

A FREE VERSE QUARTERLY

VARIEGATION

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A reading edition from the complete issue

12

ISSUE 12

V A R I E G A T I O N

A Free Verse Quarterly

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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.*

*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 contents page of this number lists only the first of the two pieces
on folio 18. What it passes over is set here where the printer put it,
under the title and the name he gave it on the leaf itself; the line above
is in brackets because it is this edition's line and not his contents
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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

LEAVES

Orian DePledge

Remark the autumn experience of leaves

Fallen to earth:

They have become the dry retort of winds,

The empty syllable of time,

The last rebuttal of an argument.

In a few, the shadow of an emerald remains.

IN SEARCH OF STARS

Lionel Monteith

In this November
of our loving,
when Spring's early leaves
are impotent
as skeletons
in a new season,
I remember the gloss
of their virid surfaces—
and the bright eyes.
(Tears are the turning
of many corners,
but now the road
is straight as an arrow
speeding to the expectant heart.)

Then, my darling, O then
our winged ways
ranged above the mountains
striding clouds
in search of stars.
And warm as Christmas fires,
your laughter
told of angels
and the red bright berries
on the holly boughs.
Yet somehow you were
always beyond my horizon—
calling me to the next hill

to the next wave,
to the brave and aerial wonder
of a new sunrise
on the dazzling sea.

And now, as the calendar
clamps down on Autumn,
our fallen hours
are ghosted with its leaves.

HAMPSTEAD

Lionel Monteith

If, under the sun's warm eye
when early summer flutters out
from the chrysalis of
a frosty spring,
you should walk in the green village
you would see a poem of yellow laburnum
splashed across its
white page of hawthorn—
and the cream plaster of Keats' cottage
to stress its gold with gray lines.

Or under the timbered ceiling
of the old inn after dusk,
where poet and priest gossip,
and evening gives chance
to the tentative eyes
of a young lover,
you would find the pace of life
calm: would never image
that such a world
could ride on the
turbulent surface
of the night's anger.

FROM SHADOWED WATER

Dolores Cairns

Look quickly
When you walk past shadowed water—
Even a pool of rain;
Lean but briefly to steal a glance,
Quickly, slantingly, as you pass.
Do not pause to stare,
For you can never learn whose the dim-featured
 mask
Afloat on the chiaroscuro
Of fluid-mingled space—
Unsubstantial, strange, as what stares eerily
From a mirror in twilight.

You will not know whose,
Nor from whence it peers.

REBIRTH

Corrinne Benson

They were cutting the roughness of thought
Into diamonds of conversation . . .
Many-sided flashes of color caught at my mind
Briefly
And then disappeared.

But through the dying logic,
New flames are burning with orange intensity.

DEDICATORY INVOCATION
FOR A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Hanson Kellogg

O, small man of infinite immunities,
Mount these steps, enter these slow

sarcophagi,
Bound in boards, and here
Entrench your prejudices, or inch
Further on through the crumbling pages of
your grasp.

These vaults entomb for you the effortless
past,
And roseate, highly improbable futures,
But sometimes, as rarely as curses or
laughter
Shouted aloud,
Minds burst through the hush
To be formed by the present in flux.

THE ERODED ROCK

Hanson Kellogg

A simple angel, clothed only in light,
Conspicuous, too, in respect to halo,
Shortly after entering the Philosophy and Religion
Room
Was politely ejected by a nonpartisan
Lady librarian of white hair and cancelled gestures.

Such patrons as had looked up
Complained of an excess,
A superfluity of illumination:
Briefly—glare in the tired, conning eyes,
Momentary deflection from the quest.
Time and the air will tarnish any grail.

PERSPECTIVE, MECHANICAL

Hanson Kellogg

The day after tomorrow
Reveals itself around the long curve of the future
Like a river town on a bend of the railroad
Come upon at dawn in an overcast.

Between the cut and the crossing we discard
A hundred futures; they merge
Into the gritty design of the day coach plush;
Our tickets are taken up, our luggage is down,
And the long curve on the railroad's right of way
Along the oily skids of the whistle-blast
Slides soundlessly into the river.

THE DISPOSSESSED

Hanson Kellogg

Street car and bus exert lines of force:
Magnetism in its patent masquerade of volition.

The cars, Molochs rendered somewhat innocuous
By that other familiarity breeding desire,
Haze the lean daybreak air with deadly cosmetic,
Bursting from tight garages into as spurious a
 freedom
As colts walked to no better pasture than the train-
 ing ring,
To the discipline of the red light's whip threat.

Only the idle unreluctant poor
Live with no immediate need to leave such plots
 of tolerance
As they have fallen heir to,
In the expanding world of sunrise,
Through some strange pattern of succeeding.

VALLEY HARBOR

Hanson Kellogg

The froth of enmeshing needles
Above the swells of the boughs
Casts off a broken spray of rain
Like spindrift,
While the hulls of the hills
Ride out the storm.

AS THE DROPPING OF
WATER

Neeta Marquis

The dove's gentle, persisting plea
echoes the rite
of the coifed suppliant
on her stony convent floor
praying.

Chill clutches my heart
as I listen.

How many are like the dove—
weak, meek, inexorably patient,
wearing down the strong
with single, self-centered will!

But these get from the strong
measured acquiescence,
not love.

ANNIVERSARY

Muriel Spark

Our love approaches the last episode
of pitiless flight;
the young albino animal reaching
his soft neck
to the friendly year
fears no more the hot herd-breath
behind him.

So wise beyond his age, this
white yearling shall not grow
rotten and rheumy, dull
as to wit, dyspeptic
as to heart,
who has lain fugitive
from the black and bellowing others,
and suffered the enchantment of stars
too bright.

THE INTERMITTENT FORESTS

Grover Jacoby

Space enjoys
An occasional irruption of twigs,
Breaking out gleefully
In turns and twists.

It would tire of being
Only smooth
Unadulterated
Distance.

THE CITY'S VIBRATIONS

Grover Jacoby

Listen to the broken air.
Let the unsteady shadow fall
On your eardrums.

SALIENT EPHEMERA

Grover Jacoby

The slim curve of pier projects darkly,
Intrusion of shadowy solid,
Where the sun has torn up the waters
Into mercurial scrap heaps,
Into tossing light!