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Our thanks to Robin Skelton for help with this issue.

~

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Richmond Lattimore

Four Poems

SONNET ON HOPE

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

In Memory of Robinson Jeffers

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

~

COLOSSUS ASTRIDE

Lost my way summer's hottest day in grass brown as hay on hill-bones, aswarm with grasshoppers, warm brown spry uniform and crazy, all joints, stems, and vertical elbows, vul-nerable and in my power. Giant I tower, too high
Carol Hall

Four Poems

THE DAPHNE ODORA

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

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

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

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

REDUCE THE QUANTITY OF PAIN

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

But what if sin were never there
In person, yet a hundred doors
See his strong shape blot out the light?
What if he waxed like wanton spores
Yet never cried, “Lord, here am I”?
Oh, there are substitutes for grace
More wearing than a flood of light,
More blinding than Jehovah's face.

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

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

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCH

Now desert scene, you stretch upon
A canvas careless as the moon
But ridden by tides as precise
And clean as love in paradise.

Here are the lucky heavens, spread
With stars as thick as jam on bread.
There are the shepherds watched by sheep,
Who watch their lambs while townsmen sleep.
What star is this, loud as a scream
But stern and willful as a dream?
Glowing as secretly as stones
Uncut and dark, the caught earth moans
In awful fear under the star
Swinging to mark the place we are.

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

---

TWO SISTERS

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

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

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

---

John Logan

WHISTLING WINGS
OR, THE WHITE TURTLE IN THE WATERTREE

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

   Then again I saw the clams
   try to put out wings
   of a whitish meat (like small, phlegmatic souls)
   from the Sisyphean shells
   they always bear
   even if abandoned in an auto tire.
The lean frog fled too.
Oh, we knew
he'd never feast upon the sun
blasted grass one kid put in,
wouldn't like the tone
of weeds against his precious slime.
Still we had a right to hope
he'd like the shallow hole
we dug, with its handmade pool.
But the frog's not anybody's fool.
Now (or thus)
as with Breughel's Icarus
I can see, in the green flowing
of my mind, his white, human legs flashing!
They leave a melancholy ring
like the abandoned whippoorwill's song.

He starts up at nine o'clock
each heartbreaking night.
The partridge has some sadness or other
knocking softly in his throat as a missing motor,
but the whippoorwill's music is the shadow, is the moon
of the last sheen of light in the meadow after rain.
The field itself leaves us blest
in an unrelieved length of pine forest—
like the baroque squiggle in the sand
of baby clams
toward water,
track of partridge with the cock's delicate trailing feather,
turtle's print before (and after)
the shore has smoothed with weather.

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

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

There was masculine fury
at the Inn just off the highway
(like the inn of Joseph and Mary,
as the natives tell)
where a husband sent six Indians to hell.
The man and his wife, who had two daughters,
were the tavern owners.
He took the wagon into town for salt and bread,
came back to find his wife and daughters dead!
Four Indians had killed them with a tomahawk,
robbed the inn and were quickly drunk.
The husband slew the four
with an axe right there,
bring two more back
and placed six heads about the inn on pikes!
Now they have a marker at a wayside park.
3. With my own wife and kids
visiting the local Indian burial grounds
I find I wonder
at the penny-strewn boxes stretching over
graves recently dug
for Billy Walking Bird and Nora White Dog.
I would guess
a kind of half way house?
They are buried on a low, wooded hill
where bluegrass seed and plum blossoms fall.

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

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

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

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

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

His hair too long and yellow for the wood
the baby walks
quite drunk,
or else bending back
on heels like a pregnant lady
round and round a small tree,
or like a cub bear,
paws clumsy in the air,
nosing honey,
or like a grounded baby bumblebee.

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

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

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

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

Except for the littlest one
all my sons
and I went out to fish one night.
Couldn’t wait
to try a new lure
sweet little thing from France we thought of her:
and fought and landed it
luminous and foam wet,
the great eye without a lid
perhaps alive, perhaps dead.
Drunk with success of our allure,
following some heady, ancient spoor
of ourselves or it
the older boys and I quickly stripped and fell
into the cold, walleye hole,
like shining gold
bugs or clumsy newborn birds
hopping from a black limb (abandoned nest and shell)
into a blue black pool.
I hit a snag of weed,
was caught like an anxious white turtle hid
in the branches of the water’s trees
for a long minute of time,
then dressed and went home.

May Swenson

Five Poems

OUT OF MY HEAD
If I could get
out of my
head and
into the
world.
What am I saying?
Out of my
head?
Isn't my
head
in the
world?
In it I'm
in it, a
round
place
in a bigger
round
place
someplace.

Seems like the
center.
Every
head
in there's a
center, it
thinks.
It
thinks!
O.K., let's say I'm
out and
in the
round free
world:

Back there's the tight aluminum sphere
I jumped
out of, slammed the door like an icebox.
A clean landscape
around me, an inch or two of "snow"—

rock-dust from those
peaks
in the distance. No colder here,
even if it is wider. Very few things
around —just the
peaks.

It'll take weeks to reach them.
Of course I came here in my
head.
I'll be taking it
back.
The idea is to make a vehicle
out of it.

WHILE SITTING IN THE TUILERIES
AND FACING THE SLANTING SUN

There is the Line
There is the Circle
the bending Line
the expanding Circle
There is the moving Line
but the still Circle
but the enlarging Circle
the lengthening Line

The Crack
and the Particle
the deepening Crack
the doubling redoubling Particle
the Splitting
and Resplitting
and the Multiple
the opening  Closing
the closure  Opening
There is a  Swaddled Thing
There is a Swaddled Thing
There is a Rocking Box
There is a Covered Box

The Unwrapping
the Ripening
Then the Loosening
the Spoiling
The Stiffening
then the Wrapping
The Softening
but the long long Drying
The Wrapping
the Wrapping
the Straightening
and Wrapping
The rigid Rolling
the gilded Scrolling
The Wrapping
and Wrapping
and careful Rewrapping
The Thinning
and Drying
but the Wrapping
and Fattening

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

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

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

~

DOWNWARD

That there were men.
That we are their ghosts.
That men died long ago.
That there was life.
That ours is merely its shadow.
That we have fallen
from a peak on the high past
and are no longer men.
That this is the reason
for our hopelessness,
the reason our life is crippled.
That we grope
upon the slope of the past
and grasp nothing
but our cravings.
Our forward aims
are but our backward looks.
We can barely remember life
for it belonged to Them.
HOW TO BE OLD

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

Youth is given.
Age is achieved.

One must work
a magic to mix
with time
in order to
become old.

Youth is given:

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

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

It is necessary
to adore the doll.

LET US PREPARE

to get beyond the organic
for surely there is something else
to which it is an impediment an opaque pod
What if it is sight that blinds
hearing that deafens
touch that makes us numb?

What if trussed in a jacket of blood
to a rack of bone we smother
in the dungeon of our lungs?

Today we are in our brain
a laboratory
Must we be here
tomorrow?

Are there not
pinnacles
on which to stand
cleanly
without a head?

Between the belly
of the sun and the belly
of the world
must we bounce forever
magnetized generations of the circle?

Let us eat nothing but darkness
refuse our stale orbit
and walk only in sleep
there to descry a crack in the future
and work to widen it

Let us prepare to bare ourselves outside the gibbet-hood
of the world
without excuse of flesh or apology of blood

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

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

---

John Berryman

THREE DREAM SONGS

I

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

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

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

---

II

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

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

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

---
III. Secret of the Wisdom
When worst got things, how was you? Steady on?
Wheedling, or shockt her &
you have been bad to your friend,
whom not you writing to. You have not listened.
A pelican of lies
you loosed: where are you?
Down weeks of evenings of longing
by hours, NOW, a stoned bell,
you did somebody: others you hurt short:
anyone ever did you do good?
You licking your own old hurt.
what?
An evil kneel & adore.
This is human. Hurl, God who found
us in this, down
somethings.... We hear the more
sin has increast, the more
grace has been caused to abound.

Richard Kell

Four Poems

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

Gardens, this road is called: a cul-de-sac
Beside the railway track,
As fertile as a fridge. The small lives pause,
Bemused and parenthetic, at a square
Bracket of bricks and mortar, wondering where
They lost the main clause.

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

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

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

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

A cockney parrot. Edie, his town-bred wife,
Thinks ours is country life,
And Hayes unparalleled this side of heaven.
Gets up at six, works in a factory, stops
At twelve to clean and bake and visit shops;
   Goes once a year to Devon,
Sends us a postcard and a tin of cream;
   And spices her esteem
With love when we are good, with shy reproof
When ironies of travelling paint us naughty:
Our baby-sitter, at eleven-thirty,
   Is martyred and aloof.
Then Mrs. Mildew, stately and correct:
   Her son, an architect,
Preferred his freedom to her apple pie.
A close-up of her husband—from far off
An all-in wrestler (tired as well as tough)—
   One morning gave the lie:
His glance was mild blue light, a dream distilled:
   Half child half adult, filled
With aching distances, I thought him then;
Imagined frosty prudes—who polish brass
And judge creation through a pane of glass—
   Refrigerating men.
The whole bright spectrum plays its colours here:
   Leslie, an engineer,
Is gentle, skilled, obliging, full of fun.
Grace chats and chuckles, with her brilliant stare.
The world should be well thrashed by Mrs. Square.
   And Mr. Hutchinson,
A lanky introvert, reserved but genial,
   Complete with pipe and spaniel,
A walk to match his educated speaking,
Strides meditative through his broad demesne

(A strip of pavement and a scraggy lane).
   Poor Mrs. Jawd is pecking—
Her black eyes tortured, mouth oblique and thin,
   Her nose a shark's fin—
To see what someone's up to. Mr. Stool
Fought, and is fighting still, the wicked Germans:
   Indoctrinates his son with martial sermons,
   Then sends him to Sunday school.
Some go to church, some to the citadel.
   Others would keep the bell
And damn the belfry. Half of them are back
Where Moses managed, but without the gush
Of sacred water and the burning bush:
   Curled in their cul-de-sac.
But all of them suburban? All the same?
   Contented, smug, tame?
A single road is opal in its moods.
And then you hear of one that went berserk;
Of rape, and children kidnapped in the park,
   And death in Cranford Woods.

WAITING
   All over now. A week ago
You smiled indomitably through
A blur of pain. Our hands clutched
Like meshing steel. I watched
Her head budging, her dainty thigh
Eased out, and heard her small prodigious cry.
She nestles, all nine pounds of her,
   Deep in my arms: a private stare,
Hands neat as petals, the head I kissed
Warm like a bird's breast.
The pleasure's mine: no frills assuage
Her radical, uncomplicated rage.
No more than touching, glance, word,
Can satisfy a different need.
In the fulfilled mother's eyes
The lover's fancy plays.
Waiting, I suffer this delight
Of seeing more dryad in you every night.

LET LIVE

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

And then of people. It's a way of living
without spoiling. Here also the buyers
find peaceful outlets, resolve discords
when selfishness acquires
what shapes its opposite. (So with words,
colours and melodies loved
for being the way they are.)
Repeatedly you see faces,
especially eyes, that will respect
Will write, he said—and did so: immaculate lyrics
Piddling from crannies in the glum wilderness
Of his devotion to wife, children, job.
Got drunk occasionally; slipped into half a dozen
Sneaky adventures (but faithful in his fashion).
Pleasant marginal verse, the critics noted.

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

Committed to the principle of commitment,
Retired to a mountain solitude. Hacked an epic
Of social disaster, pain on a cosmic scale,
In letter and pamphlet sniped from a cragged seclusion,
And striding through wind became impressively gnarled.
Was hailed, on his eightieth birthday, a major poet.
But where the road ends you meet a headline
on nuclear defence—remember then
‘important commitments’; big machines
that regulate little men
sold on prestige; mean ends and endless means;
warheads and racial hatred. May there be,
loitering here, a few from the tensed city
whose involvement is genuine, whose power and skill
are indispensable—renewing their innocence
by being guilty of triviality.

Maurice English

Two Poems

THE POET

For Peter Viereck

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

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

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

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

Below, his veins
Emptied and the monsters stilled, the diver
Groans and stirs. From the sea’s floor
His body, cramping with its death and birth,
And softly wavering in slow tides at dawn,
Rises to beach and welters. Perhaps,
Before anarchic noon returns,
A shell-collector will come by and say:
*This is a strange fish from the bottom sea.*

*Only a few,*

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

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**LIFE AS LANGUAGES**

1
With two tormented tongues the body talks
But neither tongue's wagwagging can translate
What the heart stammers in its orphanage.

No more can mind, mad in its maze of codes,
Spell out the deaf-mute gesturing of stars
Or the Braille motions of the wind and wave.

2
At tremulous three I encountered the world
All fright and amazement
Like an African learning Chinese.

Six, an assassin, I ambushed tomorrow
With the famished surprise—*Boże mio!*—
Of a Russian studying French.

*Mon dieu!*
Stone: “I am Wery. My left leg still starts
Out of the stone, enough to make me man.
But prince, my second toe was earlier than
The stub. Rich paints epitomized my parts.”
Oddly, Wery is right. Yet taste and caste
Made art because he’s Wery: because the ogee
Of his fine girdle allows his legs the degree
Of groin-blue shadow stoniness and paste
Don’t show: because inordinary shins change
Orangeness to a skinlier orange than orange.

How will death utter me, as
thou or you?
And whispering where? In that cold cancel, flame,
Or the fanged rhetoric of ice,
Or warm, the lick of worms? No matter for
The horror in such lisping sibilants,
I’ll will you, now and dying, my life’s word:
As colors are the passions of the light,
There is some silence which we cannot scan
That’s more than sound or stillness: it scoops up
My sighs and blubberings, our oaths and prayers,
Each click-and-whistle dialect of earth
And the gaunt screeching from the galaxies;
Like colors spinning into light, spins all
Such mouthings into meanings. Meant for whom?
The notes of that good news are not for us
Except as, caught up in the choraling,
We are some tone, or phasing of a tune,
In that sung silence harkened by itself.

Robert Kent

Two Poems

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

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

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

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

INFLUENZA

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

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

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

Some were wise and they had pots
they kept boiling on the bank
with river water kindred
dippered out to scald their heads
and some of these ran raving
Jesus took up their lost souls
and some else just lost their hair
and swore the water saved them.

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

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

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

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

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

ROSE OF LIMA, QUEEN CITY
It looks from the hillside like something
Fra Angelico painted, the red
rectangular lines and the bricked bell
steepled out of time. This church
honors Saint Rose in a city
spare of Peruvians as miracles.
It floods out whenever the river rises
and has a smell of common water
at the altars. Pilots of tows
needle the dark with searching lights
on long hauls from Pennsylvania
to catch the hour off her clock.

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

But churches anywhere seem rude for her.
This virgin kept a holy time
and the world had not one thing
to wed her with. Her lover came quick
to kill the roses she grew fond of
and their image withered in her eyes.
Once I thought the rococo Christ made her a dove to his flame and he held her trembling in his hand like a bell. I am not so sure of this today. She may be undiscoverable, finite as silt strong currents gentle into islands.

OLD MOON PLANTER
We needed the moon.
Whipped our mules all day while the sun whipped us, and left those fields spilled over sod with black soil. And full mooned nights we drove our wives there yelling hi-ki-wee ki-wee-ah and they running like stark does down that naked land.
And when they winded we buckled their knees and took them on top those furrows milky with their great moons full. Then the green corn came like mad I'll tell you.
Fuming to blue air loosed in sunlight
quietly circulates,
or pales and blows, drops into darkness
lightly without weights:
then circling earth leans over, changes season
without regret or reason.

Say on the crust of such a planet
there were humans
breeding together in numberless generations
as beautiful as swans
still carrying the smell of their forest
its violence, its unrest:
creatures as terrible as the mated buzzard,
the wild boar's working eye,
the ape's sadness and the serpent's hunger,
the hare's delicacy,
like the rain-waking violet, a small thing
but rooted, and beautiful looking.

Then add that such a creature's language
scraped heaven, spoke with God,
broke planet into rock, rock into atom,
touched the true and good.
There are no such words anywhere in the universe,
no phrases, not this verse.

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

~

II
Say that the earth sweating with moisture
bedews the atmosphere,
or fleeces of vapour straining in the wind
drape a revolving sphere,
the oceans and their islands smoke and stream
with clouds as light as steam.
like two weeds growing from forgotten roots
with pink faces by streams, or in between
saplings and brambles in the uncleared woods
of perfect natural shapes breathing to green:
but under the vaulted branches of great trees
their cloisteral groins of shifting light and shade
the old oil-smelling tractor shakes at ease,
which will be pitiless and quick to invade
those undefended natural solitudes.
Few weeds flourish. My life has been
a meditation made walking in the woods,
mere time, mere bird’s voices, mere breathing green.

IV

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

About the Contributors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ROBERT KENT is the former poetry editor of Minnesota Review and a
splendidly proficient translator as well as a poet. We will print some
Latin translations of his in a subsequent issue, which will be his second
appearance.
RICHARD LLOYD-JONES (first appearance) lives in Iowa City. He has chosen to remain mute to queries about his life and work, so we can say no more.

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

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


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

Some Current Books by Our Contributors
Countermoves, by Charles Edward Eaton (Abelard-Schuman).
The Norfolk Poems of Hayden Carruth (Prairie Press).
The Wheel of Summer, by Joseph Langland (Dial).
John Donne’s Lyrics, a study by Arnold Stein (Minnesota).

Also Recommended
By the Waters of Manhattan, by Charles Reznikoff (New Directions).
Could be called Jewish haiku. Must reading for other poets. (Mr. Reznikoff will read his poems at the University of Washington the evening of February 21.)
The Next Room of the Dream, by Howard Nemerov (Chicago).
Brilliant poetry, much of it coruscatingly funny.

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

POETRY

Highlights from Poetry Northwest

Poetry Northwest, Volume II (1961-62)
Numbers 1 and 2: Cover by Morris Graves.
Poems by William Stafford, Harold Witt, Joseph Langland, Donald Hall, Eve Triem, Thom Gunn, James B. Hall, Sister Mary Gilbert, and others. $1.25
Number 3: Cover and four illustrations by Carl Morris.
Poems by Hayden Carruth, Vi Gale, John Woods, George Woodcock, David Cornell DeJong, John L’Heureux, Florence Gould, and others. $0.90
Number 4: Cover and illustration by Jean Cartier.
Poems by Jean Garrigue, Kenneth O. Hanson, Joanne de Longchamps, John Tagliahue, Harold Witt, Charles Gullans, Richard F. Hugo, and others. Prize-winning poems by Hayden Carruth. $0.90

Poetry Northwest, Volume III (1962-1963)
Number 1: Cover and illustration by Mark Tobey.
Poems by W. S. Merwin, Donald Finkel, Robert Conquest, Rafael Pineda, Brother Antoninus, Marya Fiamengo, Charles Edward Eaton, and others. $0.90
Number 2: Cover by Fritz Eichenberg.
Poems by four leading contemporary Japanese poets: Hagiwara, Ito, Jimbo, Murano. Also, Constance Urdang, Robert Sward, Philip Legler, Hazard Adams, and others. $0.90
Number 3: Cover and two cuts by Richard Gilkey.
Poems by David Galler, M. L. Rosenthal, Maxine Kumin, John L’Heureux, Eve Triem, Stanley Moss, Joanne de Longchamps, Robert Peterson, and others. $0.90
Number 4: Cover by Mark Tobey.
Poems by Richmond Lattimore, Carol Hall, John Berryman, John Logan, May Swenson, Maurice English, Richard Kell, Peter Levi, Robert Kent, and others. $0.90

(Volume I is no longer available)