

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

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RECURRENCE

A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Winter 1952

VOLUME II

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A Quarterly of Rhyme

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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Myron H. Broomell

Musics Pythagoras observed
In stars, in triangles, and strings
Quivering in imperfect curves
Alike besought by hinds and kings,

And rules Duns Scotus tried to state,
Or vague Plotinus, Afric sage,
On whom the shape of spirit waits
In hope to please another age,

Or fiery nothing, speck and speck,
The prescient and Ephesian seer
Described as change, and little recked
How close he came, how near, how near—

Pass by me in a liquid stream
I shall not step in twice, nor thrice;
Since all it is, is what it seems,
And I am passionate as ice

That carves the rock and lingers still
In summer suns when all is ill.

THE RECONQUEST

Myron H. Broomell

The imaginary hero, clad in years,
Sees his past choices wisely. If the key
Turned in the lock again he would be free—
If the door faced him now, the lock, the shears,

The thread, the maze, the princess, and the spell.
Now he is master of the clue and sequel:
In their soft arms his life and death are equal,
And he, because he knows the story well,

Returns again to every situation;
There, after ages, proving much more smooth,
Retrieves the errors of his clumsy youth—
The lack of poise, the fatal hesitation.

Now he releases captives from the gyve;
In empty throne-rooms he becomes a king:
Love, even, seems a kind and simple thing,
And he dies happy as if still alive.

WINK

E. L. Mayo

At five-thirty or six o'clock, say;
When the cicadas really speak as one,
The angle of the sun
Narrows, and we see

Strait radiance, and moving up and down
Like dust-motes in a beam
This street, these houses, and the shapes of men,
As though their angels started up in time

Brief as a lid's pulsation
And one
Gone before seen
Wink passed between them and the sun.

AIRPLANE OVERHEAD

Grover Jacoby

The air is drilled with utterance.
The iron word is said,
Shattering the core of being
To leave life dead.

A moment passes. It is gone.
Silence floods the room
With pregnant vacancy in waves,
Submerging doom.

UNFINISHED SONNET

Leslie Nelson Jennings

For George Sterling

“Farther into the darkness I have seen
Than most, and found more darkness . . .” Not
of night,
Nor star-engendered, that which came between
The broken phrase and his uncertain sight.
After those few iambics, incomplete,
Was no conjecture, no alternative
To the lost savor and the slow retreat
From disillusion and the will to live.

Yet even such somber epitaphs can be
Chipped from the marble and the line recast,
The shadow of that false identity
Brushed from the page, illegible at last,
The light of mornings that he never saw
Still shining on a sonnet without flaw!

LINES FOR OURSELVES

Elma Dean

I

Never content to let the planet roll
an uneventful way around its sun,
moss gathering on the rock's north side, the mole
undisturbed in his cool, earth-dark run;
never content, we burn the candle low,
feverishly searching out the secret things—
new ways to die, as if life did not go
out of the hands swifter than wild bird wings.

In our brief stolen ease we make high talk
of this fact found and that about to be;
but never of linnets heard on a morning walk—
never of sundown gilding a white birch tree.
So quick to find the hidden, so unwise,
we miss the treasure with our stone-blind eyes.

II

Imagine now the morning of the end,
the fear they whispered shaping on the sky;
the last lark heard, the last thin poem penned—
the last, the last, a terror-silent cry;
our own made thunder on the small shocked ear,
stopping the heart, dissolving the brave bone . . .
and everywhere we turn someone called dear,
helpless under heaven and alone.

With what remains of hope when hope runs out—
with the shreds of dignity destruction leaves—
may this, if it be, be exit and not rout;
mindful of man's slow dawns, his sudden eves,
may we, the proud free people, stand up well,
faced with our brilliantly invented hell.

THIS WORLD BEING ROUND

Elinor Lennen

While earth retains its never-ending shape,
A shadow only marks off “here” from “there.”
The heart that troubles distance for escape
Pursues no journey and arrives nowhere.

AVOWAL

Oliver Hale

And does my love for you seem plain?
The visible is in my face,
the secret part intact within
my inward self beyond your guess.

If it is present in my eyes,
be sure that deeper in their well
are flames on which you may not gaze,
that fountain past your utmost wall.

When lost among unsinging days,
my spirit dim and no height gained,
in darkness or in brightest skies,
you are the light upon my hand.

THE PERENNIALS

Oliver Hale

When we were young and we were wed,

the love we pledged, the vows we made,
were buds upon our time which came
each flowering day to fullest bloom.

Though we are old they do not fade,
but in their scented dusts abide,
where in our fancy we see them
still flowers in our present time.

MUSIC ENTWINES ME

Eric Nixon

Music entwines me so,
sad heavens of sound
as delicate as snow
weep where I am bound.

Such spiritual flowers
grow upon the air
jewelling the hours
I need no silence there.

So softly I am moved
through gardens of grace,
I feel myself beloved
and seek my lover's face.

Music entwines me so
with shadow and light,
I rest where silences grow
stars of delight.

ACT III, SCENE III

Joanne de Longchamps

Ten years removed from fabled afternoons
and lovers' circumstance we drift
in conversation clinking over spoons,
hollow as common cups we lift
and settle roundly in saucer rings.

(Invaded, we are summered with soft wings
that hover the source of memory,
seek vanished warmth, enclosing bough,
the leaf-locked shelter of nesting tree,
lost orchards magicked into now.)

As waiters hum and move among their plates
we sit apart and speak. Silence waits
finale for facade of words
raised to a season blood recalls
in imagery of wings—these lurching birds
flail out against us and the tower falls.

Feathers spinning on our lips and eyes
obscure the waiters, bowing, as we rise.

DEPARTURE

S. Thomas Ansell

Life at the crossroads crooks a bony finger,
As gradually the distances consume
All but the ghost of one whose footfalls linger
To haunt the empty precincts of my room.

Here is the book we read together, in it
The passages we marked; upon the shelf
The same clock ticking every passing minute,
But no more shared between you and myself.

And by your chair, on which my arm is leaning,
Wreathed in blue smoke that circles round the past,
I ponder the inexorable meaning
Why things we mostly treasure do not last.

Though I am rich in memories, the present
Has rendered my insolvency to time—
With assets in your laughter, now quiescent,
And this poor consolation of a rhyme.

MIDNIGHT STREETS

Louis Ginsberg

Like moonlight on the water,
Moonlight glazes these
Midnight streets to glimmer,
A city underseas.

Banks and office buildings
Are palaces and towers,
Drowned in blurred and dreaming
Legendary hours.

Here Time is but a fable
Or a crystal myth
That porphyry apartments
And gables glitter with.

Hushed is underwater,
Where in caves of umber,
Lapped in lunar silence
All the Nereids slumber.

Sunk in coral shadows,
Sunk in crystal deeps,
All the midnight city,
A Lost Atlantis sleeps.

THE ENCYSTED EGO

Hanson Kellogg

So, at long last, the only enemy stands,
Age and trapped sorrow fading out his eyes,
Before you; weaponless his gnarled, lax hands.
Turn from the mirror without vast surprise.

What you have always realized, demands
Endemic relevance no longer from your lies.
Drape all the glass in crape with trembling hands.
Creep backwards through the cave behind your eyes.

THE NORM

Byron Herbert Reece

Jehovah blew my shards to form
From chaos, I arose
The shape of man. What next the norm
He means for me none knows,

As through my cells His prophets go,
Crying along the vein:
Jehovah takes His breath to blow
On chaos come again.

CHARM FOR RAISING THE ADVERSARY

Rachel Harris Campbell

If you would meet the Devil,
You need not go
To a desert vastness,
Nor prick below
The stolid, green earth-crust.
No—oh, no.

Only plumb the reaches
Of your nether mind,
And in quiet darkness
Make your spirit blind.
The grandsire of all Devils
You'll find—find.

CONTRIBUTORS

E. L. MAYO is a member of the faculty at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. His verse is represented in the anthology, *Mid-Century American Poets*, edited by John Ciardi.

ELMA DEAN writes free verse as well as sonnets. A poem by her appeared in the Winter, 1951 issue of *Variegation*.

BYRON HERBERT REECE, the Georgia poet, lectured a few years ago at the University of California at Los Angeles.

OLIVER HALE read his poems at one of the meetings of The Poetry Society of America.

MYRON H. BROOMELL'S third book, *The Outdoor Labyrinth* is scheduled for publication this year.

A little of the sparkling dust of Parnassus has settled on Glendale, California, and Reno, Nevada. HANSON KELLOGG lives in Glendale, and JOANNE DE LONGCHAMPS in Reno.

ELINOR LENNEN contributed to the first issue of *Variegation* in 1946.

ERIC NIXON'S work has been published in *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Glass*, and other British magazines. S. THOMAS ANSELL is also an English poet.

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LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS was a friend of George Sterling. Mr. Jennings' years of effort in many capacities for the cause of poetry deserve more general recognition.

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL is a playwright as well as a poet.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The reader is likely to notice a change in the method of numbering the issues on the title pages of both *Recurrence* and *Variegation*. The change emphasizes the number of issues which have appeared. This system has been used for a number of years by other periodicals.