

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Spring 1952

VOLUME II

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*Set from the scan of the magazine. The poems, their titles, the poets'
names and the figures at the feet of the leaves are the printer's; everything
in this color is this edition's.*

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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

[*The advertisement the printer set at folio 17:*]

FRONA LANE — THE THIRD EYELID. This volume is the most recent addition to The New Poetry Series issued by Alan Swallow. Speaking of the title poem, Dr. Willard M. Smith of Mills College says: "Here is a love poem fresh in its imagery and language." Because of their experimental

slant, Miss Lane's poems are interesting to the modern writer. Rosalie Moore, one of the most frequently discussed poets of the past ten years, writes of Frona Lane's work: "There are many lines having sharp sensory awareness and individual penetration." *The Third Eyelid* is being favorably reviewed. *The Saturday Review of Literature* says: "She places herself in the line of women poets who have asked of life on this earth what it seems so often reluctant to give. Miss Lane is too much of an intellect, however, to be content with the lyric cry." \$2.00. ALAN SWALLOW, Publisher, 2679 South York, Denver 10, Colorado.

PASTORAL

Ann Stanford

Now it is spring. New shops along the street
Open like elms. Not only birds recall
Intricate dreams above alfalfa fields.

We have made plans for seasons coming still,
Planted a garden, measured row on row
Green chard and red, and warred against the snail.

Pacing the orchard through the furrowed straw
We made our estimates of June and fall,
Hurried on home to supper and a view

And shelves of books to read along the wall.
We watched the city blossom light by light
And talked of harvest in the peaceful night.

THE SAILOR ON CIRCE'S ISLE

Ann Stanford

Circe, within whose isle
Of bright oblivious day
The natural passions move
Toward bodiments of hell,
If I escaped your spell
It was alone through motion.

Magic, by magic known,
Where candles spewed, and wine
Darkened the conversation,
Sped my sure hand to motion,
Clear, negative, and rude.

But was one stroke enough?
In a strange web of ease
My homeward hurrying feet
Draw langorous to the shore.

The sands entrance my step.
Unmoved I hear the waves
Crashing like chains that break
The shoreline of a dream.

I waste conjectural days
In possible delight.
The traffic of the mind
Moves with the hour of time
Through various modes of love.
I stay within an isle
Of acts abruptly ended,
Of glimpses and detail.
Offshore the sky
Echoes the flat sea.
Sand covers helm and sail.

H A W K

Leslie Nelson Jennings

That silent rider of the wind can track
His quarry down with inescapable skill,
Dropping from blue remoteness like a black
Plummet to make the swift and certain kill.
The torn breast and the sharply broken flight
Are neither strange nor pitiful, for beak
And claw remember only how the right
Of hunger leads the stronger to the weak.

Such death is not of enmity construed,
Clean and unhostile as the lightning's way;
No Thinker sits between those wings to brood
On his dark shadow plunging toward the prey.
Yet with as keen a vigilance we stalk
Skies alien to the sparrow and the hawk.

TO A SMALL PLANT OF THE
HIGH SIERRAS

Hildegarde Flanner

Flower too small to gather,
Yet large in your estate
Of mountain and vast weather,

Green gem upon cold breast
Of bare sublimity,
Scarcely have I pressed

—Sweet infant, nursed on snow—
To where you lie serene,
And chasm faints below.

All thought of you is blent
With azure sunlight, granite,
And huge, clear firmament,

Great moss, great innocent at ease
Upon Sierra's awful knee,
What tenderness you lend to these
Monuments and mysteries,

With delicate sod and bright
What loving flourishes you add
To hard works of the infinite,
And, to much awe, delight.

HUSH

Josephine Jacobsen

Now we try to build love
From the brain and the ethical book.
This is virtuous nonsense;
Love is bare as a look.

Now we struggle to pencil down love
As humor, comradeship;
Still is absence quintessence—the core
Strange to courage or quip.

These are good—call them better,
But admit love is not such.
Still it is wet apple-blossom
Shocking the touch.

FOR MARCEL PROUST

Josephine Jacobsen

Here are some changed beyond all compass.
Gathering their notes, they stare through glass,
Come slowly down the hall and pass
Where April dusk melts over the campus.

Helplessly new, they cross the sill
To find forever down altered springs
Another harshness, other wings
As late crows take their flight and call;

With sentience in a different shape
Because a man, now quiet bones
Stood on uneven paving stones,
And watched a woman in her sleep.

CRY SOLACE

Carleton Drewry

Cry comfort for this heinous thing, cry solace.
Make spells against an old and mindless malice.

In this plucked province of precarious living
Give up to selfish sleep, or go on grieving.

Try compromise, the self-deceit complying,
Concur in life's conspiracy with dying:

Or learn the bravery of being bitter
Concerning all contained within some utter

Indifferent enmity, beyond befriending,
From its lost origin down to its least ending.

THE APRIL MEDUSA

Charles Edward Eaton

Past poise of blossoming, you walk in the garden
with terrible eyes,
Obsessed with the possession of spring. Death's
blanching shows
Upon the lilac; waste-purple of iris looks ready to
close.
Why should you be gentle and willing when your
dominion dies?

Why follow the figures that fled through the garden,
Swept like petals down spirals of air,
Girls with white dresses and gold-tossed hair?
Not one of them knew how to pause, to freeze, to
harden.

Being beautiful, they followed beauty out of time
and place.
Their catafalque itself was flowing light.
They did not hold nor were held in a fixity of sight—
Your memory, alone, is that spring ago, the wind—
surge of petals, the rain-blurred face.

Now, once more you ask of the garden what is your
own,
Wringing in rage an answer from the bloom, the
head, the hand;
Or you would hold them with a stare they do not
understand,

And, unrelenting, like Medusa, look on flower and
face of stone.

A LIGHT LEFT ON

May Sarton

In the evening we came back
Into our yellow room,
For a moment taken aback
To find the light left on,
Falling on silent flowers,
Table, book, empty chair
While we had gone elsewhere,
Had been away for hours.

When we came home together
We found the inside weather.
All of our love unended
The quiet light demanded
And we gave, in a look
At yellow walls and open book.
The deepest world we share
And do not talk about
But have to have, was there
And by that light found out.

AUGENBLICK

May Sarton

Out of five hundred faces, one
Happens to me now and then.
By recognition of what bond
One does not name or go beyond?
Complicity within a thought,
The flash of insight hardly caught,
Or love—yet we'll not try to know,
Once in five hundred times or so,
But take the light to be exemplar
And reckon by it like a star,
Reckon at least that it's a chance
To give and take an honest glance—
And that's enough in cold or danger
To give home back to any stranger.

UNWILLING TRESPASSER

Isabel Harriss Barr

You move across the borders of my sleep,
Unwilling trespasser and not aware
How treacherous the river is, how deep
The quicksand waiting there.

Remain aloof, unknowing and unknown,
Behind green walls of your most separate land;
Nor trouble these cool waters with the stone
You clasp within your hand.

EXCUSE FOR MISSING A BUS

Elma Dean

You could have said a jay
flew from a lilac bush—
but not that day.
The sun's gold honey
dripped lavishly through leaves
as a wastrel's money . . .
and the hidden bird
with a secret motion
shook the cool clusters, stirred
and scattered the scent;
then breaking cover,
as if with pure intent,
burst blue from blue, soared high,
diminishing in blue,
became the sky.

TO A CAT, NOT ROYAL

Neeta Marquis

From sybaritic sires your tastes are sprung—
Else, how account for each fastidious gesture?
You scorn pale milk; your pink, voluptuous tongue
Luxuriously grooms your silky vesture.

That rich coat needs no Persian length of hair.
As for your stole, what ermine gleams more whitely?
And when you step, with Chesterfieldian air,
What plushy paws coordinate more lightly?

Your purr of speech when one you trust draws near
Denies that you are icily platonic.
Your ears, like signal pennants, slant and veer
To indicate moods playful, arch, ironic.

No boast of pedigree, no pomp of tail,
Could make you more—or less—aristocratic.
These charms I here acclaim likewise prevail
With all whose vision is not astigmatic.

CONTRIBUTORS

CHARLES EDWARD EATON is the winner of the Ridgely Torrence Award for 1951.

At one time ISABEL HARRISS BARR was on the staff of The Poetry Chap-Book.

CARLETON DREWRY'S book, *A Time of Turning*, recently received one of the very generous prizes given by Poetry Awards.

ELMA DEAN is represented by a poem in the current issue of *Variegation*.

In his book, *A History of American Poetry, 1900-1940*, Horace Gregory quotes two of the seven "Sonnets in Quaker Language" by HILDEGARDE FLANNER and says that they "retain their charm and grace and deserve to be better known."

In reference to the subject of Miss Flanner's poem in this issue, she writes that the flower is "*Arenaria compacta*, a moss-like plant found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California, at high altitudes."

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS lives in New York, although he lived on the Pacific Coast at one time. His contribution to the literary life of both coasts is a distinguished one.

ANN STANFORD was one of the contributors in 1937 to Yvor Winder's famous anthology, *Twelve Poets of the Pacific*.

NEETA MARQUIS has contributed to both *Variegation* and *Recurrence*.

MAY SARTON is at present Briggs-Copeland Instructor of English Composition at Harvard and Radcliffe. Her last volume of poems, *The Lion and the Rose*, was published

by Rinehart and Company in 1948.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY issued a volume of JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN's verse a few years ago.

MR. OLIVER HALE requests that a correction be made. In a previous issue of Recurrence it was incorrectly stated that he had read his poems before the Poetry Society of America. He was invited, but was unable to appear.