

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

09

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Summer 1952

VOLUME III

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A Quarterly of Rhyme

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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

THE HUNT

Carleton Drewry

Halloo the hills! There run tonight
Two packs, with yelping and wild laughter.
One streams along by low moonlight
And one goes blindly stumbling after.

Halloo this race that will not end
Till the hunter learn to be no longer
The killer, and at last contend
Not with the fox, but the hounds' hunger.

THE PHOENIX

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Every year when leaves are turning
The tree takes fire:
It is tall as a steeped pine and burning
From bole to spire.

All its height of fragrant timber
Becomes a torch;
Yet, as it flames or sinks to ember,
It cannot scorch.

Even though the tender fuel
May fall and die,
From ash in flames of quick renewal
A bird will fly.

HAMSTER SELF-INTOXICATED

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Our furry hamster on the nursery shelf
 Has made a playmate of her mirrored twin,
 Enchanted by this darling minikin.
Narcissus-like, she contemplates herself.

Her cup of seed replenished and her heart
 Sustained by love, though in a looking-glass,
 She finds the daylight hours quick to pass
And only sleep pries twin and twin apart.

Next morning discontent is vocalized
 By doleful squeaks that no one can ignore;
 Her looking-glass has fallen, and her store
Of food is eaten. Nothing she has prized

Remains: no image, no nutritious seed.
 Her tiny shrieks rebuke our negligence
 Till we are fain to raise in self-defense
Her fallen idol and condone her greed.

INTERVAL OF FROST

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Spirit is made visible,
Flesh being pared to the bone.
Stark elms at the year's frigid birth
Have the rigor of stone.

These augur the miracle
Of an opulence to come.
Heart, learn again of winter earth
To lie chill—to lie numb.

MORAY

Ing Smith

No grace of fin, no blandishment of scale
Lightens the sea-drab of his spotted flesh,
The fat crease of his bogus rubber smile.
Color and shape of fact, no argent wish
Can alter him. Thought is a shell in sand.
Yet need to justify his form, his moving,
Flounders and writhes, until the sinuous mind
Plunges, exploring caverns of the heart's gray
loathing.

WITHIN THE CIRCLE

Marguerite George

So much we know and yet so little,
We, who dwell within Time's circle.

And yet we push with fervid hand
Every boundary of heart's land.

We, who search each far frontier
Of the mind's perimeter

Know that brain is handicapped
By a world, miasma wrapped,

And find no way to penetrate
The mist that hangs so obdurate,

Yet know that spirit, winged with love,
Has the power and grace enough,

Has the strength and has the faith
To shatter coils of creeping death.

A L I E N

Ethel Jacobson

Here is a small community of peace.
The field mouse patters
Through the tunneled grass;
The creamy fawn
Leaps, luminous as dawn;
The woodthrush spins her song out—
Till I pass.

A hundred hearts beat
Suddenly loud and fleet.
Wariness flares
From wide and darkening eyes.
And I retreat
On awkward, alien feet
That for a moment trespassed
In paradise.

CHILD MOTHER

Neeta Marquis

Summer is come too soon, impatient and glowing,
Driving her quick heat sharp to the tender root;
She has urged the sapling past its budding and
 blowing,
Into the burden of heavy, untimely fruit.

Now the transient April of girlhood, wearing
Eden's first bloom, has vanished beyond recall.
Soon the frail branches, bent with compulsion of
 bearing,
Must shrivel and blench in the pitiless frosts of fall.

N I R V A N A

Paul Aaen

Is it to sit
beneath a peach
with will akimbo,
divining flesh
from skin to pit,
but not to reach
beyond the blush
to mitigate the limbo?

BETWEEN THE TIGER AND
THE LILY

Paul Aaen

Behind the focal plane of sight
in the nimble sweatshop of the mind
flowers seen
against essential green
are patched by crazy-quilt design
to kinship in a pattern of vestigial light.

A lily-flash before the wane,
blazing orange among the ferns,
was simply it
by lily sunlight lit,
but factored out of sense, returns
kenspeckled as a tiger in a hurricane.

Roses on a redwood fence decline
to pentagons of aftersight.
Before we knew,
we saw the present hue
of blossoms only, not the white
rose and the flame arcing to incarnadine.

AMONG THE RUINS

Charles Edward Eaton

We sat among petunias, the smell of years—
Some flowers smell of time, of time's inclosure;
Suddenly, at this far moment, the falling of her tears
Woke the unhistorical disclosure,
A woman younger than the flowers,
Whose cogitations of repose never would have
 stirred the trance of hours.

So suddenly she came from grotto mouth.
The channel-scent, spread hot and tart,
Behind and round her weeping face,
Spoke of dampness and of drouth.
And, as she groped around her heart,
I thought her blind with wandering from dark to
 lighter place.

There, among the purple, white, weeping in a cleft,
A virgin in a niche against the mountain stone,
Still wreathed by all the flowers she had left;
I knew she was not in the dark alone,
But stood among the bright debris
To see if anyone had come as far as she.

AFTER STORM

Gertrude Claytor

Into the darkened grotto of the heart
That holds an image beautiful and blind
The sea intrudes, tearing the walls apart—
Fury and foam of elemental mind.
Invading surf will reach the heart alone,
Toss flesh and weed to strangle on the air;
Salt floods the wound, till wounded strength is gone
And loss confirmed puts out the flame of fear.

The casual sun beats down upon the sand,
On starfish, driftwood, crab of double motion,
Plunder of tide strewn on the edge of land,
Forced upward and abandoned by the ocean . . .
The moon will rise, indifferent and serene,
Over the level beach swept bare and clean.

W I N T E R

Ethan Ayer

Nobody said: While most men reach the age
When they must learn that this or that is so,
You will not reach the age, you will not know,
You will go on trying in vanity and rage
To keep the castle and the cloud apart
(The cloud for your head, the castle for your feet),
Long after vanity is obsolete,
And rage too taxing for an old man's heart.

The light of your eye, the luster of your hair,
In the heaven of your ambition, will not dim.
But what of the man in the castle? What of him?
Painfully, from the depths of his royal chair,
Haltingly to the window he will go
And see that the cloud has fallen in flakes of snow.

BEYOND EDEN

Leah Bodine Drake

When Adam and Eve awoke in the wide waste
After their exile on the desert floor;
For one heartbeat it must have seemed
That they had dreamed
A blurred nightmare of sin and sudden loss,
Of that swift-turning sword,
The unpitying angels and the hard
Irrevocable closing of a door.

They would look back toward Eden, across
The flat unprofitable land
With its barbed plants, bright mica, flinty stone,
The salt wells and the lion-tracks in the sand,
And seen afar
The Garden lying like a tiny star
Green, green in the luminous air,
Remote as a mirage and O how fair!

It must have been then humanity's despair
Awoke: their hearts broke
And the first tears sprung,
And to man's astonished tongue
Came, bitter beyond belief,
The incredible taste of grief.

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL AAEN is at present on leave from Bakersfield College, where he teaches English literature and philosophy. He was awarded First Prize for poetry this year in a contest conducted by the California Writer's Club and judged by Josephine Miles and Rosalie Moore.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY recently published ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS' book, *Design for Arras*, in *The Distinguished Poet Series*.

Sunday in Virginia and Other Poems by GERTRUDE CLAYTOR is now in its second edition.

Verse by MARGUERITE GEORGE has appeared in *The New York Times* and other periodicals.

CARLETON DREWRY served earlier this year as the guest editor of the Southern issue of *Voices*.

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LEAH BODINE DRAKE used to be on the staff of the *Courier of Evansville, Indiana*, as music editor. Two poems by her were reprinted in *Poetry Awards* 1951.

ETHEL JACOBSON is one of America's most famous living writers of humorous verse.

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MARIANNE MOORE, Louis Untermeyer, and many other poets have praised the work of CHARLES EDWARD EATON.