

A FREE VERSE QUARTERLY

VARIEGATION

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A reading edition from the complete issue

30

ISSUE 30

VARIATION

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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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

V A P O R

Orian DePledge

It came slowly
Wrapped in a canyon silence
With the coolness of agates—
A cold wraith from the stone of dark.
Capture this phantom,
This flowing of morning.
Pour it in myrtle jars.
Guard it with granite breath.

PASSING OF YOUTH

Cecil Kyle

Not when the flesh shrinks
And resculptures to its frame,
Nor hair lying bleakly as brine on rocks
Left by the tides;
Nor the voice, thin as the rustle
Of yellowed papers in an attic draft;
Nor hoof-plunging rhythm
Become the fumbling of a cane:

But the steady roar of duty like the subway,
Blotting out impulse, mangling desire—
That never a light voiced call can break—
The scratching of memory on a wound that does not
 feel,
And dust upon a beloved book.

THE SILENT

San Novit

There are always the silent ones in group conversa—
tion

whose participation is of silence into other place
that over music (others do not hear) carries them
across the mundane under heat beyond comfort
of words who see what is not seen
who hear what is not heard
who feel into another plane

converse a non-existent world into a real
and question the prerogatives of speech.

YEARS AFTER THIRTY

Ada Davies

Through my ears all night the roar of tin tunnels—
The capsules of unfelt air:
Under my eyelids now the waterless sky,
And the sun turning on scythe wings;
Frozen petals falling between my fingers
Into the scatter of unshaped wounds,
Into the roll of blowing roofs between the hills;
Now, when light is piled upon light,
The darkness flocks together.

The years after thirty have rounded edges,
But our skies are still quick with knives and dice;
In the straight hedged gardens, even the roses are
 strict with their petals,
And the kittens stare widely with dark pansy faces,
For the leaves of the mind burn clear without falling,
While the serpentine hours change the pictures in
 their skins.

LIFTING LIKE MIST

Ada Davies

Lifting, lifting like mist,
Slow as a gull drifting,
The foam sifting through stars,
And gust of opening bubbles;

Here is the land's edge—
Crisped with its patterning and points
Of small intemperate sun-lives, grinding,
Grinding their bones and shells—
And here in the sheath of sand, sharp daggers
 and stars
Are burning in it, and all buried—
Parcels of heart and rock.

Even the days pouring and roaring,
In time's bounded present,
Are held for a second, still—
And this, like a frozen star
Out of its orbit falling,
Is mine, unloosed, outside of life or death—

O hurricane-swift, a skyful,
Swirling around the I—
Around the stopped moment!
Where is the lever to turn,
The circuit to close,
Where is the touch of center,
Holding the star-wheel still?

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Ada Davies

How the hills gallop their horses, warp their manes,
And stop their trees in print!
Over their waterless waves, the glittering hammers,
The steel winds blowing, their lions crouching—
 Sway through our eyes like seaweed,
 The knife's answer, the cubed ivory decision.
Our own eyes round the questionable apples,
Coil the hills or bones in capsules,
Wheel the winds through lumbering wagons of
 agate,
Carving the seas and intricate trees—
Where shall the crossed lines be straight as rain,
The horses and hills find wings?

VIGOROUS REACH

Joseph Joel Keith

Turn from the pampered gardens,
from the gold splashed
against sky,
against sea;
look down from the jagged edge:
the shrub
roots to the precipice,
lives while the breakers bite
at the rocky shoreline,
while the monstrous waters
devour the voyagers,
while the winds
flog gardens, their growths inert
above the weed
 fingering space ...

COCKTAIL PARTY

Mabel MacDonald Carver

Like the thick tallow-shapes
down-dropped and solidified
on a candlestick
are thoughts
here in this crowded smoky room,
where life is so blatantly gay,
and clear thinking
is of no consequence.

Mabel MacDonald Carver

TEN FATHOMS DEEP

Amy Groesbeck

On my family tree
hangs a pirate ghost;
swashbuckling, unmoral,
whose blood runs through my veins.

Decency and decorum
ring my harbored existence
becalmed
in the dullness of the normal.

Without warning
life sweeps over the breakwater,
desire
lashes at moorings,
and my gibbet-wise mind
dissolves in salt.

STAINED GLASS DOMINION

Lucille Evans

Corollas of velvet, white and cool,
faintly kept alive
by tap-water around their green feet—
beauty dying in stained glass dominion
of sanctity.

For a minim of time
they live for us
uttering insistent fragrance
to a carven altar.

And we, in brief respite
from our wolf-fanged day,
gaze on loveliness transient as sea foam
and ponder eternity
for a little while.

DOORSTEP FLOWER

Frances Minturn Howard

Now take a lilac (She is like a lilac.)
You have to notice it. It makes no claim on your
attention.
It has no orchidaceous blatancy
To recommend it.
In fact you'll often have to hunt it out.
Turning the corner of an old house suddenly you'll
come on it,
Filling a narrow doorstep with a well of blue frag—
rance.
But it won't stand out or make itself dramatic—
You have to look at it carefully,
Open your eyes and accept new miracles—
Tough wooden stems that fight late winds of winter,
Dropped heart-shaped leaves that beat in duplicate,
Exploding into galaxied blue stars
So closely grouped, so blown to one intention
A thousand flowers shape one dazzled bloom—
And on a sudden breath
You can be drunk on spring, intoxicate
On such a heady delicate draught of transience
That you forget the ruggedness of roots
Thrust into frozen soil, or that the lilac
Is independent as an April wind ...
I say she is like a lilac, that demands
Nothing of the heart; but to one trapped in pave—
ments
A breath will come from who knows where in April

That will bring a purple bloom and an old grey
shutter

Cutting across the mind like a knife.

WORLD

Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni

Years ago, my world was all comprising.
I could not hold it, nor regard it;
For I lived inside it.
Love shrunk my world, until now
It rolls about the palm of your right hand
Like a drop of mercury.

THE DISCOVERY OF TIME

Hanson Kellogg

Dawn plans the sunset. Noon
Outlines midnight in sharp silhouette.
We are renewed neither by sleep nor words,
Nor the odd, reluctant meetings with familiar friends
In sun or shadow. By night we do not meet.
The password forgotten, we blunder by
To the unlighted footfalls' invitation to no dance.

THE NASCENT DELUGE

Grover Jacoby

Through the split universe
Will run the grain of water.
There will be only liquid vistas,
But now
The first moments of rain
Touch one leaf at a time
With sparse infrequent tremolo.

Often a few aimless glances
Go skipping through crowds
Before the inundation of lives.

Grover Jacoby

CONTRIBUTORS

ADA DAVIES and ORIAN DEPLEDGE are familiar with the techniques taught by Lawrence Hart, but they are now working veins of ore discovered by themselves. Mr. Hart would undoubtedly agree that the end of all good teaching is exactly this kind of independence.

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