

8-2003

augG2003

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Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augG2003" (2003). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 906.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/906

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DISASTERS

1.

Stored my *chi* in the wrong vessel
heated my copper cauldron over the wrong fire
 what will become of me
trained my copper coil to drip its condensate
into the wrong chalice and to the wrong
mouths I brought that brandy

slowly reverently
serving from the heart what mind had made
as if there were some difference
when all it is, is people dogging in the park

as if the feel of things is what runs the world
I am angry at the whole city
the way Lucifer was angry at God.

26 August 2003

2.

Where are the ones who will listen to me
partners and sisters and cousins in leather jerkins
just in from the country, who has a car
anyhow, what do you really think when you pass
old men on bicycles or the woman a little
too old to show her navel stares at us in the parking lot,
who is looking, who's driving, whose hand
do you think this paper fell from
on which my destiny seems to be written,
is that just a feeling too, they call it a receipt
though far as we know nothing has ever been given.

26 August 2003

3.

Who signs my mail?

I am the logical suspect

but I'm the one who doubts.

All the rest when they see my name

blame me. What does a name know?

When I was five

I rode a bus

to Kings Highway

I read a book

about stars

I've been trying

to tell you

what happened since

but you keep thinking I'm telling you

something that concerns us both.

It's not. It's only for you. I'm no one yet.

26 August 2003

A BOOK OF BEGINNING

Listen to them listening to me

not a sparrow says

a leaf, a leaf is all about waiting

turning everything that happens

into a silent transmission

yards away beneath the earth

roots hear the light

We membrane each other.

27 August 2003

You travel through the world till you find your masters and your slaves

Till then you ride the sun,
like anyone.

27 VIII 03

Hearing helps

In sun
the dim hum
of last night's
katydids
the day's
fresh buzz

It takes
a million
voices
to make such silence

Dream on

Nobody wants to hear you dream

Only tell
what still
is happening

Quick stream
rock in sun,

kingfisher.

I would take my name from that bird

only now
this morning

sixty four years after
when I have used
up all my hexagrams
and begin again

Sequence of years

Bird fall — the blue bolt

not lightning.

I asked my mind
what my name is

and it said that bird
that falls from heaven.

27 VIII 03

Little by little
saying things

to one another
seems the way

Someday
something said

stays
Then saying

is a kind of dwelling
a kind of knowing

always but then
Not interruption

Silence
is a word's shape

listening
Pouches of silence

breathe
Little by little

one another.

27 August 2003

OMINA

When an omen is observed
a good Roman could say
I accept the omen or
could reject it, saying
nothing or not much.

I think they understood
how to put things
out of their hearts
and not worry.

They turned anxiety
into stone highways

even I have walked on.

Palliation, not cure.

To flee from omens
you need good roads.

27 August 2003

[RUNES]

I too *runar*
know *whisper*

spill the signs' spiel
breadboard the better

as if a cut
could do this to a wood,
pronounce it,

Ogham
my old material.

1.

First rune a father
looking for his mother.
That is western culture.

Comes out of Two
a mother looking for her son.

Three a daughter looks on.

A daughter has to be both
mother and son
(as three is two and one)

a daughter is her father

finding her mother finding her son.

Only a daughter ever listens.

Four is a son and then it's done.

This is the story the pronouns speak,
He, She, he, she, I have come
all the way from Earth to tell you
and tell you only this.

Earth is water, Florida, a road by the sea

light lost in sun
you find again.

We are water.

28 August 2003

VARIATIONS ON A LINE OF GOETHE'S

Who are you all you
stand before me in the Emergence
you are tattered with light
my eyes can't hold

Seeing is so fractional

Love exists to increase sensory awareness
in us of us

Who put the cross on the door
and no Christ on it?
Where must Christ be
if he's not on it?

Is he somewhere
we can never imagine,
is he close, closer
than we can bear?

and who is waiting
behind the old door?
and while you're waiting
ask Who brought the wreath

of red roses
to keep company with the cross,
winding the thorny stems
painfully around the blackened wood?

Who brought the roses?
Who darkened the cross?
Did Time do it?
No, Time has no hands.

Who married the roses to the cross,
the *many-flower* to the *intersection*,

all the answers add up
to one more question
and even if the door opened
(inward? outward?)
if the door opened
and you saw,
would you trust yourself,
virgin, newborn beholder
of what for all you know
has been living in that place forever

and how can you see a place,
virgin, how can you trust yourself to see?

Seeing is a fragment.
Even if you see everything
what you see is fragmentary.
And so you ask again: "Who are you

all you stand
before me”

hoping their answer
if they answer
will let you understand
the abyss of the visual
into which you stare
like a frightened deer
whose only way is away,

hold it all together
cross-blossoming frequencies
arrogant unfoldings of the light,
flowers that prick your fingers
deep infections, colors that hurt,
a voice in a neighbor’s house
at dawn showing the way,
a woman you have never seen
stands there in the new light
rehearsing for the day,

but she’s not the one you’re asking
and not the answer
just a parallel questioner
waiting for the secret tide

now I have to go out and buy the roses
so I can be the one I think about

now I have to go and find the door
so I can wreath them there

and make something open,
and I will live with the question
like a wolf with meat.

29 August 2003

DREAMSHOT

I dreamed of a snapshot of younger Barbara
snuggled close on my daybed with a girl friend
I almost recognize. How young they are,
with sly smiles,. B laughing, flirting
with the camera, with the viewer, with the one
beside her. Did I take the picture?

It's my daybed, the picture's in my own hand,
and it's my years have passed since this woman
was the girl I recognize. I want it to be me
she's smiling at, but why? Her smile endures,
I had it yesterday, I've never seen this picture
ever, how can such things be? How can a house

exist in dream I can come back to waking?
Who is reading through my eyes, seeing her smile
as things were then, before I knew her?
That's what a photo is, to be there before a thing,
to be before the beginning, and to see.

30 August 2003

CONSPIRATORS

Breathe with me

I am the secret society you read about
in a fat red book you found in dream.
All books are red. All dreams spill out as words,
daylight remembering something deeper.

Long house mornings. Tell the people
what you dreamed, that's the only news
that matters. Not the government, not the poets,
just what the darkness spilled

and you heard just enough of
to babble when you woke. Listen to me, you say,
I had this dream. What is a dream?

A dream is a divine misspelling,
an accident that happened to time.

I am the secret society and I let you in
because it is lonely in my secret,
and I have built this wall and carved
an ornate door in it just to let you in.
Otherwise in that empty open field
the meadow that goes on forever
we would have missed each other surely.
But the gaunt wall drew you, and the locked
door let you in

2.

But if he is the door

I am the seal.

If he is the vine

I am the bracero

who harvests the clusters,

if he is the wine

I must be the chalice,

if he is the resurrection and the life

I must be the kiss of death and the sleep

where everything begins again.

If he is the good shepherd

I must be the wolf

who drives the lovely stragglers

into the heresy of thinking for themselves,

I must be the mouth

and if he is the Alpha and the Omega

I must say everything that comes between

I must be language and a dream.

3.

Every time I say I love you
it's just a test
but no one knows
who's being tested

my fingers tremble
and my breath
rushes through unfamiliar
pastures in my chest

looking for you
or running away
I love you I need
to hear you say

but is it the timbre
of your voice
or what the words are
that so gently

answer or demur
or is it just exactly
that you hear
and keep your own counsel?

I love you for your silence.

30 August 2003

THE SYSTEM

The spinal understanding
we had to come to to kiss
is a sequenced arousal,
a wound notable for *fire*,
the old word for neurology,
behavior, that *dry water*
the Waterman carries in her jug.
She has long legs and a most
ambiguous groin, electric.
A clock shows the way:
bending always to the right
go down. One of these days
with that water gushing
down her back we're going
to invent the alphabet,
that garage to keep our thinking
safe while we sleep our way,
snoozing through princely afters.

31 August 2003

THE ANALYST

Thinking there are reasons for what I do
I look inside it. Weird little tea chest
with a heartbeat fluttering under dry leaves.

Close that. Try this, a clay bottle from
Panama, a sweaty smell when I shake it,
thick gurgling, no cork, whatever it is

must be evaporating. How long will it last?
Some decisions make themselves, I wait for it
and try an old woolen sock with something in it

harder than it but softer than a bone.
It is a wad of paper money in a foreign language,
a yellow king with horn-rim glasses, no word I know.

Just numbers. Like the clock or calendar.

31 August 2003

A&B

A thousand miles apart
they masturbate to sleep
thinking of each other.

As if distance is
what thinking's for.

Philosophy.

CASINO

Don't let silence win the bet.

Pick *red, odd*, and pile

your white chips on that.

It is not gambling when you know you'll lose.

And act of faith instead

that difference should one day win,

and color, no matter what.

Wheelless the world spins,

the croupier swinging from the moon,

and you the final physicist

holding your sweet breath.

31 August 2003