

8-2003

augB2003

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augB2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 904.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/904

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THE RETURN

You go home for a visit
you think to your family
but it isn't, it is adventure

you think you know the place
to which you go home
but home is always different

the oak trees the chestnuts
they seem the same the strange
red berries of the yew

are still there, it is always summer
but it is never the same
your father is not your father

your friend is not your friend
your mother is always in another country
waiting for you to remember her

or waiting to remember you
for the first time ever
you come back and you come back

and only when you come home
from coming home
only when you are back

to that strange place where you
and only you can be
do you understand that every

remembering is a new invention
every time you go home
you go into exile

from that which is only you
alone among all the adventures
your quiet certainty

where the pain lives
but also where young
foxes play below the hedge.

4 August 2003

exalt this and then
that the blue one
then the red
goes into it and
it goes away
methodically
over but no hill
under but no earth
like a river
but not one that flows
not water
nothing that goes
because it wasn't
in the first instance
what it seemed
but only the shimmer
of its disappearance
edge by edge until
it was really quiet
and you could hear

4 August 2003

MANGOSTEEN

a fruit name or
pick a tomatillo
from the gondola in produce
a papery green not very

or an animal whose
name you lack, wouldn't
these be nurture
as Eco's liar fed the leper king
richly on the names of things
fragrances tastes textures
distances?

Some
of our nutrition
comes from calories, most
from names in context.
Verb fat mercy marry me.

5 August 2003

RATCLIFF

listening to Mascagni's magnificent, tuneful hysterical opera, I wonder about its plot. I have no libretto, I know it's from a work by Heinrich Heine, I find on the Web:

Machine Translation of the Opening Lines of Heine's tragedy *William Ratcliff* (1822):

You are now man and woman. Like your hands
Are united, then are the hearts,
In wrong and Freud, united its on always.
Two maecht'ge Sakramente, that the church
And that for the love, you connected;
A double gene rests on your heads;
And also the father gene put I drauf.

The old MacGregor was blessing a married couple — the groom will be killed by Ratcliff, whose love for the bride will ultimately claim the lives of her husbands, the bride, and Ratcliff himself.

Later, William himself describes the dark passion that leads his life:

And confess nevertheless I - sound funful mag's to you -
There are terribly strange Gewalten,
Me control; darken powers gibt's,
Those mean will steer, which drive me
To each act, which mean arm govern,
And already in the childhood me umschauert.

When boy already, if I played alone,
Protected I often two neblichte shapes,
Those far stretched their nebula arms,
Longingly itself in dear clasped wanted,
And nevertheless did not know, and itself painfully to ancestor!
As airy and they also seemed blurring,
Notices I nevertheless on the face
The proud-distorted courses of a man,
And on other mild woman beauty.
Often I saw the two pictures also in the dream,
And looked then still more clearly the courses;
With nostalgia to the nebula man saw me,

With love saw me to the nebula woman. -
But when I came on the high school,
To Edinburgh, I saw the pictures more seltner,
And in the vortex of the student life
My bleach dream faces blurred.
There brought me on a holiday trip
Coincidence here, and after MacGregors lock.

I saw Maria there! To through-twitch my heart
Rapid lightning, at their first sight.
Were the nebula woman courses,
The beautiful, quiet, dear-pious courses,
Me so often in the dream smiled at!
Mariens was not only cheek bleaches in such a way
Only Mariens eye was not so rigid.
The cheek flowered and the eye flashed;
The sky had all dear charm
On this holde picture down-poured;
The Hochgebenedeite was
Certainly not more beautifully than the name sister;
And of the love longing pain seized,
Stretches I the arms out it to clasp -

Break.

I white like it did not come, in the close mirror
I saw myself - I was the nebula man,
After the nebula woman the arms stretched!

War's vainly dream? War's fantasy deceit?
Maria saw me on so mildly, so friendly,
So loving, so promising! August in eye
And we dipped Seel in soul. O God!

The dark Urgeheimnis of my life
Was suddenly opened for me, and understandably
Was me sang the birds, and the language
The flowers, and the dear greeting of the stars,
The breath of the Zephyrs and the brook marbles,
And my own chest secret sighing!
Like children jauchzten we, and played we.
We looked for each other, and were in the garden.
It gave me flowers, myrten, curls, kisses;
The kisses returned I it doubly.
And finally I sank before it on the knee,
And asked: O speak, Maria, love you me?

[Sinks in fantasy]

6 August 2003

What does it mean of a day to be 'bird?'

Does that eagle? And how strange

to the foreigner's ear, eagle, sea-gull, so same,

what does the *s* mean that makes one white?

I have been asked how to turn off the night.

6 August 2003

(Lama Norlha last night, was pondering aloud just those two birds, their names.)

ΔΙΚΗ

There is soaring involved
as well as falling
in the haystack of the mind
lover with lover the mild day,
some kinds of passion
leave a hole in things
a shape where something stopped happening
and let them sleep.

Lovers, lovers.

so many highways through their wilderness
and never a house.

Roads tunnels bridges

but never a motel. Churches half up hills
always locked, empty solids,
boulders. So soaring happens.
So you taste the dream in waking
a taste halfway between 'fear' and 'strawberry.'
You know it. You have survived
one more night on earth
and wake with desire intact —
Justice, or the accurate machine.

Something went wrong when *you* came in.
Any minute *I*'ll slither through the door.
And lovers lovers was just a shot in the dark.

Something always happens when you're asleep.
Overnight the world changes in your house.
Does your mother ever know you've come home?
Does mother have to be a woman?
Can your mother be younger than you?

If you were my hand what would I do?
There was a painting kept me busy as I slept,
I used your skill, *ta patte* as they say
to lay the paint on, while a critical animal
(a taste halfway between the high apple
brandy overtones of tripes à la mode de Caen
and the later Adorno), paced back and forth
in my studio, which was your pale left ear.

It was brighter then as if the water were finished coming down.
Natural measure, notional meed. Words drift
out of reach, the lost oar floats off through the fog.
Can I paddle this wreck home? Sunshine!
I dreamt I was the whole Catholic church
and did something new and fresh now I forget.

Maybe I'll open the paper later and see what I did.
Maybe everybody knows. the signal has been given,
the tool though is too small for the workman's hand.
Can you stand on a bible to reach the crucifix?

6 August 2003

OLD CHEMISTRY

There is a solution Geber gave to Basil Valentine,
there is a leper water that flakes gold white,

the disease is hidden in the cure, he said,
the house is full of tigers but most are sleeping

step careful through the precincts of yourself
so as not to rouse them. Or, by another likeness,

do not water seeds you don't belong to.
Everything is waiting, not just you.

6 August 2003

To be darker.

To stop thinking about that.

Change the tune.

How slow the heart hears!

Oh, were you talking?

6 August 2003

TACTICS

All the great
human statements
have been made.

Now we need
to hear the angelic
pronouncements.

The angel speaks
when I shut up.

6 August 2003

MIDNIGHT

Nobody knows who I am.

Am I glad or sad?

Women come and go in dark rooms
in their light clothes.

It seems to be summer
and no one knows.

Why have I kept them from?

6 August 2003

CONFESSIONAL

Let it try to be open
a 'gasp' or a 'ga p'
in the middle of nothing,
a yawn in no face

how hard it must be to be anybody else

is this language
simple enough Lord
finally

my mother's lap?

7 August 2003

ENERVATED WITNESSES

Enervated witnesses
explain the system to me
diner midnights mens room
ladies room the telephone
between, the mirror doors
“[s]he just disappeared,
thought [s]he was just going
into the bathroom but just was gone
between one mirror and the next.”
Too much coffee,
a terrible day for things,
falling from the sky, so forth.
But where was [s]he now?
Or who had [s]he ever been?

7 August 2003

PEN DULUM

head of some mountain
a hill a dolor

watching its chance
the special principle
by which grief is sown
wheat-wise in rich soil
and you are water
ever after.

7 August 2003

FOR WOLPE

What they
tell
is all they
know
but you and
me we
know a
little more
five fingers
& new clothes

the tune
tells I had
no idea

counting the steps
highway in your head

we always know
how much is
left and how

but never when
only the tune
is then.

7 August 2003

Settle in the morning's storm
that seems so calm
as if it is the end of something
not a sound

the hill of where my eyes have to go
how do they hold together
the vista and the stuff of which it's made

it's made of seeing
but what is seen
a little Happenese interlude
halfway explaining

everybody is afraid of me
but there's more to them than that
if I were another would it mountain?

psychologies don't explain real people
the invent characters who can be explained

it gives a vague idea of where tomorrow is
the light coming over my shoulder
a skill factor in purple roses
garden men arriving in clusters
adipose turf rain shadow
healing

let it grow itself
comma like the moon

gibbous these nights
and a cracked lens.

Thing neither fallen nor pushed
a rain drop only
from the summer Christmas tree
counting the steps
down they come
analyzing ecstasy

stop worrying about the color
and fret the form
 stop
the size and sweat the function,

the handcarved sea.

8 August 2003

THE OPERA CHANNEL

O bei nidi d'amore

sings Gigli, song

by Donaudy

o the lovely nests of love

the voice inhabits

then another voice

Elly Ameling's

could it be

sings Duparc's

Au pays où se fait la guerre

in the land where they make war,

all this is music

the sad slow voice

drifting like Flemish mist

over the Flanders graves

but at the end of *Rosenkavalier*

two loving women

I have never known

live inside the silence the little

page boy leaves

behind when he scampers off,

Mohammed is his name.

He never says anything

all these years.

8 August 2003

A PAGE FROM A WORKBOOK

out of John Everard's translation (from Ficino's Latin) of the Corpus Hermeticum, *The Divine Pymander in XVII Books*, London, 1650.

Book Ten, The Mind to Hermes.

52. Look upon, through me, the World is subject to thy sight, and understand exactly the Beauty thereof.

53. A Body immarcessible, than the which, there is nothing more ancient, yet always vigorous and young.

54. See also the seven Worlds set over us, adorned with an everlasting Order, and filling Eternity, with a different course.

55. For all things are full of Light, but the Fire is nowhere.

(exercise proposed 8 August 2003)