

8-2005

augH2005

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augH2005" (2005). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 803.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/803

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I am the skeptic angel
and who better skeptic
than an angel. Be.

For I read
the motivations of men.
I hear their hearts
but not their minds –
such a sorry science,

only the heart
can we read, angels,
not how the mind decides
to parcel the heart's will out
into the busy world.

Your mind stands between us.
And I have no mind,
only this listening,

like the opposite of a wind
something that takes silently in
from all quarters

the heart's vocabulary
and hears, far but clear,
the hard sentences the heart thinks.

I am the skeptic angel
who reads the terrible
trouble between each
one and the next,
the noise of thinking
drowning the heart's voice
I hear and cry
not to be able to be
the commonwealth you ask.

26 April 2005

= = = = =

The touch.

Skin

is the closest

(furthest)

limb of the heart.

26 VIII 05

= = = = =

for Ilse Schreiber

what brings us
together is like
Rilke though
he is great and we
are small we have
done a rare thing
much rarer than
eternal child
we have been
eternal adolescent
clumsy grace
of our desire
our big will a
little bit bigger than
our hands
the energy we betray
does not betray us
mind's fire
chars your book.

27 August 2005

MORS

If you think of all the ways you can die
you probably won't come up with the right one.

If that is true, then someone who envisaged and wrote down
all the ways he could think of dying
would be in essence challenging Death to think up something
original or at least different.

(Is there an original death?)

Would that be an annoyance to Death, one more demand on the
vast burden
of his art of slaying, one that would irritate Death into striking
faster, if only to get it over with

Or would it please Death, make him relent, give him a pleasant
puzzle to spend months and seasons on, intrigue him with
possibilities, relieve him from his usual round of smiting down,
and thus in effect delay the Event – either through his time spent
on the puzzle, or perhaps even in gratitude to the about-to-be-
slain?

Or perhaps every death at all is Death's fresh invention
bringing all the circumstances together
fitting the pieces together so that each one dies his own death and
not another's

and your last dream is Death's own sign.

27 August 2005

= = = = =

Catch the sawmer
and don't even know what it is
a broth or a kind of fish
or the sound a car makes
driving mid-speed on wet roads
just after rain. That's it.

28 August 2005

= = = = =

Sometimes it ends
in the act of beginning.

This is best. If a human life
actually *ended*
the human would wind up being another thing
altogether, neoteny of the living,
some starfish critter sprawled across the sky.

But we are interrupted.
Just in time. Halfway through the journey of
or just setting out from the base camp

the lightning comes. Or soldiers
from some lowland war catch us.
Or we catch a sickness from
a passing bird's contagious shadow
and we fall.

Heraldry.

That is why our coat of arms will
always show a cross.

Stop here. Arms spread.

Tau, the cross, the living end.

And this is the silence we behold
when we contemplate the cross,
the frame Christ borrowed to show us how.

Die to live. Mind out of matter
springs. Newborn in a new place
in the land of Now. A little to the west of Eden.

28 August 2005

= = = = =

Let the letters
float above the page
and give the thing

enough light
so they cast shadows.

Read these.

Dispositif: the
arrogant array
or whole scroll

talking all at once.

Never commit.

Always connect.

Let the hand
float above the skin
and see what kind of shadow

Darkness casts.

Sinners rescued from an angry god.

Escape by night

migrant mind.

29 August 2005

= = = = =

Or are all our opportunities
broken on the beach, all rust
among the foundered barges?
The Vikings never came.

29 VIII 05

THE COST OF SILENCE

Poets keep talking about *I* and *you*, but they don't really mean you, and certainly not me. Yesterday at the fair we shuffled between the pens of clean goats and new-shorn sheep, many, and looked about. From time to time we'd hear a bleat or whinny. That meant "I." Then there'd be silence. The silence meant "you."

By now, the poet, the original bleater, had forgotten that he'd made a sound. Only the silence remembered.

You are the one who lets me forget I called. We listen to the silence together, and soon become aware it's not anything else but us.

29 August 2005

RAIN

After this wooden summer
salt back in our food.

The need. The prayer
answering itself. Kiss your own mouth.

30 August 2005

ARABY

Making it less, like a sandstorm
writing its own copy of the Sura,
the lost one, the one
that wind knows the stone forgot,
camel prudent, a rainstorm stored in mind.

30 August 2005

ORGANDY

stretched on a pinprick whitewood frame
drying on its twice a year
subvention of the light. The strange
device. The patient fingers barely mine
that helped my mother stretch the barely cloth
wetsmelling against the nose of one who
stretches his arms to sift it soft into place
it tears so easy on its torture door
a portal of nails and the sail
caught there flat and quivering to dry.
You can see right through it. No part of me
remembers taking them down from the gallows.

30 August 2005

= = = = =

Will they find another
or waiting. Will the grasper
let the silvergilt cup slip.
Then who will drink the wine.
Ritual always asks us.
Setting the door ajar.
Chain the scary dog.

30 August 2005

= = = = =

Everything stops
before I thought.
Rain's the best answer,
habit of reaching.
I forget all the ones
and harbor that.
The falling. The
nameless accident.

30 August 2005

= = = = =

The essence of walking
is to abandon the place
you have just been –
that's the whole trick.

This seems to be
what I really meant to say
all the time. But can I
walk away from that

wanting? That walking?

30 August 2005

PANAMA

The end of her story
given me to tell. The canal,
a steamer barely fitting through the lock.
Between an ocean and an ocean
the passengers lose motivation.
Breakfast on deck annoyed by flies.

The humidity to write home about,
a monkey I saw trotting alongside,
his tail following like a clever pet.
Originally we meant to investigate
what people think happened
right here before they were born.

Then we got tired and forgot to ask.
Filled up the postcard somehow,
sent it home. No one knows anything
anyhow. Look at me. What do I
know about you, let alone before me.
I don't think there was anything at all

before I was, do you? The picture
on the other side shows the very boat
they say we're on, but the flags
are different. The sun is shining
and no canal. Who takes the mail away?
Does it just wait down below and travel

with us, gone from us but not gone,
asleep in its final form, inalterable message
read by nobody? Each day we put them in the box
at the foot of the main companionway, Poste it says
and we jest feebly it should say Pillar.
All words end there as far as we can tell –

are you even reading this now?

31 August 2005

For disobedience to your father's will

the world aligned you with your own first name.

Now who are you?

Look it up. Hannah = grace,

John equals something about God

or what God did. Does. So many

authorities we have to disobey.

Prayers you refuse to say. Forms

to leave unfilled out. Even bread

you will not break and eat.

Even wine you will not drink.

You are a lover. All you can do is think.

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31 August 2005