

Poetry

NORTHWEST

SUMMER 1962

VOLUME III, NUMBER 2

NINETY CENTS



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Published by the University of Washington

POETRY NORTHWEST SUMMER, 1962 VOLUME III, NUMBER 2

Published quarterly. Subscriptions and manuscripts should be sent to *Poetry Northwest*, Parrington Hall, University of Washington, Seattle 5, Washington. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts; all submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription rate, \$3.00 per year; single copies, 90 cents.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Seattle, Washington.

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POETRY NORTHWEST

SUMMER 1962

Constance Urdang

THE IDEA OF A HERO

1. *José Blasio*

In the golden age of the Valley of Mexico, Quetzalcoatl embarked in his wizard skiff for the unknown islands; but the people believed that he would come again. They believed it still when the Spaniards came, killing and looting; some of them, even, when Maximilian arrived, took him to be their god; tossed flowers under the wheels of the imperial coach; burned incense; sang the ancient hymns.

I think I always loved him. Before
He came to my country, riding on the sea,
Godlike, bearded, white-skinned, I must have loved
The idea of him; the legendary god. Later,
I chose my sovereign.

There is nothing I have forgotten. I can tell you
The clothes he wore, the wines he drank;
I know his favorite dishes, horses, visitors;
That first half-year, we gave more than a hundred
Balls and receptions; we commissioned seven
Portraits by seven painters; the bill alone
For spirits topped a hundred thousand; one
Must show oneself a king.

But later on

Among the echoing chambers, he was always
Cold—the upland chill—so we built a palace,
La Casa del Olvido, in the valley.
Who can forget, being Emperor? They tracked
Him there, his fears; his lady pined

And paled ; the others deserted
To bolder leaders ; I stayed behind,
Drew up his documents, arranged his assignments,
As if nothing had happened, as if his fate
Had not set out already from the north,
Wearing a black coat, riding in a black
Carriage, black eyes hard as obsidian . . .
We three stayed on : myself, his Indian
Mistress, and the fat professor,
Yet could not comfort him or keep him safe.

When he went with the soldiers to the Hill of Bells
He made me envoy to the Holy City.
There in the terrible labyrinth I found
The Empress, mad ; the Holy Father, blind ;
While I ran errands among the fountains
They killed him.
That is what they call history.

2. *Gral. Miguel López*

It was reported that when Maximilian and Carlota made their first entry into Mexico City they were escorted on horseback by the same General López who later betrayed him: a mercenary 'with charming manners and a reputation for treachery.'

Halfway across the capital the street
Of the ultimate indignity is busy, like any street.
The one they called the Emperor is dead
Like any man ; his lady
Jabbers in Belgium, mindless as a monkey.

What is it

That makes a hero? Where you or I
See ships upon an ocean, the hero sees himself
Borne on the immaculate flood.

I am a plain man, rode

For three years in processions, wore my gold
Braid, medals, ribbons ; saluted, bowed,
Slept in a palace ; but I am no hero.
Above the beleaguered city I saw the hill,
I saw the ready rifles. I tried to save him
From being a hero. I did not need their gold ;
He would have given more, and the rascally Father,
His sly confessor, would have shriven my soul.

I tried to save him, gave him
The papers and the key ; any man,
Seeing the squads march out and back
Fumbling and sweaty under the single eye
Of the sun, on the Hill of Bells, would know
What was to come.

They tell of him

How long ago, in Caserta, in his own world,
He dreamed he would unsheathe the golden sword
Of the dead kings, his people, and slay the beast
Ravaging on the empire and in his breast.

Now he is clay, having fathered nothing ;
Leaving behind him neither throne nor son ;
In the capital there is no monument ;
The people do not mourn ; the widow accuses
Him, in her madness ; so history is stitched up
Out of a sleazy fabric.

Where the firing squad

Lifts unimpassioned guns, the hero sees
Himself upon the hill between two thieves
Without blasphemy, in the pure light of his intention.

Cold as two sapphires his sightless eyes accused them
At the final indignity, when butchers despoiled his body ;
The mortifying flesh in robes of ceremony
Sailed backward across the ocean.

I never stood
On that hill where he fell beside the little generals.
They tell me he was brave. Being a hero
Is a public job. They say I am a coward.

3. *The House of Forgetfulness*

Nothing of splendor remains ; under the jungle,
Sprung pavement, fallen beams ; the old foundations
Gaping like graves ; and granny, wrinkled
As a fungus, monstrous luxuriance flowering among vines ;
Telling her days like beads ; seeing,
Twining among branches, the giant butterflies
Pale as the souls of the dead.

She's real, though, dozing in the garden ; once
Before her ignorant eyes, a company
Posed in the authentic robes of tragedy.
One might believe her old eyes see them still,
Or does she dream ? The Emperor,
Halfway disguised as any rural lover,
Embraces, in tableau, the gardener's daughter.
A white moth, signifying virtue, hangs
Above the couple.

In the second scene,
Comfortless on the terrace goes
The somber shadow of a Queen ;
Childless and fatherless, already she
Mourns in the endless brilliance endlessly.

Now the Professor comes, hiding in his coat
His life-destroying apparatus : nets
In which he'll catch the winged and fragile things,
Prey of his clumsiness ; in a bottle, sweet
And deadly poison ; pins that will impale

Them, finally, upon his wall ;
He bobs so comically down the walk
Under his big umbrella, who could take
Science seriously ?

In the fourth tableau,
See how the Gardener's Daughter weeps and weeps.
The melancholy Queen has sailed away ;
The Emperor is catching butterflies,
Careless of one already in his net ;
Wiser than they in ancient auguries,
The Gardener's Girl already has by heart
Her own last speeches and her final scene.

All this the watcher, in her ignorance,
Saw, did not see ; not understanding how
Reality could imitate a play ;
How could she understand these actors were
True prototypes, heroes and heroines
Mistaking life for legend ?

Years
Afterward, mumbling toothless gums, crouched
Among their extravagant ruins, she said
Only, the emperor was grand,
The empress sad, the stout professor droll,
The gardener's girl not even beautiful,
But that she'd heard that all of them were dead.

Robert Sward

THE CYCLADES

I

"The Greek islands,
Mykonos,
Tinos, Siros,
yes, yes,"
said the blow fish,
conferring momentarily
with a stone,
with an octopus
and a whale,
"natural things
come from the world!"

* * *

*They are composed, in the North,
of limestone, gneiss, schist and marble;
in the South of eruptive rock, lava, basalt
and trachyte . . .*

II

Pink cat,
skin only
in the white street
lizard bones,
twitching
mule slop,
Church bells
Mobil (and olive) oil

cans, rusting ;
it lives,
blinks,
blind
crawls
(gnats & flies)
umbrella frames
licking like life
the earth.

III

Two old men, brothers
the oldest in Piraeus,
sailors
part-time thieves,
smugglers,
and uncles to my wife,
appear
one upon the shoulders
of the other,
Midnight
at a daughter's *Taverna*
drunk
O gloriously drunk,
upon the family mule.

Introductions completed,
we observe the mule
(an enormous fish, perhaps
an elephant,
two other uncles
or a unicorn)
sipping beer.

Black Greek goat,
("time is memory")
six-inch
eyelashes—
blinking.

VIII

Death this time in the uniform
of an American naval officer,
black armband,
sunglasses
guidebook,
camera
pilot's wings
and a live rose (white) in each hand;
Death in mourning for whom?
for what? and why?

Robert D. Hoelt

Three Poems

SIEGE OF THE FIRE BIRD YEAR

We were balladeers of the grape that spring,
Great-lunged orators of the thigh's design,
But lost in a bottle and theory dollop.
We cheered hi-ho and sank
To the off-beat spiral of our smiles' decline.
Three-eyed Willy was our first great loss,
But we fell two fingers short of grieving.

For who could believe the incantations
of a cut-rate mystic
Or that third eye on the top of his head?
A falling brick cured him of life and design,
And God-Damned-Sam, the pretty one of the bunch,
Sang an eighty-proof lament above his grave.

Always-pregnant Polly
Complained in Sanscrit that her belly hurt.
Jolly mare of our hurly-burly bunch,
And prime dispenser of thermal logic;
She left us in the ninth month after church,
chanting Ave Maria.
(We heard she dropped her bundle in a ditch.)
It was down hill after that, and the sun turned blue.
Won-ton Charlie sold his hand-carved Buddha,
And Harry-the-Weed, always sad as a corpse,
gave in to his wisdom
And took to lying on the sidewalk, laughing.

LETTER FROM GUAM

In this land of not-quite-yet,
Too-soon-to-tell delights
Metal falls first victim
In the red war of rust
Whose doctrine is:
Both sword and plowshare
Are delicacies
To my insatiable tongue.
The automobile dies fleeing,
A self-propelled junk yard
Bound to brown obscurity.

Ferric posts pirouette
On thin filaments
Of declining strength,
And beer cans ulcerate
Into magenta lace.

Near the houses up on stilts
(Pre-fabricated ruins)
Bougainvillaea prosper
In their neutrality
To contrast the scene
With a natural red
Which is more emphatic,
but less insistent.

~

TWO SONGS FOR SLEEP

I

My head is on the pillow,
My hand is on her heart,
And in their joyful softness
I can't tell the two apart.

My hand enjoys the mountain,
My head prefers the plain,
For plain is cool as autumn
And mountains hot as flame.

But flame soon leaves my fingers,
Soon leaves my cooling head,
Then love and I together
Sleep like the newly dead.

II

Your hair is Sistine-yellow,
Your eyes are Mandarin-blue ;
All I see is history
When I look long at you.

My arms are obsolescent,
Grown thin by vast disuse.
Our love, once a victory,
Has now become a truce.

We spend our days in silence ;
Our nights are lost in bed.
Between crisp sheets our bodies lie,
The dying, and the dead.

~

Philip Legler

Three Poems

SPRING IN ILLINOIS

Tonight, watching for a trace
Of dark clouds bunching, blowing in from the West
With the air too still, too close,
Like weathermen we tried to forecast
(Held out our hands to the rain) to sight a tornado.
We had been given plenty of warning,

The barometer's needle a shadow
Of severe storms coming on either side of a line
Between St. Louis and Chicago.

This is the season for thunderstorms,
And all of us huddled on either side of the street
In front of our houses echoed the warning.

Long winter over, we've waited—
Just as we did last year—for something to happen.
It's difficult to get excited.
Standing behind screen doors half-open,
Some of us have been waiting too long for the summer
And need more time for such a warning.

However we answer our phones,
Assuring our friends around us, we can guess
How it happens, funneling down
On either side of a line drawn across
Our lives. Now sirens, the familiar All Clear.
We will have to wait for another warning.

~

CORRESPONDENCE

At whatever void you sank into
After you fell from the sky of your pond in a mist,
Touching no bedrock there,
What morning, dreaming to meet your gods in the blue
Ice over your eyes and breathing a senseless air,
Henry, did you shake your fist,

Waking to find things out of hand?
Without your cod-line and stone, that instrument
Which fathomed a myth and anchored
Some common ground between your hut and the pond,
How could you find your way back here to Concord?
Though leaving was expedient,

Of course, do you remember much?
Can you tug at my line as I angle for deeper queries
From clouds, whether chanticleer
Sings as you bathe? Do they allow your hermit's itch
To fish? Or ask of the partridge who nests here
About the taste of huckleberries?

Not ever wagging a civil tongue,
Could you finally pull yourself together, restore
Your summer boat? Do echoes
Repeat these hills and the white breast of the loon?
Do you at all, like a pickerel tired of shadows,
Long for that home on the shore?

~

PORTRAIT

Home from books and children, Mary,
More like a housemaid than a teacher,
Stands by the window, feeds the canary
And offers the dog in the yard a bone.
Then sits at the kitchen table alone.
Sunday the preacher

At the Baptist church, a Mr. Montgomery,
Will thank her for the altar bouquets
She pledges to keep a loving memory.
In sickness and in health grown thinner,
She'll whisk home, set her Sunday dinner
Forsaking his praise.

Tonight she would not dream to think
Of callers. Fingers fussing (first
Things first), she'll tidy her desk, spank
The cushions, straighten pictures, worry
About the fate of her pretty canary
Wheezing the dust.

Mary, Mary, not contrary,
Why did the young men quit her, though?
Why did they leave her standing weary,
Not in the doorway, not at the altar,
But by the side of her mother and father
Dead long ago?

Sakutarō Hagiwara

Five Poems

Translated by Makoto Ueda

POLISHED METAL HANDS

My hands are magnet,
my hands are platinum,
my hands are the pain of rheumatism,
my hands glimmer in the heart of a tree,
in a fish,
in a tombstone,
my hands lucidly glimmer.
They go away
already from the limbs,
burningly hot and frantic;
the fingers open for a divine revelation,
the hands glimmer in the center of the universe.
My glimmering metal hands,
sharply polished,
blind my eyes,
tear my flesh,
injure my bones,
fearful, fearful.
My hands are white, diseased radium.
As my fingers violently hurt
I secretly swallow a needle.

~

MOONLIGHT AND JELLYFISH

I swim in the moonlight
to catch jellyfish swarming in a flock.
My hands stretch away from my body

and extend farther and farther.
Coiling with the seaweed,
bathed in the moonlit water,
has my body turned to glass?
Something chilly and transparent never ceases flowing.
My soul, almost freezing,
submerges in the depth:
it is almost drowned, praying.

Swarming here and there,
trembling in pure blue,
the jellyfish swim out in the moonlight.

~

MELANCHOLY RIVERSIDE

The rustling sound
of reeds and bulrushes on the riverside is lonesome.
Wild
sharp tiny plants, or the stems of herbs, are lonesome.
I, with my eyes closed,
try to chew the root of some herb,
to sip the juice of some herb, to sip the bitter sap of melancholy.
Indeed, there is no hope for anything.
Life is only a stretch of meaningless melancholy.
It is a rainy season,
it is like a damp drop of drizzling rain.
But, ah, rain again! rain! rain!
Strange herbs that grow there;
a number of sad winged insects;
they gloomily crawl about, crawl along the shore.
Something passes on the swampy riverside:
is it a funeral procession of those glimmering lives?
Or the diseased souls of the glimmering spirits?
The grass on the riverside where all goes naturally decaying;
the strong smell of lumber that glimmers in the rain.

憂鬱の川邊

秋原翔太郎

川邊で鳴ってゐる
 蘆や葦のさやさやといふ音はさびしい
 しせんに生えてる
 するどい ちひさな 植物 草本の葉の類はさびしい
 私は眼を閉らて
 なにかの草の根を噛もうとする
 なにかの草の汁をすふために 憂鬱の苦い汁をすふ
 ために
 げにそこにはなにここの希望もない
 生活はただ無意味な憂鬱の連なりだ
 梅雨だ
 じめじめとした雨の点滴のやうなものだ
 しり ああ また 雨！ 雨！ 雨！
 そこには生える不思議の草本
 あまたの悲しい羽鳥の類
 それは憂鬱にまひまはる 岸邊にそうまひまはる
 じめじめとした川の岸邊を行くものは
 ああこの光るいのちの葬列か
 光る精神の痕雪か
 物みなしせんに腐れゆく岸邊のほとむら
 雨に光る木枝質のほけーさむい。

"Melancholy Riverside," by Sakutarō Hagiwara

春の實體

秋原翔太郎

かすかぶりもしれぬ虫けらの卵にて
 春が 芽つちりとふくんでしまった。
 けにけに眺めみわたせば、
 とこもかしこもこの類の卵にてまつちりだ。
 櫻のはなをみてあはは、
 櫻のはなにもこの卵いちめんに見えてみえ、
 やなぎの枝にも、もちろんなり、
 たとへば 蜘蛛のこどももさへ、
 そのうす羽は卵にてかたらつくられ、
 水があのやうに、ひかひかひかひか光るのだ。
 ああ、腫にもみえふる。
 このかすかな卵のかたちは 楕圓形にして、
 水がいたるところに押しあひしあひ、
 空気が中いつほいにひろがり、
 かくらみまつたこむまりのやうに固くなつてゐるのだ。
 よくよく指のさきでつついてみたまへ、
 春といふものの實體がおよそこのへんにある。

"The Essence of Spring," by Sakutarō Hagiwara

ありあり

顔が 疾患のいたみから
 その顔は くもの巣 だらけとなり
 睡からしたは 影の やた 消えてしまひ
 懐からうへには 藪 生え
 手が 腐れ
 身體 いらぬ びじり ぬちやちや ぶり
 ああ、けふも 月 出で
 その ほんほりの やうな うすら あかり で
 奇形 の 白犬 が 吠えて おる
 しののめ、ちかく
 さや... 道路 の 方 で 吠える 犬 だよ。

萩原朔太郎

"Dawn," by Sakutarō Hagiwara

倦んだ病人

伊藤静雄

夜ふけの 全病舎が 停電 している。
 分厚い 分厚い 闇の 底に
 敏感な まぶた が ひらく。
 (ははあ、 どうやら、 おれは 死んで らう...
 いつのまにか、 うまく いった 人 だな。
 占めた。 ただ おやみに 暗い だけで、
 別に 何も いう ことも ない よう だ。)
 しめし すぐ 覚醒 が はつちやう やって 来る。
 押しこら... たのしみ 笑い。 次に 笑い。

"A Weary Invalid," by Shizuo Itō

手紙

神保光太郎

人間をさけて彼は山に入った
人間をさらって雲を友とした
人間をおそれて鴉の子を去月した
人間を忘れて想いを薔薇に托した
人間に追はれ
人間にしひたげられ
人間の声のはるかなところに
彼は孤独の栖居をもとめた
彼は夜毎手紙を書き
朝毎林の彼方の赤いポストへ投函した
誰に手紙を書いたのだらう
神へか
それとも 人間へか
人間を最もにくみなからう
人間を最も愛しなぶでいられたか、た彼
彼の手紙は
この世ならぬ不思議なま声として遺った

"Letters," by Kotaro Jimbo

青い石

村野四郎

平和の日は花のように明るかった
私によくこの廣場をぶらり
音楽堂のほとりの
木かけの石に腰を下ろした
あの大きな青い石
私はきよく
戦争の襷褌をひき
あついで瓦礫の街をこえてきて
乞食のように
この石の上にやすむ
私の胸はかまどのごとく
熱の飢にいぶつこいる
それなのに
石はむかしのごとく
ま月いけむし
遠い樹陰に沈んで
しずかに私の下に横たわつていた

"Blue Stone," by Shiro Murano

THE ESSENCE OF SPRING

With innumerable worms' eggs
spring is swollen to the full.
Indeed, as I look over the earth,
every place is flooded with these eggs.
As I watch the cherry-blossoms
I see these eggs transparent all over the blossoms.
They grow on the willow branches too, of course.
Even in such things as mosses and butterflies ;
the thin wings are formed of the eggs
which glitter and glimmer as you watch them.
Ah, these eggs, too tiny for our sight,
have a faint, oval shape ;
hustling and jostling everywhere,
they swell and fill the atmosphere,
making it as hard as an inflated ball.
Come and poke at it with your finger-tips ;
you will discover there the essence of spring.

~

DAWN

From the pain of long sickness
the face is covered with cobwebs.
Below the waist the body has faded like a shadow ;
above the waist grows a bamboo bush ;
the hands are rotten,
every part is smashed and battered.
Ah, the moon is up today too,
the moon of dawn is up in the sky.
In the dim light like that of a hand-lamp
a monstrous white dog is howling.
Near daybreak
the dog is howling around a lonesome road.

Shizuo Itō

A WEARY INVALID

Translated by Makoto Ueda

Late at night the electric current stopped in all the wards.
At the bottom of thick, thick darkness
The sensitive eyelids open.
(Well! It seems I am dead.
All went well, then, while I did not know.
Wonderful! Except for this absurd darkness
There is nothing wrong as far as I feel.)
Yet, soon a clear awakening comes.
A hushed, lone giggling. Then a murmur.

~

Kotaro Jimbo

LETTERS

Translated by Rikutarō Fukuda

Avoiding human beings he went into the mountains.
Hating human beings he made friends with the clouds.
Afraid of human beings he nursed the young ravens.
Forgetting human beings he gave his thoughts to the roses.
Pursued by human beings,
Tormented by human beings,
He looked for a solitary dwelling
Far from human voices.
Every night he wrote a letter ;
Every morning he put it in the red post-box at the edge of the forest.

To whom did he write his letters?
To a god
Or a human being?
He who loathed human beings
Could not help loving them.
His letters remained as voices strange to this world.



Shiro Murano

BLUE STONE

Translated by Rikutarō Fukuda

The days of peace were flower-clear ;
Often I used to cross this public square
And sit on a stone in the trees' shade
Near the bandstand—
That large blue stone.

Today
I drag the rags of war ;
I come across the hot waste town
And like a beggar
Rest on that stone.

My heart smoulders like an oven
With hot hunger ;
And yet
The stone is covered with blue moss
As before
And lies quietly beneath me
Sinking into the distant shade of the trees—
That large blue stone.

S. L. M. Brown

Three Poems

RETREATS

First, for a long time, I forgot when
Your head turned so and something in me
Started like a parakeet from sleep,
The veil of cages fell away
And folded by itself upon the floor,
A pillow for the nights beyond the door.

For a long time, I forgot your eyes,
I was alone and only robins' eyes
Reminded me of the house asleep,
Enclosed in one vast purple eyelid,
Swinging where the earth had swung.
I felt the veins with burden
Warm and wandering like mossy tongues.

Then, for a long time, I forgot you.
Alone, only the world thought of you,
I heard it when the wind swept through
The austere scented grass
And the unexpected star of frost
Twitched like a wing beyond the fir tree,
Ulterior in air, but not quite lost.

And I forgot the rising night in lovers' mouths,
The taste of salty flowers circulating sleep.
Not even the wild bodies of children
Clambering release beyond a shoulder bone
Remain to know that we are gone.
Dreams are heavy stones and I sleep on.

“AU SALON DE LA RUE DES MOULINS”

Among the dusty hands and matted eyes
Beards rise and fall all over Europe.
Faces lift across the vapors
Of defective table wine
At an old memory caught
In the shuffling of a pack of cards.

The women standing between dinners
Watch their bodies' content
In the backs of mirrors
Settling on them like a lens:
Eros focussed on a peacock's eye
By an accident of vision.

In the flash of queens an old metaphor
Of light runs through a sea of fish
The way Adam must have seen it
Under the rude margins
Of an unprofessional age when
All nouns were proper.

There Eve floats her mineral hair
Diminishing in mouthfuls
The place where Adam sits
In hairy innocence to watch her bathe
The surface of his head
In deep reflection as she moves.

These innocents disguised in an old tune
Enter in the service of the blues,
And the wasted players and the whores
Mirrored in the grey hair of the light
Taste from the dark globe of ancient fruit
The inner ear of an absolute.

ALBATROSS

In Alicante the heat stood column high
and spined like cactus above
rope footed brick layers paid to spill
sweat and mortar into the street
where it was their duty to go mad
but we failed to love.

We came dripping from the sea, our feet
bleeding mortar into the sands.
Our eyes reeled at the natural terror
of light and sea and palm bells
ringing where the heat hissed like malaga
wine in our hot clay bowls.

Blooming in the mortar death, the three-stamened
cactus flower, like a wounded worm,
followed the chartered merit of the sun.
Leaning near, you cut the cactus flower
from the earth, put it in my hair:
here it runs my body through.

~

Robert Bloom

Two Poems

GLUG, SON OF BLAHA

The waterhole was poison.
Whoever drank there got dead.
In a hurry. Without thinking.

The lone star wrangler stopped.
His horse Glug just whinnied.
Soon it was midnight. Or later.

The lone wrangler saw a star.
He got up to drink, but Glug
knocked him down. Glug's smart.

The lone wrangler didn't know.
That Glug was *so* smart. He
kicked him in the belly and drank

anyway. Later he got dead
rolling all over cactus. Glug
kicked him right back, then.

Where it hurts. Remember :
Don't drink no water when
Glug knocks you down.



SKETCH OF AN ANTI-HERO

We spoke last of the new leader,
who refused to enter the struggle,
yet clearly observed the cur
watering the walk, scented

the old perfume of rotten apples,
pleasured himself in furs
in the way of ancient manners.
Uniform in solid colors,

he shifted these to mingle
with the host of tribes
about him, and disarmingly broke
speech in fourteen jargons.

Much of his thinking was done
in bed, with or without that lover.
He died there, his sons elsewhere,
and knew damn well it was over.

Rosamond Field

USES OF LOSS

The garden's stormed and grave
With damage ; brown sunflakes,
Fertile ashes of leaves,
Reel down and faint awash,
Their bronze rained and blown frail.
I stand with you this midst
Of sea transacting rose
And warp of winter light
That's worked the flesh of shade
Clear down to distances.
Its raw bright wave rushes
The air, hurries me to
Prepare for coming cold.
I rake, steadying the
Child in me, what's left in
Piles to burn to feed. Time
To mound up these banks for
Use in other weathers ;
Whatever cannot be
Born away waits here to
Break, at last, into fire.
Cracklings blur the late blue
Sombre afternoon in
Slow smoke, yielding a kind
Of harvest. Its red licks
Bloom the bare stalks ; whitening
Then they fall, flare down sounds
My eye saves like seed : Flames.
Gems. Tears. Coals. —Here, take them
Before your earth burns out.

THE FARM AT RICHWOOD

In an old picture album
there is wholly contained
a late century farmhouse.
It holds at one corner
a single cupola,
the fringe of a porch,
all posts, knobs and flutings
over which time most loves
to hover with its wings.
The people are grouped
casually in the yard:
such swans and sundials
as seemed to the owner
properly ornamental.

You see I am resisting
temptation to employ
symbols of transience,
perhaps tilted tombstones
of prairie graveyards
(but notice the collie
and the horse on the right,
nose down in the grass,
still hitched to a buggy:
even the postures
among the adults
are informal within
the proper bounds).
Stiffness is the ritual
of the photograph;

and yet it is incredibly
longer than time
allows for fifty years.
There is my father,
now a child,
now doubly gone
from my world.

Peering for my image
I have traveled farther
into my fancy,
my fine leather album
than time allows some lives.
A collie long nosed,
overbred and myopic,
curled before me,
I can only say
singing past my past,
I am no lover
friend or mourner,
who have the merest
blood in this matter.

Therefore I shall not
seek their loves or losses
to be my gentle ghosts
haunting these verses,
but all my terrors rage
to capture in the bearded
composed face of my great
grandfather the calm
which through that stiff
contraption, the camera,
strikes at my fate

and leaves me dumb
but to name two sons
in all their honor.



Lyon Phelps

Two Poems

THE SAND CASTLE

For Jerome & Maud

The tides behind my eyes endanger my eyelids ;
salt water, after laughter and tears, for nothing
more serious than—it's true ! this story :
a small boy and his sister have fallen asleep
by their castle of sand, made of Mont St Michel
and knives and danger on the California beach.
They dream surrounded by Red Coats and Indians, and
(the images of childhood are the most faithful)
the magic circle that can fall around us
anywhere, for safety's sake, anywhere, forever,
if the castle out of sand we once built together
stands within the sacred circle of the self.

Please God protect the knight in shining armor,
his Indian friend, the intricate fisherman,
the old lady (and her canary) taking the sun,
the three dancing graces who multiply like bunnies,
the painter of archives, the freckled boys at play,
the policemen in dark glasses, and the old
couple from Warsaw, yes, even the horrible frogman,
the bikini dame with the eye on the end of her nose,
and (with his ugly baby) the lush who sees !

But most of all please, Lady of Shells, may these
protect the nuns at baseball on the beach,
and the little ones who still speak and reach
each other without any effort at all—and,
make us aristocrats, put us back inside ourselves.
Else we shall have to leave at last with the mother
who says (whether we had one who said so or not),
“Hurry up, children—I can't bear to see it go !” before
we see water shoot up the beach and topple our towers.
The sand castle there in the tide was the only real one.



PORTRAIT OF A LADY

*Advice is what I think, but what scores
is why I say it, believe me. If you
approach me, this is how I am, to remember.*

She glides about her salon, heating,
stockingless and in bare feet, coffee,
serving memory like tennis balls.

She is decorously aware of no lines like rules,
a sober platform, waxed and always ready
for her giddy charleston, for the band. *Soubrette, madame!*

She plays both doña and housewife ; these
counter in her picture as they do in the flicks,
and, *nolo contendere*, the girl wins ! “My point !”

he hopefully cries—he's always there. Sadly
and sagely she, munching her lips, whispers, “Oh,
no, love, that was out.” Over the line. She's

upset the match is over for today. And he
screws up his side of it like a racket
into a frame, thinking, “Day's petal, night's eye !”

Ambrose Gordon

Three Poems

SOMETHING ALMOST REMEMBERED

His grandfather's fist, fair and mottled,
Lay lightly on the arm of the old overstuffed chair
And beat a strange rhythm, deliberate or not.
His father moved a pawn and looked up.

Behind, a fan whirred and revolved,
Blowing a corner of curtain.
He himself was five, hot, hungry, and fearfully uncertain
Whether the rhythm was deliberate or not
And whether the fist (open or not) could open or not.
His father said, "Check"—and looked up, stood up.

But whether or not the curtains, the hot
Summer cushions (leather), two toddies, and grandfather's clock
That beat a strange rhythm
(In the back of his mind or the back of a decade?)
—Whether or not they ever really

Were,
Or were merely something another and older child would infer, confer
On all the spinning afternoons,
He could not say surely—
Or even whatever it was that then did not happen
Between the hot tick and the cooling tock.



I, TOO, DISLIKE IT

His sweat that smelled like curry
(Lamb curry to be exact)
Was for him reassuring evidence
Of the thorny world of fact.

He sat hunched by a typewriter,
The room was warm indeed,
Till in his imaginary garden
The toads came out to feed.

The Poetess near the window
Leaned from the picture frame,
Murmured to the poet
His name, his name, his name.



EXCERPT FROM PAGE ONE

Though laid in quite different settings
F. Scott Fitzgerald's Brett and Ernest Hemingway's Daisy are pretty much the same. Neither
Is quite unlost; each is (in her own way) an unbeliever
And both
Are seldom, if ever, loath
(If you get what I mean, sir. I do not wish to seem crude,
But really I find them plain lewd,
All these Left Bank and Long Island pettings).
Paragraph.
In what follows I shall attempt to prove
Their common incapacity to love,
Though laid in quite different settings. . . .



Randall Gloege

Two Poems

ONLY THE WHITES RIPEN

Only the whites ripen
Here at the water's end,
The whites of sluice and sand,
Of stricken shells and wan

Imperious stalks. Come
Eyes, come mind, to a bold
Limited shore, take hold
Of white and know your name.

What enervates the swart
Humps of the pressing dunes,
What rises in the grains
To form a whole from parts,

And takes the early light
Upon itself, what moves
Over those windy graves
Is an aspect of white.



DEVIL'S CHURN

(an image from the Oregon coast)

It comes, the tidal wash
Of water over stone,
Salt on a foggy sun,
The chill tenuous rush

Of bones. It moves where I,
A shape contained in cold,
Am very nearly old
With rising up to sea

And settling down again.
It steals, in loud ascent,
In sliding counterpoint,
Dominions from the drawn

Declivities of rock,
New morning from the moon,
Whole patterns from the rain,
Turned foamy in the wake,

Precision from the gull,
Sub-strata from the will,
Possession from its shell.
It springs, apocryphal,

In sheer impermanence :
Great hands of spray contract
My holding walls, each act
Of wave on wave a stance

Profane with forms—a fish,
Up-ended in a cloud,
A spider and a head,
The turbulence of flesh

And spirit, light and dark
Refining into gray.
Constant it comes while I
Attend the churn in stark

Contention, for what is
Will stretch to motion, seethe
Through change. Salt-blessed, I breathe
This ocean which I praise.



Sheila Haggerty

Three Poems

TWO FOR JOHN RANSOM

I. INCIDENT IN AUTUMN

"Be near me, be . . ." the old insistent cry.
And so it happened that he held her warmly,
But that was insufficient to her bones.
The face she showed him was distraught and comely.
Her lips gave out their share of stately moans.

Her eyes, however, darted overtones—
Of malice or devotion? "Probably,"
He thought, "it is some secret I will know
Before the first unsubtle rasp of snow,
Some lover, failure, or remembered plot."
Rather it was his narrowness of thought,
And hunger in her to be more than whole.
Wherefore she broke his clasp and weeping ran
About the autumn woods like any bird.
The cold leaves trembled when the wind began
Beside him. It was not the wind he heard—
Nor any other reassuring word.
Only the cold leaves falling in the cold.



II. THE SPOILERS

"... out of ourselves for one dark minuet
And dancing; bone to bone we danced each other.
The wind rose high. The sun declined and set.
She was all summer air in winter weather.

"But you, my cousin Jessamine, who stare
Beyond the garden wall and slatted trellis,
Stare without dream or question, where are there
Roses to make you love, to make you jealous?"

He chafed and taunted that pale Jessamine
Until she rose up in a quandary,
And, plucking the darkest rose was ever seen,
She gave it him with looks uncousinly.

"Take it," she said. "I grew it black as sin.
Who gave you, cousin, leave to try my pulse?
Your love is gone. Though we are much akin,
You dream inconstantly. This blood is false."

The roses weighted with unholy scent
The night, that darkened slowly on their ardor.
The moon declined. The summer air lay spent.
What was there left, come dawn, of law, of order?



PEACH CANNING

For Josie Sloane

Empty quarts, scalded now, and steaming on the hot air,
Wait her tree's harvest, the geometrical firm segments.
She stands, an old woman, by her kitchen window canning,
Stolid in flower print and a peach-stained apron.
Her hands curve for the knife, for the round fruits exactly,
Whose fuzzed skins, loosened in steam, smooth off
At her touch. The peaches gleam like gold on her hand.
As a calm surgeon, practiced in her art, she bares the core—
The ribbed core, staining the firm meat, smelling of almonds.
Again the knife descends, scoring another peach
In moist longitudes, halving, quartering to the red pit—
"One pit to a jar, for color," for the smell of almonds.
She packs each jar two-thirds with peaches, siphons
The heavy syrup in—juice on her hands and syrup.
Fruit-flies, like static, poise on her hair, on her earnest forehead,
At whose stiff pinpoint forms she brushes with half her mind,
Her eyes measuring the rows on rows of jars, her swift hands
Twisting, fitting the gold-ringed lids in place.
Now, while peach-jars, deep in their cookers, seethe, seal
Against time, now she will talk to me of peaches,
Her fruit, her long generations. What if below
In her cellar unused rows of peaches (under blue
Or green glass, rigid in autumn ripeness) stand?
This time is hers, and I will say only, from love,
Your tree is good, the fruit thereof like Lebanon.

About the Contributors

CONSTANCE URDANG is appearing in *Poetry Northwest* for the first time—but that may be said about all the poets in this issue with the exception of one translator. Miss Urdang is Mrs. Donald Finkel (see our Spring issue) and has been published in *Paris Review*, *Sewanee Review*, *Poetry*, etc. Her home is in St. Louis.

Uncle Dog, and Others Poems, by ROBERT SWARD, is being published by Putnam in England this summer. Mr. Sward was in Bristol last year on a Fulbright grant, is at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, this summer, and will take part in the writing program at Cornell University this fall.

ROBERT D. HOEFT, was born in Spokane and has degrees from both the University of Washington and the University of Oregon. He teaches high school on the island of Guam.

PHILIP LEGLER teaches at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. He has previously been published in *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Western Review*, among others.

SAKUTARŌ HAGIWARA (1886-1942) is perhaps the most admired and influential of Japanese poets in our century. He was born in Maebashi but spent most of his life in Tokyo. Already three separate editions of his complete works have been printed in Japan.

SHIZUO ITŌ (1906-1953) was born in Nagasaki. After graduating from Kyoto Imperial University, he taught at a high school in Osaka for the rest of his life. He became a famous poet after his enthusiastic reception by Hagiwara. He published four volumes of poetry in his lifetime and a *Collected Poems* has appeared posthumously. "A Weary Invalid" is one of his last poems.

We last printed translations by MAKOTO UEDA in the Spring-Summer, 1960, issue of *Poetry Northwest* (Vol. I, No. 4). He was then a graduate student at the University of Washington; he is now teaching in the Department of East Asiatic Studies at the University of Toronto. His book *The Old Pine Tree and Other Noh Plays* has recently been published.

KOTARO JIMBO is a professor at Nihon University in Tokyo and, like Shizuo Itō, graduated from Kyoto. He has published a number of

books of poems, a book of essays, *The Mind of Poetry*, and has translated Eckermann and Nietzsche.

SHIRO MURANO, who was born in Tokyo and graduated from Keio University, started as a *haiku* poet and then turned to modern poetry. He has published a number of volumes of poetry and is also well known in Japan as a critic.

RIKUTARO FUKUDA, himself a distinguished poet, has published a number of essays and translations of Western literature in Japanese. He is a graduate of Tokyo University and studied at the Sorbonne while teaching at the National School of Oriental Languages in Paris. This past year he has been a Fulbright visiting professor at Syracuse University.

S. L. M. BROWN is a graduate student in English at the University of Oregon. He is a graduate of Stanford and he, too, has studied at the Sorbonne.

ROBERT BLOOM is a schoolteacher and lives in New York. His work has appeared in various reviews, *Poetry*, and *Prairie Schooner* among them.

ROSAMOND FIELD is an instructor at Tufts University and the mother of three small children. This is her third poem to be published, the others having been in *The Nation* and *Audience*.

Another graduate of the University of Washington, HAZARD ADAMS is now on the faculty at Michigan State University in East Lansing. He has worked on *Epoch* and on the *Texas Quarterly*.

LYON PHELPS lives in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and commutes to New York City, where he teaches a playwriting course. He founded The Poets' Theatre in Cambridge. His play, *The Gospel Witch*, has been published by the Harvard University Press.

AMBROSE GORDON, a Yale graduate, teaches at the University of Texas at Austin and has had poems in *Furioso* and *The Carleton Miscellany*. He is at work on a book about Ford Madox Ford, a chapter of which is due in the current issue of the *Sewanee Review*.

RANDALL GLOEGE is a graduate student at the University of Washington, where he studied with Nelson Bentley. He comes from Billings, Montana.

SHEILA HAGGERTY's three poems have just won this year's Academy of American Poets \$100 prize at the University of Washington. She comes from Independence, Oregon, and graduated from the University this June.

Fritz EICHENBERG is chairman of the Department of Graphic Arts and Illustration at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. "Night Watch," printed with his permission, is a wood engraving from a portfolio "Eleven Prints by Eleven Printmakers," published by the Pratt Graphic Art Center.

The Editors of *Poetry Northwest* are proud to announce the magazine's new Advisory Board, a group of distinguished poets and critics, each of whom teaches, or has at one time taught, in the Department of English at the University of Washington:

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

With their assistance, we look toward continuing improvement in this already more stable venture.

With this issue, Frank J. Warnke joins the staff as an Acting Editor, to replace William H. Matchett, who will be on leave until autumn, 1963.

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All Fulbrights, Guggenheims and Summer scholars take note: Please tell us as soon as possible of any change in your mailing address. Include both old and new address (zone number, too). Your undelivered copies usually are destroyed. If copies are returned to us, we pay vast sums to retrieve them.

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(The four issues of Volume One are sold out.)

This double issue, with cover by Morris Graves, contains five poems of Vladimir Mayakovsky (the original in Russian) with translations by Victor Erlich and Jack Hirschman; and groups of poems by William Stafford, Harold Witt, Eve Triem, Joseph Langland, Earle Birney, Robert Peterson, Donald Hall, John Tagliabue, Sister Mary Gilbert and others; Thom Gunn's "Modes of Pleasure" and James B. Hall's "Memorial Day."

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