

8-2010

augH2010

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augH2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 466.  
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Come back from India and almost know me.  
Strange smokes have littered your sinuses  
with green dreams, strange foods recruited  
your molecules to alien fields. Now you  
belong to where that rice grew. Miles wide  
the River through the poorest land. Minds  
awake in deserts, nothing to be aware of  
but awareness itself. After my body left me  
I was a song easily mistaken for an idle wind  
in the cleft of a red rock, whistling. Empty  
quarter they called me where I let music  
know my mind, replace my mind.  
Nothing on earth left but that lean sound.

27 August 2010

## STRUCTURES

One is the boring ordinary house  
we all live in. The other  
is impossible, nothing works,  
all wrong angles, joints don't fit.

But it sings to be inside it,  
illicit music, maybe, criminal  
harp strings, roofbeam drone,  
attic full of midnight, cellar  
full of light. Wrong, wrong.

But here we live full of clean fire,  
interesting danger, lion's mouth  
roars near but how beautiful the beast's  
haunches.

    This curious geometry  
is part of our souls, the unnatural  
that loves us, the unexpected joy,  
living life in the wrong house.

27 August 2010

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Thin sheets of transparency  
like glass but not glass. Just light.  
But you can cut your fingertips on light,  
be careful. Lift them into place  
to make a box: four walls, a floor,  
a pitched roof simple as Ohio  
and it all falls easily together. Now  
hoist it, leave it hanging in mid-air.  
It is a house now, your house.  
I dare you, walk the transparent floor,  
gaze up at stars through the transparent roof—  
look different, don't they? Cassiopeia  
sits on a neon throne, seven colors  
pour from her lap. And cold Orion  
has his belt on fire, blazing at the tip,  
and he seems to be aware of you  
staring up at him, your face nobly tilted.  
Any house is a miracle, and this one  
a forest of the unexpected. Nothing to see  
but the way you see, the alchemy of  
ordinary eyes turns things into themselves.  
And you are with them, fine bones,  
lucid skin, calm knowing, one more secret.

27 August 2010

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They talk their hurt  
secret as wet leaves  
in woods at night

sometimes saying so  
makes it hurt less  
sometimes more

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Tree? Someone instead.

Who? A woman like a table  
spread. *Shulchan Aruch*.

But she is dead, years ago,  
her hips are in heaven.

Then who is that over there  
in the moonlight? You were  
right the first time, it is a tree.

27 August 2010

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Haunted by the houses  
you built in a dream.  
Weird angles made a castle.

I move in. I wait  
in a very big airy room.  
I wait a long time  
until the room is mine.

The one I wait for  
could be anyone. Who  
comes into the shadowy  
room and brings light.

You know what a house  
means, it means language,  
the special kind of knowledge  
that means love, the love  
the saints call our *conversation*—

a word that might mean turning  
with one another always  
to look at the same thing  
then looking at one another,  
turning away then turning back

at last.

Even if someone  
comes and shatters it  
we still have glass, in all  
its myriads, its transparencies,  
its million words. Anything  
can happen in such a house.

27 August 2010



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Green for her  
when autumn comes  
a telegram from tawny  
on the old-fashioned weather—

could time belong to me?  
Could there be an actual after?

28 August 2010

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Music, even the merest,  
is a murk in mind.

Compared at least  
to something else.

What is that clean thing?

28 August 2010

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She was Polish and she smoked—  
is that enough to make a dream?  
And whatever I called him  
the name was always wrong.

They come to be made love to  
then they go, and here love  
means all the things that happen  
in the dark—language,  
failed recognition, touch  
deferred or almost. So that  
waking is the last element of dream.

But still a dream. All this.  
Don't think it's different now  
because sunlight's on the grass  
and nobody's smoking.  
The sea is waiting, is rising  
even as we speak, its time  
pours in upon us.  
Dream while you can.

28 August 2010

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To touch the nice part of the light  
the part that has trees in it,  
to be simple.

We are the world's  
most complicated mechanism  
built to achieve silence, simplicity.

28 August 2010

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Don't ever assume I don't assume.  
From the shape of your body I infer  
character as destiny, just like the Greeks.  
First impression is the only truth—  
why don't I ever listen?

28 August 2010

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Poor people,  
caught in language,  
language is supposed  
to free you,  
starting with itself.

28 August 2010

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The kilter of allness  
    in the blue of morning  
the arrogance of number  
    on the plains of Shinar  
how dare anyone be sure  
    or ever clear  
the orchestra starts rehearsing  
    before the music comes  
they need to know themselves  
    before they can know it  
just like you and me  
    stranded in a waterless canoe  
sure we could get out and walk  
    but where would the Form  
be then, the meaningful, telos, the goal?  
    And Form is God.

28 August 2010

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Just to be any we need all, *capisce?*  
I know it isn't Brooklyn anymore  
or even Italy, but you know what I mean  
and from the look of you better than I do.  
Help me rinse the Bible. Revise.  
Start by sitting quiet on this rock.  
Your soft and its hard are all we need.  
And I have nothing but the wanting to.

28 August 2010



## **SOLILOQUY FOR A PATRIARCH**

I know enough to need  
not enough to know how  
but answers are everywhere  
after all, a new grammar  
every day and why not?  
Christians and Jews on one side  
pagans on the other  
and the Fairies in between  
their tender laughter  
at our ancient evasions  
of the simplicity of earth.  
Come back and touch me  
before I am too old to feel.

28 August 2010

## FAIRIES

*They're coming back now, I think,  
they sing all our certainties away.*

The Fairies are not pagans—don't make that mistake. They are from before pagans, if pagan means the people of the plowed fields who worship sun or tree or bear, river or thunder, who have gods they can name and tell stories about, beautiful stories, gods they make offerings to, sometimes terrible offerings of living beings.

Fairies are before all that. To some extent they may have guided the young pagans to some of those practices, the sweeter ones, at any rate. But Fairies have no gods, and are not gods. They are the ones who have always been here. They are the ones who know. Or almost know. Certainly they know this place and how to live in it.

That much at least I can tell you, they put it in my mind when someone brought them into the conversation. Fairies live intensely, reverent towards everything that exists, but laugh a little, they can't help it, at our belief systems. Otherwise, human behavior they look tenderly upon, silly as we can be, and they help us when they can. They are said to flee churches, and that is so, but not because they fear some potent sanctity; they flee from boredom. All our -logies bore them, maybe theology most of all. Because it comes so close and misses so far? That I do not know. They rush out of chapels (congenial enough at night, cool stone dimness) and play in the churchyard, marveling at the hardness of stone, the ivory beauty of old bone,

the way lichen and time erase the names and legends of the dead. They listen to the distant beat and wheeze of the organ, the beautiful voices of women and children singing nonsensical hymns inside. And they are happy, as they are happy in the lifting wind, with the moon forgetting a cloud.

We Irish tell stories of seeing –or hearing from those who have seen— funerals of Fairies, mourners passing along middle-night lanes, and let no one dare speak to them or call out. So we imagine that Fairies must die, just like us, just like everyone. Unless our storytellers mistook the event, taking an unfamiliar ceremony as one all too familiar to us. Perhaps those who tell such stories were witnessing some other transition. It is not certain. Maybe the Fairies were mourning the death of a friendship, a cat who ran away and never came home, some words that could not find a song.

28 August 2010

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Beginningness. Meet  
the word halfway.  
Melt the mistake.  
Spire so tall above  
an abandoned church.  
Has the beginning  
even yet begun? Nobody  
knows what kilter means,  
only when it isn't on.

28 August 2010

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Start a new religion

every day.

Call it the Sun

and think about it till it sets.

Dusk now.

Soft gloaming and you're free.

28 August 2010

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Day game after night game.  
Story of my life. Baseball  
was only the beginning.  
The failure of meaningful  
pause, you might call it.  
But you don't call it anything,  
you're not even here  
to do the calling. Or the other  
things I need done to know  
how to go on. It all does,  
it all goes on and goes me  
with it. But what am I up to  
while it hurries us all along?

28 August 2010