

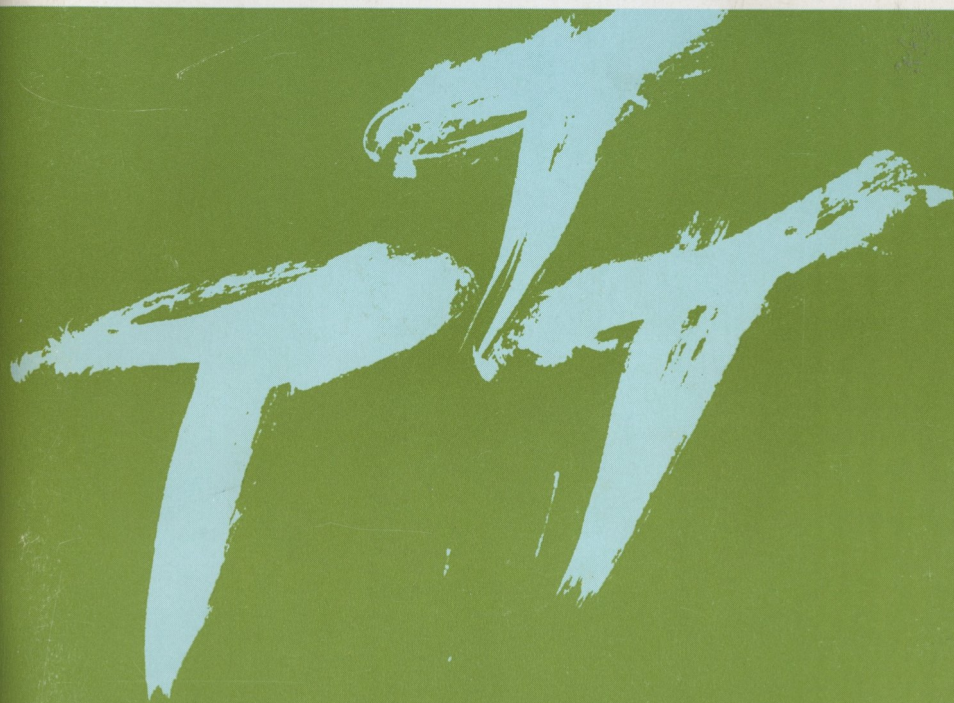
Poetry

NORTHWEST

WINTER 1962-63

VOLUME III, NUMBER 4

NINETY CENTS



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POETRY



NORTHWEST

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NUMBER FOUR

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Announcement of Poetry Northwest Prizes

- HELEN BULLIS PRIZE: For the finest long poem or group of poems in each volume. One hundred dollars.
- NORTHWEST POET'S PRIZE: For a poem or group of poems by a Northwest writer (arbitrarily defined as anyone who has lived in the Northwest—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, British Columbia—for a number of years, or who is presently living here). Fifty dollars.
- POETRY NORTHWEST AWARD: To a new poet, never previously published. Fifty dollars.
- TRANSLATION PRIZE: For the finest translation of a contemporary poet. (Not awarded annually.) Fifty dollars.
- COMPARATIVE POETRY PRIZE: For a group of poems by a writer who is not a North American. (Must be a first appearance in an English-language publication.) Fifty dollars.

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POETRY NORTHWEST

WINTER 1962-1963

Richmond Lattimore

Four Poems

SONNET ON HOPE

Bedraggled daughter of Desire and Fear,
 she'll glaze your eyes and sing your brain to sleep,
 pour siren's wax and honey in your ear:
 Hope, self-seduced and simple, counting her sheep:
 the painted Hope, blind, whispering, and with wings:
 the baby-sitter in the abandoned chair
 waiting beside a phone that never rings,
 dreaming of cradles and fixed calendars
 and the clock stopped forever, and the glass
 sucking its sand back in, the never-was
 world come again new made and clean of scars.
 I fled from Hope and found her everywhere
 barefoot and bold in all her slattern charms
 with a two-headed baby in her arms.

EAGLE OVER THE COAST

In Memory of Robinson Jeffers

Bigger than us rest. All's now written.
The lines stride in, hump to angles, smitten
bleed gray at the edge and smash; wake
the demon in skull's keep and brain's cowl, make
tower's kingdom, wolf's king, for claw
pelt and rut-reek time's apostle, law
of giant club and dog against the bull,
zodiac's black and gold, memory of polar frost
before mankind, seismic spasm and slabbed coast
upshuddered. Your blood's tides to beck of moon pull
shrink and flood; but, sprung from tempest, you rise, rise
to steep and air, dwindle on wings, harry
high birds, drop the world and marry
space. Since Hardy no such eagle sailed our skies.

~

COLOSSUS ASTRIDE

Lost my way
summer's hottest day
in grass brown as hay

on hill-bones, aswarm
with grasshoppers, warm
brown spry uniform

and crazy, all
joints, stems, and vertical
elbows, vul-

nerable and in my
power. Giant I
tower, too high

to see, too grand to know.
They feel me there, though;
frantically say so.

Murder, if the brute
lets one monstrous foot
stamp its boot.

If I could climb
out, there'd be a little time
for peace. I'm

all the god they can
know, a tall foolish man
with no plan.

~

CARTESIAN MOMENTS

How shall I know the world or even see
dimension dreaming in a plain of tiles
when all the scene is papered out and thinned
to surface without essence and flat miles?
What population makes a world of things
outside this empty universe of me?
From my false belvedere and balcony
hats and umbrellas in the street below
could be beetles, or platters moved on springs.
These are God's metaphors, for all I know,
stuck on the pane of this unwindowed eye,
with no more depth to take their inwards by
than silly mobiles clanking in the wind.
Who in this lonely world but only I?

~

Carol Hall

Four Poems

THE DAPHNE ODORA

Clearly, it could not winter where it stood:
The iris had encroached to lip its blood,
Not purposely, but through blind need to thrive.
But still the careful daphne was alive.
Gravely its grace stood battered by bold plants
That did not need it or respect its wants.

Urge to effect its rescue rose like grief,
Strong as a surgeon's passion for his knife.
Quickly I wrenched its roots to lift its life,
But you were standing by me, quick to blame.
"Don't! It's embedded with them!" Sick, I saw
The long taproot drag clumsy through the dust
But, dying, grapple through the neighbor's fence
To find its shelter in another yard.
The plant was living, with a canny trust
That its taproot would reach wet and be spared.

"Hand me the spade!" My orders hot and curt
Cut like a strap across the sudden hurt
That creased your face like folding of a fan.
—"You can't get that plant out of there!"
—"I can!"

At last I chopped the taproot. It swung free,
The still green plant, into my hands. And I,
Carrying it to a new spot near the sun,
Vowed like an anxious god, "You shall not die!"
Today, I watched its final killed leaf fail,
And read love's message as blind men read Braille.

~

REDUCE THE QUANTITY OF PAIN

Reduce the quantity of pain
To a bare maximum, and find
There are some substitutes for sin
More welcome to the finite mind.

But what if sin were never there
In person, yet a hundred doors
See his strong shape blot out the light?
What if he waxed like wanton spores

Yet never cried, "Lord, here am I"?
Oh, there are substitutes for grace
More wearing than a flood of light,
More blinding than Jehovah's face.

One sin is talent cut and bare
As the rough stump of some killed tree.
Another is Things As They Were.
Another . . . but Adversity

Can be a friend who shares his cloak
More willingly than many would.
Yes, this one friend shall be for me—
Yet I would spare him if I could.

~

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCH

Now desert scene, you stretch upon
A canvas careless as the moon
But ridden by tides as precise
And clean as love in paradise.
Here are the lucky heavens, spread
With stars as thick as jam on bread.
There are the shepherds watched by sheep,
Who watch their lambs while townsmen sleep.

What star is this, loud as a scream
But stern and willful as a dream?
Glowing as secretly as stones
Uncut and dark, the caught earth moans
In awful fear under the star
Swinging to mark the place we are.

This is the first, most fateful day,
Destined to melt and run away
Like water, like unwilling boys,
Leaving the cold earth drowned in noise.
Another year will die, and then
The heavens will be light again.



TWO SISTERS

Mildred used to hide in hallways
To spring out at one screaming.
She was impossible at times, improbable always.
And our Janet was dreaming,

Witty, clever at puzzles, kind to books,
An artist. Everyone believed and knew
She would be great, and she was short on looks.
That was the way two sisters were and grew.

Mildred was beautiful, backed like a dancer,
Janet was good and wise and got no answer.
Mildred married three times, taking to drink,
And Janet suffered equally, I think.



John Logan

WHISTLING WINGS

OR, THE WHITE TURTLE IN THE WATERTREE

1. "Whistling wings."
Can you imagine that?
We thought we were so smart.
Had the turtle in a cage
for birds, til I couldn't stand the image
longer. Then we thought
the copper mesh around his pen would always flop
him back again
when he reached a certain point of compensation.
Like a youngster on a birch
he crawled up, catching each improbable turtle foot
(which the limbs of doves and wrens reflect).
But we must admit he won. He's gone.
Myth of the eternal return!
Perhaps he carries the world upon his flank again:
When we climbed up the back of Castle Rock
to take a long, leisurely look
all the maiden hair fern
shivered in the sun,
and the dry sweet pine
scales snapped like crusts of bread.
I felt the turtle's great wing shudder overhead.

Then again I saw the clams
try to put out wings
of a whitish meat (like small, phlegmatic souls)
from the Sisyphian shells
they always bear
even if abandoned in an auto tire.

The lean frog fled too.
 Oh, we knew
 he'd never feast upon the sun
 blasted grass one kid put in,
 wouldn't like the tone
 of weeds against his precious slime.
 Still we had a right to hope
 he'd like the shallow hole
 we dug, with its handmade pool.
 But the frog's not anybody's fool.
 Now (or thus)
 as with Breughel's Icarus
 I can see, in the green flowing
 of my mind, his white, human legs flashing!
 They leave a melancholy ring
 like the abandoned whippoorwill's song.

He starts up at nine o'clock
 each heartbreaking night.
 The partridge has some sadness or other
 knocking softly in his throat as a missing motor,
 but the whippoorwill's music is the shadow, is the moon
 of the last sheen of light in the meadow after rain.

The field itself leaves us blest
 in an unrelieved length of pine forest—
 like the baroque squiggle in the sand
 of baby clams
 toward water,
 track of partridge with the cock's delicate trailing feather,
 turtle's print before (and after)
 the shore has smoothed with weather.

2. Off the pine path
 we found a pair of grey clad

woodcutters (work shirts and pants,
 heavy hats
 to keep off bugs and sun)
 whose nagging saws had broke the peace of the afternoon.
 The kids and I watched them
 hack an arm
 and leg from trees they'd felled.
 "Pulp" I've heard the living trees called!
 I held
 my breath when one took off his hat
 to mop the sweat
 and suddenly instead a woman was there,
 her hair
 falling round a rather pretty face
 gaunt with tiredness—
 and in her blue, metallic eyes, as in a cage,
 an absolute feminine rage.

There was masculine fury
 at the Inn just off the highway
 (like the inn of Joseph and Mary,
 as the natives tell)
 where a husband sent six Indians to hell.
 The man and his wife, who had two daughters,
 were the tavern owners.
 He took the wagon into town for salt and bread,
 came back to find his wife and daughters dead!
 Four Indians had killed them with a tomahawk,
 robbed the inn and were quickly drunk.
 The husband slew the four
 with an axe right there,
 brought two more back
 and placed six heads about the inn on pikes!
 Now they have a marker at a wayside park.

3. With my own wife and kids
visiting the local Indian burial grounds
I find I wonder
at the penny-strewn boxes stretching over
graves recently dug
for Billy Walking Bird and Nora White Dog.
I would guess
a kind of half way house?
They are buried on a low, wooded hill
where bluegrass seed and plum blossoms fall.

In another small area of cleared wood
across a net like that our turtle had
the kids hit a plastic badminton bird.

On a rope outside our concrete block cabin,
clean and damp and open
the many colored swimming suits sway,
all shapeless after joy.
At the beach, girl is clearly girl and boy, boy.
The motorboats buck across the lake
and root about the skirts of sails, who walk
by so slow
and turn so delicately now.

A blue and red and yellow and brown
and green and black paper chain
my daughter makes
to drape
across the drab stove in the corner,
each color repeating in a perfect order.
Yet this doesn't make plain to me
her genuine, womanly intensity
See how she
bangs and shatters the dinner bell!

Which here is on a pole.
The house or cabin key now hangs upon a hook
over the kitchen sink.
These new juxtaposings make you think!
The baby's crib's back by our bed again,
and the other kids—blankets fluffed and clean,
shook from pliofilm bags—
all are rearranged.

4. At Whistling Wings our oldest son
gets up early to fish, for the first time,
or stands gold with summer sun
plumed in a gaudy summer shirt
like a splendid, tropical bird
none of us know,
to draw back his brand new bow
and shoot forever
the first slim arrow of my quiver.

That one late night,
only a hint
of moonlight,
Ruth and I
(our children all asleep)
ran down from the cabin to the beach
and dived together
naked in the summer water.
I asked her out to swim with me because
I knew how small and white she was.

His hair too long and yellow for the wood
the baby walks
quite drunk,
or else bending back
on heels like a pregnant lady

round and round a small tree,
or like a cub bear,
paws clumsy in the air,
nosing honey,
or like a grounded baby bumblebee.

My young son Stephen looks
like a small anchor seated on the stoop,
his back to me, knees drawn up
and spread, arms hid
at some uncertain game he made.

5. I have seen them strain and wheeze
to pull down young shoots of trees
they carry before them,
tiny dying limbs
held out
as they circle slow and chant,
like elaborate candelabra in a rite.
(Once I thought
I saw my kids carried in their own trees,
parked there like ancient, shrieking harpies.)
And once in a low fog that rolled toward the wood
like those long sighs of the dead
I saw my charmed kids
conjure up or lose a voice, an arm, a head.

The girls put a puppet together
out of cork, sticks, string and a feather.
They painted gentle or horrendous masks
full length on paper cleaning sacks.
And I have seen them push
or wish
a full cardboard carton
like a wagon

up a hill of sand,
and down at last
into the sweet valley of grass.
Have watched the the boys build
a blunt sloop of board
and make it sail!
Saw one pound a nail
in a tin squash can
and tie fishline
to make a toy filled with stone
he dragged all around the cabin
yard.
Then (though I was gone) I've heard
our eleven year old
pulled an eighteen pound
carp on a clothesline
straight down the main street in town
to weigh it in at the grocery store scale.
(Small, external Jonah. Revised whale.)
Once they nailed a brown bullhead
to a board
(through the snout)
and worked out its guts
having peeled off
the skin, like a man's sox
with pliers from my tool box.
And they say the whole business is orthodox!

6. Except for the littlest one
all my sons
and I went out to fish one night.
Couldn't wait
to try a new lure
sweet little thing from France we thought of her:

La Vivif.

No Jitterbug, no Cisco Kid or River Thief,
or black or flesh-colored rubber worm
to bring the smallmouth bass home,
a weedless hook hid
inside its dull head.
Blue, red, bronze and cream shapely *La Vivif*
would bring more beautiful strife.
We walked from the cabin east
toward the Ghost
for whom the boys had named the trail,
which leads to the water for a mile.
In the dead night walking near
we were startled by a startled deer!
Then, past a turn, at a sudden quirk,
that Ghost showed up in the germinating dark
hovering in the limbs of a ginkgo tree,
its great awkward silver body
like a snagged cloud
or enormous bird,
faintly glinting in the thin moon.
A wounded weather balloon.
I felt it could still detect
the climate of my heart.
We joked too much (as they play
with bones on Corpus Christi Day).
Past the balloon, bird, cloud or ghoul
we came to the walleye hole.
Putting that *Vivif* to the test
almost at the first cast
a good pike
flashed out of the lake!
I let each boy touch
the pole to feel the fish's tug,

and fought and landed it
luminous and foam wet,
the great eye without a lid
perhaps alive, perhaps dead.
Drunk with success of our allure,
following some heady, ancient spoor
of ourselves or it
the older boys and I quick-
ly stripped and fell
into the cold, walleye hole,
like shining gold
bugs or clumsy newborn birds
hopping from a black limb (abandoned nest and shell)
into a blue black pool.
I hit a snag of weed,
was caught like an anxious white turtle hid
in the branches of the water's trees
for a long minute of time,
then dressed and went home.

~

May Swenson

Five Poems

OUT OF MY HEAD

If I could get
out of my
head and
into the
world.
What am I saying?

Out of my
 head?
 Isn't my
 head
 in the
 world?
 In it I'm
 in it, a
 round
 place
 in a bigger
 round
 place
 someplace.
 Seems like the
 center.
 Every
 head
 in there's a
 center, it
 thinks.
 It
 thinks!
 O.K., let's say I'm
 out and
 in the
 round free
 world:
 Back there's the tight aluminum sphere
 I jumped
 out of, slammed the door like an icebox.
 A clean landscape
 around me, an inch or two of "snow"—

rock-dust from those
 peaks
 in the distance. No colder here,
 even if it is wider. Very few things
 around —just the
 peaks.
 It'll take weeks to reach them.
 Of course I came here in my
 head.
 I'll be taking it
 back.
 The idea is to make a vehicle
 out of it.

~

WHILE SITTING IN THE TUILERIES AND FACING THE SLANTING SUN

There is the Line
 There is the Circle
 the bending Line
 the expanding Circle
 There is the moving Line
 but the still Circle
 but the enlarging Circle
 the lengthening Line
 The Crack
 and the Particle
 the deepening Crack
 the doubling redoubling Particle
 the Splitting
 and Resplitting
 and the Multiple

the opening Closing
the closure Opening

There is a Swaddled Thing
There is a Swaddled Thing
There is a Rocking Box
There is a Covered Box

The Unwrapping
the Ripening
Then the Loosening
the Spoiling
The Stiffening
then the Wrapping
The Softening
but the long long Drying

The Wrapping
the Wrapping
the Straightening
and Wrapping
The rigid Rolling
the gilded Scrolling
The Wrapping
and Wrapping
and careful Rewrapping
The Thinning
and Drying
but the Wrapping
and Fattening

There is the worm Coiled
and the straw Straightened
There is the Plank

and the glaucous Bundle
the paper Skull
and the charred Hair
the linen Lip
and the leather Eyelid

There is a Person
of flesh that is a rocking Box
There is a Box
of wood that is a painted Person

~

DOWNWARD

That there were men.
That we are their ghosts.
That men died long ago.

That there was life.
That ours is merely its shadow.

That we have fallen
from a peak on the high past
and are no longer men.

That this is the reason
for our hopelessness,
the reason our life is crippled.

That we grope
upon the slope of the past
and grasp nothing
but our cravings.

Our forward aims
are but our backward looks.
We can barely remember life
for it belonged to Them.

LET US PREPARE

to get beyond the organic
for surely there is something else
to which it is an impediment an opaque pod
What if it is sight that blinds
hearing that deafens
touch that makes us numb?
What if trussed in a jacket of blood
to a rack of bone we smother
in the dungeon of our lungs?
Today we are in our brain
a laboratory
Must we be here
tomorrow?
Are there not
pinnacles
on which to stand
cleanly
without a head?
Between the belly
of the sun and the belly
of the world
must we bounce forever
magnetized generations of the circle?
Let us eat nothing but darkness
refuse our stale orbit
and walk only in sleep
there to descry a crack in the future
and work to widen it
Let us prepare to bare ourselves outside the gibbet-hood
of the world
without excuse of flesh or apology of blood

~

HOW TO BE OLD

It is easy
to be young.
Everybody is
at first.
It is not easy
to be old.
It takes time.

Youth is given.
Age is achieved.
One must work
a magic to mix
with time
in order to
become old.

Youth is given :
Put it away
like a doll
in a closet.
Take it out
and play with it
only on holidays.

Have many dresses
and dress the doll
impeccably.
But do not show
the doll.
Keep it hidden.

It is necessary
to adore the doll.

One must remember
it in the dark
on the ordinary
days—and every
day congratulate
one's aging face
in the mirror.

In time one will
be really old.
In time one's age
will be accomplished.
And in time, in time
the doll—like new,
though ancient—
will be found.

~

John Berryman

THREE DREAM SONGS

I

'Scads of good eats', dere own t'ree cars, the 'teens
(until of them shall be asked one thing, they romp or doze)
have got it made;
no prob. was ever set them, their poor ol' jerks
of parents *loved* them, with deep-freeze, & snacks
would keep a Hindu family-group alive.

Well, so they're liars & gluttons & cowards: so what?
... It's the Land of Plenty, maybe about to sigh.
Why shouldn't they terrify
with hegemony Dad (stupido Dad) and 'teach'?
(The tanks of the elders roll, in exercise,

on the German plain.)
Even if their sense is to (swill &) die
why don't they join us, pal, as Texas did
(the oil-mailed arrogant butt), and learn how to speak
modestly, & with exactness, and
... like a sense of the country, man? Come off it. Powers,
the fêted traitor, became so in hours,
and the President, ignorant, didn't even lie.

~

II

The weather was fine. They took away his teeth,
white & helpful; bothered his backhand;
halved his green hair.
They blew out his loves & interests. 'Underneath,'
(they called in iron voices) 'understand,
is nothing. So there.'

The weather was fine. They lifted off
his covers till he showed, and cringed & pled
to see himself less.
They installed mirrors till he flowed. 'Enough'
(murmured they) 'if you will watch us instead,
yet you may be saved be. Yes.'

The weather fleured. They weakened all his eyes,
and burned odd thumbs into his ears, and shook
his hand like a notch.
They flung long silent speeches. (Off the hook!)
They sandpapered his plumpest hope. (So capsize.)
They took away his crotch.

~

III. SECRET OF THE WISDOM

When worst got things, how was you? Steady on?
Wheedling, or shockt her &
you have been bad to your friend,
whom not you writing to. You have not listened.
A pelican of lies
you loosed: where are you?

Down weeks of evenings of longing
by hours, NOW, a stoned bell,
you did somebody: others you hurt short:
anyone ever did you do good?
You licking your own old hurt.
what?

An evil kneel & adore.
This is human. Hurl, God who found
us in this, down
somethings. . . . We hear the more
sin has increast, the more
grace has been caused to abound.

~

Richard Kell

Four Poems

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The sun's a damp stain in peeling grey.
The terrace across the way
Is porridge-brown, spattered with pebble-dash.
The doors are black, the windows . . . black and cream.
Each railing wears a chunky hedge, trim
As a diplomat's moustache.

Gardens, this road is called: a cul-de-sac

Beside the railway track,
As fertile as a fridge. The small lives pause,
Bemused and parenthetic, at a square
Bracket of bricks and mortar, wondering where
They lost the main clause.

Or, with no head for syntax, feel no loss:
Apply fresh coats of gloss,
Drudge patiently six days, visit the pub
On Saturday night, sleep late on Sunday, gape
At the telly after lunch, read news of rape,
Or give the car a rub—

And glow with a dim contentment. Maybe so:
Who would pretend to know?
Myself, I watch the taut abstractions crumple,
The white light, splintered, make a coloured world.
Customs are single, neighbours manifold:
I call no man 'a sample'.

Sid is a bus inspector, brisk and squat;
Fond of his garden plot,
TV, the Daily Herald, and keeping hens.
Smoked forty fags a day, then gave it up
With no more fuss than turning off a tap;
And outraged commonsense

By trying philosophy in evening classes.
We hear him as he passes—
Heading for the allotment on his bike—
Or damps a bonfire till it oozes smoke,
Greeting our children with his cheerful squawk
Of 'allow, luvly!—like

A cockney parrot. Edie, his town-bred wife,
Thinks ours is country life,

And Hayes unparalleled this side of heaven.
Gets up at six, works in a factory, stops
At twelve to clean and bake and visit shops;
Goes once a year to Devon,

Sends us a postcard and a tin of cream;
And spices her esteem
With love when we are good, with shy reproof
When ironies of travelling paint us naughty:
Our baby-sitter, at eleven-thirty,
Is martyred and aloof.

Then Mrs. Mildew, stately and correct:
Her son, an architect,
Preferred his freedom to her apple pie.
A close-up of her husband—from far off
An all-in wrestler (tired as well as tough)—
One morning gave the lie:

His glance was mild blue light, a dream distilled:
Half child half adult, filled
With aching distances, I thought him then;
Imagined frosty prudes—who polish brass
And judge creation through a pane of glass—
Refrigerating men.

The whole bright spectrum plays its colours here:
Leslie, an engineer,
Is gentle, skilled, obliging, full of fun.
Grace chats and chuckles, with her brilliant stare.
The world should be well thrashed by Mrs. Square.
And Mr. Hutchinson,

A lanky introvert, reserved but genial,
Complete with pipe and spaniel,
A walk to match his educated speaking,
Strides meditative through his broad demesne

(A strip of pavement and a scraggy lane).
Poor Mrs. Jawd is peeking—

Her black eyes tortured, mouth oblique and thin,
Her nose a shark's fin—
To see what someone's up to. Mr. Stool
Fought, and is fighting still, the wicked Germans:
Indoctrinates his son with martial sermons,
Then sends him to Sunday school.

Some go to church, some to the citadel.
Others would keep the bell
And damn the belfry. Half of them are back
Where Moses managed, but without the gush
Of sacred water and the burning bush:
Curled in their cul-de-sac.

But all of them suburban? All the same?
Contented, smug, tame?
A single road is opal in its moods.
And then you hear of one that went berserk;
Of rape, and children kidnapped in the park,
And death in Cranford Woods.

~

WAITING

All over now. A week ago
You smiled indomitably through
A blur of pain. Our hands clutched
Like meshing steel. I watched
Her head budging, her dainty thigh
Eased out, and heard her small prodigious cry.

She nestles, all nine pounds of her,
Deep in my arms: a private stare,

Hands neat as petals, the head I kissed
Warm like a bird's breast.
The pleasure's mine: no frills assuage
Her radical, uncomplicated rage.

No more than touching, glance, word,
Can satisfy a different need.
In the fulfilled mother's eyes
The lover's fancy plays.
Waiting, I suffer this delight
Of seeing more dryad in you every night.

~

HOW IT LOOKS FROM HERE

Will write, he said—and did so: immaculate lyrics
Piddling from crannies in the glum wilderness
Of his devotion to wife, children, job.
Got drunk occasionally; slipped into half a dozen
Sneaky adventures (but faithful in his fashion).
Pleasant marginal verse, the critics noted.

Will really write, he said. Threw up his job,
Let wife and children lump it. Felt himself twirling
In bottomless pits of nihilism and guilt.
Became a manic-depressive, in squalls of passion
Clawed his lyrics to shreds. Commitment, he said:
In sharing the world's grief lies my salvation.

Committed to the principle of commitment,
Retired to a mountain solitude. Hacked an epic
Of social disaster, pain on a cosmic scale,
In letter and pamphlet sniped from a cragged seclusion,
And striding through wind became impressively gnarled.
Was hailed, on his eightieth birthday, a major poet.

~

LET LIVE

Portobello Road Market

Characters themselves, guardians of
the distinct, the precious Manifold,
they keep amid their junk
a flair for freedom, for controlled
ease. You get a stink
of garlic, a scratch of music
from an old gramophone, a wink of earrings.
Hearing them talk you know
they love their trade, its jumbled
clarities, the identities of things.

And then of people. It's a way of living
without spoiling. Here also the buyers
find peaceful outlets, resolve discords
when selfishness acquires
what shapes its opposite. (So with words,
colours and melodies loved
for being the way they are.)
Repeatedly you see faces,
especially eyes, that will respect
the beautiful or bizarre.

Unpolitical? Yes: and civilized.
Coloured folk touch the white in crammed spaces;
the traders, neither curt nor smarmy,
leave you to poke around. There are no prices
for human beings to pay but those they choose.
The only worriers are the Salvation Army,
a ladies' unit marching past in twos,
with earnest jollity banging a tambourine.
(‘Joy Hour’, it says, outside the Citadel):
gently the crowds open, gently close.

But where the road ends you meet a headline
 on nuclear defence—remember then
 'important commitments': big machines
 that regulate little men
 sold on prestige; mean ends and endless means;
 warheads and racial hatred. May there be,
 loitering here, a few from the tensed city
 whose involvement is genuine, whose power and skill
 are indispensable—renewing their innocence
 by being guilty of triviality.

~

Maurice English

Two Poems

THE POET

For Peter Viereck

He comes alive
 By night. Like other men's, his mind
 Buries a waxworks and a Grand Guignol.
 There, figures of authority and fame
 Are judges and ideal ancestors:
 How still they stand. Amongst them furtively,
 Comedian monsters, vile apothecaries,
 Hermaphroditus and the hag madonnas,
 Crouch in their beds and graves
 And grottoes. By the walls,
 Naked or armored or in scarecrow rags,
 The skeletons. All attend, to move,
 The frightened tourists who will not come back.

In truth, these idolons,
 Are they not fathom-deep beneath
 The knowing daylight mind? Events are suns,
 A sea of time flows over all the puppets
 Submarine. On that sea's skin,
 We ride the Gulf Streams of recognizance,
 Visit the fronded coral, and at night
 Sleep on a friendly beach. Even
 As divers, helmeted in glass,
 Trailing an oxygen-tube, which one of us
 Ventures that midnight-under? To our minds
 Shipwreck is better than the strangling plunge.

But not to his:
 He comes alive by night. Naked, he glides
 Down to the theater whose actors need
 Only an audience to come alive.
 Amid the rocks and garbage of the deep
 The agon opens.

Meanwhile above,
 The anarchy of noon, iron of ice,
 All the fanged opposites, subside.
 Custom and ceremony smile
 And piecemeal April rains refresh
 Villain and virtue. On
 The sand and the sea's skin a little hour
 Nothing is truly damned, nothing can drown.

Below, his veins
 Emptied and the monsters stilled, the diver
 Groans and stirs. From the sea's floor
 His body, cramping with its death and birth,
 And softly wavering in slow tides at dawn,
 Rises to beach and welter. Perhaps,

Before anarchic noon returns,
A shell-collector will come by and say:
This is a strange fish from the bottom sea.

Only a few,
Seeing the rage of time reduced
And chaos for a moment shaped and stilled,
Listen and wonder; doubtful, seem to hear
Jubilant voices on the wind and waves,
Sad bells beneath the sea:
Glad music made from weeping, and the noise
Of bells beneath that sea
Where the spent diver welters on the shore.

~

LIFE AS LANGUAGES

1

With two tormented tongues the body talks
But neither tongue's wagwagging can translate
What the heart stammers in its orphanage.
No more can mind, mad in its maze of codes,
Spell out the deaf-mute gesturing of stars
Or the Braille motions of the wind and wave.

2

At tremulous three I encountered the world
All fright and amazement
Like an African learning Chinese.
Six, an assassin, I ambushed tomorrow
With the famished surprise—*Bozhe moi!**—
Of a Russian studying French.

* *Mon dieu!*

At cynical twelve, I confounded the tribes
By dismissing their warlocks and witches
As so many bogies who jabbered in magical Welsh.
Age of the heroes, sixteen! I stalked
Through a wilderness rank with gorillas and griffins
And panicked them all by ranting Castilian in strophes.

3

And then long years in the mad menageries
The owl sang Hebrew, which I caught by snatches,
The great cats ranted in their whiskey tenor;
The bird of Egypt told me of its sorrows,
The rhinopotaphants their heavy hunger.
—What a pain in the Erse, their idiom!

Though I never could master that, I learned
To parse bones' groans. I strained to hear
The silk susurrus of the deep-sea fishes

And a shell I found upon the 'Sconset beaches
Brought me, at dusk, the death-scream of a mammoth,
At dawn, faint flutings from tomorrow's planet.

4

Everywhere round me today, the Choctaw and Cherokee
Screech on the warpath. I turn away,
But hear the signaling skins.

Meanwhile out of the clouds at three in the morning and noon
Ambiguous mutters discuss me in Sanskrit and Latin.
The more that I listen, the less I gather a meaning.

Very soon now, I will float to a dingle island
To teach the fisherman's wife Greek in the sheets
And learn it back again as a living language.

How will death utter me, as *thou* or *you*?
And whispering where? In that cold cancel, flame,
Or the fanged rhetoric of ice,

Or warm, the lick of worms? No matter for
The horror in such lisping sibilants,
I'll will you, now and dying, my life's word:

As colors are the passions of the light,
There is some silence which we cannot scan
That's more than sound or stillness: it scoops up

My sighs and blubberings, our oaths and prayers,
Each click-and-whistle dialect of earth
And the gaunt screeching from the galaxies;

Like colors spinning into light, spins all
Such mouthings into meanings. Meant for whom?
The notes of that good news are not for us

Except as, caught up in the choraling,
We are some tone, or phasing of a tune,
In that sung silence harkened by itself.

~

Robert Kent

Two Poems

FINE ARTS

Stood under glass in the Museum of Fine Arts
The statuette of a young man named Wery
Withstands the orange age that had him marry
(As other blue-eyed Egyptian statuettes)

Stone: "I am Wery. My left leg still starts
Out of the stone, enough to make me man.
But prince, my second toe was earlier than
The stub. Rich paints epitomized my parts."

Oddly, Wery is right. Yet taste and caste
Made art because he's Wery: because the ogee
Of his fine girdle allows his legs the degree
Of groin-blue shadow stoniness and paste
Don't show: because inordinary shins change
Orangeness to a skinlier orange than orange.

~

THE POEM

Even now they have no word
I have never not unheard.
What I was about to say
Is, I've ever had my way
(Toll of eve and break of day).

Chorus, quatrain, sonnet, song,
Some do me to do no wrong.
Sometimes gay and sometimes sad,
Some make me make someone glad
Someone has not yet been had.

Sometimes tight and sometimes loose . . .
Frankly, I would rather tight.
If my lover must carouse,
Keep me reading half the night,
I want wicks trimmed, oil, light.

That old French whore they all know,
She could teach me a thing or two.
When her lover's in a sweat—
Late to come, early to get—
Lights herself a cigarette.

CRAB

The picture lied ; it showed you swathed in pink,
the doubled blossoms dripping petals down.
So I sought you out and put you here. I fed
and watered you ; I pruned your erring limbs.
Now not a dozen blooms for my reward.
But if my care has bent a lukewarm tree,
neither towering priest nor raging bush,
true father I, I will not spit you out.

He is my son, that boy who kicks the rock.
His anger pelts the earth like summer rain,
and though his toe dissents, the righteous joy
of martyrdom sweeps his other precincts.
O tree, that we were hot as he is now !
His cause is air ; his temples throb with Truth
(or blood) ; he lives a chosen child of God.
But note the toe ! the toe's dissent is deep,
though temples soon forget. My toe recalls
the anguish from a stone ; I am spit out.

Should I complain that you have grown but ten,
all pink, to thrill the eye ? I have not tried—
indeed, I'm not at all prepared to bloom,
even with paper petals and wire stems.
And yet I have spit out a line or two
to salve the anguished toe, to breed some peace,
to drip and drizzle on the burning bush.



Three Poems

INFLUENZA

When the sweat came into town
a boy went quick. In three days
his father put him in earth.
The woman in the frame house
said evil could be circled.
She dragged her shaking daughters
from their beds and round the room
while death waited in the ring.

Some thought it was heat would drive
the sweat away and John Pike
who knew he was hated for
fifty acres on the bluffs
rinsed his children's feet from dirt
some neighbor charmed, and built fires
to roast off their sweat in June,
but pineknots couldn't help him.

Lily Falmouth said it was
mirrors that gathered in germs
from miles around and she took
her looking glass in the dark
for fear of sunrise and drowned
her image in the river
but death came swimming careful,
taking a shrewd look at her.

Some were wise and they had pots
they kept boiling on the bank
with river water kindred
dipped out to scald their heads

and some of these ran raving
Jesus took up their lost souls
and some else just lost their hair
and swore the water saved them.

And the druggist had his cure
for a man or canebrake boar.
Take headbust sucked with a reed
from out an old charred barrel,
a pint of that, and then drink
his gin mixed with epsom salts
and store bluing. Some favored
that drink and others did not.

But no one dared swallow ice,
that was death in an instant.
So all the blistered summer
half the town went down the days
under the graveyard cypress
to see how death came slowly
with his black hearse and black team
while we clenched our dry hands.

We hated that devil's box
and black devils that fretted
our sorry time in harness
while we prayed deep in our dead.
That was the way it was then
all that July, all August,
and there wasn't any wind
plucking at the corn tassels.

Mother Fills with her fox face
she would have no black hearse
taking her eighty years off.
She came on a buckwagon

with bunting wove in the wheels
and two great bays to draw it.
And the wind roared up for her,
red manes tossing and flying.



ROSE OF LIMA, QUEEN CITY

It looks from the hillside like something
Fra Angelico painted, the red
rectangular lines and the bricked bell
steeped out of time. This church
honors Saint Rose in a city
spare of Peruvians as miracles.

It floods out whenever the river rises
and has a smell of common water
at the altars. Pilots of tows
needle the dark with searching lights
on long hauls from Pennsylvania
to catch the hour off her clock.

Saint Rose keeps a timid time.
I've heard her bell strike three
as if an afternoon surprised her.
The church itself may well surprise her.
Lima raised her golden altars; Germans
used wood on the unliturgical river.

But churches anywhere seem rude for her.
This virgin kept a holy time
and the world had not one thing
to wed her with. Her lover came quick
to kill the roses she grew fond of
and their image withered in her eyes.

Once I thought the rococo Christ
made her a dove to his flame and he held
her trembling in his hand like a bell.
I am not so sure of this today.
She may be undiscoverable, finite as silt
strong currents gentle into islands.



OLD MOON PLANTER

We needed the moon.
Whipped our mules all day
while the sun whipped us,
and left those fields spilled
over sod with black
soil. And full mooned nights
we drove our wives there
yelling hi-ki-wee
ki-wee-ah and they
running like stark does
down that naked land.
And when they winded
we buckled their knees
and took them on top
those furrows milky
with their great moons full.
Then the green corn came
like mad I'll tell you.



Robert Foster

FOOL'S SONG

The dead came out of the sea
with coral in their hair,
the dead came out of the sea;
Who was I to sing or care
of my dry-land-love
under the stare
of the dead from under the sea.

A worm crawled out of the earth
with skull bones in its teeth,
a worm crawled out of the earth;
Who was I to cry with grief
at the rot and rag
under the heath
when the worm crawled out of the earth.

A bird fell out of the sky
with arrows in its wing,
a bird fell out of the sky;
Who was I to chant or sing
of the love of God
under the sting
of a bird from out of the sky.

My Lord stepped out of the coals,
with flames inside his skin,
my Lord stepped out of the coals;
Who was I to lead him in
to a place of rest
out of our pain
when my Lord stepped out of the coals.



Peter Levi, S.J.

Four Poems

I

Day after day I wake into
this blazing light and bitter wind
as if the whole sky had been skinned
there are no woods to walk into
their branches are all rattling
the reeds rustle their harshest note
drinking the air with dying throat
today I would be quite willing
if you wanted to hide all day
or walk perhaps—we'd find somewhere—
we could take bread and eat it there
but somewhere quiet anyway
we could imagine a storm there
nothing else is so private
refusals mental acts of flight
disturbances of the atmosphere.



II

Say that the earth sweating with moisture
bedews the atmosphere,
or fleeces of vapour straining in the wind
drape a revolving sphere,
the oceans and their islands smoke and stream
with clouds as light as steam.

Fuming to blue air loosed in sunlight
quietly circulates,
or pales and blows, drops into darkness
lightly without weights:
then circling earth leans over, changes season
without regret or reason.

Say on the crust of such a planet
there were humans
breeding together in numberless generations
as beautiful as swans
still carrying the smell of their forest
its violence, its unrest:

creatures as terrible as the mated buzzard,
the wild boar's working eye,
the ape's sadness and the serpent's hunger,
the hare's delicacy,
like the rain-waking violet, a small thing
but rooted, and beautiful looking.

Then add that such a creature's language
scraped heaven, spoke with God,
broke planet into rock, rock into atom,
touched the true and good.

There are no such words anywhere in the universe,
no phrases, not this verse.



III

For Denis

What is it our life now? like twin figures
that tick and tock in and out of the clock,
or birds unquiet over the dim pastures
half-heard half-seen an hour before the cock:

like two weeds growing from forgotten roots
with pink faces by streams, or in between
saplings and brambles in the uncleared woods
of perfect natural shapes breathing to green:

but under the vaulted branches of great trees
their cloistral groins of shifting light and shade
the old oil-smelling tractor shakes at ease,
which will be pitiless and quick to invade

those undefended natural solitudes.
Few weeds flourish. My life has been
a meditation made walking in the woods,
mere time, mere bird's voices, mere breathing green.

~

IV

Nothing but ashes and exhausted blood
time's fevered leavings build my skeleton
which in the intensity of its first flood
sang and stung at the channels it ran on
but now cold creature in its dripping falls
speaks its self-echoing desolate noises
like the small rain dropping on black canals
mid-winter chills it quickly it might freeze,
and nothing now rouses it from dreaming
but thin and slack it washes restlessly
where root on root blood-drinking ash-eating
my skeleton puts out branches like a tree
like shattered trees whose always hardening wood
can feed on slow streams of exhausted blood.

~

About the Contributors

To celebrate the completion of Volume III of *Poetry Northwest*, founded in June, 1959, by Carolyn Kizer, Nelson Bentley, and Richard Hugo, we give you this distinguished international issue.

RICHMOND LATTIMORE, who contributed the first poem to our first issue, leads off our twelfth. His marvelous new book, *Sestina for a Far-Off Summer*, is published by the University of Michigan Press.

CAROL HALL, of the Northwest, contributed five poems to our first issue. Minnesota published her book, *Portrait of Your Niece*. She has recently had six poems in the *New York Times*.

JOHN LOGAN makes his first appearance here. Many people, including Stanley Kunitz, consider him one of the most gifted younger (that means 40ish) poets of the day. Knopf is publishing his new collection, *Spring of the Thief*.

MAY SWENSON had three poems in our wall-to-wall women's issue, Volume I, Number 3 (in honor of Ruth Pitter); these fabulous five are from her book, *To Mix with Time: New and Selected Poems*, published by Scribner's this month.

JOHN BERRYMAN, author of that extraordinary work of art, *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*, makes his first appearance in *Poetry Northwest*. Other sections of what he calls "my insufferable poems" are appearing in *Poetry*, *New Republic*, and *Harper's*. We print three sections (or all we could get our hooks into).

RICHARD KELL is a leading young Irish poet. His first book, *Control Tower*, was published by Chatto & Windus last year. He is represented in the new Oxford anthology, *Six Irish Poets*, edited by Robin Skelton.

MAURICE ENGLISH is also Irish, by descent, and Harvard-Irish at that, although he is still living in Chicago rather than in our nation's capital. Like Kell, he appears here for the first time. And, incidentally, he is the managing editor of the University of Chicago Press.

ROBERT KENT is the former poetry editor of *Minnesota Review* and a splendidly proficient translator as well as a poet. We will print some Latin translations of his in a subsequent issue, which will be his second appearance.

RICHARD LLOYD-JONES (first appearance) lives in Iowa City. He has chosen to remain mute to queries about his life and work, so we can say no more.

JOHN KNOEPFLE is a graduate student at Saint Louis University in Missouri and is having his fortieth birthday this month. He thinks this is disgusting. We don't. He has been published in *Poetry* and expects to have a book sometime this year (Helicon Press).

ROBERT FOSTER is twenty-one (we hate to do this to Mr. Knoepfle). He is a student at Victoria College, on Vancouver Island, and this is his first appearance anywhere.

PETER LEVI, S.J., the English poet, published a book of poems, *The Gravel Ponds* (Macmillan), in 1960. He has just introduced the post-humous *Poems* (Dolmen Press) of his friend Richard Selig, late of this University. Recently, he has co-edited and translated the *Selected Poems* of Yevgeny Yevtushenko (Dutton, 1962).

The cover design is from the original sumi ink painting contributed to this magazine by MARK TOBEY, which appeared on our first cover.

Some Current Books by Our Contributors

*Countermove*s, by Charles Edward Eaton (Abelard-Schuman).

The Norfolk Poems of Hayden Carruth (Prairie Press).

The Wheel of Summer, by Joseph Langland (Dial).

John Donne's Lyrics, a study by Arnold Stein (Minnesota).

Also Recommended

By the Waters of Manhattan, by Charles Reznikoff (New Directions).

Could be called Jewish haiku. Must reading for other poets. (Mr. Reznikoff will read his poems at the University of Washington the evening of February 21.)

The Next Room of the Dream, by Howard Nemerov (Chicago).

Brilliant poetry, much of it coruscatingly funny.

CAROLYN KIZER and EMILE SNYDER (founder of *Hip Pocket Poems*) are jointly conducting a program on Comparative Poetry on KRAB-FM, Seattle, Wednesdays at 9:00 P.M. Baudelaire! Demotic Greek! Lallans! What next?

Highlights from *Poetry Northwest*

Poetry Northwest, Volume II (1961-62)

Numbers 1 and 2: Cover by Morris Graves.

Poems by William Stafford, Harold Witt, Joseph Langland, Donald Hall, Eve Triem, Thom Gunn, James B. Hall, Sister Mary Gilbert, and others. \$1.25

Number 3: Cover and four illustrations by Carl Morris.

Poems by Hayden Carruth, Vi Gale, John Woods, George Woodcock, David Cornell DeJong, John L'Heureux, Florence Gould, and others. \$0.90

Number 4: Cover and illustration by Jean Cartier.

Poems by Jean Garrigue, Kenneth O. Hanson, Joanne de Longchamps, John Tagliabue, Harold Witt, Charles Gullans, Richard F. Hugo, and others. Prize-winning poems by Hayden Carruth. \$0.90

Poetry Northwest, Volume III (1962-1963)

Number 1: Cover and illustration by Mark Tobey.

Poems by W. S. Merwin, Donald Finkel, Robert Conquest, Rafael Pineda, Brother Antoninus, Marya Fiamengo, Charles Edward Eaton, and others. \$0.90

Number 2: Cover by Fritz Eichenberg.

Poems by four leading contemporary Japanese poets: Hagiwara, Ito, Jimbo, Murano. Also, Constance Urdang, Robert Sward, Philip Legler, Hazard Adams, and others. \$0.90

Number 3: Cover and two cuts by Richard Gilkey.

Poems by David Galler, M. L. Rosenthal, Maxine Kumin, John L'Heureux, Eve Triem, Stanley Moss, Joanne de Longchamps, Robert Peterson, and others. \$0.90

Number 4: Cover by Mark Tobey.

Poems by Richmond Lattimore, Carol Hall, John Berryman, John Logan, May Swenson, Maurice English, Richard Kell, Peter Levi, Robert Kent, and others. \$0.90

(Volume I is no longer available)