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CANNE WIN . NUMBER 3

AUTUMN 1965

Poelry NORTHWEST &

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POETRY NORTHWEST AUTUMN, 1965 VOLUME VI, NUMBER 3

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POETRY NORTHWEST

- AUTUMN 1965

Sister Mary Gilbert, SNJM

Four Poems

from "A CATCH OF SUMMER"

T

Half a league from Custer Drive in a cabin 10×12 on a corner of the old Fort the poet takes a stand. One blue and one green candle below two high-screened rectangles in the double brick wall keep the dark from being total.

EXPLOSIVES: No Smoking warns the sign by the heavy metal door and the patterned wooden door inside says how far the firing line has retreated behind the pine-brushed peace of a summer afternoon.

The cabin turns its back on the highway and the railroad track.

Unlocked through intervals of armistice the doors swung to. Driven by wind or dark he stumbled in to find a troop of tumbleweed taller than any fear and twice as volatile: an arsenal of deprivation carried to infinity. And winter on the way.

He did the ordinary things by day: no sudden gusty word to sweep the hordes from cover; never a careless match; none but invited guests; and for the rest, a padlock, sturdy, to divide the In from Out.

NORTHWEST

3

You see him there, framed in illusions of the open door, lock in his pocket, hand upon the key declaring his final war.

Aggressors with brooms, trespassers on private dooms he sends astray: through anthill, skunk hollow, up unreliable stairs; into the tidy jungle or the tangle of years, while he waits patient as any mole, for the dark to disappear.

II

Sundown.

And the Great Northern Crane comes whooping through the valley where I train my eyes to take their cedar poled beside flatcars of butterfly-yellow cats crawling to the wormwood farms. I feel the cold compartment of the Western Fruit Express in its too green wrapper cut low by evening nuzzling the Cushion Ride, and guess the terminus of all those trussed-up dreams, technicolor Henry Fords, engineered towards extinction by an orange diesel and hordes of coal-black coal cars.

Fluting through the unmined night I carry the burden of the railed rejoinder, crouching with my kind in the crumpled echoes of a cry on wheels and deliver the almost men.

III

After the whirlpool flowers caught in bright buckets of song, after the shaken summer and berries dark on the tongue; after the final burning leaf and before it goes out in snow we walk through our private distances into a no-season you will not find on any calendar because the ear has never heard its name.

I drop a small stone into the well of your loneliness and watch the ripples widen where the still sky drowns in your silences. Fallen or struck, the morning floats at our feet and though we do not pick the strayed mock-orange we remember, it hangs on the air like a forgotten number or the first fall.

In clump and thicket, tree trunk, burrow, yard, the wild things sleep kept by the house they guard. The collie fleeced and warm, playing dead on the fog-chilled ground, abandons any dream of skunk or flying needles for the chipmunk frozen on logs, that scolds and entertains and plugs every hole with the essence of pine till the cold blows over.

Let them all live, the dog says in his sleep. And we do, no longer afraid of our shadows on the ant-embossed stair to the echoing wood, knowing how sheer the winter lies on the pitch of a roof engineered for explosives, now beamed toward the tunnels of light—like the poet who pondered the summer and won.

IV

Michaelmas rings in the air and the rain of that fallen brightness, petals that darken the mind though the ground is too dry to sustain them. "Who is like God?" and the little ones fade into dust that denies them.

The road winds and the hills curve outstripping the keenest glance towards alas or he-loves-me.

It will not serve—today or any day on the green banks of forever—that up in the succulent garden, tall and tended, the goldeyed glorious ones bear kingly witness.

No. I will stay outside in the doomsday weather, the round of ruin that knows me and brought me here. Courting the wide lost lakes and the wind's reverses. With the brimstone leaves struck down by a sigh or a silence.

I shall go on falling in a subterranean autumn plunge through the echoing space with the petaled legions.
Everything falls from grace: stars, empires, sparrows.
I move in the swordlight play of that downward journey.

Richard F. Hugo

Three Poems

MONTANA RANCH ABANDONED

Cracks in eight log buildings, counting sheds and outhouse, widen and a ghost peeks out. Nothing, tree or mountain, weakens wind coming for the throat. Even wind must work when land gets old. The rotting wagon tongue makès fun of girls who begged to go to town. Broken brakerods dangle in the dirt.

Alternatives were madness or a calloused moon. Wood they carved the plowblade from turned stone as nameless gray. Indifferent flies left dung intact. One boy had to leave when horses pounded night, and miles away a neighbor's daughter puked. Mother's cry to dinner changed to caw in later years.

Maybe raiding bears or eelworms made them quit, or daddy died, or when they planted wheat dead Flatheads killed the plant. That stove without a grate can't warm the ghost.

Tools would still be good if cleaned, but mortar flakes and log walls sag. Even if you shored, cars would still boom by beyond the fence, no glance from drivers as you till the lunar dust.

INDIAN GRAVES AT JOCKO

for Victor Charlo

These dirt mounds make the dead seem fat. Crude walls of rock that hold the dirt when rain rides wild, were placed with skill or luck. No crucifix can make the drab boards of this chapel Catholic. A mass across these stones becomes whatever wail the wind decides is right.

They asked for, got the Black Robe and the promised masses, well meant promises, shabby third-hand crosses. This graveyard can expand, can crawl in all directions to the mountains, climb the mountains to the salmon and a sun that toned the arrows when animals were serious as meat.

The dead are really fat, the houses lean from lack of loans. The river runs a thin bed down the useless flat where Flathead homes are spaced like friends. The dead are strange jammed this familial. A cheap fence separates the chapel from the graves.

A forlorn lot like this, where snow must crawl to find the tribal stones, is more than just a grim result of cheat, Garfield's forgery, some aimless trek of horses from the stolen Bitter Root. Dead are buried here because the dead will always be obscure, wind the one thing whites will always give a chance.

AT KEATS' STONE

I'll never know, and you Keats here down cold, that poem of poems, whatever word is bomb. Despair is carved too clear. Two laurels climb too lovingly two pines, and beyond the wall Roman traffic screams. Be bitter still. All signs point to Shelley and to Goethe's son.

Keats, I couldn't bargain for a corpse.

Can't even rhyme without a gun. The pyramid that gleams beyond the graves means sweat and sweating here because you went out young without one symbol of a high romance, only enemies and germs, I kick the stems of flowers men forget to tend. Never has day fragmented quite this wildly and never has my throat forced on me such a wild neutrality.

God, whip me child again and let me cry.

Look, no tears. The pyramid's a fake.

Ladies go to Shelley, Krauts to Goethe's son.

Just you and grass, and really only you
in this green corner, hear both cars and wind,
know how two laurels hug the pines. And you
forever warm in centuries of dirt,
despite these words bitter black on stone,
are white words tough enough to end a poem—
some final line of stone saying Keats again?

William Stafford

Four Poems

THREE PORTRAITS

When you remember Antigone did not want to go into the earth and that law or no law she treasured the corpse of her brother, you know that the truth is, no one can lament enough, if you think of everyone's losses, the bulldozer of history, the way space forgets us. Lament has its place. We have not been screaming enough.

And Cassandra delivered in front of that door, held there, worked up to raving, and then—unable to stop and unwilling but ecstatic—taken by the action over the threshold, and screaming where the blood is:

God!—the plight of us all, caught up, whirled, not even realizing that story! We have not been screaming enough.

Sometimes to escape that frenzy
I turn from it and think of Buddha.
For centuries he has been thinking about
how to vote, or whether. Afternoons he
notices the shadows, but they are not sharp.
He does not approve or disapprove.
As we gyrate he has become stiller. Finally
with Buddha there will be—or won't be—the state.

I vote for him.

THE LESSON ONE SPRING

One spring when I was a boy Cow Creek strummed barbed wire the tune of a flood: "Coming through Hutchinson." Then miles of rain did, and once it started on basements it got everybody. People without any give disappeared, but shaky chicken coops could swim.

As usual, proud boys directly suffered; proud girls had a longer story, ending with dolls far downstream sprawled with decorative debris: they thought society could float, ended with muskrats that learn principles only through their whiskers.

I've learned since that trains, autos, tragedies aim at proud people; rivers at flood look for them; little snags in words tease their pronouncements; blue light glares up from the ground and scares them with proud shadows, helps them know pride, avoid it. Pride hurts more the more we do not know it.

I visited Cow Creek last summer. It is tame, held steady by an overflow canal. But I held a stick deep in it and felt again its treasured little song.

THE QUAKER AT THE WORLDLY COLLEGE

I learn like a limousine, Sir Wisdom through the frame of history; but, "A cigar won the war so much for war," my father said. And I hold all he gave, here in the mansions of my head:—

"Hear the snow on its one big foot never asleep in stillness, or shifting fingers of its one light hand, one branch at a time to find the coldest arch to wait more time than stone can wait that softness can freeze the tiger's foot."

Such flakes my world comes by, that my pacifist father brought, now touch and arch. The day grows out of them, and the space any form can find. Where under one gray arch last night my college filed late snow I can almost understand what flakes can feel as they visit the stone so late that shadows huddle there and wear the lamps' cape.

I study every morning to live all I have read: learn the storms, touch crystals out, and wait for all the new day is to mean. "Wind can finally teach the rock," my father said.

LIGHT, AND MY SUDDEN FACE

I am the man whose heart for four days lost in a cave beat when the water dripped:
I was found, and the water stopped, never to start again.
Now even the cave is lost where the lost, in order to hear, held the whole breath of the earth.

In the night I strike a match, one little glory, a flame the world surrounds, a stutter that leaps as the light goes out and the trail to the cave begins: impenetrably disguised as myself I range the whole world in the dark and hammer down doors with my heart.

David Wagoner

WALKING IN THE SNOW

"if the author had said, 'Let us put on appropriate galoshes,' there could, of course, have been no poem..."

—An Analysis of Elinor Wylie's "Velvet Shoes,"

**College English, March 1948, p. 319.

Let us put on appropriate galoshes, letting them flap open, And walk in the snow. The eyes have fallen out of the nearest snowman; It slumps in its shadow, And the slush at the curb is gray as the breasts of gulls. As we slog together Past arbors and stiff trees, all knocked out cold At the broken end of winter, No matter what may be falling out of the sky Or blowing sideways Against our hearts, we'll make up our own weather. Love, stamping our galoshes, Let's say something inappropriate, something flat As a scholar's ear And, since this can't be a poem, something loud And pointless, leading nowhere Like our footprints ducking and draking in the snow One after the other.

POETRY

NORTHWEST

AN OLD MAID AT NIGHT TIME

I am nervous but alert under the elms, past the half-lit street and secret lilacs where the sexmad blacks and frycooks hide.

My armory of intricate trinkets (beautiful like all my things and sharp as my bones that years ago scared my flesh away) is ready:

crotch-level from my waist hang beaded scimitars; under each armpit, acid in a faience vial; stiletto heels to stick his instep should he grab me from behind.

I glitter through midnight like a malice of fireflies.

Each night, taut as the sheet I wait. I stare where the cat stares but no one is there, only air,

always air.

One night I'll hear his drag-foot on the stair and in the circle of the night light see that mansard face and sad damaged fruit and I'll cry out to him:

Born to a dark place, we die in sunlight Come to me on this white desert Rise mountainous above my body's shadowless mesa.

Give me a shadow, O my love.

Mildred Weston

Three Poems

TERMINAL

At that time I took trips that brought me to stations at midnight. Though I knew their names, still they were alien in smoky light.

Or arriving in early morning at four or five, perpetual shadow fastened below black eaves and darkened tired eyes.

No one met trains at such hours. I taxied alone to a shabby building to sleep on a chilly bed in hollows worn by strangers.

How long the day was in coming through rain-spattered windows.

Even when I turned from the old places the room at the other end was always hostile and whatever the season the climate cold.

14

MANIFESTO

My house faces the north. On the front lawn patches of snow still lie long after winter has gone.

Buds on my flowering trees, by the same token, keep their green bindings tight when others break open. And through the lulled summer how slow I go—slower and dumber than the seed I sow.

It never grieves me much that angles of the sun defining freeze and burn, the geometric line, the geophysic turn are not in step with mine.

AROUND US

If I knew the day of my death I would wait by water: not beside shallow silt-carrying river not glacial lake with its bouldered bottom but miles deep depths off land in mid-ocean.

My inland years, high above shores, lean to salt current and longer tide implicit from their beginning, through plankton—wandering past zones of up-welling down sloping sides of submarine mountains.

I have seen dying in burned bladder and parched breath stale, dry with earthy ashes labor in strangled throat. So would I sink on carpets of sea-sediment: my soluble parts to neighbor with sharks' teeth and the ear-bones of whales.

James B. Hall

CONFERENCE TIME; or THE UNDERGROUND AGENTS

Between classes
Outside this basement room the vines
Mew in the sunlight and tendrils
Pry at the ignorant glass while student
Feet, all mismated, snuffle
The sidewalk towards Biology;
Across the hall

The casts rattle
In the bonepile Cast Museum
And Zeus braces his buttocks
Against a civil servant's feather duster
While I, a poet in waiting,
Affect the double jeopardy of sleep
Perhaps to lure

A phrase which will rave
Or will swing like the black
Bat's wing, or will grow within,
Round as a wen, and so become
The rubber detonator, soft in the pocket,
Armed, quivering, ready to explode
The infernal mirrors

Of all the keepers
Of our poetry in poetry's Managerial Age.
Now the class bells ring and Keats
Writhes again beneath a New Instructor's
Well-trained sneer, or a pedant leers
Above the works of John Clare's
Giddy hours

Smiling the kill,
"Gentlemen: could he really, if mad?"
Soon the Tartar fullbacks' overriding
Thunder shall benumb these corridors
As they come, repentant and sly, to examinations.
Good sleep takes the knitting girls,
And no one reads.

Comes now the hour
Of conspirators for outside the door
The student poet stands, conjuring
Still the forbidden delicacy of flight
With last night's poems concealed
Beneath his sullen leather jacket,
These muddy cyphers

Pried last night
From underneath the terrible boards
Of memory: the Viet Nam night attack
Against a jungle's automatic weapons
Or the week his brother died so slowly
Of pneumonia, in a cold farm house.
His poems are here

Squarely between us,
The revised emblems of our redemption,
And on Page Three I read, "The lilies
Rustled then bloomed like fires of Hell,
Or tracer bullets." There I see
The squirm of talent which will surely bore
Like a spirochete

Devouring at last
Even the great tendons of his pride.
Zeus rattles and all the tendrils dive,
But this new poet smells my death
And imperiously rattles his verses.
We leave as friends, but I go to connive
In committee meeting.

Lorita Whitehead

Five Poems

LITTLE KILLER

Who's to say that a bat or pelican flies better or think either can be lovelier in this weather where, angled down lack-lovely through the fog, dragged by a hair of the wind or pitched to a bog, they dive. You could be both if you tried, Mr. Heft; considering proper paper-flowered walls, your chest of wispy neon-lighted hair, or your blue eyes mild as milk, blinking orange and green above the prize whose cries died neat in her small white teeth. Fog glows pink and blue about her knees while you, a mincing maniacal bird, with shiver and chirr like dodo, bat, and pelican together, conceive of weather.

A. ST

SPORT AMONG CANNIBALS

Death would be a sure lover, constant to the last orgiastic cinder, but we cannot love her.

We stake all on the chase of that cow-eyed girl, that citified yet pastoral whore whose cheeks like major red on billboard paper, once seen will cure; she'll fill our sleeves with opiates and oranges.

How we dreamed of towers!

Flat-chested and ratty-haired, she out-whooped us to the top of every knoll; then jeered back, an undersized and spindly armed Medusa, "Here! I told you!"

When she became no more than a garish shape passing by a door she could still lure us into the night, her look full of images: surmounted crests, luminous towers, the air like a nest spread for burning and trumpeted wheeling flights.

Even now that rag-rustle of her knees whispers enticements of new things to come: a peace, a chorus after battles like a hymn, but one in praise of what we left undone and lost. That is queer kind of dignity for love.

Death, that black woman, would still grow us wings; we refuse. The girl passes; we must play the game and lose.

MOTHER SINGING

Oh, those stark nights, the endless highway turning like a deadly desert snake under the headlights, under my innocence! Only then was I sure of you, my mother, where I sat between you, you and him. Dad tapped the wheel with his ring and drove too fast, so much the fat, the quick rich business man.

But when his voice ran bumbling basso profundo under his blanket of skin like a good natured marble, I almost loved him. But loved him more that he hummed, letting us sing:

Low and harsh from the cigarettes, your head swaying while your finger twirled in the dark the hair at my neck, while you leaned and grinned with the chorus, hugging my comrade's shoulder, proud (for once I was sure) of my harmony, of the free ease with which we met in the old songs; child mine, my mother, flapper, born only to sing, even then as a jack rabbit rushed his blinking worm-eaten life at our wheels, in the night, the miles, I felt you there, I felt I almost knew you, and I knew that I was lost in nowhere, lost in you.

RETURN OF THE DAEMON

Floating jelly-slick, the word again crawls up, loosens again and sprawls on last season's prophylactics, bald umbrellas, soleless shoes, a palpating bloom returned to the wintry beaches of the ear.

The same year after year I stand, watching tide bear it in, hear the rush of children shrieking to the strand, the stamp of drunken feet around the glare of that translucent form reared up in air.

But crones like me are slow at our amens. When we come tonight to bend our knees, all ritual fires done, it will only be to swing an axe into the gaudy hulk and strew it, limb by limb, back to the sea.

A WHALE FOR SWASHBUCKLERS

Limbless, arched through the fluidity of things, we dive almost to touch. Porpoise-lithe you laugh, swim away. Dazzler and torment, fish-angler, thus grotesque, harpoonknighted, see me plunge, heave in your wake, buffoon among fishes! So goes an old fish story, farce well played but out with our years: sad tails no ships bring in or tides wash home, not a home. But fathom this, fish-priestess, I am glad: had you paused mid-current for passion, tea. God knows now I'd be pater familias, fat, with flat domesticated teeth (plankton foddered), bewhiskered as catfish! So full throttle, dainty; let us play. Test thus this doldrum calm, that cape-reefed shoal, or, mid-Atlantic, clefts which open heady horrors under me; so let me grow old-salt tough and scarred, hindmost and rolling, heartdown Host for fishes! Thus packed with joy and life-deft, Love, let be: lone, the crusty lover of a moving thing, till mammal lusts. their last gushed high are done; settle me!

Pete Winslow

Seven Poems

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Mother never came this far
Into the cave of anxiety.
There was no bomb back in Idaho,
Or later Portland, and after that
The depression cottage in Seattle.
No extinction threatened, just poverty.
One could concentrate on necessities—
No doom lurking in the milk, the cranberries,
No insect armies waiting at the gates.
It was a simpler time.

Mother never came this far,
To where a thousand Hitlers are hiding.
Obsequious, treasonable men
With red, white, and blue hearts.
Edging toward the pushbutton room
In the sinister twilight
Of the good old days.

TIME

The pain in my stomach Is the sand running through.

WHO LISTENS TO ORPHANS?

It's dark in a cage at midnight.
The smell is terrible.
I can't even walk around for fear of stepping in something.
Soon I'll have to wrestle the lion for breakfast again—
I'd like it well-done just once.
Sometimes they don't even bother to kill it.
The lion takes care of that; he's meaner than I am.

It's dark in a cage at midnight
But there's nothing to read anyway.
At least I can stop being embarrassed for a while.
All day I'm expected to make love to the lioness
While people stand around taking home movies.
I pretend I'm sick to conceal my inadequacy.
They probably think I'm queer,
Well, I told them I wasn't a lion when they brought me here,
But who listens to orphans?

TRAPPED IN A MINE

The first day there was no sound Except for the hummingbirds whirring Over the clover in the pit of the mine, Far from the surface of the real world.

The second day in the bright sunlight Clouds were demons in the hideous sky— I dreamed of my home in war With its gnomes and crones Adjusted to darkness, not this awful blue.

The third day a child without scars
With a curious face unwrinkled and alert
Brought me a bouquet of daffodils and iris,
Pansies and crocus, the witches of underground legends.

The fourth day I was mad with thirst And peasants so weak they were actually kind Brought me wine in a crystal decanter, But my thirst was for pools of stagnant muck.

The fifth day a girl came to my side—
She caressed me as I cringed in despair of rescue,
She lay with me that night and rubbed my skin with oil,
Took the sex I was unable to withhold
And left me a stinking garland of kisses.

The sixth day, insane in the cool green meadow, I ran to the corners of my prison and screamed And the mountains mocked me with serenity. I shrieked as girls in their cities offered me love—O the torment of their comforting fingers!

I rambled off incoherent, sobbing, and fell into a coma To awake this morning in the black hospital Home in the sacred landscape of night and hunger Where the wizard turns you to dust for a thought And escape is into the solace of slavery.

THE FIRE OF THE CITIES

Suddenly, after three poems, the last one not read but absorbed, I recaptured the fire of the cities.

I had looked around me and written off another stupid day, But the literature of the city flung itself at me And the sounds of the city were with me, Its confusion, its ecstasy, all in the poems I read.

Unscholarly poets with mysterious names,
Names of Russian Jews, Greeks, gypsies,
Wine-soaked poets with police records,
Timeless as trade routes
But meaningless outside the poetic underground of cities.
I see them, the undiscovered talents of the world
with names that are poems,

I see them in tangled workrooms, evoking demons;
I see them—they get little ones or drunk ones
Discovering influences in a babble of jazz, sex or occult lore;
I see them commune with their imaginations in cluttered corners
Inhaling city wisdom, shouting into their typewriters.

I smell the curry of their makeshift meals,
Minds closed to food, only the city nourishing them.
The baby is crying; I see him carried naked into noisy parties
Where discussions hang in the air:
It's an incision into consciousness,
A wound never closed.

This is the city. I feel it
Though the poem lies before me in absolute immobility,
Its form a mystery,
Its images swimming before my eyes,
Unread, undiscovered.
Yes! I stole the unread poem and wrote it myself,
A cry to evoke the cry of the cities.

THE POEM CONTEST

You challenged me to a poem contest
And got cut
For I wrote about chocolate pudding soaking up cream
And all you had
Was something about history.

CINERAMA

The reason you can't see the top of this poem
And have trouble following it from one side of the page to the other
Is that this poem is written in Cinerama,
A comparatively new process invented by Walt Whitman.
We are working on eliminating the seams.

David Ray

Three Poems

THE APPROACHING TRIP

"Every time we part I feel older, tougher, and more determined to be with you for a good life," you wrote once in a letter and now as in the old days you were never so close as when you left waving from the small window of the air liner and me flapping and waving as you became abstract; so I've decided this time, leaving, it is to be ever more close to you—to get high enough to perceive in that seat of the common carrier what we are, what has been slurred

or lost in the last months, what we fear in each other. If the plane touches ground back in this old town again I will step down and embrace you fearlessly.

REFUSING TO WATCH YOU LEAVE

Those elbow people get us. They were there all the time Of course, in the coffee shop And on the train and in the rooms. They stood around the newsstand When we got those papers. Recall It? Then we went back to the room. Some love. That view of harbors And Burts Resale. The things that Stagger up a hill. Gravestones. I've journeyed with you, flown. Rich, fluttering imaginings. Why, then, Drawing on your gloves and getting Up, do you say to me "Glad to have Met you"? After all that, that nothing We had: You say we didn't have Or rather say nothing at all, Unaware even of this writing (at This writing) I saw you, lady, saw You turning to me whether you chose To turn or not. Rise and leave But you do not leave me. I have you. And take you with me where I go.

ON A DARK AFTERNOON

In Memorian R.I.

Out the window the sidewalks and somewhat of an audience wait for us to join him.

The forest is still dark to its very edge. The bird is still silent, holding his cold breast tight. And the dark eyes of hunters go on glowing.

In twenty years he found nothing to replace those messages he had learned.

The flyer looking for his friend found only craters on a hill and the war remained a lost war.

He looked. For twenty more years he looked, but found just repetitions of the lessons he had learned, all in a quick season.

He'd died a thousand times, ten thousand times; and then he died and stopped dying and his friends thanked god and said: At last he's stopped dying.

We open his book like a Bible.

Eve Triem

Three Poems

ANOTHER VOYAGE

Yearfall, thinned vermilion, pledge of voyage.

Dazzled as by all beginnings and arrogant for joy we cut the flowers in the threatened garden to gild our cabin.

Where our own wishes fail the wishing trees add intenser sound, lifting their black shapes naked of ornament for swifter running and for brighter speech beading the precious word on the single thread.

Where the trees fail, blue unfrozen birds weave the thread into a wider sail sailing our heart-held wish into the still waters of white cities lighting the edge of a rough ocean.

Mirrors of green moon and hill green in winter the city stands, we stumble to the loved and lava earth, throwing seeds of marigold to bind us to our home—before the little suns bloom, surrendering to another voyage.

AT THE BACK OF THINGS

I

The backs of buildings to sleep in deepen under palm & eucalyptus a moisty dusk. Too prickly

for me to climb without tearing flesh, a monkey-puzzle tree.

The underside of understanding also striped—

(the shades pulled down) aslant with fireladders the two-colored bricks face north

into song.

A finch Concise compact of theme neck rosier than brick

whited-red-

block after block sprinkled with a syrup

of his notes-

is at the heart

of the matter.

As exile is the scream of the heart.

II

Officebuildings barricade the sky, all the way round are striped with façade, a glittering stare. So much I need,

to know!

Did I start at the wrong end: front or side? In a dream the angel of finch or palm may have come to explain

the rooms filled and emptied and who is thrown out with the crumpled carbons and orange peel—

just when the "something exciting" (a tradewind stretches

the backs of flags)

has the birthright to begin.

FLOOD

Through all windows and where a door was the river comes in. Whoever is overturned by the smell of marsh grass and heron-cries, I like it, I like it!

To help the river over chair and table, give it the best bed, and see in fireflies the lamps I paid for, is easy as milk.

Roofs crumble, cows drown in the tree-snags, and the wired towns yell and flame into char—that troubles my joy. The streets had been straight and dry so long! From a drought older and longer, my stems in a well, my buds beginning, I ask place and people to breathe and forgive a river that had no choice but to flow.

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INTERVIEW

It wasn't like that. Like what? Like finding sentiments evaporable Or love a silence you could wander in. There is a bit of mind that is not there Except for music. It accompanies Dreams that are not like that, but more like thoughts At night. And when it stops accompanying Not even a bus's brand of bumpy humming Can take the quiet out of you. I took a bus trip with a rider once. A rodeo man, made of dying friends And lonely relatives: a traveler. As wandering eyes are not, who had a girl In every depot, and a broken neck Besides that, to contend with. Brace him up, I thought, and he will tell you.

It wasn't like that. Like what? Like white Othello with a southern accent, Whose courtships were, at best, a lesser danger. He told me as a surgeon would that broken Flesh spilled blood constantly before him, but That that was part of it. And that he was Nineteen, had never thought of bullfighting, Or rather, never thought of it like that. I thought of horns and peril, and he thought Of nothing. But I blazed upon him, strong As strangeness, clearly not himself, clearly The passioned, unimaginable eye Of the mere interested. I believed That he was braced for pain. His brother died Of riding motorcycles. Did he die Of tragedy or of absurdity? I asked.

It wasn't like that. Like what?

Like what you said.

And I was sorry that my brother was dead,

And then my father, well, he nearly died,

And I was sorry—and I had to ride

In Arizona, and I took the train

To get there faster. And then I had this pain

In my back where the ribs were broken, and I thought

I'd have to quit like my father, but it wasn't like that.

I won first prize that time. And after that,

I haven't been with my folks since my brother died.

Is it good to be home, I said. He looked outside

Through the window. He said, It's hard to say what it's

like.

Shirley Sauber

Four Poems

POEM

Stars drip across the dark
Small things hum
Night seeps in like smoke
Something ends—a scream? No.
What is it?
a basket of new mushrooms
a pocket full of gingernuts
a taste
of gimlet minus the dissonance
of Beethoven's storm
A blue owl broods down
a major chord, oblique
as the rifted tide from which
it sprung.

POEM

Tell me, tell me again
Where the frozen fugue
lies
Where the tainted green
goes
Submerged in its glitter
the lost song leads the last
and picks its darkest
past the frosted underside

POEM

track the night—past
the slow burning amber
my gourd rots—sudden
as the worm
the ragged knife rattles—
rattles, and circles the hour.

PROCESSION

sun on wood
—leaves, hold up your
hand against a fallen sky
light quarried through
a green stem—
eastern slumber
take, take the

word I carve—
carry the stone page
back—the moon's
borrowed gold on—
from one moon to another
unlit

David Summers

FINALE MILLENNIUM

Ruth! Ruth! Is it safe to sleep yet, Ruth?

The silence of your eyelids suffices.

We chose to enter sleep in shadows
Where black buildings move within the room—
Ruth,

I am afraid of tall empty bottles
Looming harmlessly on that plaster.
Doubtless the moon floods the bathroom floor
And strange objects strike the porcelain;
The drapes are fainting in the vibrating corner,
The chandelier, crushed upon the ceiling.

Will we wake up to shadows?

(Carousing fingers

Shift upon the wall.)

Will we have to Watch the dark forms gather and prepare?

You alone will hear it, the plank on the outside stair; A rattle on the porch; the quiet latch. You will hear above the hinge, the weather vane Squeal and cease.

And we shall rise and wait.

证书

The candle will approach.

The black rungs
Will stretch and scatter from the banister,
The cabinets cast upon the flowing rug;
Persia's rivers bear dark flowers, down
To the bright crack below the quaking door,

Which opens.

Will we concentrate upon the floor? And watch the flame spread the charcoal Zion Between my slippers and the suspenders on the chair?

Will the figure smirk and beckon others?

Ruth.

I am afraid of hearing the stern final Clack of spectacles upon the shimmering mahogany—

Ruth, will we be led away?

Sandra McPherson

Three Poems

RETURN FROM HUNTING

In Garberville three dust-unclean, the hunters, smiled a muscled deer shot hairless under evergreen.

The hunters made a short career, a heavy portage of the beast for keep in human hemisphere.

Fraternity of four increased a fine buck comeliness among three men. The hunting week had ceased but triple beard-wild jowls were tongue of kin to what the buck had been, some red young springing outdoor lung.

THE BULL

The bull is born bovinely and sets his sheen and bulk about

like a valley.

A dumbconfounded animal because

his speech would roll profoundly like black ball-lightning. Bulges

in his eyes now. He is set like a frontispiece and still with

a parlor peace.
A fine bull,
he is not exhaustive just

bilious. This convened-one, idled in the statue-forming

air, is facile and serious. A son of thanks and worship, he

fires exactly and if he does regret, regrets precisely.

He has a big behind of Psalm war and truce. He is coping.

THE ICON

Some one old Russian knew that red skies are what you ride against

and bluegreen dragons what over, gold badlands what into.

But that white horse is a power of right, a real romper

that'll get you there he said. Now you princely rider

keep your arm back and high a pursy smile forever and your

halo over your head all the way down the back of your neck.

It can't hurt he said even if the sky turns blue, the dragon dead.

David Sandberg

Four Poems

BLACK WOMAN

beautiful you are fragrant dark song tall as the tree of night

softer than wind

blowing down stars

IKON

blue stocking-capped two old men bending

like flowers in the snow

talking

slender

lines of old italian

songs to each other.

they make

a sound

like music

iron

rusty

knives in the wind

THREE BIRDS ON THE LIBRARY LAWN

for W. C. W.

Ι .	arrogant
to my surprise	strut
	and another
just as i	
watched	music in the
the pigeon	elegant
	black-coated
about to	
pounce	old woman
on the bread	bending
	to feed him.
crust an	
extremely	III
tall long-	the sparrow
	biggest
legged girl	crumb tightly
crossed	
the lawn	held in his
	beak
obscuring	bulled his way
my	
view	through the
	crowd of
	pigeons and
II	1.0
the pigeon	flew just into
walking	his arc the
on the grass	beak opened and
9-1-1-1	
is charged	the crumb fell
with	into a
poetry.	pool of
F-30-J.	
there is a	startled

]	POEMS FOR JU	DY
The Silence		Morning
the only proof of living is the act		together we are so clean our sudden singing
itself: sung softly in your hair		lengthens into warm hills of music
the song of how we love is at once quiet		through the open window a fat sun
and brutal like a flame.		turns your hair orange.
	Evening	moles de dece
	dizzying	bender's

this huge wide love. we

ride to places taller

than mountains of song

to come crashing down

brilliant arrows in the dark.

gold

fish.

music

in his

Definition

there is no more for us than this:

a quiet time, a song like wind in

white daisies, bright crystal birds in

wintertrees, noise of cars passing

in the street outside our window.

Ed Leimbacher

Two Poems

THREE MESSENGERS IN TWO BLOCKS

T

He greets the passers-by with Christian tracts a slender chanting Negro in gray wool coat, shapeless hat, eyeglasses—and reacts

with equanimity when some coarse fool tatters the Old Paths Tract for spite and shoves two Judgment warnings back at him. His rule

golden, he smiles. Though earth must burn, God loves.

II In yellow snapbrim and knife-olive suit

the studly second black accosts us with newspapers and dark mockery. "Strange fruit"

to him means black men hanging whites. His kith are Muslim now; his fist grips his *kismet*: "Muhammed Speaks." Equality's the myth;

reality, his eyes that say, "I hate."

III

Flag sagging, Lady Patriot gags, snorts, then gestures wearily. Her navy blue spells war; her chalky face courts last resorts:

Gettysburg, Flanders, Guam, and Dien Bien Phu, vacation spots she recommends. "Sir, buy a red poppy from the VFW?"

G.I.'s, abort! War's only truth: we die.

OUTLINE OF A BRIEF, DISCOURAGING ODYSSEY

The brawny, briny shipman floats and rocks in two dimensions, in four directions, of water—but always homewards. Always he talks of the years-away place; nothing else matters. Salt-crusted mouth still shapes her name. The boy's name. Home home: home.

Aging fast, changed in appearance, he burns through several ships, various friends, civilians who offer assistance or hindrance. Other amphibians stare, aghast at this callousness. He scorns men, beasts, gods, must make it alone. Are the obstacles imaginary? He naked sails on.

At the end of the line-dark dolphins' road a shimmering woman weaves days of her life, unravels threads of her nights. The dream of the rod. She walks among cattle, seasons, holds a leaf in her hand to raise the boy and fight off wolves. Though light blinds her, she sees only seawayes.

Tell the man-boy who his father is . . .
Seething at uselessness, enveloped in strangers and women, he abandons the sea. Begotten of no man he thinks, while empty years inhabit the grass.
But sons will remember, and beggars and dogs meet, when fathers finally disembark, wet.

Ragged, raging, the shipman enters his kingdom. If he smiles and draws back the bow of destruction, does he know that ahead lie blood, reunion, boredom? Unleashed, the arrows pierce man's imagination for all time.

Wife and son wait in the window. Why am I not a hero?

Helena Dyer

AWAKENING

I never knew, said the man not dead,
That light could be so light;
Why didn't you tell me (to a friend) that
Light moved—as memories slip across the
surface of water?

I feel like a ship blown by nothing but Mind, another thing than myself— Something winged: this dance is something new For clay feet. I've left the reasons behind. Why am I quiet when I should talk?
What wonder, that wonder should be so silent!
Cleaving the shadows was painless and slow;
White waters of a river washed over me with light.

I can wait, I pause, on this unsheathing. I am grateful for The windless sun that stays still as I move Toward another me.

William Dunlop

WIMBORNE MINSTER

There, on our way to Devon, and the sea, We stopped for lunch. The hulking Minster lay Bemused by sun, and all the town, that day, Yellow and soggy, like a pear, with heat. My father shivers, pushes back his plate,

And freezes Wimborne Minster.

An apple core,

A fox's mask, a dead tobacco smell: The doves brew slumber; and a mellow bell Burdens the air, beats twice. Life, life is short. Outside, my father lifts a hand to tilt

The brightness from his eyes.

Whom should I meet In Wimborne Minster, if I went there now With just that slant of shadow on his brow?

My father cursed the winding coast-road. We Were on our way to Devon, and the sea.

Frances McConnel

Two Poems

THE CATCH

All morning fishing
we walked in Willow River
where salmon hovered,
passed to their death
upstream. Eggs
and cast words fell
on barren rivers. I saw
salmon spawn below,
the fat trout doze.
My husband's father carried
cold words in wicker baskets.

The salmon fins away from spawning; his eggs hatch birds.
He will not jump at flies, you catch him with an egg.
He snaps it up in fury.

His voice turns swift and long, I wish toward fish in stone.
The egg we hover over is within me.
We move to deeper water
and still no calm.
Crossing through that wind
I slipped from water slick
to water wet, down in stunning water.
Who sent me deep?
My boots fill up like caves.
The current cannot bear
my heaviness away.
To walk in this loud water
would be as strange as flying.

My eyes could see there were no fish. Light swam down green to shape dark stone.

In a fall of rising bubbles
I breathe deeply this element
I know from my own lost year,
then slowly swarm up cliffs of light.
My hair runs down to water.
I am caught by the shape of his hand.

Must I accept this strange father lying belly to belly with stone? Some gentle fish pooled within fins. Pull me up, father, wet and quivering, if I slap on your granite then and now, remember you could not catch me as I once fell and am still falling into slow water.

CHICKEN KILLER

The golden bloody chick lay among dusty strawberries. Its neck twisted into a crook the dog took in her jaws and shook

until the black eye grew wide as cedar boughs at dusk. The down that tickled her tongue burst soft in my breath,

and I saw beyond the garden the farmer cursing our dog who pell-melled into the bushes her whole mouth dancing. Once my brothers and I went charging into the neighbors' chickens.
We banged the soft exploding bodies with our great rocks.

Stuck with gobs of guano feathers drummed in our hair and Father, yelling Heathens! chased us down the lawn

where the neighbors' bristling bitch charged from the edge of azaleas and tenderly captured his leg. We yelped with sudden joy

and, phantoms, hung from the bed as mama bandaged his ankle. Our criminal hands stank of hens and our pockets were warm as eggs.

I nestle the half-grown chick into black depths of our cellar, hiding from Father the feathers trailed by the child and the dog

as we ran down the farmer's lawn where I dreamed that violent summer he stabbed me with his shining fork and ate me, drumstick and all.

Herbert W. Gottfried

Two Poems

CADWALDER PARK

On Sundays man becomes bear. He shifts into second, eases the tight city from cobble to green, for here the park is cave, the grave the poet's ear.
This is the court of Sunday, attended
by the maple loop. The ragged poor, the dandy
leatherettes from sad blocks, flock to the bush
not for nesting but fun in dead novelty.
The bear lies open,
tortured like the formal rose in heat.

Narrow little girls know the bear.

He's their father, the ass. How embarrassing to discover one pair in the throws of clover, or the monkey hurling berries through the bars.

Mothers can never explain those organs.

Hurry! Hurry! To the bears! Those beasts, too carnal in their concrete, protected by a screen.

You don't have to feed the bear. He eats the park; sweats through the confusion of tomato pie, hot dogs, leashed dogs, kids pissing on trees.

There, beyond the rock, the sensitive

Mott Street boy, his tongue in an ear.

The girl, over-developed from tacky Roman blood, is too young to have her skirt around her breasts.

Her laughter frightens birds.

From five to six the treadle-worn track over the green to grey. There is sadness in the odor of their breath. Mrs. Kowalsky ate a fat sausage and burped a balloon full of gas. The great hacks of the East, each soft as a winter-killed flower, go home. The bear goes for yesterday's bread. The park is for sweeps of Monday, and the monkey on his mate. And you, you know who Cadwalder was, that plagued hero with a vision, now dead as granite but glad.

RED CLAY WOMAN

She is like the old men starched by dry air, swept in the vagueness of age, a skin abstraction. The locust peeling past her window stirs the dust. She, once loved and cut with the cotton, is tired in the town. A woman born in the heat; milked of her jasmine clay.

This woman, mother of nine long weaned and firm, bathes in the drift-wind.

All are settled but the last, that dancing-eyed boy bright as the morning silver and gone. He never settled, lost to East and North where no South boy belongs. A soft tongue taught his body to love the women in his wine.

She prayed he was good.

Saved his clean-faced smiles, those old laughs tasteless as hay that country girls live on or dream.

This flashing wisp of her mind once brought a woman bright as a jay. The air was hard for mother was unpainted. A quick stop, five-ten minute dollars, a smile waft in a wave.

Still she waits silently rocking, humming through her eye. As flowers turn their season, her thumbs twist time, trace the scar-laced fields of strawberry hair and clay.

But the drift-wind son is gone, lost to the East and shadow of her dress.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

LUMMI INDIAN WOMAN WEAVING A BASKET

The pliant inner bark of cedar trees (I have to search for that; the biggest stands are gone) is strong: the mountain grasses please, and I can move my hands among the strands

as fast as gulls can dart among the catch, and find the ends unseeing. Patterns crawl like trees between my fingers' needle-patch as serrate buds spring up from forest fall,

or low as runner-vines and scarcely seen. On my high shelf the bigger baskets sit where my grandmother put them fresh and green, each one so wide a child would fit in it:

the weft she formed is darkened now. I've read her spirit-taught designs by fingertip through spider webs, and in the night the dead warp cracks as if the baskets stirred in sleep.

I had no time to search for spirit speech nor fast for visions, when my children filled my basket womb, eleven, each on each, and yet my fingers move as if I had.

Vi Gale

Four Poems

PEACHLEAF WILLOW, THE TREE THAT KEEPS THEM WARM

Round as a lariat goes the talk cinching Bill, Jane, Sharon from Boston.
Bill jilted Jane; moved Sharon to his ranch house shaded in peachleaf.

Poor martyred Jane took it in stride.
Sharon grew lonely, him tending his spread, took to meeting the foreman out near the pond under the peachleaf.

What's more, this Sharon, foreman in tow, ran back to Boston. Bill won back Jane—married her too—one morning after he chopped down the peachleaf.

The lariat twirls, grey smoke curls up from old wood on the ranch hearth.

Out near the pond an old stump dies sprouting green peachleaf.

GREATER BINDWEED

Quidnunc Uncle Knut brought things on himself: orphan cats, fickle women, lovable characters, a mania for cowboy songs all of which he generously shared when he lived with us. But no treasure like the scourge he transported in a lunch box of damp moss for thirty miles and set loose in our flower beds. I see him now as he raked, fed, watered, coddled, and coaxed.

And I see myself, three gardens of unwisely salvaged plants later, tugging at skeins, untwisting hanks, digging and yanking incredible coils of fragile white glories that bind me to uncles, impulse, and plague.

IN A LOUD WHISPER

Unheard from. You are dead. Swedish flower you are bom.
—Beginning of a friend's letter

Yes. The wind roars from the east flattening the rudbeckias, scaring the goldfish. A friend is missing in Viet Nam. My family finds me impossible. The students do as I do and worse. The aged cat is gone. Gardens depress me. Old comforts are cold and I am full of death, loss and denial.

I'm speaking only to me.

FAR OUT, AWAY

Along melodic lines, Vachel, they have a new jazz now since you blamed the saxophone. No longer hot or cold its complex tom-toms take the theme at times. When delicately mad the horns go out they catch Van Allen rings around while steady as it mounts, the swinging pulse, the solid going-to-the-sun, backs shaded tones that echo non-vibrato. Vachel, when they like you set out to correlate they borrow comet-forms you came to curse but lay it coolly on the heart, lag-along, and let a drier cadence rock the head.

NORTHWEST REVIEW

In Our Current Issue:

James Ballard R. V. Cassill
George P. Elliott David Galler
William Stafford Lewis Turco
David Wagoner William Witherup

Leonard Nathan

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POETRY

About Our Contributors

SISTER MARY GILBERT, SNJM, appears here for the third time. She is spending the current academic year teaching at Seattle University.

RICHARD F. Hugo, a founder of this magazine, had five poems in the last issue. He teaches at Montana State, in Missoula, and has been reading his poems on the Pennsylvania Poetry Circuit.

WILLIAM STAFFORD, the leading poet in this area, has a new book of poems coming out this fall, *The Rescued Years* (Harper & Row). He lives in Portland, Oregon.

DAVID WAGONER, who was in our Spring issue, also has a new book of poems due to appear soon, *Staying Alive* (Indiana). Dave teaches here at Washington.

BARBARA WILLIAMS lives in Seattle; her poems have been printed by *The Trans-Atlantic Review* and *Inland*. First appearance here.

MILDRED WESTON teaches at Fort Wright College in Spokane. This is her third time in *Poetry Northwest*.

James B. Hall, the well-known Northwest writer, has a new volume of short stories entitled, *Us He Devours* (New Directions).

LORITA WHITEHEAD, a former student of the late Theodore Roethke, appears here for the first time anywhere. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Pete Winslow, another former student of Theodore Roethke, is now living in California. His third book, *Monster Cookies*, from which these poems are taken, will be published soon.

DAVID RAY also appeared in our Spring issue (edited by John Logan). His recent book is called *X-Rays*, and was published by Cornell.

EVE TRIEM, distinguished West Coast poet, has a new book, *Poems*, designed by herself and published by Alan Swallow.

James Rawley had a poem printed here while he was a student at Reed College. He is now living in Los Angeles.

SHIRLEY SAUBER studied with Sister Mary Gilbert at Fort Wright College in Spokane. This is her first publication.

DAVID SUMMERS is a student of Robin Skelton at Victoria University on Vancouver Island (Canada). First appearance anywhere.

SANDRA McPherson lived in San Francisco when these poems were accepted; to our pleased surprise, she is now studying here, with David Wagoner. First appearance, and first publication.

DAVID SANDBERG, a Northwesterner now living in San Francisco, made his first appearance anywhere in our last issue.

ED LEIMBACHER appears here despite the fact that his name is now on our masthead, so we wish to point out that these poems were accepted before he became our Editorial Assistant.

Helena Dyer is still another former student of Theodore Roethke. She lives on Mercer Island, and this is her first publication anywhere.

WILLIAM DUNLOP appeared in our Spring issue. He has published widely in England, and is teaching at present at the University of Washington.

Frances McConnel studied with John Logan when he taught the Poetry Workshop here last Spring. She has been published in the Atlantic Monthly. First appearance here.

HERBERT W. GOTTFRIED is a graduate student at Montana, where he studies with Richard F. Hugo. First appearance anywhere.

Nancy-Lou Patterson is published here for the fourth time. She is director of art at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, and mother of four children.

VI GALE, who had three poems in our last double issue (Vol. V, Nos. 3 & 4), also has a new book published by Alan Swallow, *Love Always*.

Wesley Wehr, author of our cover design, is one of the outstanding Northwest painters whose work is shown at the Seligman Gallery, Seattle.