

READING EDITION

RECURRENCE

25

RECURRENCE

A QUARTERLY OF RHYME

Summer 1956

VOLUME VII

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume VII · Summer 1956 · Number 25

*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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THE FRIENDS

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

When my cat creeps within my arms to press
His nose beneath my chin (and love his need)
He lays aside the wiles, the instinctive lure
With which he curves about my leg in greed,
For now his wish to give exceeds desire.

I stroke his silver form—his otherness.
His furred face butts my chin, ecstatic claws
Pluck hymns of praise from out my worsted lap.
His purr relaxes; in the slumbered pause
That follows our devotion is entire.

THE HILL

Eric Barker

I face a hill whose roots go down
Milleniums a star may own,
And never shake nor ever lose
What a hill was born to use
Of that quiet standing gift in time
Over which the sun may climb
And stars go over and the moon
And what gods men wait upon
And I who serve more gods than one
By altar-light of moon and sun
And love the hill for what I found
On its wild and holy ground.

THE GREEN WAVE

Eric Barker

Now in the spring, the heaving ground-swell breaks
For future flowers, and my heart awakes

And listens to itself below the ground
And knows that darkness by its own dark sound.

The sun grows up, and perfect in their place,
Shine earth and seven seas within its face;

My growing heart, its wild green rage begun,
Lies mirrored in those tableaux of the sun

Where fishes swarm and nesting birds arise;
Lean, with the season's hunger in their cries,

The hankering beasts call from the covered wood;
The green wave drowns the fasting in their blood,

Turns mine to sap and rises in the tree,
Roars in the earth, is quietest in the sea.

A SMALL CHILD LISTENS

Joseph Joel Keith

What is that in the corner of the darkened house?
It moves as softly as a white-footed mouse.
Whatever it is, it has a friendly sound,
moved in from the wind, and over dry ground.
Surely it's not a creature of fear
and I'm not afraid to have it near.
Now I can hear it, close, on my shelf;
for all that I know, like my own self
it is looking for something it needs to find.
There's paper up there that somebody kind
gave to me. Take it; form a warm nest,
little mouse. I must get my night's rest.

THE TERM

Ethan Ayer

They have found an hour together on the stairs
To cry for home, and they are not yet nine,
And all their lives remember what was theirs
Just before bedtime when they were alone.
They remember the hopeful fishing off the dock
In the summer of summers, and the Christmas tree
With glitter of holidays, when they are back
To lessons and the long monotony.

Having been left alone together, they
Weep for these things, the better to remember,
But only as the dark divides the day
With a promise of fire and a glow of ember;
Only by knowledge that as night descends,
Just before bedtime, even sorrow ends.

CHANSONNETTE

Clyde Terry

They told me of an evening,
“Go dancing with Lizette,
That piece of blue and silver,
That porcelain coquette.
Her loving is as slender
As both her hands are slight.
She will not keep you tender
For longer than a night.”

Her dress was white, and ruffled
With narrow bands of blue.
Beneath the hemline, dancing,
I saw her silver shoe.
Her sash—it was the bluest
Of all blue satin sashes.
And oh, the marsh-flag blueness
Beneath her brown-gold lashes!

They told me I might leave her
As lightly as I met her—
Count out the proper kisses,
Drink claret and forget her.
But since that farewell kissing
With half a dozen sighs,
I’ve met so many children
That have such blue, blue eyes,

So many silver willows
That bend and dance and glitter.
And ale and wine and claret
Are bitter, bitter, bitter—
All bitter since that evening
Of dancing with Lizette,
That piece of blue and silver,
That porcelain coquette.

A DECENTRALIZATION

Myron H. Broomell

Being brought by God and stork
Toward the subway in New York,
In my youth I wore a cane
And a silver scarf and mane,
Dressing, as I thought to be,
Rich young man, celebrity.

Twenty, thirty, forty years,
Skipping by with flapping ears,
Find me housed where cities end,
Gaffer, exile, babe, and friend.
Tribes from over the next hill
Bring me meat and ward me ill:
Me, how happy to be gone
Thence from what I doted on.

Scarce would you think, to see me in my hut,
I knew to spell once, but could not tell what.

THE DECLINE OF MAGIC

Myron H. Broomell

Last night I went to a debate
Between two scholars, both too late.

One argued for an age of faith.
The other bade him save his breath.

I sat and listened, skeptical
To credit one or help his fall,

Yet held the other sound at bottom,
Though breathing short in my own autumn.

Later, the judges made award
To which of them best served the Lord,

But how the question fared, I guess,
Was not for laymen to assess.

That happy wretch, Tertullian said
What hit his heart could miss his head:

How much of what the ear has heard
Could *you* believe and think absurd?

THE EGO

Ann Stanford

I am myself, nor will I ever be
A friend to any or an enemy.
Let them be friend or enemy to me.

This skull is come, the world to ratify.
Should any others say *it is*, they lie.
My time shall pass. Then pass the earth, all, I.

THE FISHER

Ann Stanford

All has gone wrong
Since I looked from the boat down the water
And saw the fish with his crown
Swim high in the pond and alone
Flowing smooth without fear or desire.

Dark fused while I cast the line
And tugged it back empty, swore
That I should have him at last
Pulled in, streaming, and cast
Choked with air on the shore.

Nothing else mattered.
I took a wide mesh to spread
Down through steel water to sand.
He could never descend
Below the sprawled scope of my hand.

And I drew him up dripping wet jewels.
His eye stared, and it looked at me straight.
“Fool,” he cried. “I choose my own fate.”
And with such swift arch he leapt free
That spray closed a net over me.

SISYPHUS MEDITATES ON HIS
NEW CAR

Ing Smith

Smoother than the stone I pushed for ages

 This enameled beetle set me free:

Swiftly I roll it up the hill each evening—

 Or, rather, it rolls me!

Neighbors come out, scatter their compliments—

 Envy, their usual coin of admiration;

Yet overnight as usual I lose ground:

 Call it depreciation.

Compulsive as a clock daily I travel

 Down again and up, in sun or shade

Auto-mated to monotony—

 Power-packed, custom-made.

THEY OF WISE COUNSEL

Rachel Harris Campbell

"Be sensible," they said.

"Let the ghostly dead of yesteryear bury their dead.

Never was dream of night

so dear as certain light.

Be sensible. Let the dream go. Bake your bread."

Even while they spoke, I heard

the unspoken, all but unremembered word,

and yesterday was one

with the very morning sun,

and all the ghosts of memory strongly stirred.

"Be sensible," they said—

they, whose hearts never bleed as mine has bled,

nor lift to hear a call

muted, unbearable

except to humility and the down-bent head.

"Be sensible," they pled; nor guessed at all

the bodiless light of which I am sensible.

MORNING IN MONOTONE

M. H. Brown

Everything is overcast in gray.
The jet black hoist no longer cuts the sky—a spire;
But softened, rattles its joints with a complaining ire.

A lethargy settles, as if to stay
The flowers from the effort of bursting forth in bud
And hides their chartreuse dress in cinder-spattered mud.

A rainy mist has settled on the day
As if a dirty window pane had shuttered down
Between the eye and all the stretching town.

CONTRIBUTORS

ING SMITH has used both Variegation and Recurrence as sources for illustrative material in a class of verse-writing at the Technical High Adult School in Oakland.

During the spring and summer of this year MYRON H. BROOMELL has been occupied, as he phrases it, "in creating a poem in stone—or to put it a little more realistically, building rock terraces, walks, and flagstone paving in the yard."

The work of CLYDE TERRY appears posthumously in Recurrence for the second time.

Poems by JOSEPH JOEL KEITH were published recently in eight different anthologies.

ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS is the author of four books of poetry.

A poem by M. H. BROWN was published in The Writer in 1956.

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL is a frequent contributor to this quarterly.

ETHAN AYER is a playwright and novelist as well as a poet.

ERIC BARKER lives at Coastlands in the Big Sur region within view of the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, it is no wonder that his poems often have an echo of the elements about them.