

10-2008

## octA2008

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "octA2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 651.  
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## MANDRAKE

I've seen you dried  
or soaking fork-footed  
in elixir

then I saw you live  
flourishing on a hill  
in France

I pulled you up  
a little root of you  
and did not go mad

unless this is madness,  
one word after another  
until apocalypse,

I did not hear you  
scream the way  
they say you do

unless this is you  
screaming now  
in anything I say.

1 October 2008

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Could the color *be* the leaf  
and all that green  
just time's intensest  
cramming a whole year into  
four hot months of glow?

1 October 2008

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Some surds are waiting to be said.  
Some is always waiting. Some  
is your best hope and some are  
coming to make you feel better.

Feel more inside and outside.  
Waiting for them is how you know  
that they are really who they are  
and not some others. Waiting is knowing.

Some others are always a problem  
but not necessarily the problem some solve.  
Some you're waiting for are also  
waiting for you. Some are safe

in a garden. Some is a garden too.

1 October 2008

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Five fat livid plums  
on a little blue plate  
with an apple none too  
fresh balancing on top—

are you a verb  
or an animal?  
Is this time itself  
or just something to eat?

1 October 2008

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But there was something left between—

an honest man walking through his woods  
wondering what makes them his.

Rain horses around an old house.  
Trouble coming?

Or just age?  
The wood is creaking to explain.

Or just complain.

1 October 2008

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Sometimes children sleep  
and dream that they're grown-ups,  
how can that be?  
How can we dream of what we never were?  
Unless we always are?

Unmask this masquerade of childhood!

1 October 2008

## POETRY READING

Let's suppose there are no books.

And there's a man in front of you  
saying words.

Since there are no books  
he never wrote one and you never read him anyhow,

he could be anyone.  
Why would he do that,  
stand there and say something to you,

pleasantly even, or urgently, or maybe even  
as if he had said the same things  
a thousand times before and no one listened

or they listened and then forgot?  
Why would he do that,  
what does he want?

Sell you something? Persuade you  
to vote for somebody  
or enlist in some terrible army?  
Does he want you to believe in his god  
or his atheism, does he want you to walk with him,  
talk with him, keep him company?

Does he want you to tell him something too?  
Does he want you to teach him silence?  
Does he want you to forget?

2 October 2008



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All the news that's good for you  
a saint embarrassed for a sinner  
how much spinach wasted on his plate  
she could morph to emeralds and jade  
to loop about some other empress  
nude but for such bling –  
be gaudy, girl, don't waste the dark  
God gave you to illuminate,  
don't sit glum in the arms of your emotions  
like an illiterate with a letter in his hand.

2 October 2008

= = = = =

Forgive me, I could not  
keep up a blog, can barely  
meet you for a coffee  
near some hour specified—

I live in a different  
kind of time, the clock's  
other neighborhood,  
the other side of now.

2 October 2008

= = = = =

Can it even try to be me when  
I don't even know what  
you're drinking on the phone  
till the words get confused  
with the buzz in my hearings  
hearing them as if my ears.  
There are so many woods  
a carpenter needs to know  
and only ten silly numbers  
to measure them, how many legs  
do you want me to handle  
on the way to a table, Nazareth?  
Questions are too much like rivers  
in the desert, no traveler  
wants to be far from them  
and sometimes they peter out  
until the monsoon remembers us  
suddenly like God I imagine  
but then I have walked the day dry  
waiting for the shadow to turn  
back into the face and the echo  
acquire soft fat lips to shape  
a different message at the shy  
interview of my ears, as if.  
And then the count goes on  
you can call it music if you have to  
the way the birds do, claiming  
an hereditary Hegel in their heads  
makes them think out loud the way they do.

3 October 2008

= = = = =

Having been trapped in the gloom of gleam  
the place where the lamp can't illumine itself  
we can't see our faces, come to accept  
the plausible falsifications of the mirror,  
the honest failure of the camera but  
close your eyes and you're invisible.  
Not a clue to who. Not whom—  
you know all the voluptuous accusatives  
but never the humble nominative  
that keeps saying aye-aye to everything.  
And whose face is it that you sometimes  
some nights wake with, totter down the hall  
rubbing your eyes to make its image fade?

3 October 2008

= = = = =

The old books I used to know  
know me now.  
All their information  
informed me. I forgot  
all the details into myself.  
Where they force me to speak  
as if I really knew.

3 October 2008

= = = = =

Surveyor on the road  
today I saw.

Each day the cherry  
orchard is chopped

down in my head  
all over again.

ca. 3 October 2008

## **REMNANT**

I am what is left  
out of you.

3 October 2008

## **THE TREE TO BE**

Slow everything down.  
I am a man, a principle  
of satisfactions. I am owed  
to a certain tree, an ash  
long ago cut down. Or fall'n  
on a winter night sick from wind  
sprawled beside my house  
it said: Now you live me  
for I am done with myself.

4 October 2008



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Or there was something else  
in the middle of the stream  
beginning a conversation  
that has no other shore  
it all is here alas as the baker  
said to the ghost of his bread  
the powdery damp yeast  
that knows us so well –  
Metambesen he calls it  
citing an ancient Indian  
he never met a candle  
in his hand a flurry of wind  
not big enough to puff  
the flame out just enough  
to stand there in wet feet  
o the beautiful ankles of  
young humans he thought  
those alone brought him  
quick to us from the stars.

4 October 2008

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It may actually have been a flying saucer  
or just a woman in a tight dress, sequin bodice  
hued pomegranate, a kind of midnight  
or a gathering window – bluish cast of gleam  
putty stuck in between. O roses, roses!  
I liked the picture of the thing you sent me,  
all those dinosaurs slithering down,  
the sky an open mouth, I think like that  
about you too, as thou dost me, amazement  
forced into such quiet wool, look, a hawk.

4 October 2008

## WARSCHAUERSTRASSE

Catching up  
is no sort of preposition  
after the fact.

The apartment houses of East Berlin  
with stores on the street floor—  
doner kebab, radio, clocks and jewelry—  
I bought a watch  
to tell a different kind of time.

Grey stone wide avenue stretching straight north  
from the big station up into where I never went.

4 October 2008

## EXILE'S RETURN

Is it true what they say  
about the parrots of Flatbush  
how they came as guests  
in people's cages then escaped  
and perch now on power lines  
along Church Avenue keep  
warm by the transformers  
all winter with sex and seed  
out of somewhere,

  it is true  
that once on the grass by  
Medgar Evans Community  
College in Crown Heights  
that used to be a high school  
I went to I found a dead snake  
I didn't know there were any  
snakes in Brooklyn although  
an old woman on my block  
kept goats in the backyard  
and an olive tree her husband  
wrapped up in burlap when  
the last tomatoes every summer  
got gathered and eaten

and I once under the Belt  
Parkway heard a loud honking  
they told me was a bittern  
a bird I thought was only  
in England like literature  
like everything else I thought  
was never in Brooklyn  
turned out was in Brooklyn  
like me and whatever is  
anywhere is everywhere  
as long as it is really here  
which is why it's so important

for me to know now and you  
tell me is it true the parrots  
red and blue and green and grey  
scream from lamp post to tree  
their crazy eyes the words  
they learned from us to speak  
shout at us now from every  
thing we thought was cold and  
silent and safe and steel and  
far away, but now instead  
the parrots of Brooklyn?

5 October 2008

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By the railroad. By the siding.  
Hard hum  
of the food-bearing freight car  
all night long.  
Refrigerator midnight  
moonless. People  
twisted together in jalopy.  
What is memory *for*?

5 October 2008