

EDITOR
Carolyn Kizer
(on leave)

BOARD OF EDITORS

Nelson Bentley, Frank Jones, William H. Matchett

~
Cover by Elise Asher
~

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Léonie Adams, Louise Bogan, Robert Fitzgerald, Robert B. Heilman,
Stanley Kunitz, Jackson Mathews, Arnold Stein

POETRY NORTHWEST AUTUMN-WINTER, 1964-65 VOL. V, NOS. 3 & 4

Published quarterly by the University of Washington. Subscriptions and manuscripts should be sent to *Poetry Northwest*, Parrington Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98105. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts; all submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription rate, \$3.50 per year; single copies, \$1.00; double issues, \$1.50.

© 1965 by the University of Washington

Distributed by B. De Boer, 188 High Street, Nutley, N.J.; and in the West by L-S Distributors, 552 McAllister Street, San Francisco, California.

POETRY  NORTHWEST
VOLUME FIVE NUMBERS THREE AND FOUR

AUTUMN-WINTER, 1964-65

A. R. AMMONS Muse	3
VI GALE Three Poems	4
ROBERT PETERSON Four Poems	6
ROBIN SKELTON Remembering Esquimalt	9
GRACE SCHULMAN Two Poems	11
FRANK J. WARNKE Love Among the Ruins	12
SAMUEL HAZO Two Poems	13
WILLIAM PILLIN Three Poems	15
CHARLES EDWARD EATON Water Therapy	18
SHIRLEY KAUFMAN Four Poems	19
SHERWOOD WASHBURN Lament for the Earl of Rochester	24
DAVID PEARSON ETTER Two Poems	25
SAM BRADLEY Two Poems	27
ROBERT HERSHON Two Poems	29
A. WILBER STEVENS Two Poems	30
CAROLYN STOLOFF Five Poems	32

JOHN L'HEUREUX Three Poems	35
R. R. CUSCADEN Three Poems	38
PRISCILLA SHAMES Two Poems	39
ELISE ASHER Two Poems	41
DOLORES STEWART Five Letters	42
ED LEIMBACHER Two Poems	46
FELIX POLLAK Two Poems	48
FREDERICK REBSAMEN Two Poems	50
THOMAS WHITBREAD Four Poems	52
J. C. WAUGH The Flight	54
MARGUERITE KAIYALA Two Poems	54
MICHAEL SINGER Useless Words to the Fearful	56
LOIS BAKER Two Poems	57
WILLIAM MINOR Weekend	58
MARTHA ASHER FRIEDBERG Three Poems	60
FLORA J. ARNSTEIN Four Poems	62
ROBERT LEWIS WEEKS Two Poems	65
ARTHUR GREGOR Four Poems	67
KENNETH O. HANSON Seven Greek Poems	72

POETRY NORTHWEST

AUTUMN-WINTER 1964-65

A. R. Ammons

MUSE

From the dark

fragmentations

build me up
into a changed brilliant shape,

realized order,
mind singing again
new song, moving into the slow beat and

disappearing beat
of perfect resonance:

how many
times must I be broken and reassembled! anguish of becoming,
pain of moulting,
descent! before the unending moment of vision:

how much disorder must I learn to tolerate
to find materials
for the new house of my sight!

arrange me
into disorder
near the breaking of the pattern
but
should disorder start to
tear, the breaking down of possible return,
oh rise gleaming in recall,

sing me again towering remade, born into a wider
order, structures deepening,
inching rootlike into the dark!

Vi Gale

Three Poems

AFTER ILLNESS

Mother's home early, out of bed,
already squeezing the forbidden coffeepot.
She crosses the kitchen critically noting
what's been done to things in her absence.

Copper and kettles don't hold her long.
She snaps on the white plastic radio
to a Scandinavian hour strictly
from garlanded maypoles and midsummer revels.

"Listen," she says, stomping her foot,
(helpless in rage and affection
plus total exhaustion, we cringe for her stitches)
"thirty Rättvik fiddlers in skinpants!"

FROM THE HOSPITAL WINDOW

On the third day we shot out of our chairs
when my father set the bag of Type A Pos.
to swinging like a gourd above his head,
groaned that he'd been about to die
of treatment if not disease,
and pointed upriver.

No spotting it but whatever mystical object
the old man *had* he saw, as did an aide
who strapped down his arm, and the charge-nurse
who moved in like a beagle off leash.

"Not this time." He looked puzzled, glared
as everyone smiled.

Next morning we had a new diagnosis
and birthday all over the ward. Nurses flirted,
medics riffled charts and developed powers of speech:
What had he seen when he snapped back?
"This year's fishing license," he said gaily,
"hasn't run out yet."

THE SQUARE ROOT OF ALWAYS

An unseasonably chill spring
rain sheering off
the cartop in buckets
feet and coatshoulders
like sogged sponges
a time of flat pocketbooks
dead fetuses and wet ladies

squared now in a chosen
dry cold that hurtles
the skipped summer
like a trained jumper spurred
by a slant of handwriting
a carefully stamped envelope
and the precise connotation

Love Always

Robert Peterson

Four Poems

10TH & DIVISION, SAN FRANCISCO

for Richard Hugo

End of five streets
& one RR line
the history thin
& walkers rare & risky
if they're planting poppies
in Vermont...

Bums from Third
won't flop this far
to retch their pity
or doubt. Here, waiting
for Go, you ponder arrows
stare back at cops
& wonder what your kid
might do with paint
or wood.

Concrete, brick, & grease. Smoke,
windows, gas & wire. This place
the elbow of a bad year
what shouldn't be true
the body you could never lift
the ghost you couldn't lose.

Up from Ninth the big semis, phosphorescent,
grind in low, then turn
to charge for Gilroy, south.
Take that road, cold
from here, where no one lives.
Take any road to Rome, but move

ON A FEVER, THE 93RD DAY OF WANDERING

1

My first love, who shared me with another, put away
her paints for good when I left her, & saying
I couldn't be more perfect, but should never marry,
went East to draw maps
for the Government.

2

Somewhere a parent must sigh / where went my child,
& what happens, & what can one do? Where I am
the scenery is soft, but fresh fruit scarce. No one
to be helped or known in basil, salt, gold, cement,
order of importance, seeds of the sunflower
or anxiety . . .

3

Once, waiting by a lake for a glimpse of a Swift
to become, for a moment, you, a Swan took a form
of desire, & my mind moved as if you were gone
forever, more than I saw you as.

4

Sister, that cool hand on my brow. The art tonight
is to build loves, as well as roofs & beds, by love
to death in air
with yarn, feathers, solitude
& restless birds' bones.

TWO DIVORCE POEMS

1

Alone in my tent, in a strange province
serving a mad Colonel in wars
against madness, Colonels & wars

I write to a friend, not of shrews who lie
& won't cook, but the harvest moon
sliding up like a plum
through my wine, hoping that at this hour
he is drunk
& wise also.

2

One of these days will I remember
all at once
my mother's luck with horses
& weep for my foolishness
& drunk again, & sick of the sights
of the towns,
crash into the night for leaves to love,
a river to save, or only
to be seen alive
in the eyes of good women
farther along this plain?

~

BYGONES

"Swim and you are not in your country."
—R. Hugo

1

I give you the self-portrait of a wife, stamped
on a coin . . .

(Might it have gone better being served crazy drinks
on lawns by pools in Yuma, or passing a painless summer
as children, forgetting we were inhabited, & nude?)

2

One of my gifts, the big fish who swam
in cream, you gave a good name & were therefore
not average, nor was the original whale, even lost,
a complete fool.

Now I give you a dead cat. And your fancy father—
he's all yours. And I throw up a problem:

The weather's good, the course true, & you,
telling water jokes till we died at sea, loved balloons
& were loved by me. The coin is called a dime & sinks
not near Yuma, but off Peru . . .

3

Aside from the wife, who was never found, what else
can be stolen, returned, or changed?

~

Robin Skelton

REMEMBERING ESQUIMALT

For Frank Fryett, who, after several years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp near Nagasaki, was repatriated to a rehabilitation center at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island.

For rehabilitation
he was sent to Esquimalt.
I remembered the kelp
in the tangling sea,
and the English gardens;
he remembered snow,
and eating meat, and
walking alone at night,

as we drank. V.J. Day
he'd seen a mirror.
"Christ," he said, "I'm
bent as a bloody crone!"
"You've had that crook back
all the bloody time
we've been in the mine!" they said:
he hadn't known.

And marching through Nagasaki,
"It looked like a flower
among the stones," he said,
"a cup and saucer
melted and hardened back
into folds of petals.
Lovely it was," he said,
"but I felt sick

thinking about it after."
We drank to Esquimalt,
all that clean blue air.
"One day," he said,
"on the ship from Java
we saw a tanker struck,
and the bastards burning and
running about like mad

ants, all burning whether
they jumped or not.
The sea was on fire," he said.
"We laughed and clapped
and cheered and stamped
to see the buggers trapped.
It isn't nice to think of
the way you get,

or even some things you've seen.
I liked Esquimalt.
They asked us to dances."
He picked up his stick.
"A bit like a rose," he said,
"I should have kept it.
That was one of the things
I should have kept."

Grace Schulman

Two Poems

STREET DANCE IN BARCELONA

Alone, I watched the solemn dance begin,
Waking from a silence that deceives,
That turns footsteps, or the rustle of dry leaves,
Into the clatter of a tambourine.

Their voices had been rattling that day,
Rapid as drumbeats, in the *Catalan*,
But a wilderness of hands reached toward the sun
Like wheatstalks risen from a ground of clay.

The crowd broke into perfect wheels, turning
To the stuttering of a wooden horn,
Quickened by the beating of the sun.
I had seen their angry faces burning.

Strangers, we stand alone but turn together
As vanes become a windmill in the wind;
One hand opens for another hand,
The wheel breaks only to include another.

SHANGO SACRIFICE

Singers accustomed to a wilder song
Gravely went down to the ascending waters;
Sleepwalkers all, they cast out voices, strong
Against the wind, compliant Jephthah's daughters
Proceeding; their white dresses skimmed the sand;
They shouted hymns and quarreled with the sea;
As on a night beyond their memory
The white bird struggled in a prophet's hand.

Silent men made sacrificial fires;
A white dress fluttered downward, whitening
The sand: black women chanting still,
Their harmonies precise as any choir's,
I watched them as a deaf man watches lightning—
A young girl, struck by singing, cried and fell.

Frank J. Warnke

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Gijsbrecht van Aemstel is far hence gone,
Henry the Lion is dead,
And Bishop Absalon always has
A seagull on his head.

Kaiser Ferdinand molders still
In his *prachtvoll* tomb in Graz;
Sforzas and Medicis glumly view
Their decomposing parts.

Power, like the artist's dream,
Builds a universe,
And kings, like lovers when they scheme,
Are prodigal of purse.

Painted figures on a wall
Fade, as fade they must;
The lover's structure, like the king's,
Collapses into dust.

The great and orderly designs,
And all the soul assays:
A tidal itching in the loins,
Death in the hollow eyes.

Samuel Hazo

Two Poems

THE MORNING THE OCEAN WAS MISSING

The sea receded fathoms at a time,
leaving the stranded porpoises to breathe
the suffocating air until they drowned.

We found them belly-up beside the sharks
and whales as if some Gulliver had gaffed
and flung them there like salmon while we slept.

No one could tell us where the ocean went
or why, or when it would come raging back.
We simply knew that we saw cavernous

horizons where a blue one used to be.
Not that we missed the drummer's roll of waves,
the jetsam on the sand, the hurricanes

that lifted rowboats to the peaks of trees
and buckled bungalows like wickerwork.
We had our fill of that but could not help

recalling sails and seascapes as they were.
When governors announced that men could walk
the ocean floor to Portugal, we felt

no urge to be the first to crush the spines
of trout beneath our boots or loot the cells
of submarines that still contained their crews.

We always thought that oceans had a right
to everything consigned to them by God
or man and never wished it otherwise.

Now we were left with decomposing crabs,
canyons of silt, mountains and continents
that no Columbus ever named or knew,

navies without a coast to guard, divers
burning their equipment, armies of scavengers,
a monumental stink from all the dead

and dying underwater life, a need
to re-design our maps, re-write our books
and zone the bottom of the sea for sale.

~

IN THE KEY OF MIRACLES

Unseeing as an embryo, he stirred
by touching walls or windowsills and spoke
the finger conversation of the dumb.
Mornings were what he guessed at when he woke

without a clock within his silences
and fingered for his slippers near his bed.
Then—waking to one Sunday of the world
unwarned, unsure if this were how the dead

arose to glory, he saw that walls he touched
were blue, that sunslants in a rain could show
a field of stationed cows with not a cow
budging, that wind behind a rain could blow

the daisies reckless as a thousand polkas.
Stayed by the wind until the wind was gone,
he blinked the deafness from his eyes like sleep
and stared at noises, and the world went on.

~

William Pillin

Three Poems

THE INHERITORS

They were never much good, our old masters!
They have forgotten the language of leaves
and running waters
Their heads reel with endless quotations
out of old books with broken bindings;
and their women are barren.

It does not matter to us that over their empty
palaces
flutter the torn pennants of past grandeur.

Our glory is in the dark autumn afternoons
and orchards of red ripening apples.

Wine will sparkle no less in our glasses
when the last conjuror of runes and riddles
coughs and dies
his lonely eyes turned to a flight of swallows
over our fat cornfields.

We will sit at his wake with sweet cider and warm loaves
baked to a crisp by our buxom women.

They were never much good, our old masters.
Ah, but the song of our young men is good,
casting its spell over the blue evenings
in the fields of ripening barley.

~

PERILOUS JOURNEY

I have seen men lured
from their lanes and evenings
who returned with angelic diseases
that baffled their physicians.
They had lunar seizures,
they sang like frenzied sea-birds,
they spent long afternoons
studying magic numerals
or conjuring coins from old newspapers.

Warned by this
I kept a tidy backyard
and stayed there
welcoming through parted curtains
a moderate sunlight,
subsisting on wholesome
black grains of clay and poetry.
For twenty years I hid thus
within my blue fence
knowing myself secure
from all sorts of intrusion.

There came a time
when through cracks in the wall
the night rushed in
foaming and shining,
and I stared
at the hypnotic window
and saw the luminous fringe
of remote twilights.
I walked like a blind man
into the darkness.

At dawn I returned,
my head a chasm
of racing stars.

Through a parted hedge
neighbors were peeking
as through a keyhole.
Reeling and drunken I returned
and even as I lay down
to nurse my aching dreams
I looked to the next night's
perilous journey
from which few return
and those few chuckling
like mad goblins.

WORDS AGAIN EMERGING

This year, after an extended absence,
words began to emerge
from their various hiding places ;

from backyard rose-gardens,
from back pages of discarded almanacs,
from clouds, bells, trees, rooftops.

It is good to have them again!
around the stove, at one's elbow,
dropping from beards of old men,
shaken from bracelets of passing girls ;

not from the learned book I meant to read someday,
not from the endless whispering of the sullen mind.

Charles Edward Eaton

WATER THERAPY

Down in the doldrums with rain, rain, I went down to the pool
Which somehow maintained its vat of supernatural blue,
Exempt from my analysis on a day I lusted for the beautiful.

It was a bath for eternal Venus. I had buried there on sunnier days
Thousands of thoughts, some mere stoppages for a life running out—
If the times were right, I would be a man of all-desiring, all-absorptive
ways.

What of the years one spends on definition?—I wished to let the load
Of water tumble through the strongest and most lucid form:
The bodies of women, the spiritual images, sluiced with monster and
toad.

The charged and oblique experience that makes the current move!—
I do not want to slow to a halt, nor, to put it flatly, burst.
I have slept with every image that Venus herself would not reprove.

If the times were right—How much, in the long light of time, will
that phrase mean?—
I strip and go brusquely toward the almost arctic blue.
If riches fall away, stick to the absolute encounter, the basic love scene,

As a soldier might arouse the too-scarred surface of his touch.
Venus has bathed here, wallowed, if you prefer, and left it blue, blue,
blue:
The combatant in me plunges blind, throws aside the times as if they
were a crutch.

~

Shirley Kaufman

Four Poems

JE SUIS BELLE

1

I am that animal I started from.
My bones lengthen,
grow silently to their own causes.
Even my ankles seem dangerous,
skin of my instep stretching
over the arch.
My arms are wrapped in thick fur;
carnivorous birds fly out of my wrists
when we begin to stroke the air.

2

Safer than rooms,
whatever hollow in the earth
I made, small-breasted as a child,
and knew by other faces
in the dark. Now graffiti
on the walls glitter
like an old family; those ancient
bulls keep watch.
Amber and ochre, color
of winter pears. They glow,
purely the cave's invention,
and we move in them reflected,
reach for unchanging signs
and give off light.

3

You bring me distance, warm
vineyards sloping to Lac Leman,
evenly terraced as your breathing evenly
without dreams. That castle in Lausanne.

The queen of Spain slept there, they said,
as if a throne climbed into bed
with castanets. Dark oak
and deeply carved. The skin of a queen
must be softer than tongues
when she leans against great pillows.
Rain-water, when you drown
your fingers in it. Deep.

4

"Je suis belle . . ." as a sleep of stone:
you seek that part of me
I would not lose,
just as those Rodin hands
in their tense bronze sob
in the flesh of her giving
and withholding. She bends and
folds over, exceeding herself.
And he lifts her, lifts her,
clutches her smoothness, thrusts
his chin into the moss of her neck.

5

The night is alive with shadows,
ships scraping up to the docks,
waves slapping around the wood,
bulkheads creaking, queens sailing
into a storm, cinders
of spray—such motion in the wind
that everything gives way—anchor
and line, shape of that wrinkled harbor,
and we rock, we rock,
we rock and we are visible
each to the other as nothing
was ever visible before.

PRUNING

I discovered them all at once filled
with leaves—but it was more gradual; ponds
dwindling underneath the wind until
all the water seemed to be gone.

The greenness spilled out of my hands,
and I forgot the way the spring began.

The weather turns to pruning, and I climb
from myself, up this rocking ladder
into the roses. (Will there be time
enough to burn the wreck I gather?)
I hang my long arms in the air
and lean against whatever's leaning there.

They yield themselves, brittle; no blooms
break low over the sour paths,
no opening fever, no fragrance bruised
in light. I make of them an ample death—
as if I wished it final. But the stiff
wood stays, cut only to the second leaf.

And a slow dark, sleep and a cold
ground will bring the small buds again
like sudden stings. The stalks grow old
as habit, luminous in the rain.

Softly I move over the wet grass,
stepping aside to let my footprints pass.

I learn my own renewal now;
root, stem, leaf, thorn, flower—
my wakenings, my sleep—warn how
the heart regresses quietly each hour
to its center and the same heart leads
to sunlight out of its own need.

NEIGHBORS

The light is thin,
slides into rooms in strips
filling the pillow creases of my skin;

there in a design
of windows red arms come,
and one hand travels up the glass with blinds.

We do not wholly
meet: blinking, we test
the whiteness of the day like moles.

Leopards swarm
over her walls and vines,
and fourteen minnows crawl across her lawn.

She may surprise
a peacock on my porch
or any wandering tail across the sky.

But she won't see
me back into my shadow
warm as hers. We'll share our ritual privately—

and light the gas,
and swing the faucets on,
and never speak about it when we pass.

~

SOME CREDIBLES OF MARRIAGE

1

The man who counts his mules
and always has one missing
at last unmounts.

He sees the one he rides!
Ocarinas! Peacocks!
Then up again numbering
over and over;
it never comes out right.
Finally he walks to town.

2

The giants
we battle
come obstinate as ever.
Proceed like elephants
into the fierce country
of ruins.

3

To lose hate
is not to have love.
If we are
each his own Adam
avoiding,
under the branches
our conspicuous system of hideouts,
there is nothing much left
but a devotion of spinsters.

4

Though we deceive
nor navigate the things we say—
spiders, the instant
below the rolling wheel,
fingers, tongues,
mandolin, blather,
any—
people in love
keep talking.

More than the inch of feathers
 on which the bird
 depends,
 the sea delivered
 and the wings unbending
 finding their shore,

dignity matters.
 Is not a chance arrival
 into the weather of flight.
 Comes like a canopy
 in the right season,
 felt.

Sherwood Washburn

LAMENT FOR THE EARL OF ROCHESTER

Or death, if I were suspect of the lamp
 Women would arc in halves, on burning sails
 Cracked goblet ships sail sherry to their hells,
 And velvet rooms hear any argument.
 Death if I rhyme and stain the nightmare king
 Fear Holland, and the slow logic of knives
 And women, and the public ends of lives
 Still sails are silk, and lamps light anything.

Courtiers discourse on our intelligence
 Of some perfect men. At High Lodge then: "Hands
 In lamp light . . . the black wicks . . . I will sail south
 To Africa, hear cries of lamps, laments
 Of rooms and sails" (and he sleeps and smiles, and
 Dreams of these truths; of women with three mouths

David Pearson Etter

Two Poems

AFTER A LONG NIGHT IN KEOKUK

Morning
 (pale as a fish)
 slips inside
 and rooftops
 spin away
 to a forest
 of burnt corn
 and birdsong
 shrivels up
 the leaves
 in the round
 Grant Wood trees
 We lie here
 in bed
 in a motel
 in Keokuk
 Iowa
 and we got gin
 and we got smokes
 and we got your
 sad childhood
 to talk about
 (and mine too)
 And I refuse
 to answer
 the phone
 or the knuckles
 on my door

FLIGHT PATTERN

The brown paper
airplane
looped once
looped twice
then dove
smack dab into
a flower bed
of four-o'clocks.
The boy was damn tired
of watching only
two little loops
then KERPLUNK,
so butchered
the brown paper
airplane
with his jackknife.
This put a bad crimp
in the big plans
to make Jasper Street
an important
air center.
Later his aunt
said it was
the awful heat
and especially
the strong odor
of four-o'clocks
that did it.

~

Sam Bradley

Two Poems

DAEDALUS

Contriver, what's feigned? Love's prepared
fleshwall, within fleshwall. Lachesis, extend
the gold thread you twine; set no rash
limit on this hierophant you lacerate.

In a man, any nerverlash
may be labyrinthine.

Listen: the darkness!
Consider gold net of my fate.
Consider meridian of my estate.
I should be spared.

Silently I master, again, what I've made.
On deathruns (deep, as if python-made), I fade
back to my shadow. Pleasure is: to begin.
As if at Godloins: begin!

Listen: a spider of sunlight traces
a scream—by design?
Masters, powerful masters,
you snarl at finality, you seek some end.

But I have been spared.
Echo mocks footfall, each footfall
as it wastes, wall to wall
. . . diminishing sensefall.
The maze is mine.

Who lies gently waiting? I grin and reveal
violences. I vein down, hour by hour,
in blood worship. Commanded, I kneel.

I reveal what's prepared.
Masters, monstrosity is
long mothered; never uncaged; even after birth—
naved in. Man breaks a womb, but must contend
at cord end, tether end.

Fatal woman, I'm favored. Many times I've declared:

"This way in—at the East.
Savor breath—and descend."

(Genius, demonic beast, shadow
greedy for me as for any feast,
grinned.)

Masters, I am your shadow!

Must I go from you?

Is there no reward for what I've dared?

But I know what's there. Again, let me be spared.

Masters, once again!

~

ODD CHILD OF EARTH UNDER POISONED SKY

We sing you a troll-song. We rock you dead seas.
We puff you a fire cloud for, ah! your change,
odd child of earth. Now: say how
—under dragon-splotched downsun, after maul—you crowd
toward mating. A siren fungi. Seed out of cloud:
calamity children! (Not one too strange
to be ours—and each fickle changeling
trails twenty centuries
to the fall-out fields of now.)

I puff you my power, your power, ours.

And what does it profit me?

In demonic gamble now
can you exchange

a life of lucklessness for a life of love?

You crowd toward mating: lion takes in lamb,
and I hear the din of earth's old vow:

"I will multiply seed . . ."

Child. Dear child—I call you child,
you who are forth from me—a thing of
incongruous genes, a cloven image that will
generate after me. You carry on—agreed?

The examined life . . . In you, vain outlashings succeed.

Suckled at folly, cradled under fire-bough,
bones chalked, flesh a thin glove,

you are indeed a new breed:

a good gasp of Space, wind-rise of a reed,
and the good news sent . . .

But what facts, nerveknots of newsprint,

can fathom you, crooked image, outcast of our loins?

I caress unknownness. I heap facts with fear

—as an oaf, amid famine, will hoard stolen coins.

What song is left, other than troll-song?

I sing to ease you. I despair of your testament,

shorn of our joy in what's precious here,
odd child!

~

Robert Hershon

Two Poems

AFTER

You might climb up to heaven,
or cycle through from hell,
to find a toad,

a mule, a roach or two.

Does not the dog eat meat,

the loon eat fish, the goose shun fire?

Are there no mules of honor, toads who die
for swamp and flag?

Or you might be dust,

gliding over meadow dung,

at one with kings and weevil eggs.

Will not the wren alight, the whale seek air?
the lion rot?

~

IT IS A SMALL SUIT

wait, there's something you don't understand
i think there is something you don't understand
you've given me the wrong number
it doesn't go with my face
look, i've a picture that will show you
this isn't the house i live in
this isn't my woman, the children are wrong
you've taken me to the wrong place
wait, i don't know how to run this machine
i can't read the language in the manual
i can't read the gauges, the dials
i don't know what to make with this machine
and this suit, it's tailored for another man
it is a small suit, i am a tall man
the suit is tight, the pants won't close
i'm not a citizen of your country
i don't know this place, these faces
these voices ask about things i don't know
call up memories that aren't mine
you've made a mistake
come back and fix things
things are wrong
something you don't understand
you don't understand wait

A. Wilber Stevens

Two Poems

AND ONE OTHER THING

I should have died a Trojan or a Spartan
Or someone mechanical or full of deadly machines
I keep seeing the more morbid side of things

When you get right down to it really
I should have been a headwaiter or a good lover
Or a Chairman preferably of someone else's Board
I keep wondering—perhaps a quiet doctor
Charging a lot and never saying much.

I should have died Established or at least Taboo
Instead of leave my card and hate the Out-of-Doors
And wonder why I should have died not being
That very Thing I should have been whether
Secluded in some New Hampshire village waging
Wisdom or perhaps wondering bitter things
Oh so sullen Things in a desert someplace where
I could have died complete and whole and all alone.

ON HEARING THE CHOIRBOY SING AT A STRANGER'S FUNERAL

I blessed the house in the far wood
Near where I wanted to die among friends
And where I felt the stream would always
Flow by and the hills cover us all always.

I blessed this house without appraising
Ever the day which brought it there or
The people who had loved me who made the
House and would oddly make it mine.

Blessings on things are nebulous gestures
In past times of fear and unknowing
And yet the blessings make the time
The house my house will always stand.

Carolyn Stoloff

Five Poems

IF A GOOSE HAS TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND

muscles to control, it is a severe
reflection on our poor posture. Pillows
stuffed with their flight are bolsters to lean
on when our ears are full of leaves; weary
we stretch and summon wings

to guide us through the treacherous
midnight. Their facile migration mocks
us by day as we shuffle, skin to skin,
with plans to summer in Sweden or Greece. One
by one, planes take off, promiscuous.

We are chained to abundance, to agents
who arrange our trips, the hoods of blue skies
and quaint pictures we are bent on buying.
More than feathers on a bird there are pills,

there are pages to leaf through, investments
that flutter and drop. Do you hear them knock
at your hearts, the geese, with their insistent
formations? They may lift men
from the gutter by their shirts
as we stoop, shouting for greater production, and a doctor.

THE TURNING

Felled, she lies half
buried in the snow.
He is a nomad; what
shall he make of her?

A tent pole he secures
in a high wind
as the canvas billows?

The canoe he carries on his back
to shoot the falls?
The paddle that he lost
the drift of? Or a gate post.

As he comes down the street
with the blind staggers,
he grabs for it
with one hand

and clutches his hat
with the other. *I'm tired,*
he says, and sinks
to its base for a minute.

A rib of the crib he holds
when he can't sleep?
when he is the rough,
loved up, old

teddy bear she can't
keep? Still the bole
is turning; chips
fly out of reach.

She is a pencil;
the page is white.
Winter is a hand
too stiff to write.

SEA

flinging wrack, moss and mangled kelp
in a low hedge, you show me, you old
miser, where I shouldn't go. But who'll
salvage and edit your art from the cool

stones on the shifting plate, but me, tossed
lost in your junk-strewn passage up the ledge
moonstone myself, whelp of your liquidity and land
polished by the grating of your breaking edge.

~

AIR

no ninny-finned fish can have you bare
yowling on bluffs of bayberry, only me
hunting a hidden moon with hands
that stumble on hanks of the island's pelt

risen to muff and mitten the smattering gale
with my firm flesh, to cough the fog and match
the sneeze of sea. In buffeting rush
I place a sail against my lips and blow.

~

ISLAND

because you block my passage with your cliffs
holding the halved and hollow cockles
of my heart, I press my sharp shell in your flank
and soil my nails in your tough, bullish back.

~

John L'Heureux

Three Poems

THE CAT

Rounding off the corners of reality
beckoning back the harsh word, the word of love
before it can be spoken, pretending nonchalance
despite my cleric gown: mine is a stainless
steel existence.

But love, like a cat thrust beneath icy water,
struggles pure and terrified somewhere deep
within.

I never thought to drown: the dreams
of pillows held upon my face, plastic bags
purpling lips and nostrils, dreams of death
when air was water rushing an evil prophecy
to fill all hollows; even with these
I never thought to drown. Nor violent death.

Caressing years rather with a chastened touch.
All senses shriveled by the airless room.
Door locked. The window firm. If there were
a nightingale, it would not sing. But even
silence is a prayer, even chloroform
and sleeping pills and medically certified tension
easers pray their way to a kind of redemption.

The steel is tempered. No daily climbing
the hill of despair to vomit into the abyss.
No excess. No drowning. Each day's submersion
is beginning, wearing smooth

the harshness of reality, cloaking hard words
words of love in sterile plastic,

purpling dreams with the gift, surrendering—
in paradox no more strange than saints—
surrendering the pitiless cat to water.

INTERMISSION

Sometimes
when the fire
burns wild

and mind pursues
blistering voices
I see how

it could end:
a plunge
down sides of cliffs

rising straight
from green
white water.

Among the slimy
stems of lilies
the fire

is quenched
voices silent
mind drowned—

while I,
crouched above the cliffs,
clack

a wooden tongue
trying to say lost
and lost.

THROUGH GOLDEN TEMPLES

He placed my head in homage
on the shelf and
where my eyes had
been he wrote sad music
keyed to no great violence
to the plaintive rumor only
that so often surged

There. No empty stare
sounding vacancies
of the conscious
great no emerald for
an eye, no onyx, only
music dispassionate and low.
Finger exercises

Thrum my golden temples,
throb summer in
my lips, ashen now
and noting song as memory
of uncertain hours. A
gold-leafed skull upon
the mantel

Tells no sad remembrance
really; a casuist
love that cannot count
account for small gains
in unaccustomed octaves.

If music be the food
of love, then

Chide these gilded gums.
Let violins poised
upon the bat wings of our
air give recompense
to this untimely
spring with mold and
orchestrations.

Three Poems

A SNOWY MORNING AT MARKHAM

for Marilyn

Snow, snow all morning, snow here
At Markham Yard, and I have been
Out in the snow, seen snow drift
And gather and cover the ties, then
Snow right up to the track level,
A cover of snow across twenty tracks . . .

Remember? This morning I slid out
Of bed, turned to look down at you,
Then jerked the covers back to see
Your snowy length. Even the baby
Sat up in his crib to take a look.

AUTUMN IN A NEW HOME

Through the basement window I watch
The falling of my neighbor's leaves.
The lazy ones become transparent in
The sun: the swift ones only a blur.

The sun lies thin and watery on the
Piles of books. There was something,
Down here, I had planned to do.

I see books I have never read.
I see books I shall never read again.

A block away, a diesel sounds its passing.

THE MONASTERY AT DUBUQUE

for Brother Dave

Up at two in the morning
(After a night on straw),
Three pieces of bread for
Breakfast, vows of silence
And a seven-day week:
It didn't sound like much
Of a life for a hungry,
Lazy, run-off-at-the-mouth
Midwesterner like myself.
But I took the 30-minute tour
And never batted an eyelash
At the scurrying shave-heads.

Back in the car, rolling away
From all that noiseless celibacy,
I turned the radio up too loud,
And talked my head off.

Priscilla Shames

Two Poems

AT THE SALINAS

Come up out of the lake,
Old Salt Woman, come out,
We must lick your flesh
And wind the red knot

Of our blood about your hair.
Come out, the sweat taste
Of your body is more beautiful
Than a white fawn. We waste

Along the shore, our bones
Hollow as turkey quills,
We have no thirst without your sour
Scent. Only your dust spills

Over us, Old Salt Mother.
We must drink your diamond milk.
Spread your manta upon the water
And begin your white walk.

~

FERTILITY CHANT

Corn silk girl
With shining hair,
Pollen boy,
Before you snare

The sun and moon,
Split their hides,
Appease the Beetle
God who rides

On lightning,
Sing a special song
To make your powers
Water strong.

Sing to the wind,
Sing to the rain,
Sing to the evening
Star alone.

Keep his black tooth
From your white seed,
And his black thunder
From your bed.

~

Elise Asher

Two Poems

DOWNWARD RESURRECTION

Still pinioned under rock I felt my will hoisted,
Long loamy roots dredged up through punctured bone,
The entire wreck of me dragged into the gleaming air
and hurled.

On my own then soared over plateglass, city clock,
past seasons;

And craning my tour above all worldly sound, there
In the high hung haze were you, twin
struggling bird,

All brine and bleeding gaze and gifted—
All shy, sly, and deliberately loving—
Knowing well we'd join though both still smarting;
Till down the slippery light we sped together,
A pair of kites until we hit the earth
Where once again our ways were swathed in weathers,
Our spirits once more mired, our days in gall. . . .

Yet have not all our nights sprouted feathers?

~

DENOUEMENT

To accept with the stern grace
Of a single remaining daisy
Frailly left to be blown
From the almost barren field—

I must, yet cannot, though I must
For down the longest thorn I know
The hazardous circle of light,
The trance that adorns

And did, in fact, so ardently
Another's very breath.
Docile and in my trusting ease I leaned
Against that dazzling shield;

And trimmed my wings to suit a loping stride,
Set my strings to the pitch and pluck
Of one grand bullying tune.
Indeed invited! And deaf to counterpoint:

Plaint on plaint before our years
Yet hitched to ours: caboose of tears
Turned iron, then rust—through disregard.
Straight up we dandled ignorance,

Until that day the rotting chains broke;
And even so, as rankness cloaked the air,
I could but spill absurd pardons,
A bog of begging

While looking through your eyes of glass
For some remembered garden
But seeing, instead, a wood
And two lone unicorns.

Dolores Stewart

FIVE LETTERS

I

My business is to keep you. Yes or no
in subtle measure. Not all described.
But everywhere surrounded. The heart walled
by senses. The home surrendered to waiting
for your entrance. The mixed sexes
remembering each other in one body.

My business is to profit by pleasing
the least crevice of invention.
Not to appease the initial hunger
with wooden order. The ladder of pleasure
mounted without direction. The mind
not invited to know the pattern of chaos.

My business is to eat, drink, sleep
in your country. Under your law. Outlaw
and queen. Captive of your halls. Free
to hunt darkness in your forest. Various
stars splitting the ascension of time.
How they shine. Where they were. And are no more.

II

tease	tease	catch me and touch me
how will you know me		follow my veins
finger the treasure		how will you know me
meddle and swallow		apple and flood

tickling eyelash		trembling bauble
coming to know me		fever and sleep
tongue on the nerve		coming to know me
needle of silver		sliver of fire

how will you know me		dark on the pillow
follow the odor		water in wood
coming to know me		berry and blossom
yellow and orange		love love

III

November. Crows and blue jays screaming their greed
in a landscape you have drained of blood
with your leaving and unleaving. Winter
scrapes the bone sky with canine teeth.
The North Wind tears at the oriole's nest.
The terror of breaking apart
pricks in my witch's thumb, and my plans
are laid to keep out cold, giving it something

to gnaw on in the cellar. My body
buys food like any woman's, and my children
do not cry in their sleep. In the spring
you can bring me up from hell, but my eyes
will not be young nor my skin sweet. Look back
before April paints my face with innocent
love, if you want to know the fact of time
breaking my stone heart with a freezing fist.

IV

I am ironing out my rage. The helpless shirts
tremble and fall flat before my armies.

You have some nerve, squeezing my life
into an hour. You have a web of nerves.
My delight is to trace them,
stinging them with my name.

Towels are perfectly passive.

If you were a towel, I'd smooth your wrinkles
with my fingers and tongue. You
are just like any man, five senses
and one pride.

Dammit,
this whore, hag, mother, sister, bride
is not content to serve and wait.
Spit on me and I sizzle.
I am doing good works with a dangerous hand,

as sometimes my good hands
run over danger
gently, training it with a sweet.

So, what do you want?
A woman who irons in cold blood,
an iron maiden?

I am ironing out the differences
between us.
Time subtracting heart's-blood.

Your difference is the most
apparent difference.
Iron me out, for I'm a wrathful woman,
just damp enough.

V

Before your eyes, my will falls like a stormed tree
rending its long roots. The sky breaks blue,
the horizon undivided. The earth
drinks in the shuddering tree, and silence
stops up its cry. I was taught not to be
a woman, but your eyes unfasten my hair
and melt my silver arrows. Virgin.
The mind is without stairs. The invader
must not be moved by piteous cries and ribbon
nets. Nothing will prove it but blood
trembling across the razed land. I love
you because I cannot withstand your siege.
Snow-fever troubles the virgin. Your hands heal,
melt, cool, level, still me with sighs
down to earth, down to the histories,
silk-wet with rain, yielding my sinking light,
breezing the grass tips with the breath of yes.

I have two breasts and cannot draw the bow
Artemis gave me. Touch my breasts. I love
you, sucking life, thrusting life upon me.

Two Poems

THE CYPRESS SWAMP

The cypress swamp, west
of here is mostly water,
sometimes coffee-colored,
sometimes oily grey,
and forty-odd cypress trees—

forty-odd cypress trees
growing up from the swamp,
each with its maze of roots
searching downward, like fingers
anchoring into the mire.

Anchored like bridges in the mire,
my tough cypresses ache
upward, tall and barren,
to clumps of moss and sticks
where cranes are nesting.

Where cranes are flying,
they scrawl swamp messages,
clumsy stick letters
that tell of the lives of birds
across the slate sky.

Up in the slate clouds
light jumps and flashes,
the afternoon sun reflecting
on a bomber's wings, with the glint
of a catfish in motion.

Where a catfish moves,
silvery in the dark depths,

like a ghost that stirs and fills
a whole room with its presence,
ripples splinter the water.

Ripples shatter the mirror
when a kingfisher splits the air
and slashes the water's surface.
Bubbles and tiny insects
dance in the golden light.

I dance in the afternoon light
though only my eyes move.
Near the cranes and the barren trees,
the catfish and the moss, here
by the cypress swamp, I grow.

~

THE BIRTH OF VENUS BEFORE THE MULTITUDE
AT MUSCLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA

The sea is calm today: no whitecaps mar
the cove, no seagulls jar the air with flight.
While we perspire, two suns drip down the far
side of the sky; and in a birth of light

a girl arises from the water's roots
to tighten all our golden, muscular
bodies, sheathed in their modest bathing suits
like knives. We focus where, curvilinear,

she moves, all oiled and loose. Our pleasures are
wholly venereal till she's out of sight.
Her musk hangs in the uncalmed air; her star
has scarred the day and sharpened us for tonight.

O may we ever leer and lust like brutes
after goddesses and their forbidden fruits!

~

Felix Pollak

Two Poems

NIPHUS OF SESSA

for Lisel and Paul

Studios with a scholar's passion, but an iron splinter
in the magnetic fields of women (and, it was whispered, Satan's
disciple),
he was looked both up and down to in his medieval
walled-in city, and his spouse, vexed by his incorrigible banter
with others, was jealous. Did she issue matrimonial complaints?
Indeed. But he never surpassed the first phase of a saint.

Nor was his scholastic life free of vicissitudes,
and had he not outfoxed the Holy Inquisition into Niphus
by making certain changes in his magnum opus,
he would have forsaken the sweet lassitudes
of life altogether. But did he make restitution in the future?
It was in his stubborn nature.

Age taxed him, but even when he was lame and ailing,
he is said to have danced for the pleasure of ladies,
caroused with bohemians, and with his lute serenaded
young girls. And his virile powers were reputed unfailing.
But when the bells tolled, was he aware?
Yes, and afraid. Time was the sound of sand in his ear.

Consumed, thus, by his two consuming passions,
he burned, judge and victim at his own auto-da-fé,
feeding and assuaging both flames simultaneously,
to rake into Phoenix-shape his increasing ashes.
Could he boast the wings to fly out of his flesh?
Events let him choose his wish.

For when he embarked on his last book, he retreated
into his studio for months, saw no one, refused to talk,

even ate in solitude, and at night, the floor creaking, walked
lonely miles within walls till abrupt drops of quiet
panicked his sleepless wife. Was she aggrieved by his sudden folly?
She diagnosed it as a sick melancholy.

And after much self-effacing seized upon a cure
—monument to her love. Niphus was known to be fiercely susceptible
to a neighboring girl, a provocative wench with eyes like receptacles
of sin and shameless of tongue and dress. The wife sent for the little
whore.

And led her into the husband's chamber?
Stealthily, during his slumber.

But even this was labor lost. Niphus barely glanced
at the minx, impervious to all her encouragements,
but wrote like a daemon, relentlessly urging
his pen across pages till it reached the word FINIS.
And then reverted to his frivolous ways?
It is said he turned twice as gay.

AUTUMN

I

Fall has ticketed my windshield.
The mauve leaf sticks like middle age,
resisting the wind's current
as a street light reflection resists
river waves.

But already it has half-slid from
the fragile arm of its dancer, and soon it will lie,
its burned tip flickering, on the ground,
a discarded address,
more faded for its green faith only a summer ago,
and as solitary as a phone's
ringing: nobody-home.

II

Now the fog is filled with the loss of summer,
a blank page overflowing with in-
expressible emotions, like Malevitch out of Mondrian,
white on white.

III

Puddles of yellow light on windows,
left by the ebbing sun.

And the faint transparency
of a moon sliver in the sky's center: how full
the missing disk!

IV

Wind: pulled by dry leaves
across the earth.
(And the rustling of dead leaves
not yet born.)

V

The whole world hangs on threads of rain now.
Listen to them breaking.

~

Frederick Rebsamen

Two Poems

THE ASTHMATIC IN THE DESERT

Brought to breathe in this flat dryness,
Plied with sun and liquids, I can
Not breathe.

Desert psychiatrists,
Eliminating pollen, dust,
Pronounce a lack of early love.
Repudiated.

Well, they say,
Desires beyond capacity?
Repudiated.

Still, they say,
There must be something.

While they scratch
Among the droppings of my mind
I cannot breathe.

But I can think
And set down here the simple cause:
People.

Voices.

Loose connections.

~

DEATH OF A GENERAL

*Johnston himself went to the right
to rally his forces. Waving a tin cup
taken from a Yankee breakfast table,
he led a successful charge through
a peach orchard in full bloom.*

—Centennial newspaper account
of the Battle of Shiloh.

Emerged running, with an empty cup—
The still retreat of marshaled fragrance,
Assembled there in blossomed rows,
Ready for inspection, could not hold his eye.
(And still the dumb bees droned and bumped
Among the spurned and perfumed flowers.)
Rushing on, constricted throat
Forming yell and yell and yell,
Emerged unspoiled by nectar, to gallantly
Unfurl his bones to waiting shot:
Whirled and bolted out of time.
Emerged a hero, written down forever—
General Johnston with the flourished cup,
The empty cup.

~

Four Poems

LEGGIERO

After the hairs cover the feeble flesh
The thighs and even the calves seem more your own,
The not-so-fatted thighs and calves. But what
Hair-sock covers the naked anklebone?

You can make one. Lambs give you none. Down there
Laughter is silent, while around the vein
That always, as a child, intrigued you, new
Tiny offbleedings, beneath naming, skein

Your summer skin. And when your winter comes
They will stand out pronounced against the white.
You can do nothing to prevent this. Try,
While it is happening, to do hard things right.

Try to kiss your grandmother. Try not to kill
The tastes of youth tender within you still.

SELF-LOVER

Into a summer culvert the small boy
Crawls quietly. He stays there while he wants
The shadow, the dank odor, the weak husk
Of hollow water, and his separateness.
He is a universe beneath the road,
Cuddled complete, touching the top of his skull
To the concrete pipe, closing his eyes to feel
The flattening rush of tires rocket his head
Loose into spaces. Then, in deepest calm,
He takes himself alone within himself.

This is a unity beyond all words
Until his whole seems tiny, or stirs fear,
Or his shoulders ache. The far cylindrical light
Attracts him then, seems friendly. He crawls out,
Gathers his body, blinks, looks round, stands up,
Stretches, half-reaccepts the intricacy
Of living as a person on the earth.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence comes hard:
Excelling things get marred
Before they have excelled.

Yet my good potter tries
To breathe life into eyes
Of plaster in a frieze.

I too, while my world burns,
Try to make icy urns
More solid than all trees.

But excellence comes hard.
Excelling things get marred,
All breaths become expelled.

LIE

I have no lie to tell
Other than one I know
You know too well:
How does it go?

"I have a sure sense
Of direction?" Do not smile.
Like mine, your excellence
Lies in that guile.

J. C. Waugh

THE FLIGHT

Fled south from Yellowstone,
A land unrealized
Somewhere behind our own

Open nerves of chasms,
Clotting mud, agonies
Of springs, pulsing, spasms

Of stream, sapphire wounds deep
In the earth's crust; wound past
The rock and lava heap

West of the coiling Snake;
Plunged all night down Utah;
Paused, then, at dawn to make

Camp where Mormon wagons
Hauled china, model ships,
Glass, harpsichords, guns,

And spinning wheels; there drew
Breath, compromising how
We felt with what we knew.

~

Marguerite Kaiyala

Two Poems

ACTUALLY,

possibles are not to be imagined. The world must hang
on sense, now fixed by the existent moon. (Still,
Newton, dreaming, saw golden gravity dancing.)

Moralists have noted the moon in lunaticking
man and beast, but in the ethical night (vile
possibles are not to be imagined) the world must hang

on Grace: who made the moon is the thing.
Head-men trace an infantile grace: the Oedipal
Newton, dreaming, saw golden gravity dancing.

Philosophers agree either a solid sphere does cling
to space, or eye projects its phantom (i.e., real
possibles are not to be imagined: the world must hang

on mind). Or, abracadabra slide rules bring
certitude to large numbers: a very metric, tactile
Newton, dreaming, saw golden gravity dancing.

But this moon-light muffles the cheek and baffles the seeking:
while the night is laid in such patina-tile,
possibles are not to be imagined. The world must hang.
(Newton, dying, saw golden gravity dancing.)

~

BOY DRAWING

The truly proportional
progress of the lineal
depends on my small son.
He lays the patterned kitchen
floor with plots of butcher
paper, and squats over
them, the playpot land
of his prehensile mind.

There, he could move
any line into shape with love;
could almost circle
space with one wheel
and make it roll;

fire
into the beautiful region of linear
and kill shocked flocks
of Japanese hen-marks;

or (since he once saw
it) paint old Pisa
off-plumb, and it would
not pine earthward.

~
Michael Singer

USELESS WORDS TO THE FEARFUL

Like water or the air, something else
Is always there: known to some as Dionysus;
About such matters I could not care less.

If you are educated you can find it anywhere
Not only well defined on greek jars, but
Exploding in kids' cars, at which I'd stare.

Once, allusions settled the damned thing for me.
Remembered lines from *The Bacchae* would lend clarity
Till it became what never had occurred to me.

I did not want it loosed before those who stare or linger.
Swiftly, links were made elastic metaphors would cover;
I would exit smartly amid victories all might share.

For us all it is a process, wherein we are found
At which point we consistently seek
What others, likewise caught, did with that sight or sound.

It is in vain, this panic, the mad grasping down
Among abundant images. It shall writhe again within you
Come to teach you your sole sight, your only sound.

Lois Baker

Two Poems

PARTIAL CLEARING

There's been nothing to the witless latitudes of sky
for days but squall and vapor: who could see
the squamous cumuli would split straight through the middle?
There's no fire-breath, or summer dragon,
or forked tongue with a new tune.

The cast-off wind, coiling in the chimneys of houses,
puts down small tries at keeping sane, or dry.
Outside, cypresses unhinged from their walks
drop gold scales into the alkaline air, leached out
of all reason; and a weightless salamander balances
the flap and ripple of the weather on stone eyes.

WAITING IN THE PARK

This is a day for loose attachments.
The drinking fountain sends its spray
one inch to the south, the park benches
trail their chains every which way
like arrows on the morning's weather map,
and a couple of kids,
having got a nickel from an old woman
and a push on the swing apiece from an old man,
don't know what to do next.
"You creep, you can't tell where the hole is
until the bird flies in."
"I want to see the nest in the tree.
I want to see the eggs."
"Well, that's just tough titty." "Shut up!"

Tough titty, shut up! No bird,
but there's the call of one. Across the street
a house being wrecked for a freeway access
gives up its walls to hammer and bar
without a moan. "We got to play here an hour,
Mama said, you dope."
"I want to see the nest in that tree.
I want to go home."
An elm could be rent by a crow claw today,
and a beaker of salts break loose a life
where there's a tender implantation.
Tough titty, shut up!
Tough titty, shut up!

While I wait here, I see you,
thinner than I remember, walking the other way
one block to the north. On a day like this
it would be no use calling out to you;
the truth is, I'd know you anywhere,
without even looking—just as the bedroom
in that house over there was bound
to be papered in roses.

William Minor

WEEKEND

I

The faces of the street are your best friends:
The worried, blind, and weak; they come and go
And you are fond of them. You love the light
In laundromats, where many things are done:
You stop and see—who knows?—what rough delight
In frayed machines, on working hands, in men.
—I've said a thousand times that we should move,
But nothing's cheap, your mother knows—

Come home; your mother waits. We are involved
In time, and time derides your dalliance,
But cannot cast it out, as it did mine.

II

Perhaps the rank thorn is the separate will:
Today our eldest son plays Cain and strikes
His two week brother at the breast. Good Cain,
My self, my child, why must we live like men?
We sulk and try to share a public park:
Its monody of color on the green,
Its carrousel of lives. We eat above
And bide our time with talk and sandwiches.
Yet when the boy returns from dirt to show
His wounded cheek, you send us off to join
The children, fathers, lovers down below.

III

You call the ducks and give them crusts of bread;
I sit among the bland in hell. You stop
And listen, what to hear? My child, you know
But cannot say, and that is just as well.
Deprived of lunch, I pass the row of blondes
Called *mothers* by their neighbors; hoist my son
Upon his small and honest seat, and watch
Him spin on iron gadgets in the sun.
One day we walked out early and he threw
Himself on dewy grass, who hadn't been
Outside the house for days.

IV

It's three o'clock. I've come for milk but sit
Beside the soft electric purr of our
New frigidaire, and drink the wine. It drums
—*In vino veritas*—a fever in my skin.
You stand beneath a single light and say,
"What reason brings you here?" The night, my dear,
Is my best friend; and night and I shall have
A time, be ridiculed and ridicule—
Together purge our pity and our fear.

Sometimes I make you sick, you say. My dear,
Sometimes my sickness makes me envy you.

V

"Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," I sing—
And who are they? My boy, I cannot say,
But don't they have fine names? I turn; you smile
And hug the boys, who tug upon your apron string.
Together by the sink, our forms imply
Four names in one, yet live alone. If I
Could often join the three of you, and keep
The truth that wine and night and I must bear,
I know we'd have a pretty thing; but dear,
Saturday night and Sunday too,
One does the work that one was born to do.

~

Martha Asher Friedberg

Three Poems

POSSESSION

After you left, Love,
Were you afraid for me?
I bolted the doors and the windows.
And I heard the garbagemen comment
On the lightness of their loads:
The unmailed letters and polaroid prints,
Packets of hair, and dust
From my floor.

I sit in my slip and watch the seasons.
I cook, eat, sleep in my slip.
But last night I wanted you back.
I couldn't find the key
You had made especially for us.

I rummaged through the cupboards
And bureau, slamming the drawers
Like a whore.
Then I remembered:
(veteran loser that I am)
It fell through
The boned bars of my life
The last time I tried
To possess you.

~

WIFE

I listen to the children
Breathe-in their dreams.
Then lie by your side
Edging a little, into your downy sleep.

But the light of the moon
Across our bed
Drifts in the grooves,
Like a sea. Then I stare
At our sinking lives.

How my eyes sting
In the weeds,
In the foam.

~

THE POEM

To write again is to love:
To hear chimes in the air
And then, without shaking a branch,
The fruits, falling.
Dark and ripe, they gather
On the page for you.

~

Flora J. Arnstein

Four Poems

GARDEN INCIDENT

1

The garden takes the morning static and separate
On the lawn where the rabbit
Tracks a blunt trail,
And swivels his nose on his own desires.
The cat steps her economical way,
And the sun prints indifferent pattern
Over lawn or tree.

2

In the noon-garden the oversun
Makes tarpools of shadow.
The rabbit in the covert of hedge
Munches his silence
And the cat
Coils sinew against a ravenous day,
Opens one agate eye at the hedged rabbit,
And the furry roundness of her paws hardens into stone.

3

The garden takes the evening
Unconcerned as a sphinx,
The soil dark, and the irrelevant stars
Their million years unrecorded. The cat
Lifts accustomed haunch, licking in a rhythm
Of decorum, while on the grass
The rumped, wry-necked rabbit dribbles its blood
Into the mindless ground.

PAYMENT

I pay for lapses,
Not in coin or penance
But in sight. What I miss
In the swallow's oblique wing,
The snail's succulence,
The blue turn at the iris lip:

More escapes
Between sight and words.

I go blind in a world of pounding sense,
And mute because this triggers
Neither speech nor song.

THIS GHOST

This ghost I cherish
Is no wanton shade, tricky
To traverse space or insinuate
Barrier.

It is not, no never eerie-
Lip to lip warm,
And my words said with a spiral of grace,
And an eye's blue recognition.

No shadow, rather a gleam
Encircling,
With oh, such iris,
And implicit tune;

But for all that, outside,
Impenetrate,
Parallel step and gesture,
Never intermingled,

With the meandering way of ghosts,
All portent and escaping,
The gift never crystallized,
And no fruit tart for the tongue.

~
BEAKED INTERLUDE

In the beaked interlude
Between the cold lips of morning
The bird lifts his first gasp of flight.

That is the moment before the cells converge.
When the body is without contour,
And blood gropes for channel.

To hoist day, balance
On the silled shoulder
The cymbals, rivets, the hobbled canter,

This drains the wrist, before the brace
Of will or nickering conscience.

The light will come
Lurching its skewer between rib and rib,
But is it too much to ask

For a boned word to buckle
The denied, the denuded marrow,
Vulnerable, and coupled too soon to dying?

Robert Lewis Weeks

Two Poems

EAST TEXAS

Living here is somehow
like living in a sanitarium

she said
There is nothing to want
nothing to keep away from
nothing to yield to

But it is stark mad
asylum style
too desolate—

around the corner of each month
a year is falling apart
though nothing to push
into the elbow room

nothing to caress
nothing to touch
nothing
to be damned for

Like a sanitarium somehow
it keeps me from screaming
But I am dead behind the barn
and only

a horse looks over the fence
and the cold moon
slides
down
the sky.

FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF ART

I want to make my body stiff,
to sit down here and never move
until I have learned to use words.

But it's no use.

I rode through a Virginia valley
a month ago on a train, alone.

There I felt something and wrote
it down in another poem.
There I was alone—

no dog snoring on the hearth,
no water running upstairs,
no children crying out in their sleep—

only people with praying arms outstretched
waiting for news thrown from the train,
the sound of the engine and the tracks

up grade to Matewan.

Oh, stiff!
rigid to experience—patient!

The water drips down the windows,
the steam explodes along the valley
of tulip trees pointed like mountains.

I will go over the mountains in August
hot with expectation.
I will settle by the sea

but I'll go on riding,
walking, talking—
gathering fat increases of books

but no poems worth the stubble
in the brown bare fields of winter
in Wisconsin or the sun in Texas.

But the babies grow up and thrive.
The grass grows. The dog
runs out in the woods and listens

to the crow of the pheasant cock,
drops his chin to sniff,
runs off like a butterfly,

comes back jingling his tags
like a dog again
ready for sleep and reality.

Oh, I ride the hills and come back
with my belly clenched, sit rigid awhile
muttering a far syllable about Virginia,

learn a few more words, pound
the halls again looking for a way
into poetry, knowing it will never change—

I will walk the stairs again
and talk about how unfit I am
before I sit down to try once more.

Arthur Gregor

Four Poems

THERE WAS A CHARM TO THIS

There was a charm to this when as a youth
I had watched a shadow and had followed it,
frightened by a form that seemed
the only one the whole length of a street
there for no one but me. By then
the imagination far into the mystery,
I declared secretly, tempted and afraid of course,

NORTHWEST

I would set aside what held me,
would trace a shadow to its source.

Now looking back, what charm there was
to the first acknowledgment, the giving
of names, first giving of hands,
the noise on stairs not so much from our steps
as from shy thoughts, and then that moment
when on entering the room something is said
and in the dim light the shadow
does not go but grows and deepens
around the body and in the face.

A charm this that repeated effort wastes
and wide experience can no more approximate.
Light that dwells within a window
holds other impenetrable features
in a white glow. Solemn acceptance of
their mysteries is good but something other
than a youth's feeling for that early shadow
that tempted innocence to follow,
years of young knowledge and of failure,
first steps in the overall pursuit.

~

FRANCISCO

All along its course
there is nothing a river excludes
once part of its flow.
Driftwood, leaves, a flower tossed
from shore, all make
a common journey. Preferred
passage exists for none
and at the end, when the river
joins a larger force—
a larger inland water or the sea—
there is absolutely nothing
the broader body does not absorb.

He of Assisi was such a river,
a form through which the stream
could work its will.
And when he beheld the doves aflutter
and saw not feathers but
the purest movement in their wings,
not air but a denseness
of lilacs by which
the movement was sustained,
he called the birds unto himself,
accepted them
and told them who they were.

And he, the river, brought them to the point
where all that flows
flows on into a city of
fantastic light. There the birds
could see their songs
as solid frameworks in the sky.
He told them so, and they, the birds
having left their feathers behind
knew that this was so
and trembled before him
who had become for them at once the stream
and beyond the river's end the source
toward which their own bird-movement flows.

~

SA RIERA

There are some rocks out in this bay
rising like pyramids above a flat terrain,
except that here the surface at their base,
unless driven otherwise, yields before man,
gently to swimmers and to man-made craft,
unlike the characteristics of sand,
often impenetrable as theft, and wont
to cast itself into a lost man's face.

The rock is no architectural feat
assuaging a king's bereavement,
or marking a despot's journey to the sun.
Nor the relic of a people startling
posterity with what they had done.
On a still evening when the waters
are soft and calm as a woman's hair,
when a man standing up in his boat

guides it without effort, leaving
evidence of himself in the water track
as in a woman's thoughts for days,
the rock, grey in a fading light,
is unmoved, being itself the base
around which waters leap like flames,
or fish for food, and like a watchdog lies
supreme and deadly lest someone cross
the boundary guarded like sacred ground.

The hardened residue of bone, of wind,
of unanticipated turn and ages of events,
tears on the face of a sea, the rocks
in this and other bays have taken in
more human things than any mind
could hold. And what mind could guess
the endurance that stirs in them
whom death flies by like the scavenger
seabirds that pay them little heed?

~

YOU WERE THERE

You were there. How else
could the scene have come
into its own, could ice
on the lake and that part
below the bridge that flows
and the trees O bare wintertrees
their arms like a fork
about to dig hay from the sky,
have ascended like a soul?

And the birds! A vertical
one pecking on wood,
a sparrow perched on a log,
and the call like a bark
of a black one above,
each flutter, each sound
complete like a marvelous death,
and the reeds in a haze
of snow on the bank.

The palms of your hands
were in the trees where the birds
drove their beaks in the wood.
The fall below the bridge
streamed from the wound
in your side. And who was it
who else by your word
sang with each bird
and held on to a tree for support?

~

Kenneth O. Hanson

Seven Greek Poems

HOTEL LIDO

After a day and a night of rain
they're cleaning up on the Saronic Gulf.
The sun burns on the water.
The doorman, dressed in dungarees
and wearing dark glasses, is shining shoes—
his smile infectious and carious.
The maid, barefooted, is cleaning out drains.
They're putting down boards on the sea-walks again.
Yesterday every place in the world
had the same bad weather.
Now, into the bright specific afternoon
the vigorous bathers come
and the dark skin-diver hangs
hours on the surface of one world
and stares into another.

SELLING FISH IN KALAMAKI

The simultaneous statement of five themes begins
—or better, six. Point, counter point,
but there resemblance ends. Along the wall
the slappy water feels the rocks.
Greeks feel each other and the fish.
The vehement gestures rise and fall
until the classic day takes place.
One Greek is beating out the life from squid.
One other bobs offshore, explaining
to himself the mustard-colored nets.
Responsibly, the opulent vocables fall on the water.
The price is set. One Greek walks off
a basket of sweet fish upon his head.

HAIRCUT ON POSEIDON STREET

I settle in, disconsolate and helpless
to this foreign barber's chair and face myself.
I'm nearer than I thought and blonder too
until I take my glasses off, and then I fade—
a fish in deeper water than the day.
The barber speaks no English and I take my chance.
What will he make of a head so long, so square
crewcut? He works in silence while I blur—
the bees in squadrons riding out the fragrant air
between the mirror and the chair.
And then the talcum drifts, I put my glasses on
and try to praise the effort honestly
that brought this self discovered to the light—
clean-cut, well-rounded, almost Greek.

HUNG OVER IN TZITZIFIES

Completely without resources
my head splits like an orange.

In dozens of stony gardens
gardeners are gardening.
Construction workers
are working on their constructions.
Fishermen fish
and the traffic cops
are arresting pedestrians.

It is a flawless day
a day without angles.

In Phaleron Bay
with units of the 6th Fleet
the world's largest ship
the *Enterprise* idles.

"Mesa se mia nikta"¹
rises from a thousand motorcycles.
"Den peirazi"² echoes
in the sleep of a hundred pimps.
All over Athens
women in black
are hanging out laundry
white as the sides of houses.
The fish hang suspended
under the glassy waves.

Completely without resources
my head splits like an orange.

Sponge salesmen sing
"very fine, very nice."
On beaches, the paddleball
players play
by the loud-sounding sea.
Just over this balcony
jet planes turn left or turn right
for Paris or Munich
or London non-stop.
On Rodos, old men on donkeys
are raising their hats
to the passing drivers.
Commuters are changing
for Metamorphosis.
Anemones blossom.
The cards fall right.

It is a flawless day
a day without angles.

Completely without resources
my head splits like an orange.

¹ A well-known bouzoukia song. Roughly: "Our love affair/
turned my hair/ white overnight/ Why do you do me this way?"

² Another well-known song. Roughly: "Relax. Take it easy.
Doesn't matter. Don't give it a second thought."

TRUE ENOUGH WILL DO

Triantáfilos Tsaloukídes
otherwise Lakis, "Little Flower"
street Tripóleos
played the horses
and lost his last shirt button.

My friend—it was always
my friend—I need 600 drachmas.
My mother she
very christianity, he said.
Last night she hospital.
I smoke and I smoke
holding up his stained fingers.

O my friend
it was skilled snow job
and both of us knew it.
Now six months later
your mother long since forgotten
along with 600 drachmas
into a world where all the horses win
your letter (postage due)
comes saying, I send you letter
but you dint send me any answer.

A GOING CONCERN

Speeding on hair-
raising hairpin turns
through the Peloponnese
having missed
Mycenae for Messene

taking one hand
from the wheel

to cross himself
at every Dangerous Curve
my pious pimp friend
tells me Hanson be
happy. Do me the favor.

But hell what the hell
I say I don't
have to be happy I
just have to be alive.

SWINGING IN THESSALY

Surely there are gods
in this landscape
surely
Olympos is all inhabited

shepherds piping
yes truly
with flocks a black
goat with soft eyes
and sure feet

small boys
singing mimic bouzoukia
sometimes I'm happy
but then
sometimes I'm sad

and eating a stolen
orange
Axarides, Athenian
out of his element
steps on the gas
past Katerini

Matter of fact
we're not much interested
in ruins he tells me
while thunder

rolls rattling the stars
in their sockets
and sunlight
footloose
falls over Thessaly
undaunted

About Our Contributors

The editor is composing these notes under a peepul tree in West Pakistan, so we trust that our contributors and their friends will forgive any dearth of information.

A. R. AMMONS has been causing a stir for the last few years with his poems and his theories of prosody; his recent book was *Expressions of Sea Level* (Ohio State University Press). First appearance here.

VI GALE, the well-known Northwest poet, teaches creative writing in Portland. Alan Swallow, publisher of her first book, will publish her second, *Love Always*, shortly.

ROBERT PETERSON has recently taught the Poetry Workshop at San Francisco State. He has a new book for 1965 entitled *Report from the Photo Service*, which will include these poems.

ROBIN SKELTON edited the anthology *Five Poets of the Pacific Northwest* (KENNETH O. HANSON, RICHARD HUGO, CAROLYN KIZER, WILLIAM STAFFORD, and DAVID WAGONER), all of whom, like Skelton himself, are well known to readers of this magazine.

GRACE SCHULMAN has been studying poetry with Léonie Adams at Columbia University and finishing the course work on her Ph.D. at New York University. First appearance here.

FRANK J. WARNKE, who has recently returned from a year of Fulbright teaching in Germany, is a professor of English at the University of Washington and author of *European Metaphysical Poetry*.

SAMUEL HAZO is an associate dean and a professor of English at Duquesne; more important, he has a book of poems, *My Sons in God*, being published this year. He also edited a good little anthology, *Contemporary Religious Poetry* (1963).

WILLIAM PILLIN has a new book, *Pavanne for a Fading Memory*, published by Alan Swallow. Pillin, like Hazo, appears here for the first time.

CHARLES EDWARD EATON makes his second appearance in *Poetry Northwest*. His last book was *Countermeasures* (Abelard-Schuman); he is completing his new (fifth) collection.

SHIRLEY KAUFMAN is a poet we discovered at James B. Hall's annual Manuscript Day at the University of Oregon last spring. She once attended the University of Washington and is now working toward her master's degree at San Francisco State.

SHERWOOD WASHBURN is a poet we discovered in our mail box. He is a mathematician, studying algebraic geometry at Columbia (Mr. Washburn, meet Miss Schulman), and is probably some kind of genius.

DAVID PEARSON ETTER is an assistant editor at the Encyclopaedia Britannica and lives in Geneva, Illinois. He has published in *Prairie Schooner* and *Antioch Review*, but not with us until now.

SAM BRADLEY comes from Pennsylvania and has had poems in *Poetry* and *Prairie Schooner*. He has a book forthcoming: *Men—in Good Measure*.

ROBERT HERSHON is a trade magazine editor whose poems have appeared in *Reviews* and *Quarterlies* from Antioch to Colorado. We are happy to extend his geographical range.

A. WILBER STEVENS once taught at this University, where he founded our predecessor, *Interim*. After ten years at Idaho State College, he has gone to head the Department of Literature at Park College, Missouri. Alan Swallow—one of our nominees for a President's medal—will publish Wil's book one of these days. First appearance here.

CAROLYN STOLOFF, an artist-writer, has studied in the poetry workshop of Elise Asher's husband. She publishes widely, paints furiously, and teaches art at Manhattanville College, New York.

JOHN L'HEUREUX is an old *Poetry Northwest* hand; several of the poems in his new book, *Quick as Dandelions* (Doubleday), were first printed here. Father L'Heureux is working on a book about Albee and today's theater in general.

R. R. CUSCADEN is the respected editor of *Midwest*; his poetry and pamphlets have been published widely. His new, longer collection of verse will be called *The Abandoned Railroad*. First appearance here.

PRISCILLA SHAMES is acquiring an advanced degree in English at U.C.L.A., raising four children, and winning honors for her poetry: the Alfred Longueil Poetry Prize and an Academy of American Poets Award in 1963. First appearance here.

ELISE ASHER is a painter-poet, and for the cover of this issue she has painted the portrait of her poem "Downward Resurrection." She is wife to one poet and sister to another. First appearance here.

DOLORES STEWART writes greeting cards for a living, but has published her serious, non-living-making poetry in such places as *Massachusetts Review* and *Wormwood Review*.

ED LEIMBACHER is working toward an advanced degree at the University of Washington. He also came to our attention at James B. Hall's Manuscript Day at Eugene. "The Cypress Swamp" won an Academy of American Poets Award at the University of Washington last spring.

FELIX POLLAK became known under the name Felix Anselm; he was born in Vienna and, after vicissitudes peculiar to our century, has come to rest as curator of rare books at the University of Wisconsin. First appearance here.

FREDERICK REBSAMEN teaches English at the University of Arizona and has published fiction in the *Kenyon Review* and in *Antioch Review*. First appearance here.

THOMAS WHITBREAD teaches English at the University of Texas. Harper & Row will publish his book of poems, *Four Infinitives*. Another first.

J. C. WAUGH is a teacher of English and a coach at Lawrenceville School: an auspicious combination when one reflects that such luminaries as Rolfe Humphries and Theodore Roethke once combined the same activities. First appearance here.

MARGUERITE KAIYALA, a graduate student at the University of Washington, is being published here for the second time.

Our information on MICHAEL SINGER is a year out of date, but he was, and presumably still is, a graduate student at Washington University in St. Louis. He has published in *Perspective*.

LOIS BAKER is the wife of the capable West Coast sculptor, Manuel Izquierdo. She lives in Portland, where she sometimes writes art criticism, and casts a clear eye on art, life, and letters in general. First appearance here.

WILLIAM MINOR, the father of two boys, is a printmaker whose woodcuts have been exhibited in a number of important museums. He teaches English at the University of Hawaii, and his plans for the future include more poems, prints, and children.

MARTHA ASHER FRIEDBERG has previously been published by John Logan (*Choice, Critic*). Like her sister, Elise Asher, she is a poet and a beauty. First appearance here.

FLORA J. ARNSTEIN, we assumed, was an exceptionally gifted young lady; and after an exchange of letters, this opinion was confirmed: she is seventy-eight, which gives us a sixty-year spread in the ages of our contributors. She is also the author of a favorite book of ours, on teaching poetry to children. First appearance here.

ROBERT LEWIS WEEKS, our second Texan, teaches at Stephen E. Austin State; his first book, *To the Maker of Globes*, has just been published by South & West, Inc. First appearance here.

ARTHUR GREGOR, the distinguished poet and editor, appeared in our last issue; these poems, like those, will be in his new book, *Shadowplay*. He has poems in the current issues of *Sewanee*, *Chelsea*, and *Poetry*, among others.

KENNETH O. HANSON is widely and deeply represented in the new anthology, *Five Poets of the Pacific Northwest* (University of Washington Press—we want to get in as many plugs as possible for this book); of the eighteen poems selected, we first published ten. Hanson plans to visit Pakistan soon, and the editor of *Poetry Northwest* is trying to get the country ready for him.

~

We think it worth calling attention to the fact that this is primarily a First Appearance Issue and that among our contributors in this issue are the authors of twelve new books (not including *Five Poets of the Pacific Northwest*, \$5.00 hard cover, \$1.95 paper). Isn't that splendid?

Other recent books by our contributors are *For a Return to Kona* (Swallow) by EDITH SHIFFERT, and *Ryoanji* (Harcourt) and *Half-life* (Pym-Randall), both by TIM REYNOLDS.

Poetry Northwest's editor, Carolyn Kizer, is in West Pakistan from the first of October until April, as a poet in residence under the Cultural Affairs program of the U.S. State Department. *Poetry Northwest* will not be accepting new manuscripts in her absence. However, the publishing schedule of this magazine will not be interrupted, owing to the large number of manuscripts on hand.

We will be glad to send Miss Kizer's address in Pakistan to personal friends and professional colleagues who might require it. Unfortunately, we are unable to forward mail from contributors.

Questions about *Poetry Northwest* may be directed to members of the Board of Editors at this address. Questions concerning copyrights, distribution, subscriptions, back issues, and other business may be directed to Miss Emily Johnson, Acting Director, Office of Scholarly Journals, University of Washington.

~