

8-2005

augG2005

Robert Kelly
Bard College

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

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augG2005" (2005). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. 804.
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/804

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.

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

Wait for the whistle
unperturbed pentathlete
and then resume
the march round Jericho!

So many years
actual, calibrate
the celebration,
the exposed roots than snake across the ground

are evidence of waterless
the tree goes in search of aquifer
bring me water when you come
I'll make you all the rest

“and do you like it
when I beat you?”
“I don't know if I like it
but I like it that you do”

chanson de rapport
the melody chooses you
and the soloist who succumbs into your duet
silenced by a word

I was writing
another tree
about love love
it is good to be a connoisseur of

but not admit it,
stars staggering towards dawn
and then the ordinary
time alarmed me

a bishop of a bird
predicated a window
tentative with light
bewildered empty bottles

spin in the cradle of a shopping cart
used as a battering ram
against the mercenaries
(anybody who works for a living)

anise, carrot greens, smells of things
don't have to be so particular
a lady wearing power
a span of metal horses haul my sky

and drag it down to your basilica
I am always trying to say mass in
to be good to you because you answer often
in a speakless world a murmur is a queen

talk to me talk to me tak
a nugget, a little slab of jade
with those words on it
inlaid, chinesey, silver

in travertine courtyards
wear a yellow silken mask
to mark yourself a miller
of that same wheat Joshua

made his soldiers grind
his oxen they were
the city was his mill
and when the wheat inside was fine

the walls fell down
and made a sound
like a single trumpet vastly overhead
song fell into a silent world

and relationship was born
we hear the same thing!

we must be somehow same!
come shuck our differences and touch!

the chronicles as usual got it wrong
and thought the sound came first
but no, it was the silence turning round
that made the city fall

round dance of a secular army
girl by boy by boy by girl by girl linked silently
grinding the empty wheel of space
until the wheat of silence

cracks into word, wear
the yellow mask that marks you Mahler,
Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer,
slim girl in your haughty father's clothes

near enough
to spill or tell
an organ thrall
—aren't we all?

a regendered catamite
—but I can bite
a wolf indoors
—with satin afterthoughts

but specify

–I will be general till you want me
melodious and true
because a tone row never gets there

and a tune is always coming back
I want that other thing
the irrecusable magistrate
won't let love get in the way

of love, his castle on the Moldau
hurts heaven somehow why
gleam after rain!
a woman shaped like a cloud!

king crab legs piled on her platter
arthropod alphabet
I'd better learn to read
before this life is out

to understand the numbers
all tangled up in seventeen
and back again, my feet of different sizes
my eyes of different lengths

polypore! recidivist!
touch me again
on the old LP
your mother lost it in the little park

between the swing set and the sea
where all the old music got made
one afternoon between Biber and Strauss
and now the night time is

for sleep and dream
and only remembering
such resolutions –
music is the only actual

remnant of a past culture
only music wields
unchanged the shape of that time's time

the lesson ended and the little girl
still trying to get the fragile rubberband
around her ears to keep the mask in place
sat on the church steps listening

all the overtones
hear her down the spine

series of a slow bell
yellow mask yellow mask who do you mean?

the children cry who settle down around her
pigeon people plump with need
what you see in fat men's eyes is greed
who do you mean they cried and they sang

I can't see the face that I am wearing
she answered, prim, accurate, a little pretentious,
but you could see before you put it on
they said and they said

dear friends, dear friend, dear special friend
wherever you are hiding
I do not know the features that I wear
that's why I need you so bad so bad

wherever you are
come out and see me
I confess what I have done
I have put on a face I do not know

and it was midnight when I put it on.

21 August 2005

= = = = =

Don't know.

Don't not know.

Imitate.

Something clever

like a squirrel

who just does it

whatever it is

needs done

do it. Do it.

21 VIII 05

CALICOON

The railroad tracks run through the printed page.
Snapshots show me hanging on the boxcar ladder
waving to my biologic friends, uneasy
even then with travel. I was not a seeker,
I was *one who has found* and now spend
autumns and winters making sense of what I found.
Trying to get it to run. Plugging it in
all the right places. Listening to the hum.
All one has is hum. See how easy
to extract 'me' and 'I' from the equation
and leave the clean numbers, the operators
busy at their everlasting switcheroos.
The train is always bringing wheal and oil and friends
and hauling away gondolas full of cauliflowers
red slatted cars loud with swine,
and Pullmans sliding by with open windows
carrying congressmen to and fro. This is life.
This is what it means to be anywhere,
constant 'vigilance' is the price of light.
The boy is in midair now, halfway
through puberty. Someday I (who comes back now)
will be worthy of being the man that he becomes.

22 August 2005

CATHEDRALS

No one is willing to hear my confession,
no priest can handle the subtle evils of nuance,
the fluttering velleities, the drowned dreams.
So I whisper to the stone what's on my mind.
The stone hears me. The stone absolves me,
stone has been forgiving us from the beginning.
That's how and why these edifices mean.

22 August 2005

SCALP

thin veil over the foramen,

torn.

The light of some sort passes out –

we wear a scalp to keep the light inside.

They scalp their enemies to capture the resident light

which pours out through the sudden gap.

They eat their captives' light.

We wear a scalp to keep the light intact–

hence yarmulkes as signs of that containment

which is a covenant,

or the specific crowns that Lamas use

when giving empowerments, when they are

the deities whose presence they transmit

and full of god light

not to confuse with sunlight or common radiance—

to touch brows in greeting

is to exchange lights

or to offer direct transmission of the light.

A hat keeps the light on.

A night cap holds the dream safe and bright.

23 August 2005

HOLZWEG

By Hegel light
alone ill-lumen'd
on the sympathy
through the wood way

where wood is mad
fox torn branch
your skin the sin
all we atone.

23 August 2005

HYMN TO

Wonder earth
sympathy a calling
kind of, neuro
pathology of not
paying attention

the beefsteak flung to dogs

measure, Measure
in your exacting moonlight
I have spelled my life

in careful wildness
letter by letter,

Measure

I have lived in you
like the man in the moon
reaching for the loins of women
teasing the wolves till howl
their horrid liturgy
to praise my interfering
rays.

Measure a third

time I cry you
I praise you, I take your name,

maze you, numb me,
take name for you
measure me,

I am the failed silence
that hums words to you, friend,
while you're trying to sleep
arm curled around your head
your hair can hear me
better than I would hear myself
if I knew how to listen.

23 August 2005

= = = = =

In the summerhouse he is
wondering at you
how many miles it takes
to walk all the hallways of
your little house, how many
faces look out at him
from her many mirrors,
all of them her, not him,
he looks for himself
and sees only her, the long
corridor of desire beginning
focus, lights on, carpet
pattern colors of twilight
leading to what's happening
to them all. A leaf
scuds up the hall, the wind
has something to say.

The pleasure – *it must give pleasure* –
that built it. Must have meant it
for him. For all of them,
sore feet, burnt hands,
eyebrows singed,
to find her there.

Or find where she would be
if they call the right way

bang the right stones
together, silex,
the flint, the spark
of wanting built that house.
Trying trying. Finding finding.
A broken yew branch on the gravel path
points where he must go.

23 August 2005

= = = = =

But are these love
these leaves
or just some sounds
woke me
and there you were
on the other side
of what I thought
all the falling
towers of dream
a quiet quilt.

24 August 2005

but then the young
never know their skin
until distances teaches
what their bodies are
and then they think it's love
but it's this other thing
closer than the heart
than any heart

the distance

between
any thought and any other,
the quantum factory, the mindlight
winking off and on.

Meantime the story in that other language
you think is English but will never be
keeps going off in your head, word after word
like the wind blowing in your hair.

25 August 2005