

READING EDITION

# RECURRENCE

23

# RECURRENCE

A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

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*Winter 1956*

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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[*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 CRYING OF THE GRASS

*Leah Bodine Drake*

---

When I press your head to mine  
A voice cries from the grass:  
"This head you hold so dear  
Under the grass shall lie;  
Far beyond wood and wave,  
Where your feet will never pass,  
His hushed forgetful heart  
Will nourish the wild rye  
And the beating of his heart  
Pass into the wind's sighs."

O with your mouth of love  
And your heart's beat close to mine,  
Silence the crying grass,  
Hush that I may not hear  
The grass and its terrible lies!

## THE DARK AND THE MUSIC

*Hanson Kellogg*

---

Within the huge magnificence of night  
The small radio sings, brave  
As a cooking fire, as bright,  
Against a canyon wall.

How did our grave  
Progenitors fight off the wolves of silence?

Tall as immortality night stands,  
As wide,  
As all the seven rivers Hell demands  
For its protection.

Melodies ride  
The witch air from night to morning.

Between the wrung day  
And the new one, dry,  
To endless symphonies, to twittering ballet,  
I seek to coalesce and learn to drift  
On Roland's horn on every beast's last cry  
Down canyon, down arroyo ever seco.

Air is the current when the silt must sift.

## AMADEUS IN THE ANTEROOM

*John Theobald*

---

Then the Archbishop inclined his head  
And scullions cleared the table  
And the strings were plucked and tuned  
And the woodwinds plugged an ugly gap in the babble.  
The composer was twice interrupted, not by an ovation;  
The linen at his cuffs was frayed.  
Later in the evening he was accorded a slight collation.

Later in the age, to the pauper's grave, came the ovation,  
Awarded for grace abounding, finality of tune in the clutch,  
And sublime suggestions, after all scarcely expected,  
Enabling us thereafter always to say, "Such and such  
Sounds silly and strange because we have not been elected,"  
Or, "The idiom is distinct, but we all have a tin ear,"  
Thus allowing a double redemption: of fame and music.

The notes themselves glitter and toil not,  
Earlier than fame and later, rain pearls,  
Furl crystal distance as a bird's slack  
Horizontal dive stitches notes in the vertical beam.  
Fits of wings prove the expectant void  
Is calm end and mad track, need and will,  
Empty airs and flung body, which is closer and more extreme.

## SOMETHING OVID FORGOT TO TELL US

*W. R. Johnson*

---

Inchoate thunder, swift and fierce,  
Has split the Grecian lyre;  
The twilight zone's corrosive spring  
Dissolves in bitter fire.

The autumn groves, where Sappho walked  
Transfigured in her grief,  
Are seared and blighted, root to limb,  
Bright petal and bright leaf.

Where Bacchus and Apollo danced,  
Twin brothers of the wood,  
An ancient beast has vomited  
Its black unfragrant blood.

In temples where the marble gods  
Stand weak on brawny legs,  
The ancient beast has come to lay  
Its ugly iron eggs.

The monster has no fangs, no coils,  
No bitter noxious breath:  
But if she will pollute our lives,  
She will not give us death.

Enchanted flesh and honey wine,  
A well-appointed room:

This is the substance of her curse,  
The nature of our doom.

Old Neptune's horses paw the wind,  
Minerva guards the gate:  
Unseen the monster enters in  
And teaches us to hate.

The welter of the monster's gifts  
Allows no choice of mean:  
No common meeting ground will hold  
Both Eros and Athene.

For we have seen the laurel fade,  
Have seen the Sybil die;  
And now we guess no golden ear  
Will hear our muffled cry.

The gentle nymphs have murdered Jove,  
Dark Juno lies alone:  
Unending seasons eat her heart,  
Existence gnaws her bone.

The valleys green, the marble towns,  
The blue unruffled seas,  
Are clouded with the harpies' wings  
And cold eternities.

## LOST LATITUDE

*Gertrude Claytor*

---

There is an island green and blessed with sun  
Set in the vast maternity of ocean,  
Uncharted, and the property of none;  
An anchorage defying water's motion  
Like the white calm within the cyclone's eye;  
And here the tempest leaves the wrecked, the lost—  
On this small center, under a widened sky  
Where coral battlements protect the coast.  
No shallow grief, no cockcrow gain is here,  
But temperate winds that soothe a ripened land  
And salt that sweetens on the circling air,  
Obedient to the lifting of a wand.  
Who finds this refuge captured from the sea  
Forgets the past, like Ariel, is free.

## PROJECTION

*Sara King Carleton*

---

The mirror on the wall-square  
reflects the bare, outward scene,  
lacking each shadow or move  
below, above the smooth screen.

How far truth travels beyond  
the fond, contented eye,  
behind the flat, cool surface,  
the factual glass . . . the lie.

## IN ABSENCE

*Marcia Masters*

---

If you return to me  
Like song to the embracing tree,

If you return like flame to stone  
That has grown grey and chill,  
Like spring that brings new colors to the hill;

If you return, if you return . . .  
What can I say  
Who all tomorrow fear  
Unless it be like yesterday?

## STILLNESS AND TURBULENCE

*Joseph Joel Keith*

---

Flow, brook, flow.  
Let us be  
part of your green purity.

River, go.  
Let us drift,  
part of your wide, longer gift.

Ocean, sweep  
thoughts afar,  
varied as your colors are,

shallow, deep;  
let our speech  
find the mysteries you teach.

## DISTANCE CANCELLED

*Elinor Lennen*

---

Thought could not cover distance here to there,  
Frustrated by despair.  
Bound then by gradual paralysis,  
Now I am healed by this:  
The heart leaps over chasm and up slope  
Because you give it hope.

## LOST AND FOUND

*Elinor Lennen*

---

To crop neglected meadows of the mind,  
To breathe unhurried, spirit-answering air  
Gives quiet opportunity to find  
Oneself which has been scattered here and there.  
Within, without, the world has elements  
Which answer to our creature confidence.

## WHOOPING CRANES

*Eleanor Glenn Wallis*

---

Though they breed, the hunters' toll  
Has been heavy; though their parks afford protection,  
Flight is long from goal to goal  
Be it south or in the opposite direction.

It is outlawry to shoot them, but on high  
Who shall recognize the black-tipped underwing,  
Yellow gaze and scarlet crown? Against the sky  
Each becomes a neutral thing.

Slender shank and heavy plume  
Furrow air: our hope accompanies what we cherish  
As the distant hills assume  
The great bird in flight, this creature like to perish.

## T A M E   E A G L E

*Eleanor Glenn Wallis*

---

The eagle, groomed, becomes a docile guest;  
Bred to the sky, the fierce assault, the kill,  
She may be gentled to the falconer's will,  
Sight and devour the lure at his behest.

Or, stranger still, ride as the falcon may,  
Travel for many a mile with jess and hood,  
Gain as reward an unplucked fowl for food  
Whose bones and feathers grace the end of day

Within the basement of a courteous home  
(The corner market having served her host)  
Where she, their strangest guest, will be the boast  
Of him and his for many a day to come.

But whether carried back by car or plane,  
The hilly region that she loves will be  
Once more her own: the cliff, the slap of sea;  
The lure to which she stoops, her fiercest gain.

## THE HUNTER

*Eleanor Glenn Wallis*

---

White as the great white dusk through  
    which he moves,  
Silent as arctic snows,  
The owl traverses winter solitude  
Above the floes;  
And smaller creatures than himself contract,  
Numb in a glaze of fear  
As the voracious beak, the claw's impact  
Draw near.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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LEAH BODINE DRAKE'S collection of verse, *This Tilting Dust*, will be published soon. It is recommended by the Book Club for Poetry.

W. H. AUDEN selected JOHN THEOBALD'S verse for anthologies which were printed at Oxford University in the thirties. Both poets were undergraduates there at that time.

GERTRUDE CLAYTOR is the author of an interesting monograph concerned with the last years of Edgar Lee Masters, the father of another contributor, MARCIA MASTERS.

SARA KING CARLETON is president of the New York Women Poets and a director of the poetry section of Pen and Brush Club.

A poem by ELINOR LENNEN was recently accepted by Arizona Highways.

ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS and JOSEPH JOEL KEITH are the authors of books that have received favorable reviews.

At the present time W. R. JOHNSON is with the American Army in Germany.

HANSON KELLOGG is represented by several pages of verse in the current issue of *Variegation*.