

A FREE VERSE QUARTERLY

VARIEGATION

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A reading edition from the complete issue

31

ISSUE 31

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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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

IN MEXICO

Cecil Kyle

Passing a stranger
In a foreign land,
A dark figure clothed in faded white,
Alone against a sky—a slash of orange-red over
the mountains
And brilliant turquoise above—
I see one lone figure
Against a raw landscape
Though he be thief or herdsman,
All that is superfluous drops from him.
There is majesty in his smallness;
Dignity in the thin shape—
But most of all
There is a mind that looks at me
Out of that sculptured immensity
Above the malice of savage gods now dead;
His eyes, with shadowed wonder, like my own,
Bid me farewell.

M O M E N T

Bernard Barrow

There is a moment, always,
In our time together,
When I know you are watching me
From a place beyond this moment
Where I cannot go.

And if I reach out my hand to you then,
You will smile.

THE SILENT ONE

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Hills roll away from his shoulders:
The wood dove gives an intermittent,
 mournful cry;
In the valley of the Pocosin
Bluebells carpet the spring morning,
And hounds are running on the hills.

Who shall wake the sleeper now?
He is blanketed by shadow,
The long limbs held in torpor.
How can it be that these alone withstand
The two-directional thrust of spring,
Downward for deep rooting,
Upward into light.

BLIND MAN

William Millett

I wait inside a season
 of imagination,
my sight emptied
from largeness
and extended
into an ambivalent dog.

Too slow to take
too fast to grasp,
my dreams frolic like dolphins
and my branchless wires are
extended inside
 a dog's magnetic stillness,
waiting, always waiting.

OUR LIMITED SKIN

William Millett

Sunshine divides the foam
on the barreled waves
and on the beach
brittle shadows clatter
on every sanded face.

Swooping down the boardwalk
the cyclists coast in furrowed air
and all the birds ripple
thick bubbles of glass
in their valved and fluted throats
as a strict ant crawls beneath a tree
 his precision body oiled in
 the secret destiny of instinct.

This is the place where rigid cliffs
 yawn the air
a place of ancient echoes
where man shall pause in limited skin
to sound his buried songs alone
and long.

DROUGHT

William Millett

Cannons boom

hazel rods dip

hands join

by prayer

and rain makers

seed the clouds.

Thirst hangs

like jointless bones

on their faces

lean faces

smoked brown as

virgin rubber.

Water harsh as a coast of cement

lies buried beneath divining brows

eyes that stretch like a doorway

into the gnarled sun

steaming out of air smooth as

vermilion plush

so hot that children feed on

old breath.

TRAINS MOURN THEIR DISTANCE

William Millett

Trains mourn their distance
in an iron climate
where flames bite like an ant
inside those laminated brains
as tonnage and crew hang suspended
between whistle and rail
Trains wait till the shocked air
admits their mass
swinging gates and lights
clearing away the clutter
rushing away on gyroscopes and hoops
to roll down the night with a long candle
that searches and searches for home

ORIGINAL

Elinor Lennen

Listen!

The lonely rhythms of the sea

Assault the shore,

Yet turn unanswered,

Back to what distant source?

Return to depth

Which was at dawn of time,

Its secret of being still hidden

From curious, imitative man.

He has made quasi-light and quasi-soil,

Not ocean's tide.

BRIEF MOMENT

Gertrude May Lutz

The snow flakes down
becoming silence . . .

We lean

to transient whiteness—
scoop with the hands
and shape to the curved palms
these merged moments—feel them
solid . . .
cool.

TREASURES OF THE DARK

Meade Randolph Loomis

I like to smell the dark,
I like its musty fume in an attic,
Its fresh, unripened scent
On the first night of spring.
I like to listen to the dark.
I hear it tinkling in a snowstorm
And it soothes me in the rain.
Most of all, when I reach out my hands
Beneath the quilt of night,
I like to feel that muted blackness
Sifting through my fingers,
The stillness settling in the marrow
Of my bones—
Leaving a silence there.

SURGERY

Helen Travis

There goes a slice of my soul!
Is there any left?
The tree is pruned—
Sharply—
So that the little left
May reach more quickly,
More surely,
More luxuriantly
To heaven.

INTERVAL OF REPLENISHMENT

Peter M. Urquhart

At the long span of the sun
And with the first burst of song,
Entirely I move in this new mist,
Claiming all colours in affirmation.
Tender the bird-winged air
And the benediction of messageless waters
Summoning now completely
Fluence of sap and the blood's calm.
Welcome of grass and leaf to this slanting gold.
Empires of wide stillness
Poise in a skytide compassion
Even beyond, to the broken city;
The meditation of shadows,
Bronzes and darkening greens,
Hovers over the deep earth.
Blessed the nostril, coolness of flesh
And the lucent eye.

Intake and hold. Hold
Against desperate, iron meaning—
Accept . . . Renew.

SOLITUDE

Peter M. Urquhart

Beyond the comprehension of speed,
There is no speed.
In the knowledge of light's flash
Is stillness
Poised, complete, now.

I am the only motion:
My pebble of thought
Drops in the placid pool of silence.
Smoothly the rings of awareness flow
Outwards, wider and wider:
Calm in wonder, I wait
Centered in peace,
Simply being,
My senses singing—
But not beyond fear.

For the ripples fade out of consciousness
Slowly, gently, merge in darkness
And leave me lost
With the yellow face of the clock.

MYTHS FOR MORTALS

Hanson Kellogg

Old songs deride
The current air
Filled with the silver motes of minutes,

Hymning the darker seas,
The taller storms,
The closer sun against the blinding snow
Cloaking Olympus then.

Old songs deride
Mortality in any temple.
Under any stone.

CONTRIBUTORS

At one time BERNARD BARROW taught drama at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

MARIANNE MOORE wrote favorably of ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS' first book of poems, published by Contemporary Poetry of Baltimore.

PETER M. URQUHART still continues to write poetry, although he no longer lives in England. His home is now in Toronto, Canada.

HANSON KELLOGG was born in Boston, but California can now claim him as one of her best poets.

It is interesting to observe that HELEN TRAVIS is appearing in Variegation, not in Recurrence, since her most recent acceptances have been in such magazines as Quatrain Digest and Sonnet Sequences.

MEADE RANDOLPH LOOMIS lives in Chico, California.

CECIL KYLE, GERTRUDE MAY LUTZ and ELINOR LENNEN have appeared in earlier issues of Variegation.

WILLIAM MILLETT is a young poet of great energy and promise.

Several attractive brochures containing poetry by GERTRUDE MAY LUTZ have appeared during the last few years.