

8-2009

augG2009

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augG2009" (2009). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 572.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/572

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.

= = = = =

1.

All things being ready
the armature begins to sing
inside the wet clay.

The statue of the king
salutes the dawn or closing
of the day depending

on where the apprentices have stored
the rolling platform on which he lives.
A gesture (you know this) is permanent.

Or nothing is except this saying so.

2.

Word is only a handshake too,
a blind man's whistle,
a pinched cheek for the deaf.
O listen to your skin
the oldest book.

3.

But the king is different,
says one thing only
only it means a thousand things
depending. All we are
depends. Or some such thing.

4.

Don't be cynical. it's love
that understands your word
most accurately, lover's breath
has something to do with it
the smell of her mouth as she
comes close to whisper—which
is the real word, the fragrance
of her speech or what she says?
Everything turns out to be a word.

5.

I think I have picked up this stone before
and there was nothing beneath it then
and nothing now. Only the earth, the last surprise.

6.

There is a current meant to ride
the *joy behind the stars*, a fierce hilarity
we perceive as the color blue,
its angers, remorse, liberties, its seas,
its confounding laughters that crumble tyrannies.
(Riding the scum of Bacon's images the joy of paint.)

7.

Find me where we are
in the hymnbook sister
what number now
should we sing?

8.

The iron frame
he built soft bones on
and made the whole thing
look like you.

Whoever has a face
rules the little world
till he turns round.
Now sing this with me.

25 August 2009

= = = = =

Eve was my sister.

The book knows nothing of me
as I was, calls me a servant,

heard as 'serpent', tells
that it was my fault, my clever
decoding of the tree of life

into the tree of death.

Eve was my sister. She knew
better than to trust me,

I said Do not eat the apple,
the apple kills. So she went
right to the deep-laden branch

took the ripest she could find
and ate. I looked away,
my shadow followed me from the garden

and they thought that was me
down there, a slithering resentment
leaving. Wrong. Eve

was my sister, no one knows me,
I was a voice in the garden
promising they would be gods.

That much was true. About me
and about them. They
are gods. There is no other.

25 August 2009

= = = = =

Selfishness
of the old
how the world
shrinks down
to what comforts
them or ails.

26.VIII.09

= = = = =

That there be
things wait for me—
who stole my story?
Θεμς great goddess
of arrangement
human magic
sets things in order
who stole my story?
try to answer
by breathless evidence
presented
a writ of right
a script of weather
who stole my story?
villain mystics
why silence did
and mock and mutter
keep this name
in mind
forget your own
we illustrate
the story digital
image high resolution
how much things cost
who stole my story?

the airy victims
by lewd molecules
thou art made
and made of entrances
speak the count
and tell who stole
my story
it was on the left
horn of my brain
last night tomorrow
sleep bring and dawn's
determined light
we are made guilty
by design
to free thee
from thy humors
the sweet feel
of being part
of what has no parts
a soft deluded
morning all day long
someone tell me
irritants align
lose my thread
the amber beads
roll on the Isfahan
lost in the sand of wool

who stole my story?
the wool of crimson
shaved so smooth
the hands sink in
seeking amber
seek amber every sea
never answers
lost in the pattern
nothing matters
but the smallest
cling to the tether
release me
from my clutches
we are children
when we stand
beside the sea
it only
is full grown
it laughs
at the silliness
of our dispositions
the birds the words
we put such faith in
the sad lying oracles
of the heart
the sea hears
teaches us to be

unpersoned
beyond a self
no story
just an ampersand
to be
between
the sea did it
ocean thought
woke me
without word
wanting sleep
sleep is my mother.

26 August 2009

[dawn waking]

= = = = =

Lofoten Islands and.

Shiel's other kingdom.

So I wanted water

wind and sky and cold.

Why those and no others,

why? Why do I want what I want?

Isn't that the urgent question

we keep dodging by trying to get it?

I want to be on a mountain want to be on an ocean

what is to be done with me?

Or is always ocean me I mountain must?

26 August 2009

[second waking]

= = = = =

Does a walk in the dark
equal the grain in cut rock
polished to show
the streets of its difference
lighting through the mass?

27.VIII.09

[woke with that]

= = = = =

Don't think of anything

before thinking.

And speak

before you open your mouth

so the answer comes

as it must

before the question

distracts it from knowing

into life we are lured

so many things to be said

and no one listens.

27 August 2009

= = = = =

Rapturous paradoxes

take the story away

I am left with astonishment

a bare tremble in the me of me

making wonder

but what, a shudder

built into sunrise,

a wind has its way with a house.

27 August 2009

= = = = =

When ready, more is.
That's why so many birds,
seas. Name me again
and I will other you.

Birch trees and their
names. A meadow
among pain. Change,
change is the only pure.

Running water purifies
itself by running, the mind
heals itself by thinking.

27 August 2009

DODONA

The basic measurement
is a star. We replicate
its rays. Vitruvius
diagrams it. Everything
in us means to go out—

let it. The whole
body speaks.
Be good to everyone,
that is how to be good.
Harm no one.
Know who is behind your thinking—
listen to that empty room.

(They come first
show them the way)

(I wasn't sure what I was thinking
I was translating the sloka where the Buddha
tells clearly the three complementary
practices that form His whole teaching)

(I wasn't the one saying this.
But then I never am
—by my theory, theory

sees better than I can
since it has eyes of your own)

how is the new coffee
go and see
see in the sense of taste
sense in the sense of know

I could two batteries three pens and a watch
I am ready to begin
too hot to drink

Let the thought of it
come back to the place it began
a thought whose white skirt is stained with grass

because we speak the word
only the place
put into our mouths

blue ink in some pens
what is in the batteries
acids metals red
ink in one pen

what current makes time flow?

too early to be awake
this head needs sleeping

Nothing matters but to keep talking
death in mid-sentence a terrible thing

Don't you ever worry about what you've done?
—That anxiety is all there is of me

the voice of my slain brother
calls out from my mouth

we become what we kill

a few dead wasps on the porch

abstract nouns have no rivers
have no bones

Seated between bronze cauldrons
that sing from the brush of a gentle
whip a boy wields—he too
made of copper or of bronze—
the prophet lets the sounds explore her mind
silencing the usual clamor of the self

and then from an immense distance

suddenly inside
a voice says things that she has never
heard but now repeats,
wondering at what comes out of her mouth,

letting it come.
The answer has been given.
Now understand.

I suppose—though the texts
do not say so—that understanding
means the listener—the querent—
travels into the same silence
to seize and taste the words he has been told
from her careful mouth
now try them on his question.

Who can help me when I hear a word?

Shall I say Apollo
spoke it while I slept
then woke up and wrote it down?

No names yet. The bright one
clutch the dark around them,
our skin their house and bone.

28 August 2009

DREAM ISSUE

*Nothing but time
is waiting
and it knows how to wait*

I washed my hands in the rain
on the broad marble parapet
slipping my fingers through the wet

she was inside dancing a new dance
my god it was like bible lessons
the way she danced

in a brown ballgown prancing around
singing her new song about how
she wanted to paint her ass

she was teasing with a pot of paint
then someone threw her down and did
she screamed and cried and let them

purple paint all over her ass
then all over her, she got up and stumbled
half naked sobbing—but they were pretend

sighs realistic I had not known
how good an actress she was—stumbling
against a bare brick wall and playing with a knife

I stood outside amazed at her performance
she came towards me, the purple paint
all symmetrical, raying all over her face

petals of color all over her face her brown dress
how young she looked she loved the applause
came out into the mild rain with me on the balcony

saying she would drive me to the airport after all,
San Francisco, early the day after tomorrow.

28 August 2009