

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Autumn 1950

VOLUME I

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A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume I · Autumn 1950 · Number 2

*Set from the scan of the magazine. The poems, their titles, the poets'
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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Recurrence: A Quarterly of Rhyme is published by
Variegation Publishing Co., Room 540, 124 West 4th Street,
Los Angeles 13, California. 25¢ a copy, \$1.00 a year.

GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

THE LIGHTHOUSE

David Marcus

As I returned that night, the cliff was lit
By sudden rays a reeling lighthouse threw;
They pressed against the flowers as if they knew
Some mischief had been done, and knew that it
Was hidden there and trembling in its core.

I walked with quickened step and turned my eyes
Away from them, or tried to wear the mask
Of innocence in case they'd think to ask
Where I had been, and all my hobbled lies
Would only serve to make them question more.

But they had burnt their way into my mind
And touched off little horrors at my feet
And made me run in panic through the street
Like some poor hunted convict who must find
Without delay an unwatched, open door.

SMALL OASIS

Eric Wilson Barker

Move stealthily upon vacant city lots.
Poetry, that random butterfly, is lying
As peacock-eyed (despite the corner sots
Whose bottled week-ends are too long in dying)

As where her fans hover in duskfall skies
An earth-hugged age removed from any town,
Or anywhere her more conspicuous dyes
For good or bad are hunted up and down.

Surprise her in a corner where the grass
Escapes the creeping jaundice, and allays
A sickness bred of gutted tires, and glass
Dribbling the heeltap of the reeling days.

She's even more consoling to the eye
Than if her small oasis were a meadow,
Dearer that westward, by her compass sky,
Her only sunshade is a warehouse shadow.

Oh then give thanks that even here love comes
Bearing no fusty standards on her car,
Trailing stale thunder of the deadbeat drums,
But quietly unpretentious as a star.

FIERCE INTERVAL

Elinor Lennen

Suddenly, in a city yard,
The jungle breaks through time's thin guard.
 By arching spine and the upright tail
 And a fiendish, sleep-disturbing wail,
 The cat, but lately a household pet
 Reverts to a role that she can't forget.
 The eyes flash green, and the stabbing paw
 Is edged with the atavistic claw.
 Hisses and snarls in electric air—
 Surely, this is a tiger pair!
Then quiet possesses the yard again,
As the beast responds to imploring men:
 Kitty, kitty, kitty!

TIPTON'S CORNERS

Dorothy Haddox

Shadows slip through the village lanes;
The hedgerows are alight.
The boys at Tipton's Corners
Are burning a witch to-night.

No one is there to help her,
Or hear what she has to say.
The Squire is off to the wars again;
Parson has gone to pray.

These things have always happened:
Some say there always will
Be boys at Tipton's Corners
To lead the halloo and kill.

Some may risk ox and acre,
Or throw away hearth and fee
To take up cudgels against them;—
But One will walk silently.

He will carry the thorn-mark on his brow,
And his heart will keep the score
Till the boys at Tipton's Corners
Howl and harry no more.

“BLIND”

Neeta Marquis

Like some slow river's lap and beat
Against a bulwark worn and grey,
An endless tide of stepping feet
Flows past my post. I, only, stay.

I listen, but I know no dream
Of eyes where friendly looks appear—
Of dogwood flowering by a stream,
My narrow world a tensioned ear.

If suddenly a lark should sing,
Here, close above my pavement-seat,
How could I hold that trill of spring
Against this lap and surge of feet?

SONG

Robert Beloof

Let none think that I have seen,
Because I passed the rose-bush by,
Everything that roses do
As they bud and, blowing, die.

I could stay Methuselah's springs,
Watch ten thousand blossoms sprout,
Wait till each poor petal falls,
And still leave all to be found out.

Still, with a poet's practiced eye,
I saw at once the purest flower,
Plucked it as I hastened by
Knowing its perfected hour

Could only be accomplished there
Tombed within your midnight hair
Who are my hope to prove my sense
When I, perforce, am hurried hence.

VACATIONER

Joseph Joel Keith

Like a flower open and petals torn,
like a parlor-bird out in the wild,
half-lost and weary, small, afraid,
is the homesick child.

She hears the whistle far away.
Far, far in the gloom a bright lamp's burning.
She must remain a fortnight more
before returning.

S A N D

Sarah Foss Wolverton

The crumbled sand is a beam of light.
My prism, fancy, bends its rays;
A rainbow arc half blinds my sight.

Gay shattered fragments shine out, bright
With flakes of sard or chrysoprase.
The crumbled sand is a beam of light.

As stars go singing through the night,
So sands are speaking as I gaze—
A rainbow arc half blinds my sight.

“These yellow grains looked on the plight
Of cave men in a bog’s black maze.”
The crumbled sand is a beam of light.

“Atlantis sank, upon the night
This jade was shattered from a vase.”
A rainbow arc half blinds my sight.

Between my fingers runs the slight
Smooth stream; my soul is in a daze.
The crumbled sand is a beam of light.
A rainbow arc half blinds my sight.

SONG FOR HANNAH

Orma Jean Surbey

This is only wind and sound.
See, it lessens even now.
The leaves that twist and eddy round
Left a high and holy bough.
Let them pass, my Hannah.

Let them settle, let them lie.
Wind must have what it can take.
Let them shrivel, crisp and die.
The bough they left will never break.
Hold to me, my Hannah.

Hush-a stir among the leaves.
The ancient ones are drawing near
Bringing with them garnered sheaves.
Do not tremble, do not fear.
It is a sign, my Hannah.

The fields that gave our fathers bread
Wait for us to reap and glean.
That bough whose leaves so late were shed
Will wear again its crown of green
In the spring, my Hannah.

AS I LAY QUIET

Margaret Widdemer

As I lay quiet
 From weeping sore,
My father and mother
 Came in at the door.

They stood in the dark by me
 Arm in arm.
They said, "We were young,
 We meant no harm,

We were only lovers
Our world went gay with
Who thought a child
Would be fine to play with—"

But there was no word
 I could find to say,
Till daylight came
 And they went away.

STUBBLE

Stella Weston Tuttle

Beauty and wonder now lie dead
While I, harrowed and harvested
And robbed of my unfolding grain,
Sicken to weeds at your disdain.

And though I wept as I felt the rake
Of your sharp arrogance; for your sake
I received the blade that plowed me under,
Stripping me of my ripened plunder.

Yet for myself and my wasted yield,
I laugh as you ravish another field,
Worn-out acres that hide the curse
Of moth and blight and something worse.

M A R A U D E R

Aveline Perkins

No mercy
In the estuary,
Nor pity
In the pitiless sea.

On his mount of tides
To north-to south,
The robber rides
At the Avon's mouth.

"Stand and deliver!"
The highwayman's order
Of sea to river
In their wild border.

No mercy
In the estuary,
Nor pity
In the pitiless sea.

THIS NOW

Gertrude May Lutz

While the headlines are grey-printed on temples,
and commentators argue audience heartbeats,
maps prove impossible examples
and the world meets.

Now is a trembling flesh that ages;
heritage of youth is lopped-off years.
Man seals his diary of unwritten pages
and the clock strikes tears.

THE USUAL SONG

Hanson Kellogg

I wrote; I now no longer write:
The mortal swan hymns his discontent
With a green world where he, forever white—
Set like a taper or a monument
On all he finds dim and remote and cool—
Haunted by his own arch within the pool,
Flees, and fails escape, and dies of fright.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Eight volumes of verse by MARGARET WIDDEMER are only a portion of her literary output. She is also known for her novels and literary criticism.

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JOSEPH JOEL KEITH'S name is frequently found in the leading American journals.

HANSON KELLOGG is represented by two poem reviews in the current issue of Variegation.

"Tipton's Corners," the poem in this issue by DOROTHY HADDOX, was read aloud and praised by John Gould Fletcher at a gathering of poets in 1947.

SARAH FOSS WOLVERTON experimented successfully some years ago with analysed rime. She is the president of The Poetry Society of Southern California.

AVELINE PERKINS still continues to spin the amazing web of iron that is "Assignments."

Poems by ELINOR LENNEN, NEETA MARQUIS, and ROBERT BELOOF appear in the current issue of Variegation.