

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

17

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Summer 1954

VOLUME V

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume V · Summer 1954 · Number 17

*Set from the scan of the magazine. The poems, their titles, the poets'
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CONTENTS

<i>Achromatic Lullaby. Mary Winter</i>	3
<i>The House. Mary Winter</i>	4
<i>Man of Gath. Eric Barker</i>	5
<i>Partridge Call. Eleanor Glenn Wallis</i>	6
<i>Wild Creatures. Eleanor Glenn Wallis</i>	7
<i>The Interval. Eleanor Glenn Wallis</i>	8
<i>Translation. Laura Benét</i>	9
<i>The Dream of Coronado. Virginia Russ</i>	10
<i>April Is the Poet's Month. Gene Magner</i>	11
<i>Yet Do I Sing. Oliver Hale</i>	12
<i>Windshield. Ann Stanford</i>	13
<i>The Lazy Prince. Leah Bodine Drake</i>	14
<i>Dynamo. Elinor Lennen</i>	15
<i>Dune Spell. Elinor Lennen</i>	16
<i>Contributors</i>	17



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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

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[*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."

ACHROMATIC LULLABY

Mary Winter

Think gray:

Sombre the tone of sleep,

Negation of the hues of day

And drowsier than counting sheep;

Think gray.

Not black, not white:

Stars puncture night

And white spills all

The spectrum's light

If fractured.

Think gray:

Color of sleep,

Of dust, of shadow and of sigh,

Think gray

And quiet lie.

THE HOUSE

Mary Winter

"Now this house here,
Has atmosphere," the agent said.
It had; a rank effluvium
Remindful of we knew not what
But dank and dead.
The windows, their glass shattered,
Were sockets in a skull
And leaves like footfalls pattered
Down the dim hall.
The porch, a sagging jaw,
Dropped in a beard of weed—
We had no need, to see more than
 we saw.

"You could fix this up," the agent said.
But no—we knew the house was dead,
 long dead.
We felt an emanation, impalpable,
 impure,
That would forever hover
That alteration could not cure
Nor fresh paint cover.

MAN OF GATH

Eric Barker

David went up against that great man
With five pebbles chosen from the brook.
Goliath looked far down and saw him come,
And suddenly he roared; his shoulders shook.

His laughter hugged the trees; the branches
 rocked.
Wave after wave went rolling down the sky.
The birds flew off, the frightened rabbits froze;
Then passed the wind-a long, enormous sigh.

Goliath listened-far and far away
He heard the last faint echoes of his mirth
Die in a hollow cloud. Too late he turned,
But not before the sadness of the earth,

Earth and the sky and all the living world
Moved in his heart like tears. He stood alone,
And Gath, before it crumbled in his eyes,
Annulled the loaded air, the lethal stone.

PARTRIDGE CALL

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

(Where the Mill-Wheel Turned)

Now heavy sheaves of wheat are harvested,
The bright corn brought to bin
That lay in shallow heaps of gold and red.
Where pasture fields begin,
A partridge calls "Bob White!" aloof and clear
To the earth-enchanted ear.

Bob White! Bob White! as long ago he called
His solitary summons and a child
Paused where the meadow by the wood is walled
To learn and love the wild
Warm cry of bird to bird and the interval
Between each call.

Now as she stands and listens to the sound,
A mill-race runs again, a wheel goes round,
The corn is ground.

WILD CREATURES

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

They come down to drink of cold moon-water—
Forest creatures summering on the hill
In burrows, hideout of oak or beech, a shutter
Dropped, as a fallen limb, in the gale's swell.

Walking in forest by the lake, one notes them here:
Rustle of leaves, a scamper or flash of white scut;
Chipmunk on a fence, back mandolined in fur;
Eyes, peering through briar, warily slit;
Movement of what seemed antlered thicket, through
air.

They wish to remain anonymous but when sun has
sunk,
When stars pierce black or the hunter's moon is high,
They consider thirst, steal down to the lake's dim
bank,
Push out from shore or crouch where reed is rank
To lap the coldness of pool-reflected sky.

THE INTERVAL

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Here in the bright exotic Eastern court
A fair-haired child prattles in polyglot,
In a jargon formed of English, French, Chinese
That shakes upon the breeze staccato sound,
But not the purr of this sleek tiger cub,
The Royal Bengal kitten she has found.
Bred for the young king's pleasure and too small
To have known the taste of human blood as yet,
He gambols, purrs, smacks at the rolling ball
With manners mild as a domestic cat,
Although the flaming coat, the sooty stripe
Will mark him savage when the time is ripe.

The young king strolls at ease among his blooms;
The fair-haired foreign child
Teases her sleepy cub; the chapel bell
From the French Monastery chimes a mild
Reminder. For the moment all is well.

TRANSLATION

Laura Benét

When I first met you,
There was much to learn,
For you were a foreign tongue
Unknown, unsung.
I conned one phrase at a time
And thought to go on from there
But arrived nowhere.
So I threw aside my primer,
Resolving to toil no more
At understanding hard words.
Then suddenly in a small hour,
You became clear
As a newly washed mirror.

THE DREAM OF CORONADO

Virginia Russ

The Lord of the Indies sits beneath the trees
And one thousand small gold bells are ringing in
the breeze.

On every branch tip a golden bell is tied,
and incense light through trees quivers shimmering
and pied.

Seventeen girl slaves dance for him, each one a
white orchid maid
wearing a turquoise nose ring, and a tall crown of
jade.

Bird of paradise feathers sway in slow pulsing fan
as the golden bells tinkle to tempo of pavane.

Hummingbirds sing to him, tongues tipped with
cinnamon
throats agleam with opals, their coral toe-claws
crimson.

He sits a-gazing towards a far rose hill
and all bells hold their tongues as the wind grows
still.

Does he dream perhaps of Cibola's seventh city
where the silver river crashes on amethystine jetty?

Or does he yearn, longing as even old kings must,
towards the sweet Fountain of Youth, whose spray
flings beryl dust?

Brown backs bend as diamonds glitter through royal
carpet, now unrolled,
and the King sips pearls molten in honey, as the
gold-fish sky grows cold.

NOTE: The 15th century chronicler Quivera, wrote: "The King
of the Indies sat beneath a tree hung with gold bells." Later,
Coronado searched for him.

APRIL IS THE POET'S
MONTH

Gene Magner

The April leaf cannot but grow
Just as in autumn its color changes to colors,
It curls, becomes brittle, cold.

Dearest, when my heart is too quick, know
That the grass of the season cannot recolor,
Nor can my heart unbrittle when old.

YET DO I SING

Oliver Hale

I would not have it at the end
that the stops pull out, and my sound
of song expire in a rush of wind:
thou Hand, I feel your fingers press,
the sword of their fall on my keys,
yet do I sing and still lift up my voice.

WINDSHIELD

Ann Stanford

Break wind
Break wing
Break wet
Keep from our eyes

The rough
The live
The small.
The burgeoning skies
Clouds thick as seas,
We go too swift for these.

THE LAZY PRINCE

Leah Bodine Drake

I know the enchanted castle lies over the hill
Where the barley ends and those gloomy thornwoods
thicken.

From my turret I've watched its weathercocks glitter
and fail
To turn in any wind, its people and banners stricken

By the fairy sleep that has gripped it, ever since
The Princess (a beauty, they say) was pricked by
the spindle
Of some old witch or another. A kiss from a prince
Takes, I believe, the place of bell, book and candle

To break the spell. I'd attempt the rescue myself
Being her neighbour, if only that confounded briar
Weren't so tough . . . and my armour's somewhere
on a shelf . . .
And I've heard the stairs are steep that lead to her
bower.

If I woke her, great gods! of course we'd have to
wed!
I'd find myself with a bride whose tastes were passé,
For a century's a damned long time to be socially
dead—
O the time it would take to teach her our world's
way!

But they say she's extremely pretty and I'm a king's
son

And her castle lies practically on my own door-sill.

Maybe I'll ride over tomorrow . . . well, it's pleasant to plan

High daring to do, knowing I never will.

D Y N A M O

Elinor Lennen

The quiet words that make a book
Have power that can move the mind
When eyes are given consent to look,
And thought responds, kind to its kind.

Fuel for an engine thrown in gear,
The writer and the reader mesh,
And energy no one can hear
Flows through the spirit and the flesh.

DUNE SPELL

Elinor Lennen

This desert dune that bears no grass
Sways back and forth, or ripples in the wind.
While days and seasons come and pass,
No crop is cut, no harvest yield is binned.

Seceder from the kingdom, earth,
Shall this be known henceforth as animal—
Not soil for roots, but by rebirth
A subtle beast, austere, monarchical?

No strength or skill avails to tame
The wilful creature, now supine, now stirred.
Man leaves it, humbler than he came,
Mastered by this which has no certain word.

CONTRIBUTORS

A poem by OLIVER HALE appeared in the first issue of Recurrence.

LAURA BENET is the sister of the two famous poets, William Rose Benet and Stephen Vincent Benet. She is the author of four books of verse.

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Several poems by ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS have appeared in The New Yorker during recent years.

Both ANN STANFORD and ELINOR LENNEN are represented by poems in the current issue of Variegation.

MARY WINTER is a talented sculptress.

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ERIC BARKER was born in England, but he now makes his home in California.