

12-2014

## decl2014

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, "decl2014" (2014). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 1370.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/1370](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/1370)

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).

=====

1.

Talking a beginning  
Dew on autumn tables  
But bees at Christmas

A sign.

*Tekmar*, none clear from Zeus

To mortals,

Only the sky itself

And what comes out of it.

2.

Men in coal mines

Turning earth into sky.

I think sometimes about money,

Not often, not like Miller or Pound,

Just the sound of it destroying the earth,

Their arts murdering beauty.

What can I do,

I must hate beauty too

I use so many words

To talk about it,

So many trees.

24 December 2014

## INCARNATION

*... When the whole world was at peace*

It said,

At this one and only when

And only then

Could the fusion happen

In or to the genetics of

This wise animal.

Or was it Calvary

A life away

From agony a *nuclear event*

That changed our plasm?

Was it peace or

War that happened us?

25 December 2014

## **THE LAST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS**

**People waiting  
In the elevator  
Of the building  
To rise or fall—**

*All motion is imaginary –*

**It appears  
Only in the mind.  
We can walk through  
Only the doors we are.**

**25 December 2014**

= = = = =

**Trying to tell you  
But there is no.**

**She told  
Us long ago  
We wear those chronicles  
On our bones.**

**Even the window  
Keeps trying to remember.**

**But the purse is full,  
It holds no more.**

**25 December 2014**

== == ==

**Not the end of history  
But the end of trying**

**This tablet  
Or remember me**

**The cut tulips never spread  
Wide the purple ones**

**And dreamt it was sixty-one  
On Christmas morning almost was**

**Our friend had bees at his window  
Slippery truth of weather**

**Deep honesty of climate.**

**25 December 2014**

== == == ==

**Short lines are best —  
Who knows how much breath  
Is ever left?**

**We are at  
The outposts of the obvious.**

**Beyond this gate  
Each fate is different.**

**Pass through and find  
The one who really thinks he's you.**

**25 December 2014**

= = = = =

**Mercenary energies  
Block the chalky pages—  
No word sticks.**

*If you remember your dream  
The day is different*  
**If you forget the dream  
Your life doesn't know what to make of you—  
“how could they forget  
What I spent the night time teaching?  
O waking people are poor students,**

**Poor scholars of the one  
Science they need.**

**They're too busy figuring the costs,  
The losses, the lusts, the parables  
They never understood,  
Even the clock  
Confuses them, the day  
Is a blazing blur.”**

**Your life wants you to listen all the time.  
Especially when sleep disarms the opposition  
And their troops are asleep too in their trenches.**



25 December 2014

## PASSIONATE SURGERIES

Passionate surgeries  
Draw a straight line  
Premises voided by aftermaths—  
Tartan tie for dinner wear  
Day sliced to ribbons by desires

Call the porter *por favor*  
Let him — used to it — hoist  
This heart from comradeship  
To something more — call him  
Albertine and hide behind the door

That day he read no further  
And I went no further than ordained  
*Ostiarius* in one faith but the door  
Stays open forever — I did something right —  
And Brahms on the radio forgives the birds

Nothing further from a bird than a Brahms  
— we live inside parentheses  
She leapt over the seat back and on  
My astonished mouth bestowed her own

## **How far does a dream dare to go**

**Even among the Irish — some valor  
Tells the whole story with a single kiss  
No angiogram required to tell that  
Six deer leap the lawn and of them  
One was young and one a dominant**

**We shoulder risks to leap the fence first  
The avant-garde got left behind  
Naked woman in a window the end of that  
The other thing that art was all about  
Rhymes with Chartres rhymes with Sartre**

**Old Tom's Quincunial Lozenge made of joy  
To write pleasure in a pinprick pattern  
No house is falling down around you  
The Blessed Virgin mothered me knew me  
In blue robe plaster even saved me**

**And shall I put the green robe on  
To guide the pilgrim towards the shrine  
The common people call just Morning?  
What could be truer than the other?  
Every wound a blessing language said.**

2.

**My body keeps its secrets most from me  
Near the ridgepole where crows perch  
Amygdala or Miriam from the almond trees  
Never that far from Jerusalem o, holiest salaam  
Pin likeness to the mirror and disappear**

**Who knows the other side of anywhere  
Mints for a widow coins for a child?  
What can you buy with half a mind?  
His lozenge surrounds the heart with signs  
A sign by nature points two ways at once**

**Art is harder than even that  
You looked for passion and found suffering  
Didn't teacher warn you, slim Jesuit  
With a *dream* in his hand before you  
In your first youth at the oaken table**

**Aye aye sir, it was the book as you suppose  
Taught me true *vist the interior* it instructed  
The dream the day beginneth not endeth**

**Carry the flag of no known country  
Thrill to the republic of the empty air**

**Or so I thought the book was saying, it  
Could say anything I thought because it's words  
Reading them is climbing up the hill  
Bare trees are waiting for their scholars  
A room tells you all you need to know**

**Find the utter center and stand there  
Wordless waiting like a frost-bit apple  
Too high up for the deer to nibble  
And there you are, half gone with longing  
Till far away you hear her footsteps come.**

**26 December 2014**

**= = = = =**

**Our old well used  
For watering the bees—  
Could that have been  
The word I meant?**

**The hard fact  
Of not knowing  
Where water goes—  
It stops running  
Just as you're getting  
Close or at least  
The secret meaning  
Of all that flows.**

**26 December 2014**

**= = = = =**

**When you're writing you know more  
That when you're reading. Things  
Fit together quicker, come home  
From further, link lighter,  
In lovely strife with one another,  
Every fact is wide awake  
And with its mind on making love.**

**26 December 2014**

**= = = = =**

**Bird on roof.**

**Alarm.**

**The sky  
Comes down  
Again and again.**

**26.XII.14**

**= = = = =**

**The meaning is the same  
But the destination  
Has to be increased —**

**Do they all talk like that  
The blue population  
When the clouds drift away,  
Skywards, *sky words*?**

**They're people up there, you know,  
You just can't see them,  
Not aliens, not strangers,  
They live above the weather  
But they're part of earth —  
Just listen if you don't believe me.**

**27 December 2014**



= = = = =

**Break the grass**  
**Let resemblance out**

**The *sound of words***  
**Voice of a dragon.**

**27 XII 14**

=====

**But things were later then  
But nothing exhausted  
Orion still was lord of winter  
Corn stob still yellow-ochred the fields  
And foxes roamed.**

**What had I done  
To the earth? Things looked at me  
The way they always did, wary  
But sort of saying hello.**

**But something there — what  
Is the wolf in the sky? The surf  
Pounding in the inner ear?**

**Confusion**

**Loves us, keeps us warm,  
Shelters us from knowing,**

**Knowing can be**

**The opposite of awareness.**

**The roaring sky**

**Puzzles us into clarity.**

**27 December 2014**

= = = = =

Every language has a word I know  
If I can find it, all the other words  
Understand me as well.

I am their business — to spell me  
With a foreign sound that wakes my own.

(I should have thought of that  
Before I bothered learning German, Latin  
Greek, French, Hebrew, Tibetan —  
To name only the ones I really don't know —  
I should have waited silently  
Till the Wampanoag spoke from their white cliffs  
Or the gypsy fiddlers in that Vienna café.)

I am ashamed of knowing  
So much and knowing nothing.  
But that's just me.

I reach out for a crystal  
But it's the first quarter moon  
Caught in the branches of the yew tree.  
My fingers are empty  
But the moon's still there.

27 December 2014



**= = = = =**

**The anodyne rewards  
Of sweet life**

**Ponytail**

**Of the jogging matron,  
Easy dog trotting by her panting heels,  
The world as video,**

**Flat,**

**Secure, abbreviated.**

**But the bandwidth of poetry!  
The sky clearing!**

**28 December 2014**

## GERTRUDE AUX ENFERS

How could it fail to begin  
When it is always? Rhadamanthus  
Said this. *As a wife*  
*As a cow* she answered,  
*A love story* she explained,  
The halls of hell

Lit up at her text.

But Aeacus said Concentrate  
On chewing your food, don't choke,  
Coughing is intolerable down here,  
The reverberation. But the woman  
Laughed, her laugh, wise  
As Paris, coarse as Baltimore,  
Re-echoed through the vaults,  
And Minos wept  
Having troubles of his own.

2.

She had to go to the classical underworld —  
All the other nice Jewish girls  
Went to Catholic school, so they  
Would have to bargain with St. Peter  
And all the other saints who guard the mind.  
So Gertrude stood in the meadow  
— pré sacré — and watched  
The glamorous vaporious shades

**Drift in and out just as Monsieur Gluck  
Described them,  
Lyrical, a little wifty.**

**She could make good sense of those —  
They are repeating without repeating,  
Time passes them from hand to hand,  
Pretty girls exhausted by their beauty.**

***I never repeat* she remembered,  
Understanding deeply that every word  
Comes from the mouth each time for the first time,**

**There is no past, the children  
Never grow up, no one dies. She caught  
Her breath and in wonder that she had  
Without dying come to the land of the dead.  
And found them living, sort of, drifting,  
Hearing, cheating at cards.**

**Then Minos spoke:  
This is the queer consequence of being. Animals  
And men change places, faces. Women rule.  
We three judges are men, or were, and this  
Is the only job men are fit to do, deciding  
— when nothing hangs on our decision,  
Fate  
Tells each being where to go, the better  
To enjoy or be repaired. We judge  
With no power, we grieve for no loss,**

**Just grieve for our own sake, solemn  
Our countenances, our fierce red weeping eyes.**

**3.**

**Ink like skin turns brown from sunshine  
— what shall we make of this?  
It was a Shepherd asked her this  
I am no sunbather (but she recalled  
Those sexy Bain de Soleil ads of long ago)  
But a writer — shall I worry  
That my words will fade away, or turn  
Cancerous with long exposure  
To the reading lamps of lovely ladies and even  
Faute de mieux those rascal avant-gardists  
Who tumble up the staircase at the rue de Fleurus  
Just off the shady side of the Gardens?  
I am in a place now where no one visits  
But one stays, all of us abide, snug  
And tedious as hymn tunes — O the South  
Gave me such strength! No one notices  
How African I am, and all I do is signify.**

**28 December 2014**



= = = = =

**If I err able  
then sing queer  
would the chert  
chip in my hands  
glisten?**

**I'm trying to hear you  
hard, Chinese towers  
Turkish mandolins  
the Black Sea spread out  
beneath my plane**

**this is where I wake up  
almost forever in Europe**

**this is where the finding  
forgets itself again  
in the shadow of the vineyard**

**so this is where  
you've been hiding  
while I hid in sleep**

**weird church  
where statues riot all through the night.**

**(27.XII.14)**

**28 December 2014**