

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

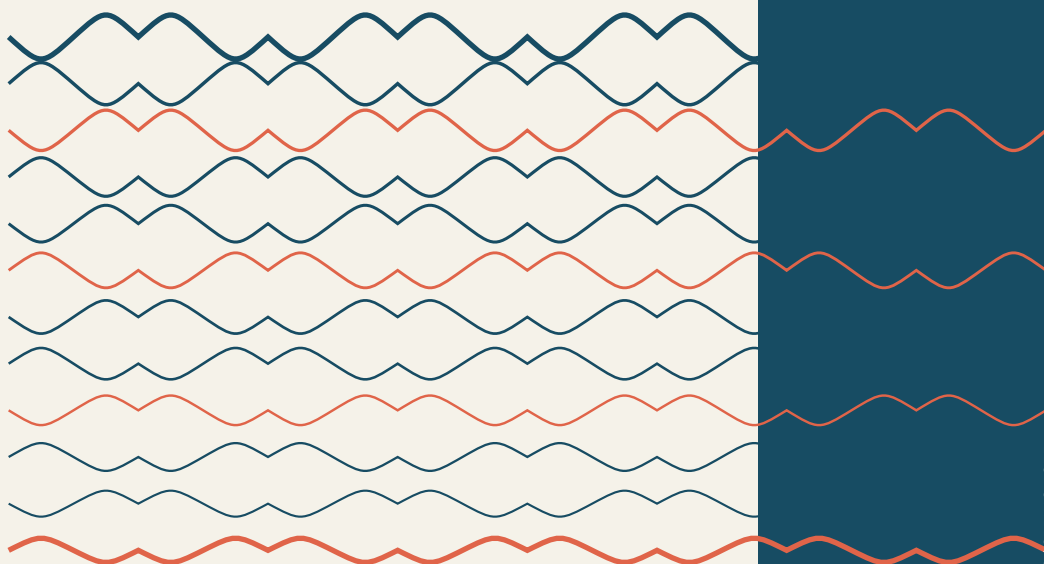
COAST LINES

Spring 1955

VOLUME I / NUMBER ONE

1

ISSUE



35¢

COASTLINES / SPRING 1955

COASTLINES

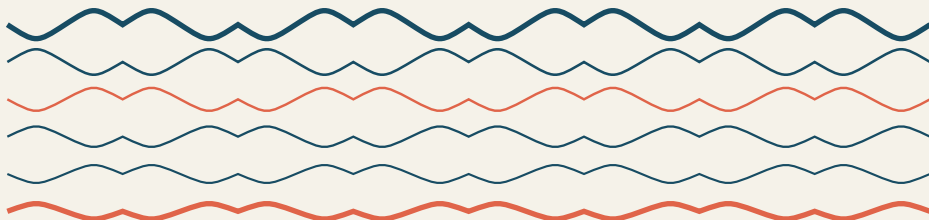
ISSUE 1

A Literary Magazine of California

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This 6 x 9 reading edition preserves the issue's original sequence, page references, and literary formatting. The archival scan remains the authority wherever its text or layout is uncertain.



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EDITORIAL

The poems in this first issue of *Coastlines* represent the work of many individuals in finding, encouraging, collecting, and writing. The magazine itself is actually the result of a fortunate meeting between these workers, who, having on their hands a collection of poems, had no magazine, and the editors, who, attempting to found a magazine, had no material. Such a meeting, of course, is more than an accident, since the founding represents no mere whimsy, but an actual need for a magazine. The need for *Coastlines* becomes quite obvious when it is realized that Los Angeles is undergoing a vast social revolution whose shape, although sometimes causing despair, is not yet altogether clear.

There is no necessity, then, to build an editorial policy on the delicate superstructures of other little magazines, but rather, simply, to continue discovering the source of writing here. In so doing, we are particularly interested in the new writer, the promising writer who has already had his start, and the writer who is maturing, or is discovering for himself new directions. We are interested in works which define the cultural problems of our world and era, as well as those of this region. We are interested in the lyric poem, in the poem which binds, resolves, and clarifies; in works with strong centers, as opposed to the sheerly allusive, formless and peripheral. In criticism we shall not be concerned with the apologetic, or defensive, but again with the affirmative, the fearless, and the clear thinking. At another time, these attitudes may have reflected a mere wise eclecticism. In these times, however, the advocate of taste and reason must of needs take on a vigorous partisan character.

AUGUST 1955

DEDICATION

Edwin Rolfe, one of the contributors to this issue, died before the magazine was completed. He was a poet and a writer of fiction and reportage; he was a member of the Lincoln Battalion which fought in the Spanish Civil War, and much of his work deals with experiences resulting from that war; above all, Edwin Rolfe was a man whose friends and even brief acquaintances can find satisfaction in remembering. His extreme gentleness, combined with the strength to act, to kill or die if necessary in defense of the value of the human being, made him unique among his contemporaries. Because many of the other writers represented here knew and admired Edwin Rolfe and his works, and because he is a man who ought to be honored, we dedicate this issue of *Coastlines* to him.

ARTICLES

AT THE STATION

By Don Gordon

Which way do the trains run?
Traveler, lost under the station lamp,
I am farther from home than you.

Nothing is familiar except the damp memory
of childhood:
The inhabitants are woven in their cocoons;
each recalls,
Long since dismantled by the wrecking crew,
his house and his beliefs.

The landscape has been subtly shifted, it is
out of focus or we are:
Yesterday, manacled to the marshal, I saw the boy
I knew at school;
There were trees where we stand, then the sound
of hammers,
In the morning you will see the scaffolds
with their solid arms.

Who has displaced a nation? The people
arrive and depart
On their laughter-ridden tragic errands
shot with music.
Nearly midnight in the station and they sleep
like plants.

The military train has always the same destination;
the circus train ends
In a dream of carousels; the quieter cars
head for the resurrection
In the shelter; the scientists are borne on the
Special to their last grave convention.

Which way does the big train go?
Traveler, lost under the station lamp,
I'm a stranger here myself.

SOMEONE ALWAYS SAYS

By Don Gordon

*it was a merciful release;
may I go like that when my time comes.*

Having said it they are washed of guilt
in the oral waters.

The round crackling wreath of sound, placed
at the disposal

Of the folded arms, implies the dead
is fortunate,

In keeping with my mission I await
a special doom;

Meanwhile I deny my own mortality
by affirming his.

Roses, lights, cliches are whisked like props
in a Chinese play.

The gongs confuse the issue, the words conceal
the fact: each thinks of himself.

Deliver us from ritual, the great bronze bell
of the ego in distress.

It is not release or confinement: it is
lawful process.

It is not merciful or cruel: it is an end.
The human seasons

May not be imposed upon the actual winter
of the world.

ASCE 11 /

THE SILENT

By Don Gordon

The tree is a cone of quiet.
The sounds it seems to make
Arise from the neighbors:
The wind talking in its travels,
The rain chattering on the way down.
The tree itself is silent, its sign
Of life the root in the earth
From which its wisdom comes.

Silent the birdless miles;
Taller than the water mountains
The sea answers the moon with motion,
All its particles self-contained
Until the land disrupts with rock
The huge, untalkative, and perfect tide.

Words are unimagined in the fields of space.
The stars undisturbed by shores or neighbors
Conduct their orbits in silence. Whole systems,
Lit by interior suns, proceed without expression.

Now in the empire's lighted arenas
The Romans uncage the man they fear,
Begin the sport of ailing caesars.

The questions bind him like the net.
The questions bleed him like the trident.
The questions stalk him like the lion.

The man is silent,
His sign of life
The root in the people
Of unworldly wisdom,
His tide sustained unbroken
On Rome's jagged rocks,
His interior sun proceeding
As usual on its path.

TO RITA

By Ken McLaughlin

When night labors past the
Veiled line of ours, the
Fabled time of child and
Song, and rests; let us
Remember blind dancers
Aloof and stone, cast by
Dust from Echidna's mold
And others not as cold.
Let us doubt the day and
Escape the night that traces
Time by a window smear, and
Love the moon, and kiss
Away the dead dog's tears.

COMPLAINT OF THE INSTINCT

By Gene Frumkin

I would burst from the beam
Of the possible suns at his center,
Blinding his wife's desert eye, frigid
In his mirage of wild and warm
Tangle. My light would fill
The space of his marriage rainbow,
Now wan and mocked by cold parhelions.

I am wimpled, hoodwinked
By his faithful urge, this daily cloister
In teeming streets where bouncing girls
Tempt me from his bosom. His Christ
Is pussy-hearted, bounding
After the dog-kneeling dames, but crossing
His legs at the damning mount-minute.

And even if I escaped
His ring of law, where could I prison
Myself from his mob of conscientious
Objections? The clock's wizened hands
Will slow my pulse in his heart,
Till only his eunuch senses lose
The game of high, swift heels on the hunt.

PHILIP EMBALL STROLLS IN THE EVENING

By Eugene Frumkin

I

He might have been a Lombard youth
Hoisted from his horse at Waterloo,
Or a lawyer charging the guillotine,
As he strolls this cutlass evening clean
With honor. (Yet walks the avenue,
He knows, far from the way of truth).

Reader of romantic tales, Emball,
Tonight, wears time's three-cornered hat
To hide his freckled head from the dice
Of his thoughts, and rolls his eyes to entice
The passing maids, though soon he may chat
By the grave, a courtly smile in his skull.

On a sidewalk filled with vacant faces,
At a window loud with gladiators,
A curtain of glass reflects a stage.
By chance, the treason of his age
He sees, portrayed by the years, his traitors,
So rushes to night's opaque spaces.

II

'A smoothly polished wooden pole,
I am withied round by bloomless vines
Of faded faces: the redhead rose,
The brunette orchid. What use to pose,
White tie and tails, next month sip wines
in Italy? The minutes dole.

'Time, the marplot, swift, arching, grenades
The masqued field of my existence
With its moons and suns. Shall I, a mummer
Of ages past, return this summer
To the ancient Po, or cut the distance
To this hour with present-whetstoned blades?'

Dogs bark sound, a verdict from the jury
 of night. This judgment gavels the court
Of silence, howls doom in the ears
 of Emil. 'My whilom rushing years
Are stiff on gallowed time. My heart
Is a weed that God's just scythe will bury.

'But here where I see a cross-flagged dome,
At this corner's lamp, I'll seek a cause.
Perhaps the probing fingers of my prayers
Will touch the hand of grace, and heirs
Of the canon's blood transfuse God's laws.
Capital! A pilgrim I'll go to Rome.'

POETRY

SEASIDE ALBUM

By Thomas Viertel

In some paint-chipped bungalow
Near the sea-gulls line of search,
Old photographs turn yellow,
And letters, locked in a desk,
Blur in a twilight of dust.

Only the voices heard from the porch,
Of old men swinging on hammocks,
Say that memories are real.

They sound faint against the whish
Of cars gleaming along the highway;
More ominous than gulls scouring the shore.

A NET FOR VENUS

By Lee Robinson

The time we downcast wound
I was prone to lie
(long having lain encased)
still covering to conceal
my deepbedded spring of love.

The crazyquilt of guile
spread: a counterpane
overlay my covert need.
Long having lain enclosed
I was wrapt indeed:

You took me at my word,
screened your inmost eye,
Knitted the truth unsaid
To a nodding lie.

We lie in a bed I made.

THE PERPETUAL BOURGOIS

By Alice McGrath

Coins cover his live eyes.
Lies bandage his wounded heart.
Muffled, still his blood cries out
The agony of its secret art.

The chromium nightmare money built
Turns on the flesh, brutal, bold,
But guilt diffuses all his guilt—
Makes mercy metal, iron-cold.

Perception lives with the live nerve—
The world goes dark if the nerve fail,
As magic contradictions serve
Not those who wish but those who will.

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POEM

By Edwin Rolfe

Many an outcast calls me friend
and with that word compels
my pity to embrace his loneliness,
my meagre share of goodness to expand
till friendship and intense
compassion warm us both.

Many a weakling thinks me strong
and with his thought endows
my weakness with an unsuspected power,
unearths within my heart a fire
and in my mind an iron
that was not there before.

Many a fool has called me wise
and, doing so, has forced
the little sense I had to rise
up from its deep morass of ignorance
clear to the surface, there to solve
his problem and my own.

And loveless girls have called me *love*.
These do I most enshrine
because their simple longing builds
love amid lovelessness, and gilds
even the tarnished feelings till they shine—
yes, theirs and mine.

CONSCRIPT'S SONG

By Edwin Rolfe

On this cold mercenary hill
my heart is numb, my brain is shrill.

cursing the cause that brought us here
to manic war, to panic fear.

Companions to my left and right
dig in, but have no will to fight.

Like white worms on the frozen ground
our minds churn in a sad-go-round.

We dream of childhood longingly
who never shall know posterity.

but strangle, strung upon the last
link to our own most savage past.

IDIOT JOE PRAYS IN PERSHING SQUARE AND GETS HAULED IN FOR VAGRANCY

By Edwin Rolfe

Let us praise,
while time to praise remains,
the simple bullet,
the antique ambushcade
and the fanatic justice-crazed assassin—
we who have made
and fired napalm
and casually—
alone among all men—
dropped on Man
the only atom bomb.

AND IF YOU DON'T SEE WHAT YOU WANT ASK FOR IT

By Edwin Rolfe

What is he saying? What is the madman saying
Whose voice cuts through the night of stars

and cells?

I hear the words but I do not understand.
I do not, can not, will not ever understand.

Back where you come from! the Sane Man says.

All right, I'm going, says the Hurt Man.

Enraged, the Sane Man locked him in a cell.

And I, the Invisible listener, the Bystander,

go mad.

We hold these truths, the Sane Man says.

His meaning's simple, obvious. But no,
to hold is not enough, these truths must

be locked

in the same small cell with Him Who Comes From.

If you don't like it here go back where

you came from!

The voice was vicious, the tongue was fury.

I tried. But I failed. The border was closed.

Only my father had entry there

with his dual eternal citizenship. Not I.

RITUAL

By Bert Meyers

Parents surround a child
until their image is
absorbed. That giving in
becomes a mighty sin,
and the child who wishes
for love at any cost
feels all its beauty's lost.

I think of children who
must play an instrument
and make an artful noise:
the trite, embarrassed voice
of their disfigurement.
Convinced the song's their own
they hide and live alone.

We take into the world
a blessing or a curse:
the love we learn at home.
Always, we feel unknown;
always, we must rehearse;
and keep in dreams the art
of the hot, natural heart.

BALLAD

By Bert Meyers

Lucky Aladdin had
a lamp that he would rub.
Metal, it showed its love
in practical delight:
gave him a golden life.
But, now, the gods are gone,
and we are on our own.

Bold Rustem beat the deevs;
with heavenly assistance
shook all the gaudy tents
of Asia like a tree
against his majesty.
But, now, the gods are gone,
and we are on our own.

The lonely, young or old,
who tossed all night in bed,
were heard and comforted.
Not fantasy, but flesh
lay down to share their wish.
But, now, the gods are gone,
and we are on our own.

Then, green as money were
the distant fields. And all
who stood upon a hill
and swore they would fulfill
their dreams before they died
had lightning at their side.

But, now, the gods are gone,
and we are on our own.

A PLUG HAT FOR THE ARCHETYPICAL MAN

*By Lawrence Lipton
from "Rainbow at Midnight"*

The basis of skyscraper construction is the underlying steel frame—the "bones" which carry walls and floors, and which have given this method of building the name of "skeleton construction".

WPA Guide to Illinois

1.

*On the window sill the pigeons
strut and swagger*

It is a matter of record
that the Board of Directors is opposed
to all irrational numbers

Also the location is to be regretted
the sky blinds the bookkeeper

There have been crimes and disasters

Morning is a white collar
too tight around the neck
one swells in the night

Noon is a paper napkin
bloody with ketchup

Night is a warmed-over dish
between bedtime and midnight

At six the Slovak women
will bend over the waste baskets

*On the window sill the pigeons
strut and swagger*

We have been given to understand
that scotch tweed is a mode of being

Also that respiration follows
the curve of wheat

And the Masonic ritual resolves
the riddle of the infinite piece of string

*On the window sill the pigeons
strut and swagger*

Certain things are accepted

It is permissible to gorge
on the wings of white butterflies

One may also harness the lightning
to incinerate garbage

It is likewise good form
to wipe one's nose on an orchid

Duty is a mahogany box in a steel-glass tomb

When the clock in the tower strikes five
 he will pause for a newspaper
 in the doorway—

*under the window sill
where the pigeons
strut and swagger*

In this no matter of great consequence
 is seen, save only this, perhaps,

That those who sit above the salt should take
 precautions lest a bad example set
 before the people should breed discontent.

The tall helm of Achilles in his day
 suffered a like indignity no doubt
 beneath the Trojan gate

But he had Homer to present his case;
 moreover there were omens seen
 and auguries in birds

The thing could well have been a thing of state.

The august Emperors of the East were wise
 in matters touching royal etiquette
 hence the ceremonial umbrella

Double, triple, for good measure; and
not to be outdone, the pope's
official parasol

De rigueur and S.O.P. in all processions
displaying power, authority and renown,
the helm, the miter and the crown.

A wise precaution. Let the great beware
of inadvertance in such matters.
Who can say? It well may be

That kingly power began to wane the day
when through some oversight the common fool
chanced on Caesar straining at the stool.

NIGHT-PRAYER FOR VARIOUS TRADES

By Naomi Replansky

Machinist in the pillow's grip,
Be clumsy and be blind,
And let the gears spin free, and turn
No metal in your mind.

Long, long may the actress lie
In slumber like a stone:
The helpless words that rise from sleep
Be no words but her own.

And may the sleeping laborer
Be far from clay and lime.
May he not tunnel through the night
In unpaid overtime.

Jobless, freely enter sleep,
Nor cool your heels outside:
As all the other doors were shut,
So may this door swing wide.

You girls whose bed your timeclock is,
May sleep be your last guest.
It has no hands and no demands,
Lies quiet at the breast.

And may the streetcleaner float down
A spotless avenue...
Who red-eyed wake at morning break,
They have enough to do.

Enough to do: now let the day
Its own accountings keep,
But may their dreams be holidays,
And lazy be their sleep.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISSERTATION

By James Boyer May

An attitude of body may denote the mind:
how one stands or prays or sits or leans
upon the atmosphere, or covers up
one's finitude, or looks toward flown invention.
The eyes flit gestures which the limbs may not;
and stomach-rumbling should be listened for
before the word. Without a bated breath,
could lovers meet? And there, beneath, a heart
 that signals rapidly by beat
 the time which hands lack yet the boldness
 to reach out and touch. Ambition
 is a forwardness of spine, a jaw
 kept shut on hunger after nodding
 of decision ... slackness of
 the shifting hips reveals
a looseness in convention ... moral firmness
of the sworn intention trips on air,
when shoulders shrug before the fist has clenched.

1955 11 25

MY LIMITED SCOPE

By William Millett

The world is a nightmare
in which I sleep
never to awake
until I die.

Out of my limitations
there arises oddly
 creation
and from denial
comes revival
and each and every frustration
 bears its own cancellation.

Paucity lies in my skin
as other lands invade through
freedom reveals my greatest sin
the constant search for truth.

ON SOCIAL WISDOM

By Stanley Kurnik

*If you cannot go to the source
Do not go to the vase.*

Leonardo Da Vinci

Where in the world we would have descendants
To see the wind rise and the rivers flow
Then there is this wisdom that we must know
Since we are all of us solar dependents

Who coming about in a time and a place
And so making life of our own differential
With motions integral and essential
Go stamping nature's history upon each face.

Such is the natural history of our light years,
Dark though they be for the major part,
Little knowing in our heated ignorance and fears
The common social sun of the human heart
Where every individual ray but mirrors
This absolute source with its relative art!

POEM FROM THE PRESENT: A FRAGMENT

By Curtis Zahn

The women waited
They all wondered, wilted, waited
And young men with handpainted neckties
Stole from door to door for Real Silk
(an enigmatic product with a political past)
Were whistled by the coarse voices
That might be the lame calling
of injured shrieks
Overhead, the gloved violence of airmight
Hung and burrowed into the gloomed,
manmade silence
Like loaded umbrellas
Leaking into the open, wondrous mouths
Of a suspended citizenry
The groundforces, hurrah!
The groundforces moved; defiling the senses
Roaring and smelling and maiming
While the people sickeningly offered up
their money
Their labor, sweat, honor; their lives
Their friend's lives

Security, now, came in longer, stronger
Brewing of coffee
As radios wept and wetted, amorally voiced
As tyros twirled their TV knobs
Welcomed the clowns wired for sound
By the brilliant enterprise
of childish sociology
These were the day's strategy against
nightfall
The defenses of offense
In the battle of ourselves against each other

WOMAN THAT WAS FULLY COVERED

By Curtis Zahn

Somehow, the lady on the left in the mink
 Is huntersought and caught
 For cash value; as is an animal itself
 And wily trappers on the Avenue
 The Tradingpost proprietors know their
 Predatory heredity
 They, oh they, oh yes certainly they
 Follow these expensive scents
 Hoping the skin the fine, lithe beast
 In some eighthfloor granite cave
 While drumsbeat cool, crazy, collected
 On slow, easy payments

She said well
 She said hell, she was not insured
 Nor yet fully covered
 And to be not uncovered
 Until he insured her; assured her
 He must insure her
 Against calculated heartbreak
 (and woodsmen; Jr. Models, in the Parkave snow)
 A small thing to ask when you got only one

mink motor

And he
a '53
Hunting license
Yoiks! Sir.

He ran with the wolves while she grew her

wintercoat

And hung around town
Dressed by the pack for their own attack
Owned and operated by a sportsman's lodge
Lured to their stakes by steaks
Kept in an airconditioned cage
And exercised at night
Among the safe noses of amateur gunners
Flown high, shot low
A bird of rare, subsidized plummage

DESCENDANT ROBOT

By Melvin I. Weisburd

The trumpet of his voice
Bleeds in its rusted organ.
His cogs are gnawing at their motion.

The needles of his dials limp—
His hand grows cold, petrified
In the silent climax of its precision.

And his eyes, webbed in satin
Dimensions, conceive immaculate
Instruments of reason

Isolating grave meniscuses
Of error, reflected
In the dark convex of his mind.

THE GAME

By Melvin I. Weisburd

In the living room, they face each other
 and circle;
 Full face, half face, quarter face—no face
 Disappearing around the edge of a question,
 out of
 Each possibility as it is suggested, full
 Circle in their own silences, back out into time
 With fresh faces, and another cigarette,
 retiring
 Now to the rug and the ash tray, and the
 restoration
 Of damaged senses.

Each loses or wins, and shapes whatever smiling
 Or frowning victory lumps his face from
 The certain defeat within. But each is a stellar
 Sport, shining coolly at her mutual distance,
 Polishing with her mouth the elegant lies
 And stinging truths passing hotly in the excuses
 For her desire.

One wins, crosslegged on a stubborn center
Of the rug, bristling all her muscles of

Winning all power to decide, all freedom

Plays treason to the other's memory, breaks off
His exposed desire, and cackles in a laughter

Indigenous on what she dies, on the still

While the world steals around on the sly.

disguise;

of reason,

grown

twisted rug,

THE HEAD'S DARK HOUSE

By Henri Coulette

It is childhood's haunted house
That shapes the rapt mind in its warp;
Warp of the fabled house of winter nights
Where choirs of cold wind troop through
empty rooms,
Wail in a multitude of tombs.

Dust on the spiralled stair records
Your step and comments on your search;
And ritual of seeking hands that find
In secret places childhood's fading letters
Whose rumors tenant egregious manors.

It is the labyrinthine house
On the legendary midnight hill.
Antique its corridors, those catacombs
Where memory hears the gothic heart
That hallows you always through the
caroling dark.

MIGRATION

By Henri Coulette

Autumn, and migratory birds begin
 Their long passage south, following the river,
 Their sword shadow sheathed in the black night
 Of the fixed globe, of the factory towns.

Fatigued, the workers lie in coffin rooms
 And listen while the birds parade the streets
 Of the midnight sky, and mingle sweat
 And grief with contemplation of time.

Not time of poverty: meticulous
 Timeclocks that regulate the common sun;
 Not time that mocks the pulse it binds; nor

psalmed

Hour of the church, or bankers' fiscal year.

But time as movement measured by its goal:
 Holding the turning seed, the womb holds time;
 And calloused hands holding products of their
 Labor are movement's valued calendars.

And measured, too, these dreams, for they

will end

With poor men rising, leaving poverty
 Wrapped in the wilted winding sheet of their
 Long suffered innocence, and, rising, they

Will walk, communing in the warm spring nights,
The avenues of purpose, and, walking, learn
The revolutions no clock ever knew,
Leaving the birds poised like an arch of stars.

THE PASSION OF THE HEAVENLY DETECTIVE

By Thomas McGrath

On the film set's formal garden the curse of
all curses
Falls on the famous actors: the awful deed
has been done.
(Our hero, in silk pyjamas, is at home cleaning
his gun.)
Off stage, like a fallen soul or a trio of horses
A scream still sounds. Our hero does not stir.
Shaving, holding a mirror to Nature, he pondering
points
To the Human Condition. Then, with nard and with
oil anoints
The galvanized decorum of his hair.
Then among the stars the heavenly detective
wanders,
Suspect to suspect, resolving to solve—be it ill,
be it well—
What he considers the perfect crime. Who the hell
Is guilty? a literary policeman wonders.

SCAN PDF PAGE 32-33

Is it the star, sweet Evelyn Laye from Eden
Nebraska who sprang fully formed from the richly
umbraed side
Of McAdam, the Pythagorean producer, under whose
hide
(Surprise!) the golden and dancing rib was hidden?

The world (that groans in its bed when her
fabulous name
Troubles its pragmatic sleep) thinks: Is Beauty
ought but devil-
Ment? For does it not lead to her ivory gates
of evil
From whence proceedeth the sorrows of sin and
dream?

Or is the crime perhaps some secret canker
Of the script itself—put in by the crotchety
alcoholic
Writer? Is the villian the villian, so blond
and brachycephalic?
And is the satanic stranger a New York banker?

All are suspect to our hero the Private eye:
 Producer, director, star. A cop with a flashing
 stick
 Patrols the garden. Above, the constellations
 tick.
 The wagon is waiting to take them all away.

SCAN PDF PAGE 33-34

If he could only think like Mickey Spillane!
Our hero thinks; what a simple matter to fill
with hot lead
The sinful sinner (though it be in the belly or
in the head)
And then with Miss Laye to fall in a sexual
swound!

But, dreaming, he is aware of the sudden burning
 Look on the face of the clock (it is Human
 Saving Time)
 Great God! is he the guilt fall guy, scapegoat
 for the crime?
 He thought it was only a play! And, warily
 turning,

He turns his weathercock head and alas! and
alack!

The mortal drama now can have no happy ending.
He was not born to suffer though he suffer to be
borne past mending

As he rides through Gethsemane Fair in his
Cadillac.

Envoi

Oh hopeful burgess in the darkened theatre
Waiting for the Salvation Follies to go on—
It is enough that you know that the hero is gone,
That neither today nor tomorrow will you see
your main feature.

Too bad that today there is little or the wrong
kind of love
And that neither yourself nor your friends will
suffer the pain
Of man's passion. It is called off on account
of rain.
Above the garden the stars, or the signs, wink
on, wink off.

THE ROADS INTO THE COUNTRY

By Thomas McGrath

Ran only in one direction, in childhood's years—
 Into mysterious counties, beyond the farm
 or the town,
 Toward the parish of desire the roads led
 up or down
 Past a thicket of charms, a river of wishing
 hours,
 Till, wrapt in a plenum of undying sun
 We heard the tick of air-guns on the hills.
 The pheasant stalked by on his gilded heels,
 The soft-eyed foxes from the woods looked on.
 While hung upon the blue wall of air
 The hawk stared down into a sea of fire,
 Where, salamanders in our element,
 We ate the summer like a sacrament.
 That was another country, and is lost.
 The roads lead nowhere. Aloof in his field
 of fire
 The hawk wheels pitiless. Alone, afar,
 The skirmishers of childhood hurry past,

Hunting a future that they cannot will.
Children of light, travelling our darkened years
We cannot warn them. Distant, they have no ears
For those they will become. Across a wall

Of terror and innocence we hear the voice,
The air-gun in the land of all mock-choice;
Around us not the game of fox and pheasant,
But the gunfire of the real and terrible present.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HENRI COULETTE Has had a volume of poems accepted for publication by Ballantine Books. Poems used here through the courtesy of the *California Quarterly*...

EUGENE FRUMKIN A young poet previously published in the Los Angeles State College magazine *Statement* and in the *California Quarterly*. One of the editors of *Coastlines*...

DON GORDON Author of two books of poems, *Statement* and *Civilian Poems*; has published in *Poetry*, *Harpers*, *California Quarterly*, etc. Completing a new book of poems...

STANLEY KURNIK First publication...

DAVID LEMON Formerly instructor of art at Elmhurst College, Illinois. Now a resident of San Francisco...

LAWRENCE LIPTON Author of two novels, *Brother*, *The Laugh Is Bitter* and *In Secret Battle*; sections of his book-length poem "Rainbow at Midnight" have been published in many magazines including *California Quarterly*, *Outposts* (London), *Arizona Quarterly*, etc...

JAMES BOYER MAY Has had wide publication and is known for his work as editor, informal writer's representative, and critic-historian of the little magazine in which capacity he edits *Trace*; has two books set for publication, *Twigs As Varied Bent*, a study of the little magazines since 1946, and *Modern Greek Poems*, a work on the modern Hellenic of Phivos Delphis...

KEN McLAUGHLIN First publication...

BERT MEYERS A young poet previously published in the *California Quarterly*...

WILLIAM MILLET Published in *City Lights*, *Goad*, etc.; probably the only poet to have been on television except for Shakespeare...

ALICE McGRATH First published poem...

THOMAS McGRATH Has had poems in various magazines; author of *To Walk A Crooked Mile*, *A Garland of Practical Poesy*, and recent winner of the Alan Swallow poetry prize...

NAOMI REPLANSKY Has published in *Poetry*, *California Quarterly*, *Twice A Year*, etc.; author of the book, *Ring Song*...

LEE ROBINSON First published poem...

EDWIN ROLFE Rolfe was the author of two books of poems, *To My Contemporaries* and *First Love*, and of the official history of the Lincoln Battalion with which he served in Spain. His poems have been widely published and anthologized. A new volume of poems, *Words And Ballads*, had been completed at the time of his death...

THOMAS VIERTEL First published poem; an editor of *Coastlines*...

MELVIN WEISBURD A young poet, former editor of the magazine *Statement*; guiding spirit of *Coastlines*, he has had work published in the *California Quarterly*...

CURTIS ZAHN Writes fiction as well as verse and has published widely: *Frontier*, *California Quarterly*, etc. A CO, he is a contributor to *Prison Etiquette*, a volume of essays put out by CO's after the late war.

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NOTE ON THIS EDITION

This is a reading edition of *Coastlines*, Volume I, Number 1 (Spring 1955), the magazine's first issue, reset from a clean transcription of the original mimeographed pages. Where an earlier transcription followed the magazine page for page, this edition reflows the text to read continuously. The magazine's own page numbers are preserved as faint inline markers at the head of each piece, so any passage can still be traced to the page on which it first appeared, and the running order of the issue — the editorial, the dedication to Edwin Rolfe, the verse, the contributors' notes and the closing subscription notice — is kept exactly as printed.

Original spelling, punctuation, capitalization and verse lineation are retained. A number of the magazine's own spellings look like slips but are reproduced deliberately: "villian" (twice) and "alcholic" in McGrath's "Passion of the Heavenly Detective"; "bourgeois" in the title of Alice McGrath's poem; "assistance" in Meyers' "Ballad"; "withied" and "gallowed" in Frumkin's "Philip Emall"; "sord" in Coulette's "Migration"; "drumsbeat," "eighthfloor" and "plummage" in Zahn's "Woman That Was Fully Covered"; "airmight" in his "Poem from the Present"; and "inadvertance" in Lipton's "Plug Hat." The poet's name appears as "Millet" over his poem and as "Millet" in the contents and notes; both are kept as printed. Straight quotation marks have been curled, double hyphens set as em dashes, and the long lines whose tails the magazine set flush right are kept flush right.

In this reading edition the byline of each poem is placed at the head of the piece, beneath the title, rather than at the foot. The cover drawing by David Lemon is artwork rather than text and is not reproduced here. Two taped tears in the original — across part of the Don Gordon entry in the notes, and across a line of the closing notice — have been repaired from the visible fragments. Handwritten additions on the original (“published March 10 1955” on the contents page, and a price revised to \$1.25 for four issues) are recorded here but not otherwise imposed.