

8-2008

augF2008

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, "augF2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 643.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/643](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/643)

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).

## METHANE

1.

Canteen, or be in floss  
cotton boll among these  
*strangers* I think they say,  
blue lights on the hillside  
where the vent gas burns

man fire bale fire  
corpses of us, of our  
fascinations burn there  
caesura of common life  
the grasp of gasp: midden.

Smashed or only cracked  
crockery the lines of cleavage  
semaphoring Change,  
irreversible animal!  
The pain was small but very long.

This life was a cruiser  
among battleships all round,  
small, fierce and nimble  
among the giant almost  
unconquerable ghosts.

2.

The sawyers busy down the glen,  
wait. Unscrew the lid, the dull  
aluminum of. Shallow  
brackish drink.

I'm doing  
what I always would have done—  
morning, bakery, girl,  
newspaper, pigeon, blood,  
all the clichés take

their turn impersonating me—

let me touch the skin,  
let me be the one who lights the light,  
crams into the subway, sees  
a tree beyond the archway and breathe free.

I knew when I tasted that water  
lifted from the Walkill insipid with heat  
a million years ago I knew  
I had been deported to this place.  
These trees were poison me.  
This river meant to devour my soul  
with busy eels and lazy weed.

3.

A stone fell from the sky  
to be I

    I thought,  
it broke something,  
I am guilty  
but not responsible.  
there is law and there is feeling,  
they will never say the same  
in human weather.

    But the stone I was  
learned to talk at length  
though in heart deep I  
was mute as an orchid.

25 August 2008

= = = = =

Could have been lilies  
or pale Susanna. Of course  
they looked as she  
unfolded from her clothes

but instead of worshipping  
what they saw they blamed  
her for their desire—  
thus sin came in the world.

25 August 2008

## THE CASTLE

1.

Take a look at the other side  
the castle you're coming from  
you can't recall the name of—  
you were drunk and I was fantasizing  
and between our two delusions  
the birds got lost in the sky  
and magnets started pointing west.

Over. It's over. It's over there  
where the river, crossed is no more  
or no more than a murmur.  
Something is always behind you,  
why does it always have to be me?

2.

Our pain is that we are animals  
automatic, and sometimes  
we know it, we see the patterns  
we can't stop fulfilling  
and that makes it worse,  
an examined life that can't be changed.

It is the castle makes the king—  
you find it sometimes  
on a weekend out of town or in a dream  
but the name they call it by you can't remember.

26 August 2008

= = = = =

What would I have said if I hadn't listened?  
Where would the wind come from to fill my lungs,  
where would north be if you didn't tell me?

I am no metal, I can't read by myself  
the ley-lines of heaven, the birds ignore me  
mostly, but sometimes hint me home.

And then I sleep. But I woke and listened  
to what you or someone like you were saying  
and now all I ever am is answer-man,

no animal of its own, no barking question.  
O lucid Sphere beyond my here, let  
one day wake to hear me have to say.

26 August 2008

## **SILENCE**

1.  
On the quietest days  
I can sometimes hear myself think

2.  
Isn't thinking  
adversarial usually?  
I think this  
because you think that?

And so it goes  
down the years  
of the cerebrum  
the old medulla  
whispering its need  
to make me differ

where something lives  
behind the brain  
like the brain behind the mind?

3.  
The noise outside, trucks and gear  
and shouting men and poles  
and dragons, the world  
is never different from itself  
only from me. I am the lord  
of silence and I abdicate.  
That is the problem, I lost it  
in my other kingdom  
the one you'll never enter  
ever, and I can never  
bring it home to hear.

26 August 2008



= = = = =

The very first time  
it was an accident,  
the very second time

it was a wheel  
heart rolling over heart  
and how it hurt

to use such words  
all of them weary,  
wake me, wake me

the very third time  
I cried and you did too,  
not knowing not how to feel.

26 August 2008

## CABESTANH

Among love's many miracles  
his heart in her dish  
still singing after a fashion  
hissy little rhapsodies de l'amour  
the way he did one does  
heart or no heart

that giant vegetable called Nature  
makes him do it makes us do it  
it is after all itself  
a kind of song more turnip than cilantro  
more mouse than manatee but

there it is in her plate  
pumping for dear life  
busy squeaking intimacies  
she listens to with half an ear  
the other half trying in vain  
to quiet the rowdy Christmas trees.

27 August 2008

= = = = =

There are cycles of submit—  
a wariness comes over summer,  
something is meaning.

Something  
is leaving, make the best of it

someone says, make light  
while there is still wheat,  
there still is grinding to be done  
and we sit analyzing stone,

what crushes us best beneath  
the wheel of sky,  
what portent  
can we extract from the flood,  
we drowning theologians?

27 August 2008

## AUCTIONING TRUTH

At least she's naked  
as the old Italians show her,  
standing up from Sandro's mind  
boyishly severe,  
a pretty girl frowning with morality  
and much holier than thou,

but naked, naked,  
means truth can feel the slightest  
wind, can feel the smallest  
pebble of deception, her skin  
is knowledge, she knows  
any living thing that touches,

truth is comprehensive,  
undisguised,  
but so frail, so much in danger  
as she stands there in the wind,

such use they put her to,  
the buying, the deciding  
for this god or that one,  
or politics, how they coat  
her nakedness with the green  
pondscum slime of money,

the politics of truth  
is a terrible animal  
savages men, men especially,

in the forum, we have seen them  
bloody from the fangs  
of those who call themselves  
apostles of the truth,

while she is far away  
naked, one finger  
held up in the clement air,  
making the point she means to make,  
always, never mind  
the tear that may or may not be on her cheek,  
la Verità.

28 August 2008

## THE ETERNAL DIRECTION

1.  
Finding the way  
is losing something else.

Another thing. The sweat  
stains on the explorer's shirt

the drift of time  
across the easy sand.

2.  
Nothing here for you.  
You called it a dream  
but it was a machine

an animal inside  
another animal  
always pointing south

where the rain comes from  
always hoping inside you  
where you built a house of water

3.  
And it stayed.  
Waiting for a body

you roll over to  
and it is there.

Later it buries you in sand.

4.

Is it the smirk  
of history we fear,  
the brave godless road we chose?

Tell us.  
Or are you  
an animal too?

29 August 2008

= = = = =

What do numbers tell us?  
Nada. And that is the best of them,

gesturing into a brightness  
indecipherable.

To follow.  
A number means to go.

29 August 2008



= = = = =

I wish I could believe in this lawn,  
the sunlight on it, the shadows beyond it  
in the trees where the new ferns grow,  
this house, this air I breathe, this life  
that seems to be my own, the timely  
tingly sweetness of it, cool night bright day,  
and birds darting in and out, how  
I wish I could believe it all, believe  
that this is mine, and I am me, and I am here  
where I belong. Believe that I am  
and this is it. O dearest lawn, dearest  
shadow, I guess even the thought  
of you won't last, it shimmers, shifts,  
and I will be another and there will come  
to spread over you a different kind of light.

29 August 2008

## **THE BOY'S SONG**

The girl of my dreams  
is inside me now  
and what am I going to do?

...29 August 2008

## **THERE**

To concentrate  
on that which is gone  
and left nothing behind

concentrate on that  
nothing,

the soul you come  
saying  
is receding before you

into the distance  
and being gone.

29 August 2008

## THE SPIDER

I understand  
this place is yours,

harvestman.  
Your long legs,

the cantilevered  
lens of your body

lifted lifts me  
into a tenderness

I haven't earned,  
I have walked

heavy-footed  
on your tabletop

as you so lightly  
walk on mine.

You are how it should  
be, to walk on earth

already half-ascended,  
your body already

part of the air.

29 August 2008

= = = = =

That there could ever  
have been enough.  
A sparrow.

Knowing your place  
enlarges it.  
The sky for instance

understands,  
but what?  
Know me,

I have been waiting  
forever for  
what I think is you.

29 August 2008