

8-2001

augB2001

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### Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "augB2001" (2001). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 1049.  
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I haven't seen your flowers yet  
the ones you've been planting  
by your little house you tell me  
and I always listen to what you say

but in my mind's eye I see you bend  
in the cool edges of a hot day  
to weed or feed or frankly  
just to fondle one of them, red

I see it though the legend stresses blue.  
Red among yellows, a tawny mulch  
making the crash world neat.  
You, of all people, I think,

because we belong to the legend,  
the house we live in, we  
it occurs to me to say, we  
still are on the inside of some story

shows itself to us only in these glimpses,  
woman caressing her flowers,  
house on the brink of a dark ravine,  
man watching, shadows, hurrying,

someone coming, wanting, taking,  
gone. And what we needed of each other  
is safe inside, suddenly, roar  
of earthquake, lover's breath,

everything different and nothing changes.

6 August 2001

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Let it be as if I had just awakened  
and be morning, candid, not yet sultry  
on what will be the hottest day  
and through the woods I hear Whitman  
playing softball in the clearing  
and all kinds of birds here between us.  
We are at the center of something  
and imagine it as waking, we are waking,  
I sit at a green table on a scrappy lawn  
leaf shadow shakes down dapple.  
The poem stops before the story begins.  
That is its glory.

6 August 2001

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But it is a species of descent  
“lark or leveret” as signifier of  
the morning. Signbearer.  
Poems talk this way so no one listens

and they can do their secret work  
inside the rhythms of you  
where the magnets ride

while there is no story to distract you  
from the space around you

and we become each other architects of void.

6 August 2001

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Precarious means  
just before ruin. Rot.  
The green smell of mildew  
working away under houses,  
in dank closets where the brooms  
sleep promiscuous against the walls.  
I think you have betrayed me  
but only the ouija board will talk to me.  
I run my hand along your back  
again, to find the wedding bell.  
I've done it too. That's how I know.

6 August 2001

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The law has yet to catch up with analogy  
we can do something about the actual touch  
don't touch relations of the world  
but what about the woman who sits across the room  
stroking gently something on her lap  
a book maybe that you gave her and her fingers  
caress the surface of that thing  
as you would stroke her lap to begin with  
and neither of you touch

what is the law going to do about that?  
Shouldn't there be some legislation  
that makes her liable to litigation  
for stirring up unconsolably in you  
desires that are all too close to waking anyhow  
and making you think with your fingers  
and talk with your body in this silent room?

Whose fault is anything anyhow?

6 August 2001

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Bolstered by memory the sad yellow roses  
hang their heads among the apparently  
everlasting babybreath and withered leaves  
nobody's bouquet so beautiful in the blue  
glass vase on a grey morning yellow even  
the fading yellow of one of them is bright  
still and quivers a little bit in the wind  
I have been hurt so much I hardly breathe.

7 August 2001

NAUFRAGE

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What we find  
has to be  
what we were looking for

a hotel in Bloomsbury  
a warm hand on a hot day

salt.

8 August 2001

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Turn around and look the other way  
the way I'm looking so I'll see you looking  
and know we're looking  
at the same departure

I am falling into you again  
the probe the mattock poked inside

the place house hook hard jab

I am a scream let loose inside you  
something hard that knows the way.

8 August 2001

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He evaded his pursuers by  
    concealing his face in the pages of a book.  
His eyes were scattered type  
    his skin was paper  
and he was studying you from where he sat  
    at midnight on the jetty  
while you thought that you were reading him  
    word by word he  
reads along your hands your arms and finds  
    a place inside your body where  
you and he and all those words are ready to start.

8 August 2001

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## CARNETS

But something else, akin to waiting,  
Aching, maybe, comme une virgule  
Dans un texte you wrote or I wrote  
A yearning built into language, a break  
That satisfies and makes you want more

At once. Yes, you. Pausing to make  
The words limp, go by so slow we touch them.  
Always me and touching — what can it mean  
That I was born with that deficiency, need it,  
That a hand or a hide holds so much meaning?

Something else, maybe something wrong.  
The wordless place that body is  
And all its names are silly names, elbow,  
Calf, small, nape, knee. Because  
The body is the other side of speech

We read by writing, another kind of touch,  
Little notebooks filled with flesh and blood,  
A carnival in your pocket, a great  
Solemn god sits on the lap. *For the dancer*  
Says Mallarmé, *is not a girl*

She is something that happens to the light.

8 August 2001

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Circumnavigating the globe in a hammock  
You come to the strangest ports of call.

That's enough music. I want to talk to you.  
It makes you ridiculous to make fun of your friends —

You choose them, the joke's on you. The glove  
Goes back on now and I stroke your *nuque*

Pretending that I was speaking generally.  
But I wasn't, except the way that all talk

Immediately pools out over the ocean  
And comes to the limitless limit and goes on.

Just like a poem, one of those  
That snatches out of tired imagery and narrative

Some statement about reality  
It tries to get you to believe. Yes, you.

The other side of me, the one I want to know,  
Touch, hurt, investigate, astonish, claim.

The only one in all the world that's mine.

9 August 2001  
102°

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Something coming  
as a verb says to its noun  
latin lesson  
be irregular with me  
semi-deponent  
work on me for me

I have no self  
but what you assign  
or I am the sign  
of your having passed  
along a way

you move I rest  
I am trying to say  
a simple thing

things come to me  
or stay away  
my reach  
being infinite  
holds everything  
and nothing

so it's all up to you.  
All I ever do  
is choose who you are  
and you  
do everything.  
Cow. Honeybee. Wolf. Verb.

10 August 2001

## THE INTEMPERATE

because a name  
a sudden dwelling

names unfold out of one another

*eventail* adventure

as at Margate sands the tattered elephant

elle lévante

she runs away from me into the rising tide  
where I will find her

the surf belongs to me

or in the forest a bounding Fawn.

Expert, be naïve.

There is sand in your clepsydra, darling,  
a sleek of oil along your practiced hip

from far away they come seeking new names.

2.

to repronounce your love same heart same hide  
lopsided senses

everything I am is on your side

I want to listen to what I think and then do what you are

do the other can't I that you are  
or how without a word  
to do?

without a word to confuse me

since we both use it what word  
I am you je me tutoye why not a word

like a phallus or a feeding tube a fading tv screen  
lost image  
things swallow when we're not looking.

10 August 2001

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a port of approaches  
Apaches we are violent  
to begin with but then  
Chartres and the telephone

and Proust almost able  
to use both not far  
from the middle of the world  
I worry about childbirth all the time.

11 August 2001

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STATION

As if there were cities  
lapping — *clapotis* —

bees around me, gulls

and all these rivers were on the way somewhere

some same where

just one river

all one where

I smell the kindling of a flag

that burns the air

outrageous jingo sunshine

on the little lighthouse island

the train I wait for just one more wave.

11 August 2001, Rhinecliff

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the poem keeps talking  
talking to you

I find out who you are  
by listening to what it says

I know nothing  
nothing but what it knows

scanning the lagoon  
for herons herons for you

11 August 2001  
Amtrak

## WEST VILLAGE

Safe at home  
after the nativity  
birth trauma city  
ailanthus in rain

tall streets I covered  
fifty years south  
all crowds I see  
the spectral premises

of bookshops bars  
where I first knew  
the other animal  
all gone now

sullen jollity Jersey  
tourists among my  
screaming lights  
all this is mine

but the streets  
are the identity  
of geometry  
the structures of my

transactions linger  
love changes hands  
the church is bright  
with money the door

is locked  
against the poor  
the cars are nervous  
where I come from

moon my wedding ring.

11 August 2001

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the place I love  
the splendor  
of the broken same

a sprawl  
of difference in a garbage hand

11 August 2001