

8-2008

**augE2008**

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augE2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 643.  
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## SO THE NUMBERS COUNT

The thirteen number gods and the twenty day gods of the Mayan calendar permuted with the seven day gods of the Mediterranean calendar (accepted now through all the Norse and Buddhist worlds) yield a greater year of 4.99 solar years, call it five years, a Roman lustrum.

So there is this five-year-cycle to attend to. And this is an endless, self-regulating cycle, needing no further observation or computation to keep the numbers straight, but obliging the Daykeepers to correlate the ordered day count with the phenomena they are to observe: weather, the movement celestial bodies, the songs people sing, the price of bread, the fall of princes.

21 August 2008

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Again. The birds told me  
this. They tell me  
everything. No interruption,  
it is continuous  
but it bounces, has freckles,  
changes as any we  
are still distracted by  
what we just heard  
another hearing, hearing is  
what does us in  
and brings us round.  
Seamless, beautiful,  
continuous: the individual  
personality a glorious mistake.

21 August 2008

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All I have to do is hear.  
All I have to do is here.

21.VIII.08

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To come in  
on the end  
of the song  
say, and still

know who felt  
something  
but only the shadow  
of desire's left

like that factory  
of dreamless sleep  
where the actual  
world is made.

21 August 2008

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Not the shirt I was wearing  
but another shirt, same color  
same texture

21 August 2008

*SMILING AT STRANGERS*

she called it, her first try,  
it begins in Hawai'i, with a glottal  
stop between the I's. Children  
came later, the second of three husbands,  
a serious health issue she called it  
with menacing vagueness. Novels  
need plenty of bad news. The girl  
(she still thought of herself that way)  
came through it all, came back home  
to a snug weird town in West Virginia  
deep in the folds of Appalachian rock,  
Josh (or Jared) was there for her,  
they raised heirloom chickens  
and a little pot on the side, did well.  
We were supposed to care about all this  
and somehow we did. A smile is cheap.  
Picturesque people remind us of our dreams  
and that's where we really want to be.

21 August 2008  
Kingston

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I really want to know you  
e-mail will have to do  
for the moment. Till I find you  
on that park bench in Peoria  
by the little stream, the willows.  
It's getting dark already  
I can hardly see the keyboard  
to touch your hand.

21 August 2008  
Kingston

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Coins will soon be no more.  
Just paper or the electronic  
trail of numbers meaning money.  
The Moon will be alone again  
with her Sun. Nickel and copper  
will go back into the rock  
ore. We say things we don't mean  
but they turn out to be prophecies.  
Be with me in my kingdom – or  
somehow the flask of wine  
is corked again, sealed, untasted.  
Everything is new again.  
And in my pocket only my hand.  
A thought of rivers irrigates the wheat.

21 August 2008  
Kingston

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Dragons litter the highways  
with their impressive but somehow  
tiresome sarabandes. How slow  
sometimes things are to devour us.

Nuclear evidence swept aside  
the diplomat is even so uneasy,  
so many people! Metaphors  
too close for comfort.

Return  
all things to their starting place  
where Parmenides tried but failed  
to find them.

How do I know this?  
It was one of those nights you just know everything.

21 August 2008  
Kingston

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But there were people here before us.  
Where is here though when you say so,  
not that I don't believe you but I mean  
do you mean America or this backyard  
or is there no difference and space  
itself is just the most pervasive, per-  
suasive of our fantasies, and place  
itself a fond illusion, you're breaking  
my heart already, is everything  
that ever was right here still here  
and there is no elsewhere than here  
or where are we when we speak,  
where are you when you say here?  
Won't you even let me answer?

22 August 2008



everything matters. Don't you think?  
Or didn't you think so then, or was it the green wine,  
the illicit music,

*raga bhavalila*, those weary  
pale faced priestly people played,

it's not a mandolin, it's not a drum, but  
we were so close to being close, it almost touched  
like the edge of the moonlight on the edge of the stone  
hand that still gestured towards the far-out unconquered further shore.

22 August 2008

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Out of synch again, the sorrel  
skips the soup. You never know  
when the word begins what  
it will make you say. Or seem  
to: there are weird little extras,  
strokes or dots you don't  
discover till it's later  
or too late, slip of the pen,  
a mother instead of another.  
accuracy is boring, it's the other  
that tells all, the fertile egg,  
the streak of blood. As if  
the world as we know it is  
God's mistake, when He  
meant to be saying something else.  
*Lapsus* means both Fall  
of Mankind and Freudian slip.  
O blessed Latin, your lap in  
which I learned all that  
I used to think I know.

23 August 2008

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Crow maybe-ing overhead.  
Nothing as definite as a cock crow,  
the day for all its chill is soft,  
it will be hotter later, alas,  
it will be noon and things  
will have their edges  
again, slice through, be decisive.  
I wonder if I will ever go with them  
to where it is Being Definite.  
Desire dasn't be too focused  
or else it misses all the other  
gorgeous stuff to want. Those  
golden eyes. Or were they green.

23 August 2008

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Don't be alarmed – still  
one lamb left in the Ark.  
The wolf has swum ashore  
to seek out the theater  
where their liturgy will be recited,  
the growl, howl, bleat, bleed  
and bestial repentances,  
sorry to die, sorrier to kill.  
And we'll see the whole thing  
again, we always do,  
the terrible art that happens to the world.  
Stunned witnesses, we shamble home.

23 August 2008

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Sometimes what the dream  
left unsaid wakes the day,  
bright footnote to a vanished text.

Where do I come stumbling from,  
what do it mean  
by being here now, out loud,

outside as if the air  
belongs to me and ever after,  
one more cup in a drunkard's hand?

24 August 2008

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Under the radar  
in a small cabana  
safe from the sea.

Everything frightens me  
so everything is useful,  
a challenge, a question, a wolf

maybe to tame.  
But that leads to nothing  
but one more dog.

One more thing  
to love. Fear.  
Abandon. Run away.

24 August 2008

## THE HERMIT FLEES ESOPUS ISLAND

Something must be wrong with me,  
I'm telling the truth—  
there is an island where the rocks  
cleave edgewise up into the patient wind

and there's no room to build  
my Temple of the Requisite.

Just stand there or squat  
by a dead campfire between two  
fins of this stone shark  
the priest said. How long  
can we live on what we only claim?

Why do I think I'm telling the truth?  
Some story I was told,  
something I can barely think,  
left-over dreams, the name  
of a philosopher I will never read again?  
Life is too short for all this understanding.

24 August 2008

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Somewhere says  
thing. A sign  
a gate is  
going in is small.

Then it is there  
you are.  
Inescapable color  
of what happens.

End of some line.  
You know me.  
You have been here  
with me almost content

decisive like a tree  
I grew up beneath,  
my soul.  
My subway home.

24 August 2008

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A leprous twit. I just called  
someone a leprous twit.  
How dare I? And he's too short  
to be a twit, too dull  
to have gotten leprosy.  
The things that come  
into my mouth to be said!  
Strange little copper  
stain on the back of my hand.

24 August 2008

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As if to close another wardrobe  
built into the hallway  
how dark wood is inside itself

or never raven. No bird indoors  
or ever after, still need  
that one fix, the bulk

of her afterward, flex  
of all her repentances.  
No moon. Not even a sky.

A wall around a thought,  
the only thing that matters in inside.  
Outside is nothing, and inside even less.

24 August 2008