

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

22

RECURRENCE

A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Autumn 1955

VOLUME VI

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

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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*

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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."

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MISSILE

Eric Barker

Water had smoothed and shaped it for such work
As would promote a shepherd to a king,
Bring down a living mountain like a bird,
For it was changed when fitted to a sling.

And what had given it purpose was the stream,
Wearing it with the long perpetual wave
That is Time's operation, and will bring,
By that sure motion, each man to his grave;

Whether he comes to glitter huge and tall,
A loud, defiant target in the sun,
Or from his purling arsenal rejects
All flawed for flight, and keeps the deadly one.

WITH A GIFT OF PINE
CONES

Rachel Harris Campbell

These in the high Lagunas
Were gathered, on a day
When we remembered winter
Far away.

Now for your hearth at Christmas
Take them; the scented blaze
Will speak of pine-wood mountains,
Summer days.

GHOST TOWN

Rachel Harris Campbell

Not only the still street,
The sagged lintel, the crazy doors without latch,
The old porch, past remembering the tread of feet,
Growth greening the broken roofs with outlaw thatch.

Not only that here the lode
Gave up its earthborn riches, petered out,
The hotel guests departed; a new road
To promised finds drew off the miner rout.

Not only these . . . but that all rich lodes spend
Their ores, and there is only a rubble of stones;
All hopes move elsewhere; all cities end
As ghost towns, nothing but wind silvered bones.

FOR AN UNBORN CHILD

Thomas Parkinson

Spring on succeeding bent
Has reached its full intent,
Gay weeds are gone, but fair
Greenery fills the air.

Life-giving heat
Restores the earth's full beat.
The fertile reach of time
Has further springs divined;
Striking reluctant stone
The serpent rod has won.

Earth now freshly clothed
Awaits another fall,
When at the summer's close
The stripling winds may storm.
Down to the river bed
Descend the drifting buds,
Under unclouded skies,
The wandering waters rise.
Wind tears the buckeye free,

Each bough is one great leaf,
Salmon nuzzle the sea,
Fawn, colt, and heifer leap.
The serpent forms his O,
The moon shines her full,
The rivers overflow,

The cattle drink their fill.
O common and strange conceit!
The world lies at our feet.

AUTUMN PRUNING

Raymond Currier

The tree stands
neat and small, trimmed
to the delicate bone,
shorn of summer's
smothering luxuriance:
a little Artemis carved
for a private altar, stripped
to the innocence of pure passion,
all showy clothing slipped
to the cold grass;
or a psyche cut
back to the clean core,
relieved to feel the parings go,
seeing already April
beyond the not yet fallen snow.

THE POINT OF ARISTOTLE

Myron H. Broomell

The Enigma sits, her forepaws strong and tawny,
Beside the road the traveler takes to Thebes.
To answer her, he must use nimble wits.
No problem there: it is his heart that grieves.

The heart labors with ire and fear.
Expelled from Corinth lest he prove a cad,
He met his father in a clumsy cart,
Slew him, passed on, and will be wholly bad.

Deliverer of peoples, but not exempt
From human weakness (impulse, arrogance),
Oedipus hears his name from all the steeples.
Dying, he murmurs at his gross mischance.

Not his only, of course. We all have traits
Likely to ruin us while the Sphinx waits.

THE BEAR

Myron H. Broomell

I never knew until
I met him in the wood,
That there could be one still,
Or I have hardihood
Who felt so much alarm.
To yell so that he ran—
I with my tiny arm—
He more than match for man.

Yet I have a savage friend
Who found this creature's brother
Walking on the fresh snow
Away from cover,
And when the two met thus,
My friend looked all about,
And without any fuss,
Nor any doubt,

Seized a good heavy rock
And hurled it at the bear,
Whose forehead received the shock
And he crumpled there.

My friend is a savage. I
Could emit only a cry.

GLASS IS THE BEST MATERIAL FOR ASHTRAYS

Myron H. Broomell

Zinc and copper and china,
Paint and putty and clay,
Brass by acute refiner,
Plastic to throw away,

Wood of the nut or apple,
Steel or silver or gold,
Pewter collectors couple
With if it be old,

Ivory, tin of a can lid,
Porcelain saucer or dish—
None is so quickly handled
For washing (the housemaid's wish)

When befouled with solid ashes
And tar from cigarettes,
As the pure glass of habit:
Hot water makes it fresh.

So, I think, it should be
With consciences and friends—
Both to be seen through free,
And a mere rinsing cleanse.

SHABBY GENTEEL

Ethan Ayer

Dark is the night where only shines the moon
On loveless houses and an empty square;
One single figure waiting, crossing there,
Would bring the windows wide, would rouse the town.
This is the place of terrible old age
Where a crowd has shriveled and dwindled into one,
And the daily sound of getting a living wage
Divided and faded into almost none.

This is the place where every window sill,
Brownstone after brownstone after white,
Bears a plant that will not live and one that will,
One for the day, and one throughout the night
Where curtains blow outward like a bridal train,
Or a flag of conquest, then blow back again.

FATHER OF ACHILLES

Patricia Duff McGinley

Over the rocks the sea came lapping
And surged back to the shores of Troy.
Old Peleus, on the shingle, napping,
Dreamed, they thought, of the fine tall boy

With waving plume and golden buckle
From whom an army fled for life.
They did not hear the old man chuckle
Who had a goddess for his wife.

There upon the shingle, dreaming,
He traced her footprints in the foam
And held her, slim and wet and gleaming,
Held his wife again come home.

LADY IN THE GARDEN

Ethel Jacobson

Only white flowers grew in her garden—
Phlox, narcissus and marguerite—
In narrow beds, each set apart
By stones white and neat.

Only at night she walked in her garden—
Silver-pale as petals that shine
Whiter still when the lone moon flower
Blooms on its star-leafed vine.

Only white flowers grow in her garden—
Camass and jimson in one low bed
Where noon and morning are moonless night
And the white stone lies at her head.

DEUS EX MACHINA

Leslie Nelson Jennings

To know behind the shape of marble some
Veiled demiurge both dreaded and revered
Brought closer Hellas and Byzantium;
Back of the smoking brazier appeared

Portent of doom or promise. To exalt
A Mythos of Unreason made more sure
The hand whose chisel fashioned without fault
Column and frieze and high entablature.

Diggers in mounds of stone and iron dust
May wonder whom we worshiped here before
The sky went dark, what thunderbolt was tossed
That left no shattered splendor to restore.

EPITAPH FOR A SLATTERN

Kate Brackett

The meadow brook seemed warm enough for washing
And cool enough to drink.
How could I think
It mattered how I shifted for a night,
Who would tomorrow surely—or day after—
Join in the four winds' laughter,
And dive and rise and fling a diamond spray
Out of the Milky Way?

L I L A

Hannah Kahn

She was a wild one,
never at peace,
running breathless
through the trees . . .

running at random
as though compelled
by a deeper need;
as though she were spelled

and spawned in light . . .
Yet I envied her
that only she,
abandoned and wild,
of all of us
remained the child.

CONTRIBUTORS

ERIC BARKER'S new book entitled *Directions in the Sun* is scheduled for publication in 1956 by Merle Armitage. It will contain prefaces by John Cowper Powys and Robinson Jeffers.

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