

11-2014

novA2014

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "novA2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1347.
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GOING TO CHURCH

One thing true enough is telling.
Ogival window seeing makes
landscape woman. Or from all
sides farmers and merchants
hurry through these woman arches
to be in church at last. To enter
church, *kyriakou*, the lord's place
and what place could that be
but the lady? The church is a young
girl guarded by earnest eunuchs.
We are her suitors, we line up, ready
for the ordeal, we take our chances,
which one of us will she take by the hand
and lead us into the dark, never-changing
ever-virgin simple mystery of herself?

1 November 2014

ALL SAINTS DAY

**But all the dead are holy.
Even the demons who made
hell on earth for all life
around them, they're holy
now in the great silence
before they come to mind again
and wake as someone else
until at last they become
our mother and our father.**

1 November 2014

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**Knowing enough to know less
as if I were Europe and came home
every night to my fence and a fresh
wheel of cheese, a cup of water
from your well, the only taste I need.**

1 November 2014

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**What's in a nave
a ship on land
a kind of shoe
for a god to fit
too tight her
footstep in**

**and stands there
letting us behold.**

**But what's in an elm
a shiver of amber
leaves they say but
we know better,
sap and sugar, stained
glass and Cambridge
by Longfellow's house**

**who's in the kitchen
with dining doctors,
deipnosophists of
Harvard Square around
the corner and down
towards where the folk
live, those bearers
of vernacular and tales!**

**Write them all down
in mandarin, translate
breath into stuff like
this, and o back then
for that god's sake
imagine me, imagine me**

**hearing how stone talks
and meek cathedrals
cold incense and the soft
void above us to Whom
he cry at midnight, wet
pillows sometimes, or dry
catastrophes of sleep.**

1 November 2014

CHOREOGRAPHY

is literally writing the place

**writing the place
that makes you dance,
configuring a space
(or stone, of sound,
color, music, a place
of light) that *compels*
the body to dance.**

**Writing the place
is writing the dance
is writing the body
swayed by, beaten by,
place. Dance
is compulsion,
a regimented madness,**

**a force from the
ground wont let you stand still.**

1 November 2014

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**The wind has come that bares the trees
—I don't know more than that
yet, chairs overturned, covers spun off
in this by-humans-interfered-with world.**

**But out there the hibiscus tried to keep
its leaves, a show of strength, flower-
maker against the blow-away, a game,
for god's sake it's a game out there**

**and only me to take it serious, me
with my tenacious little notions
I call ideas, and think they somehow
make me different from what blows away.**

2 November 2014

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**There I go again
describing what I see—
ordinary vistas
with poem obligato.**

**One more mistake,
one more love affair.
I wonder what it sees
when it looks at me.**

2 November 2014

LATIN LEXICON

**Take Lewis & Short
and shake it out**

**so I'll wake up again
as if I had never slept,**

**and all the words
I ever heard will**

**analyze themselves in me
and me along the way.**

**Words know us
better than we know ourselves.**

2 November 2014

BORING PLACES

Church Classroom Train Ride

1.

Church

she says is boring
and delights to be so,
boring is pleasing them
who go so early
Sunday morning to
to bask in the irrelevant,
what all the week's
other days and the rest
of this day too avoid:
tedious liturgy, pompous
desperate sermoning.
They take the pleasure
of being *somehow benefited*.
Like art. Like a fairy's kiss.

2.

Classroom

Twelve years of misery.
Think of what a child
(you, me) could really
learn in those years.
I hated school, it
kept me from learning,
kept me from books.
From hearing, looking,
just walking around.
It made me repeat
other people's thought
hoping I would mistake it
for my own. I never did.
I stared out the window
and studied the better
blackboard, blue one,
full of white signs.

3.

Train Ride

Travel is the opposite
of going somewhere.
When you're going
somewhere you just
want to be there,

**the train's just a shuddering
fidgeting waste of time.
OK if you're traveling
though, when the whole
point is being anywhere
else but where you are.
Now the train ride is
another glowing vista
in Otherland, the place
people pay to behold.
Be held by. Next week
our friends are going
to Vietnam, not for war
or commerce, just
to look around, who
knows why. Alas though
no train goes there.**

**2 November 2014
Amtrak to NYC**

BEING ALONE

**Being by myself
should be boring
but is not. Slender
shapely ideas pass
sauntering through.
Sometimes say
their names, tell
where they've been
or where I am.
Or even why they come
to me to be thought,
just now, with sparrows
fluttering round them,
green sea canyons
stretching to hoirzons
between their legs.
An idea is a door.
Being alone is opening it.**

**2 November 2014
Amtrak to NYC**

NOVEMBER ELEGY

Tall men tend to tell the truth.
The soapy residue even good
experiences tend to leave behind
—is that on the mind or some
other plane midway between
what they call us and I call me
a level we dare not name
where whatever happens leaves
its shadow subtly, barely noticeably
that colors (that drains color from)
our feelings like a young or unripe
cataract in an old man's eye.

2.
Forgetting things is my business
or part of the process (Pound
says this of the wind), part of this
obligation when sunlight
catches on a long stray hair—
we all are women to the wind,
the Vulture's bridegroom,
the lighthouse far inland.
I have to forget in order to remember,
poignant answer to a mortal question.

3.

Who let the ghost in through the keyhole?
Isn't that what iron keys are for, to keep them
out, keep them from speaking their word
through, the word no one wants to hear?
The slimmest word.

But here comes cloud,
very loud, streaming from the northwest,
a simple form for once, I could draw it,
could pull it down and sleep on it tonight—
some shapes are safe in bed.

It puzzles
the animal of me, that rhinestone tiger
with a wounded paw—

o leap
your own fence, citizen, that's
your only limit now,
given the calculus of terror,
the agency of age.

4.

Think
of that girl in Dante, fair of face
but foul behind — the opposite
of nowadays when handsome
back and shoulders turn round
to show faces of studied vapidty.
Writing yields to ordinary knowing,

**ambulances arriving at the scene.
O sentimental mind and tree-shaped
heart my *hero*,
wine, tooth, tree, form, fire,
*sex, sudden, weight, mine, then...***

**We get where we need to be,
get there by wanting alone,
magic spell of listening between
anything ever spoken, there,
but where did the saying start?
Something to do with horses,
chariots, little books I forget.
For whom am I grieving?**

3 November 2014

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**I taste fish wherever I go
must be the time of day
when the wolf comes out
and looks around, anxious
to know if I'm really me
and therefore his friend
or friend to be. Or is it a dog.**

**That cant be right. Fish
live in the sky, that part of it
dense with hydrogen and salt
where the mineral of the air
comes close to taking form
but at least knows how to leave
a soapy film along your fingertips.**

**Afternoon is just morning again
heading in the wrong direction.
Or right if the sun's too mean to you
and you hide like me in bosky
situations, cafés, houses, dells.
That taste again, as if an old book
swam up the Severn to meet me
when I was the other side of me,
back then, funny accent, different stars.**

3 November 2014

