

A FREE VERSE QUARTERLY

VARIEGATION

VOLUME XI / SPRING 1956

A reading edition from the complete issue

42

ISSUE 42

V A R I E G A T I O N

A Free Verse Quarterly

Volume XI · Spring 1956 · Number 42

*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.*

CONTENTS

<i>Octopus.</i> B. A. Uronovitz	23
<i>Andante.</i> Ichiro Kono	24
<i>A Love Song.</i> Ichiro Kono	25
<i>The Return of Ossian.</i> Virginia Russ	26
<i>Night Clamor.</i> Ethel Jacobson	28
<i>Chromatic Canvases.</i> Jeannette Chappell	29
<i>The First Morning Hour.</i> David Cornel DeJong	30
<i>Coats Of Fear.</i> Ada Davies	32
<i>Answer.</i> Ada Davies	33
<i>Slum By Night.</i> Susan Baker	34
<i>Traffic Sound.</i> Gertrude May Lutz	35
<i>Microbiologist.</i> Barriss Mills	36
<i>Contributors</i>	37



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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

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to bookstores and newsstands by B. DEBOER, 102 Beverly
Road, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

[*The publisher's own advertisement, from the last leaf:*]

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*.

OCTOPUS

B. A. Uronovitz

Octopus, when I think of you,
And I must confess it is seldom enough,
I see your hill of an ink-filled head
That spells upon the waters
The signature of all things, indelible,
And your vast eye that must see everything at sea.
I look upon you as a Buddha, prince of love,
Seraglio in your arms,
Yearning for planets,
A kind of god,
O mountain in vermilion,
A many-sceptered charismatic king
Who rests for now on the great floor of the world.

ANDANTE

Ichiro Kono

An apple
fell from a window of a train
on a rainy day.

The boy cried.

The apple
resting its cheek on a crosstie
felt cold.

A LOVE SONG

Ichiro Kono

*(A monologue of a young man who ruined his career
not for the girl but for a lipstick which cost 52 cents
including city tax.)*

An empty coffee cup is left on the table with a ring of rouge
And a faint fluff is gathered along a streak of sugar left in it.

When was it? When was it?
I must wipe off the rouge with my lips.
I must wipe off the fluff with my lips.

I know there still is a tissue paper
Crumpled in a trash-can with stains of the rouge.
Where was it? Where was it?
I must save the paper from a garbage man.
I must save the stains from a garbage man.

When was it?
Where was it?
I must save the memory from a garbage man.
I must save the day from a garbage man.

THE RETURN OF OSSIAN

Virginia Russ

Now I am old who lived young three hundred years
And brought to earth, who rode white steeds above
the clouds:

My senses dim within this shrivelled body husk,
Yet still with spirit-eyes, I see
The young maid, a gold apple in her right hand,
And she, swift as a gull, dancing along atop of
foamed sea waves.

Always I hear silvered pipes in the Boreen of
the Thrushes,
Wild singing in the fairy Brugh of Angus,
The Ever Young, Lord of Youth and Beauty:
Ah, indeed, it was sweet, sweet . . .

Now they tell me it was for three centuries
I dwelt in that land,
Although to me it was three years and three days
with my Niamh,
Her of the hair of sunbeams, her skin white as does'
milk,—as swans in moonlight.
“With all the veins of my heart” as they say
“I loved her;”
There was not a pulse of me but was in love
And this I say with pride, and with no shame.

Now you bid me, good Patrick, to repent:
Forget what was but fantasy, profane delusion of
the pagan senses?

Nay, I cannot, I must believe that your god, who,
 you, kind saint, say—
Made all the world with his outgoing word,
While moulding men, did pour through their
 bodies' lamp
This sun of love which illumines all our bones
Like flame within a marble column.
Is not that, also, life and force and good?

I know now, for me there is no return to the
 Shining Place between the lavender horizons.
Oh, where is my island glowing like a lilac star?
Gone is the magic!
So be it:
Gather me then to your Shepherd of Doves;
Let his love blow up the coal beneath these ashes;
Let him lead me to his river, where no love lies
 awaste,
No opal dream is lost.

NIGHT CLAMOR

Ethel Jacobson

Thus the frogs cried one other night
When I heard them above your whispered words
And did not know I heard them.

Why must they cry now
And fill the night with their clamor?
Now there is no sound to sing against,
No foolish murmur to drown,
No voice in all the world but the frogs
Crying from the black pond's edge.

CHROMATIC CANVAS

Jeannette Chappell

Whatever the period,
Blue, Rose, Cubism;
the subject, tribal or classic,
he transforms the look of our era.
He lives—
a breath of color blowing across canvas.

THE FIRST MORNING HOUR

David Cornel DeJong

The hour is a curtain
devotedly gentle,
a preamble time.
And light at the windows
like a prominent faith
adopted in season.

There is still so much
to be molested
or pretended, that a chorus
line of tulips can flash
on the mind
a maddening innocence.

Drink the ruminations
with the coffee,
nod the disapprovals,
while the cat yawns and
the intentions are mouse-still
with anticipation.

Here in this pink genre
of ivy and chiaroscuro
I feel the last
inclemencies of night
edge away as with
a slight insouciance.

And let the wife say:
"Darling, at evening return intact."
And let the sun shift
to the next nostalgia
and an old, ill-
remembered passion.

COATS OF FEAR

Ada Davies

Shall we, then, always wear our coats of fear
As necessary cover to our courage?
Is the inner skin so tender to exposure,
Yet so tough and impenetrable under attack?
Only animals and artists can see with their own eyes;
Yet even these have not always dared to move their
 own minds and muscles—
But if we must follow a drawn string across the floor,
Never speaking the desires forged in our tongues,
Nor walking among the native grasses of our habits,
Shall we not smell others' fears and be maddened;
For there is no aura of innocence over their flesh,
Nor love in the curve of their eyelids.

A N S W E R

Ada Davies

Those who have become their own children
Are the artists, filling the centers of their being,
Shaping their solids natural in air,
Beyond the faces of innocence or guilt,
Beyond the chatter of these beer-bottle words.
They need no fences of fear, nor translations of their
 love or grief;
They drink the waters of memory, unmetalled from
 the springs,
But when questioners murmur, "Then what of the end?"
The rocks and the sea make answer finally,
"What has never begun, can never end."

SLUM BY NIGHT

Susan Baker

Sooty bricks and dingy clapboards
Huddle together
Warming the ragged and half-starved,
Who search by night
With paper matches
For the light switch to dawn.

TRAFFIC SOUND

Gertrude May Lutz

(From a San Francisco Apartment)

Here, high above street,
always the sound of traffic is like sea
booming on sand.
Multiple turn of wheel becomes lift and fall
of waves continually beating.
The water-sound recedes and flows . . .
recedes and flows
No need to be held in this pressed-round place
bound by walls.

Close the eyes;
this is the feel of shore,
not city street. As liquid run of rhythm
pulses against the mind,
near place becomes distant,
and the morning sun smoothes a bright path
to some far water place.

MICROBIOLOGIST

Barriss Mills

He is a famous microbiologist
Who isolated an antibiotic. Each morning,
Having reached his laboratory and set
His germs to festering, he takes
His coffee break here in the coffee shop,
Surrounded by students worrying
Their books or making early-morning love
In an atmosphere of orgiastic jukebox tunes.
Here he reads the paper and sips
One long black cup of coffee before hurrying
Back to his tirelessly reproducing
And obscurely motivated microbes.

CONTRIBUTORS

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DAVID C. DEJONG was born in the Netherlands. His translations from Dutch and Flemish have been published by important American firms.

Brochures of poems by GERTRUDE MAY LUTZ appear with considerable regularity.

SUSAN BAKER and JEANNETTE CHAPPELL are herewith making their first appearances in Variegation.

It may come as a surprise to find ETHEL JACOBSON's verse in this magazine, since she is best known for her humorous rhymes.

In her spare time ADA DAVIES takes pleasure in drawing portraits of her cat.

B. A. URONOVITZ is a member of the artist's colony in the North Beach area of San Francisco. When one considers the lively character of that section of the city, it seems something of an anomaly that Mr. Uronovitz should be engaged in writing A Book of the Dead.

VIRGINIA RUSS is well-known for her recitation of monologues and poems.

BARRISS MILLS is the Chairman of the Department of English