

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

16

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Spring 1954

VOLUME IV

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume IV · Spring 1954 · Number 16

*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 publisher's own advertisement, from the last leaf:*]

ENJOY THE OTHER EMPHASIS AS WELL. The two quarterlies, *Recurrence* and *Variegation*, differ not so much in kind as in emphasis. In *Variegation* you will find the contrasting rhythms of free verse. Each line of *vers libre* is a unit with a certain trend and direction, and there is always discernible the occurrence of accent, not at specific stated intervals, but still with a feeling for its placement which registers certain effects. For this reason free verse is not an attempt to undermine conventional methods, but actually reveals them in a new and valuable relationship. This relationship is further amplified by the editor's epigraph on the title page of each issue of *Variegation*: "Free verse is not a desertion of prosody; it is an exploration, intentional or unintentional, of the mysteries lying at the metrical core of speech."

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THE MYTH

Myron H. Broomell

The Gorgon, as to all is known,
Had what would turn a man to stone—
Snakes for her hair, and such a face
As Perseus used to gain his place:
Bringing her head home in a wallet
He held it up and the court froze.
The king's wiles were no more; the queen
Of course was secluded from the scene.

Andromeda, whom he had saved
From the sea beast as the sea waved,
Drops out properly from the story.
The subsequent events were gory:
The Gorgon-slaying, the homecoming;
As always, the victory over evil.
How he ruled after he became king
Apparently was a minor thing.

He who rests lightly on his former laurels
Must yet compose his mind, and subjects'
quarrels.

THE SEER

Myron H. Broomell

I could have seen things as well as the next man
If only there had been someone at hand
To tell me what it was I' ought to look for
And what I was supposed to understand.

I used to sense the future coming, quite plainly,
But I faced it unafraid, I suppose,
Having been cautioned often and vainly
By the kind of person one does not believe
 knows.

And I do not think they do— for I didn't either.
The past, too, seemed theirs rather than mine.
I was blind, of course, but may the hand wither
That is raised to strike me—an old man, and
 blind.

MERIDIAN

Ethan Ayer

More often than winter or the snow that falls
Ever more heavy as the years that pass
Come voices of spring, as though in these chill halls
There was always sunshine on the window-glass.
The white of the distance never seems to fade
Into a purple twilight as today
In a dark green summer, in a dusky glade
Where, younger than ever, we escape away.

Let only the fall come in this equinox,
And all the remembrances, in one vast flood,
Will melt like glacier of the poles, and blocks
Of ice will calve like cattle, and the wood
Will be embalmed in conifers of cold
Like hearts grown young in bodies not grown old.

NO JOURNEY TO THE MOON

Anne Barlow

I will not journey to the moon;
Give someone else my place
On any lunar rocket ship
Outbound through cosmic space.

I have not been her worshiper
So many nights to dare
Pursue Diana's chariot
And seize her regal chair.

Leave me the moon unravished
Of her cold, ethereal bloom.
Let there be heights, where mortals
May not venture to presume.

I'll keep her as the symbol
For all glory never gained,
A silver goddess, still remote,
The fairer unattained.

L A T E S P R I N G F R O S T

Barbara Leslie Jordan

I had two pear trees, flowering and white,
Which stretched their branches upward to the sun
Heavy with buds and vulnerable to bees
Raiding each fragrant blossom, one by one.
I had two pear trees, flowering and white.

I had two pear trees. On a spring-soft night
I watched them dancing to a windy tune,
And marvelled at the patterns that they wove,
So dark against the silver of the moon.
I had two pear trees, flowering and white.

I woke this morning, roused by slanted light,
To see that frost had come without a sound
And every fragile petal, bruised and dead,
Is hurled by wind against indifferent ground.
I had two pear trees, flowering and white.

R E T U R N

Joseph Joel Keith

Returning from the wished-for, unseen place,
from endless byways near the street or corn,
a man will venture backward yet go forth
unto the home where he was born.

Soon he will hear throughout the silent house
the ticking of a timelessness, and walk
through old rooms up the attic stair, and move
into the place without a clock.

What he will feel, what he will know as true,
will be the fact that he had known before:
that he can't leave what is himself, unlocked,
not by a key's turn in a door.

ETCHED IN SHADOWS

Hannah Kahn

Not clearly remembered and yet never forgotten,
Words that she spoke,
The sound of her voice;
Fragments of thought that echo the lost, unwritten
Phrases of sorrow,
Language of intimate joys.

Not as a portrait do I see my mother
Mending a garment,
Biting the end of a thread . . .
At times it is only her hands that I see caressing
A child in pain
Or kneading a loaf of bread.

And often the picture is blurred, yet etched in agate,
A shawl on her head
And her eyes half closed in prayer . . .
And the way she turned her face when she
 was weeping
And her faltering step as she climbed
The final stair.

IN SYMBOL

Elinor Lennen

The wind is common carrier for all weather;
Tornado's cataclysm, zephyr's balm,
Attack or soothe, and give no option whether
The air-freight is explosive or is calm.

Through mountain pass, on prairie or in city,
The cargo travels, day or night, in scorn
Of man imploring elemental pity
From this by which he cried when he was born.

His words use hidden bellows to move air—
A little wind in symbol—here to there.

THE LAST AFTERNOON

Hanson Kellogg

With what finality the wet light drips away,
Draining the street of movement, dust and sound.
Rain makes a sorry finish to the day.
It flattens all the sun gilds in the round:
Brick chimneys, rich against banked cloud,
The jut of dormers and the thrust of spires.
Such hours are for the young, those sad and proud
Romantics warmed by metabolic fires.
Or for the old, to watch the pear drops race
Down the streaked path of the window light,
Time stretching to their measured tortoise pace.
With what finality . . .

It may stay always night.

FIRE AND STONE

Eric Barker

Stone is that one who comes
Smooth, round, without a claw,
But firm and fully armed
Against the fire's red maw

That hungers for the fields
And licks their acres clean,
That springs upon the woods
Nor leaves one tower of green.

Beware his leap to life
And wind that helps him fly!
He mows the golden woods;
The meadows shrink and die.

Fierce, beautiful he is,
A whirlwind of desire
That would engulf all things,
Even the earth entire!

But when at last he lies
Sufficient to his end,
Smooth stone will be as much,
Round stone will not unbend.

Fire's lion eyes will close,

His lion-colored wings
On leagues of victories,
On deaths of lovely things,

Save one that would not fall,
Nor move, but stood alone
And cast the lion down
From walls of simple stone.

BIRD SONG UNDER RAIN

Willis Eberman

Like seed-pearls strewn across the grey
Wet marble of the sky,
The notes are flung, and not a thread
To hold them by.

An instant glint on the glad ear,
And they are lost somewhere
Among the columns of the rain,
And drumming air.

TERESA'S HANDS

Oliver E. Townsend

They might have toyed with diadems, those slender
fingers

With almond nails' deep cinnabar;

Or parted drapes that gave on scented terraces,

So poised and delicate they are.

But some bright chance, decreeing sunnier portion—

Remote from gems blue-cut and cold—

Gave those portrait hands a cottage garden,

And children with hair of tangled gold.

THE PIGEONS

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

They mince as if bowing to one another
On polished coral toes,
Eyes wary of the passer, wings set for an
 upward rush
As wind blows.

Like wind they circle, enter
The belfry of a church:
It is there they teach clamorous young in
 summer
To drop from the steepled perch.

They circle, stoop to a flying buttress, once
 again
Pavement darkens under wing-smother;
Then clears as they trip sedately to and fro,
Bowing to one another.

CONTRIBUTORS

The title poem, “Big Sur”, of Eric Wilson Barker’s recent book of poems first appeared in *Variegation*.

ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS’ poems on animals were praised on one occasion by Marianne Moore.

OLIVE TOWNSEND is a native of Ireland, who is at the present time a member of the California Writers’ Club.

A poem by HANNAH KAHN is to be found in the current issue of *The American Scholar*.

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH recently lectured and read his poems at the University of Redlands. His poem in this issue is one of a series dealing with Hawley, an imaginary rural community.

ANNE BARLOW is the first contributor to this magazine to be a resident of the state of Virginia.

QUEEN’S QUARTERLY, *Northern Review* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine* have published work by WILLIS EBERMAN.

MYRON H. BROOMELL lives in Durango, Colorado and works in the field of accounting. His two books of verse were favorably received by discriminating critics.

Poems by HANSON KELLOGG and BARBARA LESLIE JORDAN have appeared frequently on the editorial page of *The New York Herald Tribune* during recent years.

ETHAN AYER and Louis Simpson will work together as the guest editors of the next issue of *Voices*.

ELINOR LENNEN is a contributor to this season’s issue of *Variegation*.