

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

18

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A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Autumn 1954

VOLUME V

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume V · Autumn 1954 · Number 18

*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*

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761, Hoboken, New Jersey.

[*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."

ADVENT

Jean Burden

Before you come
old springs flower
in the silence of my earth
and rivers locked for seasons
in my cold
flow with longing
toward the hour.

And this is love, I know:
to wait
composed as stone
while ancient nativities
tremble in my darkness
gathering a violence
of their own.

ANTIDOTE

W. Price Turner

Walk away rage in the rain
where fury and sorrow fuse
to drive out pride's excesses
and lay the ghost of pain,
till peace that joy renews
is all the heart confesses.

CORMORANT

Joseph Payne Brennan

In pure air, over the promontory,
The cormorant cries.
His piercing eyes
Plumb the cold wave
Where the sunfish lies.

I am a spiny softness
Upon the rock
His screams mock.
His pristine ancient plunge
Annihilates the clock.

ALLHALLOWS

Ing Smith

This night, alone among deserted rooms,
Alert to sound from aging beam or floor,
I hold at bay all uninvited dreams
That press a doom on this uneasy hour.

By day, when laughter comes with burst of sun
Through open doors, I shall forget how mist
Swirling on nightwinds upward from the town
Fills inner landscape, too, with gray mistrust

Of something Other, shrouded and fog-surrounded,
Wrapped in the past, yet by the future haunted.

THE MIDDLE AGES: TWO VIEWS

Leah Bodine Drake

I. Con

The wicked barons laid the landscape waste
With their obsessions, hunting and battle.
They were always riding down something,
man or beast,
And they placed the peasant on a par with cattle.

Castles were lordly prisons: ladies found life a bore
With their men forever away on feud or crusade.
They kept such open house for the troubadour
That Holy Church anathemized his trade.

Their vices burned them spindleshanked and white.
(The tapestry-people prove this, says Michelet.)
Even crowned kings could seldom read or write
And villeins slept in sties and ploughed all day.

They had schools for magic, and the droit
du seigneur,
And a low taste in fun, like the Feast of Fools.
There were racks, and covens of witches. They
baited bears,
And they had Gilles de Rais and plague and
ducking stools.

They ate with their fingers, and quite learned

scholars
Debated how many angels could dance on a pin.
They thought the earth was flat, and serfs wore
collars
Of iron, and all believed in original sin.

II. Pro

They enjoyed their times so much they pictured
Paradise
As a little compact city with walls and spires,
With the Blessed walking about in pointed shoes
And stylish liripipes, among rose-thorn and pears.

They worshipped courtesy and chastity and courage
And Woman: there was always a knight on the road
Glittering off to rescue a lady. The woods' foliage
Rustled with fairy hinds and Robin Hood.

They liked the beasts: the pious, fantastic towers
Prickled with pointed stone ears. They were subtle
in love,
Craft-proud, ardent. Saints sprang up like flowers,
And that life was often merry the folk songs prove.

The lands glowed like a painted tabard with tourneys.
They had exquisite ivories, Dante and Joan of Arc.
They were always jogging away on exciting journeys
To Canterbury (see Chaucer), the Grail, or the
Holy Rock.

And they lived cheek by jowl with surprise and
miracle!
They believed in mermen and elves and the

Judgement Horn;
The Queen of Heaven might appear at some holy
well
And any thicket hide the unicorn.

PARK IN SEMITROPICS

Joseph Joel Keith

This flowering land,
the bough profuse with blossoms,
tree searching sky—
here did the hand
dig long in labor, deep eyes
see nothing dry.

This woodland grown
green in a city's center
spreads acres-wide,
for here was sown
the future, all the plenty
time could not hide.

Replenishing earth,
the risen theme, the chorus
begun with dawn's tune,
grows still in its worth
when blooms are softest under
the light of the moon.

THE MOUNTAIN SHOULDERS

Alan Swallow

Once, when the mountain shoulders turned
To gather rocky clusters in the skies,
The fire was speechless that we burned,
Voiceless our night sighs;

And speechless lay the hurrying night,
Voiceless were the moment and the hour;
Vague breezes moved the feeble light;
No thing had power.

Lazy were words within the mind
And soft the words upon the lip; there, dumb,
Great strength grew in us, cold, to find
The perishing womb.

THE SLEEP OF A LITTLE GIRL

Marcia Masters

Oh, let me sleep near you,
Oh, let me share the sleep
Of one who dreams of fairy fields
Where time blows green and deep.

And let me kiss your head
Still warmed as if the sun
With such a daisied mass of brown
Were never done.

Oh, let me breathe this scent
That meadows cannot keep—
And find a road that whispers
 through the pines
Where both of us may sleep.

CHILD UPON THE SWING

Marcia Masters

How high and sweet the morning is!
Blown into pictures by the wind;
There is a larklight all around the
 hawthorne trees;
An echoing gold upon the sand.

And there—the darling of the sky,
The owner of a path of blue,
My little girl from her obedient swing
 surveys
The winking grass-spires belled
 with dew.

With hair all rapture, and unpinned,
An amber audience for the sun,
She pauses on the heights, then glories
 down through space
Where only birds before have gone.

And elm trees shimmer, pines renew
Both earth and water with their cry;
As down she comes with all of springtime in her face,
And all she learned up in the sky.

FOR ANY LOVE REMEMBERED

Barbara Leslie Jordan

You do not look at me nor I at you,
We are as casual as strangers who
Glance at each other in a subway train
And turn aside, in order not to stare.
Our words are chosen with the utmost care
To hide our thoughts yet leave our meaning plain.

The conversation rises, stumbles, falls.
Enclosed within these once familiar walls
We shun the ghost of what we used to say.
Almost we are without the power of speech,
So many topics lie beyond our reach,
Part of our loved, abandoned yesterday.

Our voices cease. Our fingers drum a tune
Upon a table top, where one lost June,
You carved an arrow with an ivory knife,
Then cut a heart and placed our names inside.
Remembering our love, our youthful pride,
This unchanged symbol mocks our altered life.

Trying to speak, I meet your smiling eyes
Without deception. You are very wise
And do not give the ancient countersign.
Your mouth is just the same. I do not miss
The now forgotten fashion of your kiss
For other lips have met your lips, and mine.

THE SILVER BIRDS

Charles Edward Eaton

One bush remembers, so it seems,
Every figment of my winter dreams,
Exhaling birds of silver in the sun
Like ghosts that fed in silence there.
I know it only as the bounteous one
Whose berries have distilled the blue of sky and air.
And yet without the flight of birds when I came near
I might have turned away from it in fear.

I knew by those white phantoms past my head
That all the images of ice had fled;
It only took my coming to arouse
Them feeding from the purple nipples of the boughs.

A part of earth, I think, knows how I waited,
And now expels some part of me to welcome home
That son, most prodigal, whose heart is never sated—
The triumph lies in knowing when to roam
Back upon the bountiful, remembering bush,
Pause for a moment, listen to the hush
That comes upon a ghostly gathering
Before it quivers and takes wing.

Blueberry, lovely bush, O purple feast,
Left by the phantom birds with all their song unsung,
Whoever works in ice is blest
If destiny remembers and keeps him young.

L A D Y B Y A L A K E

Michael Ivens

The waters of this deep and ancient lake
Lie on the shallow surface of your eyes;
For you have borrowed beauty from the evening
And wear the sunset's colours as disguise.

Tenderly about your pallid features
The aura of a distant splendour plays;
The dim and purple shadows of the mountains
Soften the cool indifference of your gaze.

Nature, that contriving old romantic,
Has crazed my vision with her favorite spell;
Let us hurry to the safety of the city
Where logic lives and I can see you well.

THE LADY AND THE WEATHER

Kate Brackett

Her dwelling was a cosy curtained place.
Weather, she said, looked better through a pane.
Fierce sun, fierce cold attacked her porcelain face;
Winds whistled after her and tweaked her lace.
To stay indoors was civilized and sane.

Love found her at a tea, and watched her pour.
Caught in the meshes of a fragile joke,
Noting against the delicate décor
The whiteness of her arms, the stranger spoke—
And withered all that she had prized before.

He filled her throat with throbbing songs; he stirred
To frenzy in her breast a beating bird.
He strung her like a puppet on a wire,
Taught her to laugh, and led her muffed and
furred—
And later torn and sobbing—through the mire;
Shook loose her hair, whiplashed her with a word . . .

But here was neither wanton nor good wife;
And so love left her to her cosy life.

MUTATION

Hannah Kahn

Felled by no stroke
of tree or wind
or lightning flash,
but by the thinned
processed thought . . .
by this unwrought,

felled by no war
nor crucial act
but by what made
my world intact,
I am become
inert and numb.

CONTRIBUTORS

A story by JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN originally published in *Weird Tales* was recently selected by August Derleth as one of the outstanding short stories of its kind of 1953.

MARCIA MASTERS, the daughter of Edgar Lee Masters, returned not long ago from a trip to Europe.

No one has done more for poets during the last few years than ALAN SWALLOW. His activity as a publisher is a vital part of the literary history of the last decade.

An article by JEAN BURDEN appeared last year in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

A poem by LEAH BODINE DRAKE printed in *Recurrence* was selected for the forthcoming collection, *Poetry Awards 1954*.

BARBARA LESLIE JORDAN's home on Manhattan Island was built by her family in the early part of the nineteenth century.

W. PRICE TURNER and MICHAEL IVENS represent Great Britain in this issue. Mr. Turner's poem is the first one from Scotland to be printed in *Recurrence*.

HANNAH KAHN is one of Florida's best poets.

Both JOSEPH JOEL KEITH and KATE BRACKETT have been represented by their poems in *Harper's Magazine*.

A short story by CHARLES EDWARD EATON was reprinted in *Martha Foley's Best American Short Stories of 1952*.