

8-2005

augC2005

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

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The Greeks took *to tês hodou sêma*—  
the first thing they saw on the street  
when they set foot outside their door  
as their oracle or sign for the whole day,

so I should take the sign of my handwriting  
as I write down my red dateline  
—how many years have I being doing that now?—  
to judge from the comeliness of the *yig-sgo*,

of the planetary sign, the numerals, the name  
of the Mayan day how balanced I am  
in the day to be. Pendulum of the pen.  
I write out what kind of a day I am.

8 August 2005

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Water always excited me,  
to put my endless fire out

or damp it down.

If I could breathe in ocean I would choose to drown.

8 VIII 05

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Otherwise memory too much.  
Seasons greetings afterglow.  
To be able to breathe down there,  
seas, lakes, rivers, wordless  
but never soundless, material  
but no money, everlasting copious  
supply and personless abundance.

If I could breathe down there  
it would be like being inside God  
in touch with everything,  
no move I make wouldn't  
run to the end of all things,  
the knotless nexus, the silkless web.  
The ocean is my skin and I know everything.

8 August 2005

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To breed a me that lives under water  
sustained by the *thought of oxygen* alone  
as we live on earth sustained through  
war and pain and loss by the thought of love.

8 August 2005

## SELDOM CREATURES

schoolyard tyrants  
and a handball court

a big rough wall  
to bounce our guesses off

hard black ball  
white cloud with black plane in it

water fountain bubbling up  
with a girl bending down to drink

this was when I lived on earth  
a connoisseur of unnoticed miracles

later her eyes were blue  
as if there were nothing but the sky inside her skull.

8 August 2005

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Ambidextrous conifers  
a spin in the country  
how the uplands surge  
in the Taghkanic Revolution  
that Ordovician quarrel with the sky  
we inherit road by road on NY 199  
all the way to Connecticut  
felt just like the D903 out of Thonon  
coming up and up the gorges of the Dranse  
to the Morzine highlands –  
all trees everywhere  
are citizens of the same country  
and make us one with them  
quiet if we to listen quiet come.

8 August 2005

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How could her hand  
not lift the candle?  
The molten wax  
flowed around her fist  
hot petals –  
it is not easy to be flower.

The wall of my house  
got broken in a dream  
a forty foot drop to a busy stream  
choked with branches –

lean on no wall,  
go through no door–  
everything falls.

8 August 2005

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By your coat of arms I know you:  
an eight-pointed silver star  
on a deep blue field.  
And nearby people chattering about roses.  
Lilies. Rose of Sharon. *Sexe de glaïeul*. . .

8 August 2005, after Breton

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Spinach we called it  
or bucks as if we ran  
out early every blessed morning  
to shoot them on the hills

(what does a word mean  
when no one listens  
what wild dreams of semiotic  
transgendering throb in every syllable

sexing and blaspheming all night long  
till 'dawn' means 'terrapin under hedge'  
and 'this' means 'that,' apocalyptic  
identity crisis in the heart of fuck?)

we meant money when we meant  
anything that really means. We ran  
out every terrapin to milk it  
from the hills, money, meaning, cash.

9 August 2005

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I never understood anything.

I never had to. It was there  
like a rainbow till it wasn't.

But the sky was always there,  
somewhere, out of reach but  
always letting me stand under it.

Shimmer nailed to shimmer  
everything quivering and nothing firm,  
everything permitting everything else, smooth,  
practiced gigolos at an endless dance.

9 August 2005

## THE TARNISHED MIRROR OF ANTIMONY

Give you my first breath  
the sign of word  
first word that rises

a word rises  
because it rides on breath  
rises as the residuum the specter  
the ash of atmosphere

it means the world  
the word that rises  
means what arises  
in an oxygen-nitrogen world  
all things rise together

from the ambix of the thorax  
th' elixir form'd.  
It is the only thing we really make,  
this thing that utters up out of us  
shaping, shaped by, breath.

You can hear why mystics (mustai  
those who are *mute*, vowed to  
silence, who keep *mum*) think that silence  
is the only tool we have against the world.

And they are wise and we are foolish,  
baby basement alchemists  
turning this into that and taking  
everything that happens as our own,  
our chemistry set, *little tin gods*  
*on wheels*, infants, poets,  
every word we think  
we think we have a right to say.

10 August 2005

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I think I'm in Thonon this morning, Thonon-les-Bains, where that great water gushes up and you drink or bottle as much as you want, free, in the little fountain house pergola, all tile and cool, in the park, waiting your turn while pensioners fill their plastic gallon jugs. Thonon market, Thursday is it, big crowds and acres of stalls and the solemn Swiss landscape across the lake looking on. I hide in a bookstore examining school notebooks to find one for me with the right heft. I laugh at my unconscious, best kind, German pun (Heft = notebook). And the laugh brings me back right here to Annandale, St. Anna's on the Sawkill, An, the Lady of Rivers, lakes and streams, Latin *amnis* has her name, and the Tuatha De Danaan are the people of the Goddess, De Aan, An again, Di-Ana, whose only known true sighting was in a pool where a stream poured in: naked, laving herself clean of all our slaughters. And he paid dear who saw her – one more pun, alas, that brings me back. Actaeon paid deer, paid with his body, his life, his deer life. Noticing language always brings me right back to where I am. I am here in her valley, a valley in a valley, the vale of Annan, the stream Metambesen – I bet *-an-* is in the middle of that word too – or Sawkill's Valley running aslant down into the Hudson Valley, the big estuarial river they Indians called *Mohik-an-uk*, the Goddess who goes both ways, the sea tide comes up while the midchannel, the river proper, flows south to the sea. Her husband's sea. I suspect the Indians forgot her, in their masculine way, and then we came. Never forget Diana, Anna, An, the wet one, the first one, from whom we are. Lakeside in the Chablais, drinking her copious waters, down the lake shore from her better known Evi-an, Evian-les-Bains, which sells her to the world. Because Eve is An, and we are born anew from every

drop of water. But when Evian becomes Eve and An, language strikes. Like the corpse in that Indian story, it leaps off your shoulders in the here and now and soars back to its origin, and all your thoughts turn into language again. My thoughts. Language brings you right back home. To your own corpse = corpus, your body, your own skin, your own hand, own house. Even if you own nothing, language brings you to your own.

10 August 2005

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The results are flames  
but what simple oxygen we guess  
could be the cause? Feathers  
on mediaeval angels look like that  
too, a dangerous rainbow  
leaping from their shoulders –  
an angel is himself the flaming sword.

For everything is Eden.

And from each ease  
of lip or sinew a strange  
impermission works  
repealing pleasure.

It should be so garden,  
so skin with skin  
retrofitted nearly in  
sunset minglings  
then sleep apart  
like Courbet's lovers  
dreaming each other.

But there the mean wings are  
logical and cruel – and always  
they have the look of having been  
there from the beginning, as if Eden

were always lost, and all our loss  
an afterthought, a dream made up  
to explain our present compromise,  
this improvised  
playground of our senses  
that we contrived or dreamed

and they then, bright ones,  
came and took away –  
not it from us but us from it  
as if we could find it in ourselves  
to go back and dig in,  
colonize the ecstasy we thought we knew.

11 August 2005

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Not so much talk.

No merchandise.

Split the wood

and find me there he said.

The bone of silence.

11 August 2005

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To talk  
to tell

I wrote myself

on the backside of the moon

I found a word

that no one ever said

now I can't find my way down again.

11 August 2005

## VEL' D'ÉTÉ

Try to listen but no one will.

I can't begin. Jews rounding up Jews.

How easily they learned the arts of the round-up,

the deportation. The holocaust

knows how to repeat itself – one more

lesson the world has learned.

The settlers are being dragged out of their houses,

old women and bewildered rabbis,

girls with their babies, it is all happening again,

dragged out by a government determined

to prove itself cruel enough to be legitimate:

*if our own people fear us so*

*think how our enemies will tremble!*

Yet one more exile from the promised land.

Trusting dark eyes full of pain.

They have seen it all before.

11 August 2005

## LUBRICANT ANIMAL

These in their clothes  
meager measure summer  
hills she sang. Etruscan,  
with every move,  
knife and fork weaving  
bible witch spells over chickens,  
this hen is *rangée*, if you  
eat her she will carry  
all the hexes into your policy,  
blue alarm, haze over valley,  
senators, would you believe a bird?

Liver of a ram  
by death *made holy*  
(sacri/ficed)  
set apart, we eat  
only the lines  
we eat only what we can read  
the marks his life and death inscribed  
on the living organ

we eat only his interpretation  
of the time we meet in, hour  
of his death and all our ever afters.

11 August 2005