filth and animals and chemicals and chalk.

21 November 2000

---

*to the sarabande of the fifth suite for cello*

Something waiting  
some thing that has  
never spoken  
speaking

21 November 2000

---

there are so many statues on the lawn I cant see the grass  
all these pretended Gypsies speaking excellent Romani  
I can barely speak my mother tongue the world is so deaf

there are so many flags in the sky the birds cant get by  
snakes have no room to slither through construction sites  
my hands cant reach you the room is so busy with ideas

the politicians have stolen the stars out of the sky the planes  
have no place to land pale stewardesses grow old on the wing  
and the wind knocked at my door to tell me you loved me

but he was trying so hard not to cry he had forgotten your name.

21 November 2000

---

*for Charlotte*

Because there is no one  
Outside the music  
No one but you  
Inside me inside  
What understanding  
Understands what  
Music hears

                    No one  
Hears the way in  
The way you do  
Sometimes I feel  
Broken with distance  
Then I know  
It is always you always

The one who is present  
Always in the interior  
The space the hand  
Is always (even  
Asleep) holding.

22 November 2000

## SURPRISE

The day the surprise comes  
    is not itself a surprise  
it has a sunrise and a busy noon  
    a siesta erased by money  
a happy hour at the neighborhood gin-mill

but still the surprise makes room for itself  
    like a mouse inside a cheese it's eating  
in a cartoon. That's right, folks,

a surprise eats time from inside out  
the surprise is a prisoner with a file in his hands

and the bars won't last long beneath his frantic  
    friction. Soon he'll be out

and the prisons all empty. Except for wind,

the wind and the surprise alone in the streets  
after everyone has hurried home  
    to their old nurse, the pillows heaped up on the bed

and the surprise screams in the empty street  
and no one hears it but a child or two  
    and nobody listens to children.

22 November 2000

## WHY THANKSGIVING IS ALWAYS THURSDAY

Why Thursday was it  
history who said

what did she say, Story,  
storiella, a woman

Herodotus saw her  
disappearing over the desert

her shadow fell on rock

and stayed, her shadow  
always, fallen on the fact of the mind

as fact, that final fable.  
As if there were a going and one who's gone.

23 November 2000

SHEEP WIND

A tea named  
for something that has never been

the Noon Moon  
the cathedral inside out.

But that is me, my darling,  
no enclosure, all archi-

tecture reaching  
for my lost

interior the dark  
wonder inside you.

23 November 2000

---

Third planet from the One  
and halfway down the hill to Brookline

we walked into precocious winter  
glad of our wool. End of the personal.

From here on out, I am a pirate  
on a dead ocean, an astronaut

indoors, a bank without a dollar,  
I have been emptied of everything I thought.

And now I am sort of beautiful  
if you like tall ignorant men

who don't know how to stop talking  
all the way to Centre Street and the MBTA tracks.

23 November 2000  
Boston

---

I wonder about all this history, Heraclitus,  
And I have since my childhood felt sorry for your death  
Even before I knew who you were and would be for me,  
A word on the other side of words, a laugh  
Beyond a tear beyond the sneer. I wonder how I knew  
Enough to weep when I read old Cory's translation  
Of the elegy, and heard first time of the sinister *they*  
Who bring the bad news, heard the plangency  
Of its repeated *They told me*, I wonder if I could  
Forgive you for being dead before I knew you lived,  
I learned how to grieve from you, your death  
Taught me history, that someone went on caring  
And spoke your name among the living, and cried  
Because you were simply dead. Or precisely, because  
Someone else told him you were dead. This news  
Was news indeed for me, meant you had lived  
And I could find you, the scowl at sunshine, the austere  
Satyr sprinting through the surf, sea mist  
Cool against your skin, fresh as the mind remembering.

23 November 2000  
Boston

*from an unborn book:*

## **Dreamworks**

Eating a bowl of cereal  
I remember a dream last night  
of a bowl of cereal

sharing it. Sharing a spoon.

\*

un autre rêve:

a ritual  
we talked about  
for hours  
till you asked me  
to and I did

*[Annandale]*

\*

The White Hen Conundrum:

As a convenience store is to a real supermarket  
This world is to what?

(cs : sm :: w : x)

I'm sure there is an answer.  
I wake up positive

for we make treaties with the world  
to ask much and take little

but there is a world that gives us  
more than we know.

*[West Roxbury]*

23 November 2000

---

Thinking about you  
When we are both far away  
From where we know ourselves

Not so far, a dream  
Is always close

And two of them each night  
Devote to you

Remarkable circumstances disclose your name:  
Broken glass on the lawn

A dream is all the distance there is in the world.

24 November 2000  
Boston

## Wohnen, Wonne

Dwelling, delight, bliss

*ecstase*

as from a draught a dwale  
of some snoozy opiate  
you relax enough to be where you are

(real estate is the opium of the moneyed classes)  
to *have* a house  
to be a house*holder*,

such active verbs  
we stagger  
to carry,  
have, hold,

(the way the liturgy bends a man to take a wife,  
to have and to hold)

but to be near  
*in your presence*  
is to dwell anew

to be dwelling in a new way  
that seems also very old  
built into the deepest  
customs of the mind,

I feel reinvented by you, rediscovered  
by your, in your, presence.

The strength of *Wohnen*  
calls out the intense *Wonne*, bliss, to come

even if (especially if) this bliss  
is the unhurried presence itself,

the sense that just by being here with you  
I can completely fulfil my own nature

and my desire?

What is desire? The *wonne* of *wobnen*

: to be inside someone  
and find her body is in fact yours,

your long lost house,

and how does she find her home in him?

Can we live in gazes?

That is surely the Lady of the Lake,

the lake the eye  
its gleam the gaze,

we live in each other's gaze, en ton regard

I, wounded by time and years,  
sail into your gaze

like Arthur off to Avalon  
in the old book,

Morgan la Faye, queen of the glance

by which (Dante tells us)  
love is kindled,

apprehension is by eye,

Queen of the Glance in which the lover comes to *dwell*—

*Wohne in mir. Wohnen in mich.*

You be my grammar. I try to tell you how you feel

24 November 2000

---

**Let the nearest  
Open the old door**

**Let the dearest**

—here the manuscript breaks off  
and who knows  
what the dear would do

and here we are in Wonderwood again  
half into winter

and the deer streak down the little ridge  
that separates the old shale of the lake we were

from a high hard continent long  
ago lost into America

and the dearest should be busy there too.

25 November 2000

---

Aloe unpredictable  
evidence succulence  
in the desert

a whole Leopardi  
ode would  
speak from your green  
fingers or are they feathers

lost Water Bird  
trapped inside the earth  
always trying to fly  
up through us into so dry a sky?

25 November 2000

---

something if not sumptuous a photograph  
of Jesus taken from an old chalice restored  
to its rightful owner — the altar — lost  
itself in the mountains of a questionable state  
halfway between Zagreb and the moon

so I see in the papers the new nazis are busy  
in Berlin they're walking from my Ostbahnhof  
to nobody's Alexanderplatz I wonder  
how scared we are or just disgusted heavy rain  
is predicted but the minister of the interior says

the police have the situation in hand they say  
grip in German but then they are a forceful  
people as you can tell from the way they march and  
one of them just got arrested for giving  
the Hitler Salute and screams out what about freedom

of speech? & the policeman answers Freedom  
of arms you mean? just lie down in the truck  
you'll get your freedom soon enough he means the rain  
that they'll all be walking through soon back home  
or out for a beer and everybody identically wet

because politics is just another kind of weather  
that only rarely kills but these bald adolescents  
are the kind that do so momma keep them home  
don't let your booted offspring strut along the street  
screaming for justice they'd be the first to quell

then back to basics the uncles and the aunts  
the ordinary houseplants and the fireplace  
everybody is waiting for the world to go away  
and leave them alone — this is called the Rapture  
when you answer the doorbell one last time

25 November 2000

---

At least forgive  
this aptitude for sin

it slakes thirsts  
beauty made

to be within  
the shimmer

to live inside color

become the interior  
of what we see as skin.

25 November 2000

