



# POETRY NORTHWEST

SPRING-SUMMER, 1960

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4

60c



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## POETRY NORTHWEST

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## POETRY NORTHWEST

SPRING-SUMMER • 1960

*John Holmes*

### Four Poems

#### RE-ARRANGEMENTS

The difference between discarding and throwing away  
Shows when fingers take it, the long arm rises.  
Whenever the thing came, today is its last day.  
It has no more surprises.

The long arm swings out, and the dull object hangs.  
A shuffle in the pattern of possession stops.  
Then love, a door that was held a little open, bangs,  
And whatever the lump was, drops.

Discarding means putting it in miscellaneous,  
Pulled from the alphabet that included all.  
Sometimes the eyes narrowing show how ridiculous  
It is to think this cruel.

The fingers pinch a corner, arm hardly moves,  
Tossing it to a mixed pile off at the side.  
Occasional re-arrangement always improves.  
Later one can decide.

What is decided later is that change is rewarding.  
Need, nearness, are not forever what they were once.  
It might as well be now. Throwing away or discarding,  
There is no real difference.

## HAMLET WITH A LICENSE

Heads break, not on real curbstones or cliffs,  
But on must; on to be; at the hands of a clock;  
Those rocky musts we thought were cloudy ifs.  
Stumbling on cobbles, we unpocket luck.

It is a curse of a kind on the age we live in  
That I, even I, should argue this out of my cave,  
That I, lacking philosophy, shamed in religion,  
Confess thus, thus deny, thus seek and seek my love.  
Worse is knowing I said Yes, in an exuberance,  
In good faith Yes, Yes with all well-wishing love,  
And now wish No, as I save up breath for existence.  
No. No. No to the greed I so suffered of.  
I have damned and desired historical good weather,  
Hamlet with a license, wondering what's next for us.

I want it for everyone, though, this ease together.  
Yet fear for it. There are old, old gods against us.  
My grandfather did all he could, and my father, to get it.  
Do, do. If you want it, you do something about it.

It was a live time, green and windy, going west,  
When rivers had no names, and night was nightfall.  
Ignoring the wild gods, I turned it into Must,  
And wrote laws against myself in the marble capitol.

We must break those laws, though we break our bones.  
We meant springing green, never never meant stones.

## FIELDBOOK REVISED

At the time of fresh green tips on all pine branches,  
As if they had been dipped, the lady-slippers are out,  
And blueberry bushes are in white flower. At this time  
Small mindless merciless flies gather at any face, or wrist,  
And bite. The question-mark fern, the common fern  
Will answer itself in a few days of sun, and be two feet tall.  
By then the lady-slipper will be dried up, the pine-tips dark,  
The blueberry flower hard green dots. The flies are gone.

The nation is at its midsummer, or a half-century earlier.  
Insect and foliage, a nation has its four seasons each once.

A man, with men to remind him of every age he has been,  
Never knows himself, in any of his years at the very time.  
Green-tipped boyhood he understands when he is old bark.  
The man at forty-five says no one tells him how to be older,  
Though fern or gnats could have told him, or berry-flowers:  
One knows what he is by what grows near him, in what season.  
Lightning, fungus, blight, ice, drought, rot, and dark  
Showing a man what he might have been without their teaching,  
Come too late, and are in any case more than he needed.

The nation, being this man by millions having ancestors,  
Could know which flowers can be picked for what birthday.  
But nation is a word, not a knowing; neither housekeeper  
Nor historian. History is a fieldbook twenty men write,  
One or two men read, and nobody or everybody, the nation,  
Knows what to do with. After summer, the fall, then winter.



## PORTRAIT: MY WIFE

"I'd rather be loved, and love, than be Shakespeare."  
Ambition is what calls the mountain till it comes,  
Or goes where it is and gnaws the mountain down.  
But she is not ambitious. She makes a choice,  
Which, being she, is foregoing neither wholly,  
As: how should she not be of the many-parted poet  
Miranda sometimes, Lear's daughter, Elizabeth,  
Or not be as she is, fresh beauty to the use?  
She writes; is a woman; Shakespeare would know her.

As for the other, loving her makes me that poet.  
Once I desired her, not seeing who she was,  
Having been then married to her a morning's years,  
To the straight smooth back, the opening kiss,  
The laughter a red peony thrown and bursting.

She is my stranger every day. She is wretched  
With doubts; everyone seeks her reassurance;  
Quick-tempered as firecrackers, scornful, clean;  
A spiritual materialist, Eve with clothes on.  
No one knows her loneliness, or believes it;  
Not I, but that it is the edge of my world,  
And when she comes back, then I can come back  
From looking over. She is warm, her cheek is warm.  
Bored with sameness, we re-read one another;  
We break up housekeeping to keep our house alive,  
And are thought a steady pair. O, she has her wish!  
She, whatever she does next, is my one wish.

## Hayden Carruth The Carpenter's Flute

"All, however, that these thinkers [the ones Aristotle is challenging, i.e., practically everybody] do is to describe the specific characteristics of the soul; they do not try to determine anything about the body which is to contain it, as if it were possible, as in the Pythagorean myths, that any soul could be clothed upon with any body—an absurd view, for each body seems to have a form and shape of its own. It is as absurd as to say that the art of carpentry could embody itself in flutes; each art must use its tools, each soul its body."

—*De Anima*, Bk. I, Ch. 3.

And if in the lucidities of heaven's  
cerebral blue the bloom of chaos spreads?  
Time slopes and slops and slews the ark awry?

In the wigged years, that time speech glittered  
Like the candles branching on the intaglioed walls,  
My hammer clanged those square-wrought nails home

In a house for pigs where I heard piggy speech,  
Or once, a slave in Carthage, I planed beams  
In the shipwright's broiling yard; and no doubt wept

My fortunes after hours—I don't remember.  
The meaning is always now; and now is a florid  
Monkey making dirty disorder in

Our tree, the which disturbance I had thought  
Was opportunity for underlings,  
The gift of music and a tone to tell

The blue that had been mine as much as theirs.  
But all's at odds, wrong bodies and wrong souls.  
I've read more books, I say, in these two decades

Than in twenty centuries, and my head spins,  
A whistling top or pinwheel shooting fragments,  
My hand grips the pencil like a hammer claw.

Life is a job in someone else's shop.  
Tools misplaced, the materials old and tawdry—  
What can one do but do the best one can?

If it must be a tune, then let it be a tune,  
Broken and strange, this message from below.  
Listen, for God's sake, to the carpenter's flute.

George Garrett

## Crows at Paestum

The crows, a hoarse cone in the wind,  
a swarm of flies, so small and busy  
they seem, so tossed by breeze  
from mountains where the snow  
glitters like a brooding skullcap,  
the crows, I say, swirl and cry out  
and rise to be torn apart in tatters,  
a shower of burnt cinders, fall  
in one swoop to a perch in the sun  
on the lee side of a Grecian temple.

Sheep too. Soft music of light  
bells. I've seen them grazing  
in other ruins, cropping shadowed grass  
among the broken emblems of empire,  
and once with the dome of St. Peter's  
for background, behind and above them  
like a gas balloon on a string.  
There behind me posed Garibaldi,  
bronzed above a squalling traffic circle.  
Now only crows and sheep and a yawning guard

share the ruins of Paestum with us.  
The wind off the mountains chills  
and westward the sea is whitecapped too,  
is all of sparkling like new coins.  
"And they came nigh unto the place  
and there builded a great city."  
To what end? That a Greek Relic  
should draw the husband and the wife  
from snug *pensione* with camera and guidebook?  
For a few sheep and the exploding crows?

I am uneasy among ruins, lacking  
the laurel of nostalgia, romantic wand,  
and cannot for a purpose people empty places  
with moral phantoms, ghostly celebrations.  
I listen to the light bells, watch  
the crows spring to life again, sheer  
off and fall to wrestling the wind,  
thinking: "If sheep may safely stand  
for that which, shorn and dipped,  
is naked, bleating soul, then

"I take these crows (whose name  
is legion) for another of the same:  
the dark, the violent, the harsh  
lewd singers of the dream, scraps  
of the shattered early urn, cries  
cast out, lost and recovered, all  
the shards of night. Cold air  
strums the fretted columns, and  
these are the anguished notes  
whose dissonance is half my harmony."



*James Dickey*  
**The Prodigal**

"See!" he cried, "the dead dust turns  
To green, in Umbria! It burns  
To lift my steps on the road  
To Heaven, stride on stride!"  
He is that one I let out  
On the old, unwavering, flat  
Track that walks to Assisi.  
Of a child alone in this country

I had no knowledge, but only  
Great fear, and creative awe,  
Yet knew I must let him go  
Forth, on the April plain,  
Believing dust-devils a sign  
Of life, where plodding cows  
Drew stubborn, time-killing ploughs  
Slowly, to raise the spring

From Etruscan tombs, that it sing.  
All day I sat in the door.  
The wall and I sweated with fear,  
Looking out the gate down the road.  
Then slowly, up from my side,  
One arm of mine stretched out  
Toward that high crumbling gate,  
And, poised as the dead, I saw

I beckoned, not him, but dry  
Beggars, the halt and the lame,  
Those men most immune to time  
My guide-book had not allowed:  
Who shambled to me in a crowd  
Of eternal gestures, tossed  
Away upon sunlight, and lost  
To all living creatures but me,

Who sensed their identity,  
And mine, with cattle and birds,  
And the holiest movement of words,  
Though none of these was my son,  
And I had been brother to none.  
Among them, I wondered if he  
Were now of such company,  
Or if he would come driving sheep,

His blond, living image deep  
In their eyes, or holding a cock  
On his wrist, to sell me  
For sharp-edged American money.  
He came at dusk, and leaping  
Like a child released by the spring  
From a tomb. At the sill he sat  
Smelling of sun, and of what

Is gone when the sun is gone  
To dust, somewhere between  
This place and a holy town.  
A farmer had set him astride  
A bull's earthen neck, to ride  
Through chickens and goats and pigs,  
Moving deeply in time with the legs  
Of a patient beast, to the church

Below the steep mountain-side  
Where a saint's light whispered in shade.  
He had clambered alone through the wood  
And sat on the knotted bough  
Whose birds are still pondering how  
They may live by the sermon they heard  
Preached there in the leaf-like mother  
Tongue, by their human brother.

He had come back onto the plain  
Into dust, and the dusty green.  
"Something turned in my mind," he said.  
"I walked up a hill from the road,  
And where I had stumbled alone  
Were my many steps arising alone  
Into air, and porous with sun,  
Each feather-foot standing alone:

And then the whole space of a wind  
Moved; for miles my footprints danced  
Without me, and I with them.  
I climbed the vast tree of the air  
And leapt in my footsteps, where  
They were dancing like leaves, over sheep  
And goats, at the heart of my life,  
And a saint whole-heartedly sang

Through animals, making the spring  
Abound. What to do, if cast among  
The beasts and birds of that song  
In the dead's frail, many dusts,  
Raised up from the singing beasts  
In my own resurrected stride  
Through the chanting, holy word,  
I have come to myself, at last,

Thick-plastered with animal dust,  
Before this house, and find  
The poor of this country around  
My earthly father, who hands me  
Handfuls of American money,  
And grins as he gives it away  
Right and left to the halt and the lame,  
With a cock on his timeless arm,

With a strange mote of dust in his eye,  
With beggars and children about him  
Silent as leaves, all of whom  
He seems to be blessing with silence:  
What to do, when out of that dance  
Of birds, I have fallen to earth,  
Whose steps on the white road knew  
How to bear my wild body to Heaven,

And I have walked home, forgiven,  
Instead, and found my father  
And beggars and blind goats together  
Grinning, while a dead wall drips  
Human sweat as it keeps  
Shining without any sun,  
And the last of the money is gone,  
And the cock on his shoulder hops

To mine, as my body drops  
Beside him down on the sill:  
How shall I know who I am,  
And how can I tell it to him?  
Shall I sing like a bird or a bull,  
Or dance upon light, or fall  
Like a leaf, now I can give  
More human love than I have?"

*Kenneth O. Hanson*

### Five Poems

#### SPRING

The black cat has folded  
himself on his knees  
under the apple tree.



Blossoms are falling.  
One has fallen on his nose.  
He is a tiger in Mozambique.

He ignores the postman  
passing. Come, cat  
quiet as a kumquat. There

are no tigers in Mozambique.  
The postman is passing.  
Blossoms are falling.

#### WEST GREENLANDERS

who  
kept the stone age going  
north of Thule, duelled  
in public to a hand drum  
while they sang their  
rich obscenities in rime  
impromptu, turn by turn.  
He won who proved most  
master of abuse. O  
useful muse! To please  
that small community  
and win your case! They  
needed every man where  
life came not more com-  
plicated than the primrose  
and the gnat, until one  
day religion and a Danish  
rifle shocked them up  
to date, and primrose gnat  
their stone age arctic  
indiscreet and skillful  
roundabout, died out.

#### THE MAP BY ORTELIUS

Gnarled mariners who sought  
exotic landing somewhere past  
the loud huzzahs of casting off  
brought us these flat reports.  
What most we see is effortless.  
The coastlines are almost never  
true. The waves are regular.  
Winds, known to be contrary,  
keep their corners, breathing  
flowers or pestilence, and the land  
seems merely a kind of fixed excuse,  
rarely inhabited.

Not so the sea  
where playfully in foreign river mouths  
the hippocampus floats, half  
dolphin and half horse. Even  
the ornaments are false. The mountains  
rise into blue air (and it is blue)  
where roughly north northwest  
past howdahs of rajahs in june grass  
the Great Khan swaying down  
crosses the afternoon. All Tartary  
hangs in the balance. A darkening  
silence hides the walled white towns  
while off the map, in harbors  
made to anchor in, cantankerous  
crewmen bring their barque  
by fixed stars home, naming  
the names where they have been  
to win their voyage round again.

## TO KEEP WHAT IS CLEAR, CLEAR

The common sparrow, nothing  
to lose, sits in the squares  
of an iron fence, in range  
of flowering grasses missed  
by the mowers when they cropped  
the lot, kept by the electric  
company. Danger, in red.  
High Tension. Do Not Touch.

The birds, who know nothing  
about electricity, but know  
what they like, knock seeds  
from the inclining grass, before  
they fly off, leaving the fenced air  
charged with their moral message.

1

## BEFORE THE STORM

One summer, high in Wyoming  
we drove nine miles and paid  
to see the great whale, pickled  
and hauled on a flatcar cross-country.  
"Throat no bigger'n a orange,"  
the man said, in a smell  
to high heaven. I wondered how  
Jonah could weather that rubbery household  
tangled in fish six fathoms down.  
Now beached by the sun and  
shunted to a siding, the gray  
beast lay dissolving in chains.

It was none of my business  
late in the day to sidle past  
ropes and poke, nostril and lip  
and eye till Hey! said the man,  
keep away from my whale!  
But too late, too late. I had  
made my mark. The eye in its  
liquid socket swung, the jaw  
clanged shut, and all the way home  
through the bone-dry gullies  
I could hear the heart as big  
as a bushel beat. O weeks I went  
drowned under day while mile-high  
the red-winged grasshoppers span  
like flying fish, over the vacant lots.

1

*Joanne de Longchamps*

## Three Poems

### A FURTHER DIALOGUE FOR CLOWNS

This is the day the self divides  
and mind takes sides—  
flesh says *fly*, uneasy on its bones  
cries *out* and *go*—but the day,  
dismally set for dialogue,  
bids body stay

as mind revolves on discontent,  
for being greedy yet afraid  
of mirrors, movement, change,  
it grabs to hold and hoard  
and if arrangements shift,  
jumps to rearrange



and catches on the dream of pride,  
those fabled roles assigned inside,  
each one heroic in its ease,  
paced to please and for applause—  
The private dramas fail  
but self will circle on their flaws

considering a fate of fools  
and inadvertent clowns  
abused with laughter, bruised by falls—  
The fictions of perfection bear  
no clutching at preposterous pants  
or pride caught in its underwear.

Clown inside, you are my fear  
as I endure a captive child,  
the fatal whisper in my ear:  
*Be good, be brave, be beautiful*  
*and everyone will surely love you—*  
Advice impossible to prove  
even if true.

#### THE FRIGHTENED LOVERS

The walls were all constructed  
in their cautious heads—  
the elaborate maze and boxwood puzzle  
snaring them from Castle Bliss  
they made of fear and sad advice  
and dreaming a dragon, named it **THEY**.  
In crazed and furtive clutchings  
the lovers sighed to say  
that should they dare a bed together  
**THEY** would spy and find them there.

He rolled a rockpile of taboos,  
she compiled her list of sorrows  
and suffered stony death inside,  
in mind, where the stones hide.  
Yet driven to the feared excess  
by irresistible caress  
both forgot the dragon named  
to guard a guilty gate—  
yielding, they strained and wept.

And very soon, but late  
over an indulgent land  
they searched their vanished barriers,  
marvelling to understand  
why no one cared and no one came  
to cry them shame.

#### DRINKING

Spiral, the soar of euphoria  
as taut world slants to a splendor,  
tipping a mesage of mirrors;  
double-image and double-entendre—  
How tight world cracks like a melon  
all hard green leaning to ripe,  
a fruit of eyes and near voices  
each seed a mouth-shape for sighs  
that swells, unsheathes with a shout  
and spits the stone of a question out,  
the question of seeds and asking faces  
splitting the husk of air with voices  
as blood becomes a beast of gardens,  
lolling, gorged on stony questions  
and the sly scene stiffens, hardens.

Whirled in dizzy arcs down-spiral  
and plunging inward to a core  
the seeds are silenced, reassemble  
as broken flesh of fruit is drawn,  
maternal, to the settling seed  
and over fruit the ribbing rind  
meshes an encircling skin  
that seems a shape of world to keep  
all voices and all questions in  
as single-imaged and unanswered  
both beast and garden sleep.

John D. Engels  
Spring Bass

We were late — the bass  
Forced up Pensaukee Friday,  
Paused like commas in  
The curled mud-grass,

Last year were early and  
We hooked them, each day  
Clumped and scaled  
Our triumph; in the hand

They died at once, for weak  
Air and a foreign sun,  
But are remembered:  
Had a tiger cheek,

This year again finned there,  
And — gone before we missed them —  
Tried against the thin lawns  
And the forcing air.

卵のかげ 蔵原伸一郎

みんなのこえが 天にのぼるのだが  
みんなのかなしみが 雲に映るのだが  
みんなの夢が 風に吹かれるのだが —

天は光がまぶしくて  
かんがえることもできはしない  
どこまでふかれてゆけばよいのかしら  
いつまで待つても  
返事がこないのだよ どこからも

みしらぬ沙漠に小さな花が咲いて  
どこかの海辺にくらげたちがあそんでいる  
ばかり  
時空の中で月が小さくはてゆくのだ  
空間の奥で太陽も消えてなくなるのだ

卵のかげみだこに うす青く  
地球のかげが  
虚無にうつっているのは美しいな



卵のかけ

藏原伸二郎

みんなのこえが 天にのぼるのだが  
みんなのかなしみが 雲に映るのだが  
みんなの夢が 風に吹かれるのだが――

天は光がまぶしくて

かんがえることもできはしない

どこまでふかれてゆけばよいのかしら  
いつまで待つても

返事がこないのだよ どこから

みしらぬ沙漠に小さな花が咲いて

どこかの海辺にくらげたたちがあそんで  
いるばかり

時宙の中で月が小さくなつてゆくのだ

空宙の奥で太陽も消えてなくなるのだ

卵のかけみだいに うす青く

地球のかけが

虚無にうつてゐるのは美しいな

Shinjiro Kurahara  
THE SHADOW OF AN EGG

# 花 火

笹沢 美 明

Yoshiaki Sasazawa  
FIREWORKS

部屋の中で人々は黙ってゐた、  
盲目の女の話が途切れたので。

庭から花の匂ひが

ほのかに、ほのかに漂って来た。

そのとき、誰かが一寸、叫んだ。

それは静かな座を<sup>たち</sup>割るやうに乱した。

花火が瞬間、夜空を金色に刷いて消えた。

他のものは誰にも見なかったのだ。

夜空に再び現はれるものを待ってゐた。

秘かな心を互ひに遷くしながら

女を劬はる言葉を探してゐた。

盲目の女は熱い心で希望を持ってゐた。

自分と別の世界の人々の心をつなぐために。

周囲の人は儚ない希望を持ってゐた。

しかし待たれるものは来なかった。

夜空は闇を流してゐるだけであった。

庭のアカシアの梢がほのかに光ってゐた。



石の思想

藏原伸三郎

廣い河原にいつて  
石の間にもぐり込むのが好きだ

石たち自らの追憶 その三十億年は

昨日のようだ

二十億年前の 青い蝶が

ほら 河系をよこぎつてゆくのが見える

石たちの上を 時空がゆつくりゆつくり

あるそでいる

ほら一匹のバツが

しどいに 巨視像となつて

永劫の空に映つてゐる

光りかざり また光る 雲たち

廻轉しながらいつか無の中に消える地球

ぼくも石たちも

やがて 消え去るために

今は

光つてゐる

Shinjiro Kurahara  
THE THINKING STONES

## 地下鐵

阪本越郎

私は毎日 棺にいます

見らぬ人々と いつしか

私はあわたいしく 釘をうつ  
自分の棺に

そうして 都合の方へ  
生埋めに され行く

Etsuro Sakamoto  
SUBWAY

# 秋

壺井繁治

秋は冷たい寶石のかげら  
きらきら光りながら  
わたしの胸へころげこむ

Shigeji Tsuboi  
AUTUMN

秋は透明なこころの鏡  
そつとのぞいてみると  
わたしの涙と微笑を映す

秋はわたしの白い柩  
ひそかに地中へ埋めてみると  
傍で虫豸がちろちろと泣く



秋

壺井繁治

秋は冷たに寶石のかげら  
きらきら光りながら  
わたしの胸へこぼれこぼ

Shigeji Tsuboi  
AUTUMN

秋は透明な二つの鏡  
そつとのどいてみると  
わたしの涙と微笑を映す

秋はわたしの白く  
ひそかに地中へ埋めてみると  
傍で虫豸がちらちらと泣く

## FIVE CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE POEMS

*Translated by Makoto Ueda*

On pages 21 to 26 appear reproductions of these poems  
in the poets' own writing.

*Shinjiro Kurahara*

### The Shadow of an Egg

The voice of everyone goes up to heaven,  
The grief of everyone falls on the clouds,  
The dream of everyone blows in the wind, yet —

Light is bright in heaven  
And I cannot even think.  
How far am I going to be blown?  
I've waited long,  
Yet no answer has come, from anywhere:

Only a little flower blooming on a strange desert,  
Many jellyfish playing near a coast somewhere.  
The moon will grow smaller inside of time;  
The sun too will disappear in the heart of space.

Like the shadow of an egg, pale blue,  
The shadow of the earth  
Is mirrored on nothingness. How beautiful!

*Yoshiaki Sasazawa*

## Fireworks

In the room people were silent,  
As the blind woman's story came to a pause.  
From the garden the fragrance of flowers  
Faintly, faintly came floating.  
Then someone uttered a cry, a brief cry,  
Carved into the quietness.  
In an instant, fireworks brushed the night sky in gold and  
disappeared.  
As no one but he had seen it,  
They all waited for what would reappear in the night sky.  
Hiding their secret hearts from one another,  
They were seeking words to console the woman.  
The blind woman kept a hope in her hot heart,  
To tie herself to the hearts of the men in a different world.  
The men around her kept a vague hope,  
Yet what they awaited never came.  
In the night sky only darkness was flowing.  
In the garden the top of an acacia was dimly gleaming.

*Shinjiro Kurahara*

## The Thinking Stones

I am fond of going  
To a wide river-beach and mingling with stones.

The stones' own recollection. Their two billion years  
Are like yesterday.  
A blue butterfly of two billion years ago;  
Look, she is flying across the river-beach.

Time is walking, slowly, slowly,  
Over the stones.

Look, a grasshopper  
Gradually grows into a gigantic image  
That falls on the sky of eternity.

The clouds that shine, darken, and shine again;  
The globe that rolls and disappears into nothing some day;  
I and the stones also.  
Only to disappear soon,  
Now  
Are shining.

*Etsuro Sakamoto*

## Subway

I get into a coffin every day  
together with people I do not know

I hastily hammer the nails  
on my own coffin

and go towards the metropolis  
to be buried alive.

*Shigeji Tsuboi*

## Autumn

Autumn is a cold fragment of jewel.  
Glittering and twinkling,  
It tumbles into my bosom.

Autumn, clear mirror of the heart;  
As I glimpse you  
I see reflected my tears and smiles.

Autumn is my white coffin.  
As I bury it secretly under the ground  
I hear an insect chirping near by.



## *Bienvenido Lumbera*

### Haliging Asin

Natatandaan mo ba ang asawa ni Lot?  
Bulag sa ningas ng tinig ng Diyos,  
Nagnakaw ng sulyap sa nagliliyab na lungsod,  
At biglang napatulos sa tinitindigang gulod.  
Kahit na pangala'y wala mang naiwan.  
Bakit di natiis na di lumigon?  
Kung maburok na gunita'y nawaksi sa Sodom,  
Kanino, at sa aling tipanan ito pinagtalikupan  
Ng bagsak ng apoy at asupreng ulan?  
Naisip mo ba minsan man kung anong naramdaman  
Nang maging asing malamig ang katawang laman?  
At alin ang naunang naging asin:  
Utak bang pinagsidlan ng alaala ng mabangong diban  
At pawisang katawan; o piging pinagtungkuan  
Ng nasang siniga pagyakap sa karimlan?  
Puso kayang tinupok ng hapis sa siklab ng utos,  
O matang pinagbatisan ng maalat na agos ng panghihinayang?  
Sinong makapag-uulat kung gaanong kapait ng asin  
Sa bibig na dati'y bolbok ng masaganang pulot?  
Sa mga bagay na ito'y wala sa ating nakatatarok —  
Kahit pa sugong anghel na bihis ay liwanag  
At ispada'y lintik at tinig ay kulog.  
Marahil, mga sagot ay lihim ng tubig ng ulang  
Marahang nanangis nang agnasin ang haliging asin,  
Na sinuob ng masangsang na usok sa kinatirikang gulod,  
Sinumpang bantayog ng nagunaw na lungsod.

## *Bienvenido Lumbera*

### Pillar of Salt

Remember the wife of Lot?  
Blind to the flame of God's voice,  
Stole a glance at the burning city  
And was suddenly a stump on the hill where she stood.  
Nothing remains of her, not even a name.  
Why sneak the final look?  
If she forgot her body's memory at Sodom,  
In whom, and in what clandestine room was it trapped  
By the crash of fire and sulphur rain?  
Have you wondered ever how it felt  
When cold salt assumed her flesh?  
Before all else, what turned to salt:  
Brain that urned remembrance of perfumed beds  
And sweat-stained bodies; or loins  
Where desire was fired to brighten the dark embrace?  
Heart reduced to ashes by the sudden flare of command,  
Or eyes that sprang a saline stream of regrets?  
Who can tell how bitter was salt in the mouth  
That once surged with the richness of honey?  
Not one among us has the answers to all these—  
Not even the herald angels clothed in light  
With lightning for swords and thunder for voice.  
The answers perhaps are secrets of the rain  
That softly wept as it lapped the pillar of salt—  
Incensed with smoke on the hill where it stood—  
Cursed monument to a vanished city.

*Phyllis Webb*

## Two Poems

### THE EFFIGY

I hoisted him up to the tree  
on the ropes of my anger  
by the loops of my longing  
I hooked him onto a branch.  
Like a self-righteous lyncher  
I had stuffed him with hatreds and visions,  
but he swayed thin as the inmates of Buchenwald  
in the polluted breeze.  
Effigy of a flourishing effigy,  
Judicial pendulum on a time-eating tree,  
he was the grandfather of grandfather clocks  
and he clicked and he clocked out of me.

He was the city whose building leered down at me.  
He was the vulgar hats of their women.  
He was the pale taste of a thousand Sunday painters,  
and the lover who would not leave his wife.  
He was the sexless marriages that used me  
for their polite social lies.  
He was the dust of unfulfillment.  
He was the bomb carousing in a stately mind.  
He was my bad poems with their bad lines.

My hands fell away. My eyes leaned up  
to see my many suicides  
definite in the tree.  
And in this he excelled me.

There was a bowl of salmon gladioli in the room  
yanked out of the market at nineteen cents a bunch.  
They too turned on me  
and died without asking permission.  
Therefore, take them, Strawman, for your weddings,  
and swing in the motion of my sexual failures,  
familiar fruit on a familiar tree.  
So branch be your lullaby, so sing me free.  
Pendant on your own pulp and a hard core,  
hang praising now, hang praising, praising  
in a green tree.

### PROPOSITIONS

*for A. A.*

I could divide a leaf  
and give you half.

Or I could search for two leaves  
sending you one.

Or I could walk to the river  
and look across

and seeing you there  
or not there

absence or presence  
would spring the balance to my day.

Or I could directly find you and take your hand,  
so that one hand would be given

and one kept, like a split leaf,  
or like two leaves separate.



These would be signs and offerings:  
the just passion, just encountering.

Or we perhaps could speed four eyes,  
the chariot-horses of our dreams and visions,

in them direction and decision find.  
The split leaf floating on the river,

the hand sketching in the air  
a half-moon, its hidden wholeness there.

1

*Frederick Bock*

## Two Poems

### THE BOTTOM OF THE STREAM

Because a crack in a shack let me see only  
That bounce after bounce of a ball to be retrieved  
Over and over fetched no blow from her patience—  
Who laughed each time she got up or again sat down  
To the pan of peelings that rode the waves of her love  
As over and over she rose or stooped with a laugh,  
Her shadow has followed my eyes like a diving bird  
Across Missouri and Kansas and half of Texas.

For down and down and down where fathoms of care  
Drown her deeper than creosote or sanskrit  
Sinks the most submissive road-making man—  
And she mixes mud and mind to as quietly much  
As the stillest cold of brilliance and ability  
Yet easy and wise in her mystery as the anhinga,  
Still she bobs and she bobs—ever at middle ends—  
As far as my eyes have fled in Santa Fe cars.

## FIVE SONGS FOR AN INVALID FARMER

### I

Bring his waving hands—  
Oh, bring him in a chair  
Who long did little else  
Than go to field and brown  
And bring away the corn.

For while we turn the land,  
He'll turn the orchard air  
And wave us miracles  
Of grief upon grief grown  
To sweetness in the thorn.

### II

Gathered around him in a ring  
And watching in a sunlit daze  
How his blindness lifts and looms  
And blazingly confounds that blaze,  
We start as if he pierced a gloom  
That kept us sightless from the spring.

Each passion of white petals falling  
Dowers our witless witnessing:  
Straight at the hedge the hen barrels through,  
And every outburst of the year,  
We stare; and, wry with silence, share  
His empty sing-song as of praise.

And when we lace his string of spools  
Through and through with sprigs of plum—  
Before we geniuses or fools  
Have done with his pitch of doom,  
Around us, in the dazzling shade,  
Our darkest woes like roses bloom.

### III

May wrens among these rusted spokes  
 Not chide and chirr  
 A whit  
 Too hot and keen?  
 Though grass  
 Bewitches every wheel,  
 At last  
 The years turn slowly clean.

And when he woke and stumbled,  
 Falling on an arm  
 Up a ditch and down again,  
 Sun-struck  
 And foreign-tongued,  
 Did we, too, fall upon harm  
 Who wept for Sorrow's Farm?

For now that years have grown  
 Past listlessness  
 And restlessness  
 And patience with the hoe,  
 Still sweeter prank the plum's  
 White blossoms  
 Upon gamboge spars  
 When brought to Summer's Own.

### IV

Our toil is as a sleep  
 Beside his day  
 That lies awake till the last sympathy  
 Of stars forgets him.

Freely we move among blunt afternoons  
 And hide nowhere the secret  
 Of our joy  
 In the sweat of harvest.  
 Yet what shall we tell our hands  
 That work all day to be eased  
 Of a stolen peace?

Surely to no blame we dream  
 Of a sickle lost  
 When the depth of our sleep securely  
 Rests upon pointed stubble.

Yet in that dream we say  
*The field has cut itself.*  
*All's for the sun's loft.*  
*Left for our living is only*  
*One trembling sheaf.*

Joy troubles our hearts.

If easily we move,  
 Steadily we move, all-seeing,  
 From the horizon to the heart of being—

Why do we seem asleep in the burning noon?

### V

Now sun-rays through the leaves would fall  
 Almost for fain brotherliness;  
 But answering from his garden-place  
 His tacit eyes have warmed the air  
 Until the sun's own fol-de-rol  
 Is baubled on a string of spoons.

O wonder-work that shames the sun!  
His eyes move—and the years move on  
Coloring knick-knacks in his lap  
Like peaches blushing along the prop.

Flashing fire, the wings of squabs  
Ignite the blue above the lattice;  
But terribly, no less ecstatic,  
Shines his beard and spittle, too,  
As fair as any wing around  
And makes our happiness profound.

*Mildred Weston*

### Three Poems

#### ANTISTROPHE

I contradict the season,  
deny the stream with drouth.  
The flowing green of April  
dries in my desert mouth.

When the perennial leaven  
commands young growth again,  
a stubborn spirit stiffens  
against prevailing rain,

against the soft persuasion  
and stratagem that yields  
ill-timed, illicit harvest  
from my impervious field.

#### DUST STORM

Enclosure serves me well.  
Pressure prescribes my girth.  
Wrapped round by windy walls  
I breathe a dusty breath.

Snatches of foolish tunes,  
Ravelling bits of waste  
Litter the island room  
Whose air is motionless.

Apart from rage and rush  
In storm untouched, untossed  
By motion meant to move  
Or vision set to love

I stay behind the wind  
And stinging thrust of sand.  
My fingers strictly curled  
Hold chaos by the hand.

#### DEPARTURE

Down the dim aisle of standing pullman coaches  
blurred in the grey dust-powdered light,  
I tilt my shoulders to the weight I carry  
across this night.

Away from mingled voices in the station,  
on time and guided as the ticket shows,  
I am instructed so myself may follow  
the track I chose.

Revolving thought begins with steady motion  
to wind its circles round an iron core.  
The private pulse identifies with power  
as conqueror.

I take my leave of stationary places.  
My resting place shall be a moving berth  
where slow footsteps give over to the paces  
that claim the earth.



*Arthur F. Draper*

## **Easter Among Minarets**

Bronze rang solitary among minarets,  
Praising silted teeth and unglazed  
Taste of Eastern urns. Bronze  
Rang solitary praising green flies  
Stalking through the catacombs of ravelled  
Dust, and praising caparizoned mules  
Drawing coffins golden bronze  
And blue, enameled as the sea.

Bronze rang praising painted eggs,  
Painted while the children slept.  
Grins and geometric blues and golds  
Hidden under helianthus, palms  
And bitter roots Phoenicians grew  
For Easter search of morning  
And hidden shouts that told  
The find of painted treasures.

The muezzin's cry on wire wings  
Rises over mosques and minarets.  
The green fly walks through palms;  
And light, finite as flesh, sinks  
Into stones north of the porcelain sea.  
There the sad dimension measures  
Miracles of tawny chicks waking  
Under palms and geometric grins.

\* \* \*

She makes no treaties with the sky  
Nor with the Easter sun; nor with  
The urn's breath clouding mirrors  
Of the men who gaze at stars.

Bleached wagons wail the stationary  
Moons; all the seas have dried  
To salty drops upon her tongue.  
And green flies tread through gold and bronze.

She sees the structures old men  
Build in shadowed minds; endures  
Alone the elegance of atoms  
And unfolding cells. Whispers,  
Fainter than the memory of pines,  
Or pigeons flying out of painted  
Urns, bring word from farther  
Than the farthest, fleeing galaxy.

1

*Lloyd Parks*

## **Three Poems**

POEM

The roots of roses ease  
Down through the dark, cool loam,  
Below the earth-worm's bed  
And salamander's home,  
To where a world is worm  
And wet gravel, to clasp  
The empty-handed dead.

And they, forgiving death,  
Leap in the dumb stone.  
As the salmon acts and dies,  
Flashing up dry bone  
Of stalk and thorn, they rise,  
As fish arc on water,  
Poise on a waving flower.

But leaf, they fail in turn:  
After a breath will flake.  
Yet leaf, we still may learn  
At last the way leaves take:  
How rose bruising to be  
Will leap from time, forsake  
The last, flaking tree.

#### NOW SKY IS WARM

Now sky is warm again, we shed our walls  
To house in air. Now light and heat are one,  
Down through a twist of vine-leaf, sunlight falls  
To brush as Bonnard might my wife and son,  
Or speckle grapes, heaped sweating in a bowl,  
Or leap leopard to our dark, cool floor,  
Now weather is our window, wind the door.

Beside the boy, small, blonde and winter-pale,  
Backed by a wall of leaves and scraps of sky,  
In the green haze, she shows like a white sail  
On shady water. Where shadows brim her eye,  
Fashion a cheek, or soften into hair,  
Her face takes form and tells me where I am:  
A face of wave-spun lights, a face of leaves.  
I am another leaf the light reprieves.

Clearly at noon appear three drifting nudes:  
One sleeps while two elaborate thick hair.  
Three naked girls, all play at attitudes;  
All turn and curl and shine. Brightness on air!  
Confusion of flesh and cloud, they flow around  
Our landscape, crowd the birds, swarm in the trees.  
Across the foliage, I catch a flash of knees.

#### TIDE

Swiftly the tide runs in  
Over my sill.  
Swiftly it overwhelms  
Ceiling and door.  
While thought turns to water,  
Claw, fin and gill  
Slip seaward, for the moon  
Will dry the floor.

Most sea and sea-life follow  
The sea. What lingers  
Malingers, to drown in air  
And foul its shell:  
In sunlight soon a hive  
Of buzzing odors,  
As soon washed and buried  
By the next swell.

And yet, one beast bequeathes  
A satin conch,  
To net the mounting night,  
And gives it, turning,  
Whorl on whorl.  
Spinning cobalt and green,  
Spanning an inch,  
Star by star goes burning  
Dark to pearl.



## About the Contributors...

JOHN HOLMES, distinguished American poet, teaches at Tufts College, and is in charge of the Steinman Poetry Series there. ✦ HAYDEN CARRUTH's book, *The Crow and the Heart*, was recently published by Macmillan. ✦ GEORGE GARRETT's poem in this issue, "Crows at Paestum," is the title poem of his new book.

JAMES DICKEY recently won the Vachel Lindsay prize for a series of eight poems in the July issue of *Poetry Magazine*. ✦ KENNETH O. HANSON, Northwest poet, makes his second appearance in *Poetry Northwest*. ✦ JOANNE de LONGCHAMPS lives in Reno, and has been widely published. ✦ JOHN D. ENGELS has published poems in *Poetry*, *Literary Review*, *University Review* (Dublin) and others.

MAKOTO UEDA's translations have appeared in *Sewanee Review*, *Prairie Schooner* and elsewhere. He is preparing a book of translations of the great Japanese poet, Sakutarō Hagiwara. ✦ BIENVENIDO LUMBERA, of the Philippines, is a graduate student at Indiana University. He has translated his own poem from the Tagalog.

PHYLLIS WEBB, brilliant young Canadian poet, is preparing a second volume for publication. ✦ FREDERICK BOCK, until very recently, was Assistant Editor of *Poetry Magazine*. ✦ MILDRED WESTON, of Spokane, appears in *Poetry Northwest* for the first time, and recently appeared in the *Northwest Review*. She teaches at Holy Names College. ARTHUR F. DRAPER, Seattle, has his first published poem in this issue. ✦ LLOYD PARKS, formerly of Seattle, with a Ph.D. from the University of Washington, now teaches at Ohio State.

SHINJIRO KURAHARA, born in 1899, has published two novels and five volumes of poetry. He is one of Japan's most eminent poets. He writes: "My house is close to the American 5th Air Force Base. It is winter now, and I see the girls from Air Force families enjoying skating on the river right below my house together with young Japanese boys and girls . . . I believe a poet in any country or in any age is an exile, so to speak . . . In this sense, I believe I am of the same race as American poets . . ."

YOSHIAKI SASAZAWA, born in 1898, has published numerous books of poetry, including *The Road of Honey Bees*, *The Beautiful Bandit*, *Notebook of the Sea City*, and *The Flames of Winter*. He has been influential in Japanese poetry since the 1920's, and has done much to develop interest in modern German poetry, particularly Rilke, in Japan.

ETSURO SAKAMOTO was born in 1906, is a Professor of Psychology, and worked for a number of years for the Ministry of Education. He has written many volumes of poetry, including *The Costume of the Clouds*, *The Grave of the Seashells*, *Collection of the Sea Foams*, and *The Orchard*, and has also written several collections of essays on poetry.

SHIGEJI TSUBOI was born in 1898, and founded the avant-garde magazine, *The Red and the Black*, which has been extremely influential. He is a former member of the Proletarian Writers' League, and was imprisoned twice. After the war, he helped to establish the Association of the New Japanese Literature. He has written five volumes of poetry and two collections of essays. He writes: "I am anticipating new developments in American poetry. In any country, poetry is shut out from popular journalism, and must walk a very difficult road (which may be poetry's good fortune). Please try to introduce contemporary Japanese poetry to America. My regards to the poets of *Poetry Northwest*."

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Consideration of Poems in Manuscript by Northwest Poets

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SISTER MARY GILBERT, Spokane	RANDALL GLOEGE, Montana
JEAN SPENCER	MARGARET NORDFORS, Alaska

#### PANEL FOR SATURDAY, JULY 30

NELSON BENTLEY, *Chairman*

CAROL HALL	WILLIAM MATCHETT
VI GALE, Oregon	EDITH SHIFFERT
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