

12-2011

## decF2011

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, "decF2011" (2011). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 306.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/306](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/306)

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).

## DELIVERANCE

And one day the silence came  
all by itself and no leaf stirred  
and no one summoned. Cars  
still moved along, sleek steering wheels  
still hypnotizing drivers into thinking  
there were real places and they had to go  
but no sounds led them. Thinking  
makes no noise. Even the birds  
shut up till springtime anyhow  
and roadsigns stop creaking  
in the wind. I miss those most  
I thought (thinking makes no sound,  
doesn't do a thing) but love this first  
opening of the curtain. Sound is darkness.  
Now the light comes in I thought  
and shows what everything is really thinking.  
The smell of coffee, truck hosing heating oil.

22 December 2011

## FETISHES

First day of winter  
an eagle meets a sinner  
two predators we are—  
we believe in miracles  
we prowl the sky and earth  
for our occasions.  
In grace to pounce.  
The neutral kill.

2.

Alienists called them fetishes  
with colonial aplomb  
and use the word for anything  
people use to get off—  
ascension into the exalted space.  
Were gods once, they and us,  
and still the lover worships  
the silken gown, the open lips.

22 December 2011

=====

Birds discern.

Men specify.

22.XII.11

= = = = =

Stare at this white wall  
until it speaks.

This is The Method.

Follow the grain of wood of wall of rock  
followed long enough leads you to yourself

who else is there to find

a hawk on a little crabapple tree

and who spoke of finding?

23 December 2011

=====

Because because

I was a boy

No one knew me

there are no pictures

of my ignorance

(not knowing, not known)

except my face now

trying not to remember

the word on the tip of my tongue.

23 December 2011

=====

Fly on windowpane  
winter  
crawling up  
towards the no way out.  
An ache here and there,  
a man.

23 December 2011

## SEASONS

pass in a minute  
in a mind

the music breaks

the snow is green  
trees fall from heaven

it's a movie trick  
the ghost with big breasts

two trees from one root

we hurry through winter  
a sea is waiting, warmish,  
south of the world.

2.

According to Ptolemy  
this region is ruled by Leo  
where the lion bathes his paws  
in the saltpans of the Camargue  
to disinfect the claws of lust.  
Or east to Nice, Nice is Italy,



La Nizza, where the cornices  
of heaven crumble, men kill their dreams,  
daughters seek their fathers,  
everybody sad.

Nothing sadder  
than sunshine. The sea  
at midnight. This very night  
dark of the moon  
not a single ship in sight.

3.

Give me back the hope I pledged in you  
o far country take off at least your clothes.

4.

To look failure in the teeth  
and say you're mine.  
After the first love what then?  
Shouldn't we (like certain  
prudent male insects) make  
love then die right away  
our work accomplished?  
We have no work though,  
we have only what we make up.

5.

I woke up thinking about Faust  
then wrote down what I thought:

If i really were Faust, there'd be no Mephisto for me. I would go straight to the woman, to Margarethe, Gretchen. What does a sly, snide travelling salesman in red tights have to teach me that doubt has not long ago made me familiar with? Gretchen is herself my devil-instructor. The milky-thighed innocence of a young girl: that is Satan's gospel, and from her wide-eyed tremulous credulity i learn all the local secrets of cosmology. Doubt and credulity--these are the salt and sulfur to which the lustful mind brings its spermy mercury.

She is my teacher. I can learn from her because she knows nothing, and wills everything.

But by then I wasn't sure.

Isn't writing it down a species of doubt?

I think I meant a simpler thing:

I'd go to the girl to find out  
because I sense that she alone  
knows the one thing I need to know—  
how can I even know what to ask for?  
I lie beside her thinking  
give me all you can  
and here is all I am  
and let my body ask her.

6.

But that's another opera.

In the cold here world

nothing moves,

only the flecks and floaters in the eye,

a little jazz to speak the little light.

24 December 2011

## CHRISTMAS

*for Charlotte*

Christians say that on this day  
God became Man.  
Everything changed in us,  
our flesh was god flesh now  
and day by day we take god in,  
repeat the incarnation.

Everything changed.  
And the words changed with their things—  
God meant God and not man,  
human meant human and not God  
but suddenly one day, this day,  
they changed. One became the other.  
Not just the nouns (those sacred  
mysterious things, man, god)  
changed but the verb too,  
what can *become* mean if one  
already existing complete entity  
becomes an already existing other?

All the words changed us.

They call it the Mystery  
of the Incarnation, there's a pretty  
little cathedral on Long Island  
named for this theology.

All the words  
are different now.

And that's where we come in.  
When God became human he took it  
on himself to die, because men die,  
to love, because humans love,  
to laugh and sleep and wake  
and walk in the country under trees  
that do not always bear fruit.

Not always. God (why do we say He?  
God is She just as much, the Transcendent  
has all our categories to transcend)  
walks by the barren wood, the too-salty sea  
in Palestine, the one called Dead,  
lowest point on Earth's surface—  
where else could God come to  
if he really wanted to come down to us,  
come to where there is nothing lower?  
And the rabbis used to say that men

don't see G-d or angels any more  
because we don't walk with our eyes on the ground,  
modestly, humbly. For God is there,  
he came down from heaven as far as he could.  
Where we are. To be us.

And the words changed, the meanings  
opened up, a word could be a cave  
and we could go down and visit  
the interior of the earth, a word  
could crack open and let us see the stars.

Anything goes. Where we come in  
and study hard to know  
the range of meaning of each word.  
Because a word is incarnation too,  
a word takes a long time, as it takes  
my whole life to find you, to become  
your husband.

To find out what that means.

And then I look at you, I study the casual beauty  
you invest in every movement, how you dress  
in simple splendor for each occasion, the slim  
skirt for the bike, the velour dress you wore

tonight to go caroling (you see it mulberry,  
I see it warm brown). It seems to me  
that studying the incarnation means  
studying each human person God put on,  
this one you grace with lucid form,  
the strict behavior of your habits,  
the firmness of your heart and will—  
so love makes a Christian of me still  
to study the becoming-work of time,  
  
how the world came up with you—  
that's the part of the story I have to understand.  
And Christmas seems a good time to say so,  
  
here, midnight mass all alone in Annandale,  
the Buddha's blessing takes us by surprise  
again and again, to live so long and come  
close and closer to the one  
we must still be intended to be.  
Without you I could never have become.

24 December 2011

## SKY MINDS

First coming  
blue instead  
the sky minds

poltering us

what name what name  
the grace to fall

to intercourse the moment  
as a verb  
incarnate noun

the sky minds

we are knives

knives in surgeon's fingers  
we live in mirrors  
curious of faults

which one is mine  
or name name



a horn or hammer  
never  
till the blue discover

pain over right eye  
what is wrong

the sky minds

something changes  
the shoppers pause  
mid-money

they cry what names what name  
don't think about already gone

the sun the sun  
like men run

no city s completely flat  
always steps to count

the steps the steps

to hide your  
goods in the sky

climb tall

the piled-up thing

you live in

every house a donjon keep

what are we saying when we say

wailing for me

what name

comes up the steps.

25 December 2011

