

A FREE VERSE QUARTERLY

VARIEGATION

VOLUME VIII / AUTUMN 1953

A reading edition from the complete issue

32

ISSUE 32

V A R I E G A T I O N

A Free Verse Quarterly

Volume VIII · Autumn 1953 · Number 32

*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*

Enjoy the Other Emphasis as Well

You will find in *Recurrence* that rhyme is more modern than
many think. Although *Recurrence* and *Variegation* are probably
the only magazines intended to complement each other in
terms of writing technique in the history of periodical
literature, they do often meet on common ground. For
instance, both quarterlies use a considerable quantity of poetry
experimental in form and content, though the conventional
forms are amply represented in *Recurrence*.

RECURRENCE: A QUARTERLY OF RHYME · VARIEGATION
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INLAND SEA

Ethel Fairfield White

In apathetic mood,
The mind is a sea,
Clogged by kelp floating
In stupefying calm.

No sparkling thoughts ripple the surface.
No meditative current sways wreckage
Of the past, fathoms deep.
No scheming coral forms.

Only emotion rising—
A swift, strong surge—
Can tear the matted seaweed
And clear the mind.

THE HORSE IN THE FOREST

Kay De Bard Hall

Rigid as fabled unicorn
He drinks from the thatched waters . . .
His legs lift like fronds:
Mane lies in ivory folds like leaves
Fluent with shadow.

Drink, chill horse,
Neck arched as a cathedral door,
Among cool troweled greens and half-seen shapes,
Drink, fountaining abstractions
In the orange smudges and featherings of tropical
forests.

NEWNESS

Gershon Lieberman

I

Dried hard clay
After a heavy rain
Becomes soft—
Changes into unresisting muck.
Old shirts wrinkled with last week's sweat
Slide slowly through laundry machines
And become fragrant with perfumed heat.
All things change—
New and old, old and new,
All different, all the same.

II

Come! See the young flowers.
Here are the first buds of spring.
What is spring?
Is it a new rainbow
Or an old rainbow
In the prism of eternity?

REBIRTH

William Millett

Crack,
dash fiercely those waters
into our blood stream!
You hold your breath
as the wave arches
its feline back—
foam-flecked claws
reaching, tugging
our bodies back
into the sheltered warmth
of the womb
the womb of the sea.

LOAM AND CLOUDS

William Millett

Trees inch a path
through loam and clouds,
almost resolving visibly
 the unreconcilable,
living two emotional lives,
one anchored in reality
 the earth,
the other in that body
of a tremendous elongated
 root
floating in the flux
next to birds
bit by bit lifting
water to every leaf.

SILENTLY THEY INVADE

William Millett

Across a galactic frontier
they sit
squat on tendrils and germs
watching;
hidden under
dimensions of unknowables
they fish for our
spines
and sway with the gravity in
our continents of greed
to arrive as the saviours
of Rapa Nui, Pompeii, Machu Picchu,
and every undersea city
 broken like an eggshell.

CEREMONIAL

Candace T. Stevenson

Horse-chestnuts brown and glossy
peer from burrs. The samara
flutters from the maple, spinning
a weighted top tossed by the parent tree.
Gold leaves, minted a million times,
fall in a final rain to fill
earth's strong-box with their leaf mould.
Milkweed pods release white ballet
through the amber air.
So, once again, the autumn ritual
is danced in cycles of the whirling seed.

ANTICIPATION OF AUGUST

Alan Brownjohn

Even the fountains fall wearily
In the middle of summer, a parched time.
Do not expect love, or the fresh
Thought to return of unthinkable April.

Waking to voices by the curving shore
You notice suddenly, perhaps, the winking sails
Loose in the shifting fabric of the waves.
But how a daylight of activity

Fatigues the dancer, calls the swimmer in.
The haze curls across the tall cliffs.
All the air waits. This is slow afternoon.
Before, sky and the inquisitive sea

Sliding up carefully over the sand.
But beyond, night. So now remember too
The simple emptiness of wanting this
And then to lose it in that dark and heat.

THE RISING SEAS

Edith E. Hewins

Salty talons of sea
Grasp at this land.
Each oncoming tide curves rivulets
Through its reeds and low grasses.
Nature's untended garden
Flings wild rose over all.
Goldenrod, clematis and aster,
Tansy, butterfly weed and yarrow
Mass at the margin, follow the road.
Heat waves of summer are spiced with sea air,
And myriad bird songs override
Dull drumbeats of the surf.
The yellow warbler is a sun flash,
When he lights in a chokecherry tree.
Rising seas threaten.
Soon or late, fish will swim
Through drowned shrubs,
Birds be forced
To less favorable fields.

LEAF FALL

Gertrude May Lutz

Heaped with autumn
the red truck passes . . .
Leaves, crimson and gold,
spill—
trail like gypsy footprints
behind the turning wheels.

HOW FEAR HAS CLOTHED YOU

Adele Levi

You wander through the city like an old Greek voice
Betrayed by some death you cannot tell of,
Or telling, mask the cause in hate.
How fear has clothed you like a light,
And your eyes move with aspen flicker
And you burn like a legend under water.

MELANCHOLY

Cathy Walls

Everyday I give a party.
Melancholy is my guest.
Arriving early, he seats himself at my table.
“Melancholy, do you care for sugar in your tea?”
But Melancholy only sits—
Madness in his eye,
Loneliness in his eye.
Soon he begins to melt
Despite the horror of his host.
He melts and flows all over the floor.
The tear-water rises and engulfs me;
I am drowned.

NOSTALGIA

Dorthea Knapp Killian

Little golden pears fallen from the tree,
Ripening in the grass,
Lying all about the tree and the old well.
A little child wrapt in some special magic
Of the moment in the sun,
Is gleaning the golden pears,
Hungry for fruit.

Lollipops—red, green, yellow, orange,
Always more lollipops;
Chocolate sodas, juke boxes—always more.

So few little golden pears lying in the grass
Making the air fragrant with their ripening—
Little neglected pears turning golden in the
sunlight.

OF THE RESIDUE

Frances Montague

Constrained to the narrow cave of body
He plucked food from the air,
Raiment from the restless field.
Of the worthless residue
He made his god.

Now in pride of blueprint
Four walls of glass he builds,
And roofs them over
With tangent of sun,
Curvature of moon and star.

Pillars of fire ascend at his command;
His mind outleaps the bars
Of space and sound;
Fragments of fear
Pulverize to uneasy dust;
And of this residue
He makes his god.

CONTRIBUTORS

CANDACE STEVENSON is a contributor to the Saturday Review of Literature, Voices and other important publications.

Departure, a literary review published at Oxford University, is edited by ALAN BROWNJOHN and John Adlard.

Five contributors to this issue, former students of Lawrence Hart, are now developing their own individual approaches after studying his unusual technique. They are WILLIAM MILLETT, ADELE LEVI, KAY DE BARD HALL, GERTRUDE MAY LUTZ and Edith Everett Hewins.

A poem by DORTHA KNAPP KILLIAN was reprinted not long ago in The Atlanta Journal. She lives in Fairmont, West Virginia.

ETHEL FAIRFIELD WHITE, a resident of Spokane, Washington, is already known to readers of this quarterly.

GERSHON LIEBERMAN studied during his school years with Southern California's foremost teacher of verse-writing, Snow Longley Housh. Mrs. Housh has undoubtedly edited more young people's anthologies of verse than anyone else in the country.

CATHY WALLS is twenty years old, recently married and still going to college.

Two poems by FRANCES MONTAGUE appear in the Autumn issue of Recurrence.