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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CAROLYN KIZER, editor and founder of *Poetry Northwest*, has resigned to take up duties in Washington, D.C., as consultant in literature on the National Council on the Arts.

DAVID WAGONER was appointed editor of *Poetry Northwest* in February; however, this issue and the subsequent one will consist of poems selected by Miss Kizer.

POETRY NORTHWEST SPRING, 1966 VOLUME VII, NUMBER 1

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POETRY NORTHWEST

SPRING 1966

Katie Louchheim

Three Poems

A WRITER'S VERSION

Cold, we are told, was specifically prescribed,
implacable cold, the cold of steamed breath:
the Maker of Myths, that skilled régisseur,
wrote "cold" in the margin. As for the plot,
"Keep it simple," he advised, "prove your point
without too many miracles—one should do."

He must have had his trouble with writers
forever wanting to interpret,
alter, embellish, heap on parables,
confuse humanity with man, birth with death,
the star with wisdom, gold and myrrh and kings,
concessions to the love of pomp, with faith.

When it came time, he chose a sleep-blue sky,
cold-folded, that opened its arms to the star.
You could hear the knocking at the stable door
all over the hills, the child's cry in the sea
and in men's hearts. And when the wind ran down,
the page turned in heaven and the book closed.

Later, many forgivenesses later—
up there they count by graces asked and granted—
the Seraph scribblers came to him and said,
"Miracles must be refurbished, repeated,

the journey retraced, the birth reënacted,
the star pointed out." He nodded.

They took his nod for approval; pens in hand
they tumbled down, spilling tracts and platitudes,
a downfall indeed—never recorded—
being angels, they assumed anonymity.
Faith, explained by them, became a dogma,
his son a talisman, his word a church.

It must have troubled him, but if he knew—
knowing all, he must have—what their prose would do,
why did he turn them loose? Was it to prove
that words, when there is truth, have little use,
or that scribblers have no place in heaven?

~

ASSIGNMENT

In politics you fix a book
with names and feuds and who is in,
to give you an alert wise look

at airports, where the curious eyes
approach with careful keeper's steps,
to scrutinize their captive prize.

Identities and titles pack
their bosomed hats in one sedan;
the driver of the car looks back,

her right hand tells why plans have changed:
two factions had to be assuaged;
her left describes the scenic range,

past neon vacancies, past cars,
parked chaperones to dark motels
asleep between the wakeful bars,

we trace the landscape's spreading pride,
new factories astride the fields,
old farm land now a four-lane drive.

The history of the city's heart
spelled out in monuments and domes,
the columned courthouse where we park

the past to enter potted chrome
grown tall beside the mirrored clerk,
in this our home away from home.

Madame Chairman proffers flowers,
comfort trickles cold from faucets,
breakfast happens in six hours.

~

WITH OR WITHOUT ROSES

With night like a shawl on her shoulders,
content to be dark, the sea moves mild arms
over and under silver-scrubbed calm.

Under laws that divide jealous valleys,
hammers and hawkers trouble the landscape,
their sea, packaged, sells sunsets in plots
to sailors saved from calender rocks.

Dimensions of stillness breed in her swelling,
she gives sleep in untranslatable speech
but no man subdivides her dwelling.
Her children are flood tailed, parched by her side
she leaves them to drown in her punctual tides.

Oh cities of hills on cruel horizons
under splashed stars, tall, you are handsome
but the sea holds you all for ransom.

The clerk at the desk of your towers
steals your triumphs, mislays your address
cannot forward your soul to its rest.

Our Father of aspens and gentians
is your meaning explained in the waves,
did you make the deciduous days
and the sea without roses or seasons
so our swords might rust in her coral caves
and our sensible wars need not be revealed
to the dread sea-secret keeper?

~

Robert Pawlowski

Two Poems

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Caius Gabriel Cibber, a Dane by birth, is known
to fame as the sculptor of Raving and Melancholy
which adorned the entrance of old Bedlam Hospital.
—MacMillan and Jones, *Drama of the
Restoration and Eighteenth Century*

This luxury of adornment at old Bedlam
May strike us as strange or frivolous;
Nevertheless, it is seldom
One draws wild hair and quiet shoulders
To stay so precisely within the limits
Of definition.

Limits are a matter of coming and going
And staying; not of crossing,
But of staying arrival and departure,
The entrance and exit where familiar refrains
Say *Raving* and *Melancholy*
To the hands and hair
And shoulders.

Coming,
This music at once
Wildly and quietly poses
Each strand and muscle at the limits;
Going for once and for all
To the stone or bronze we accept
For flesh, knowing that flesh is sacred,
Knowing we accept the word of it, the song
That holds hands to the hair and shoulders
And stays stone or bronze
With arrival and departure.

~

THE RIVER FISHERS

Down among the rocks and gravel
The river fishers have stood since spring,
Never remembering yesterday or the last winter
They sat under kerosene lamps
In linoleum kitchens.
They are here for today to break
And fall as the sun falls,
All of a piece, to the holding water.

In the years since they turned
To their women, the turning from
Has moved their eyes
To now and the running river
Where reeds drift in growth,
Bent by the late summer and heavy color.

Standing apart in the broken sun
Like old gods with cane poles,
They have no worlds to sport but this river
Where today breaks and falls
To the ancient water holding their eyes.

~

Charles Black

Two Poems

THE FALSE ACCUSATION

Elsbeth and I (she criticizes me)
Met someone from the Board of Fond Objections,
With him a woman I could barely see,
Who charged me with abusing her affections.

Upon my more than coolly alibiing
(I named the town, the day, the very street)
They lost their nerve, he knew I wasn't lying,
And mouthed some cant that ended "... off my beat."

We'd spent our honeymoon beside Lake Como
(Elsbeth and I) because it isn't hot there;
I showed enough to prove I wasn't homo,
She cried a bit, and wondered how she'd got there.

But that was years before. How time depraves!
The form's inaction rules us from our graves.

~

MY QUEEN OF THE BLUES

The intersection I perceive in you
Of Bessie Smith and Mrs. Montagu.

Your mind is strong and stocked, your mots are witty;
You'd be a good-time girl in Morgan City.

Voltaire might once have smarted from your snub;
You'd have electrified the Hellfire Club.

Commons would cry, "Hear! Hear!" You'd get a hand
Perched in the spotlight on a baby grand.

You're throaty, bubbling, troubled, deep and fiery;
They laud your patient spirit of inquiry.

Your friends should be the courtliest of scholars
Or anybody with a hundred dollars.

Coolest *esprit*, woman of breath and glance,
Desert is out. I praise the gods of chance.

~

David Farrelly

Three Poems

QUERY

Beside the trammeled creek, a wild plum
standing by whose branches sag with misty,
bitter fruit, your mother heaving like a heavy
sea, hooves first, then your head you're flung
from blackest womb an animal can know,
the midnight innards of an Angus cow,
into the harsh and glitter of our noon.

Suppose your blinking eyes,
uncluttered still with sight, could in one rush
of vision shove the glimpsing moment by and pierce
into the all-in-store, the motley skies,
uncertain pasture, barbed-wire fence, the dull nudge
in your scissored testicles and, last, the heavy sledge,
would you crawl back between those bloody thighs?

~

ENTRY

Lying in the shroud of sleep, I heard
this night a voice which cried,
fluttering around me like a bird,
"The hearty, plump executives,
the bony prelate of the harshest creed,
the bully with a gun, all those who've won,
the mean, convinced, the satisfied,
the rankest weed that lives
I pluck and weave into my nest.
And all the wretched, foolish things
who've labored at command of these or died,
they huddle there beneath a common wing
lest they be lost.
And there I warm the bird and barren twig
almost as fondly as I warm the egg."

At this I waked and saw,
shoving off the night,
the ruddy sun come clean and raw
to rinse the fields outside my window, wet
with dew, in shimmering light,
and rose and crept
here to my tablet
in the chilly dawn
to put the vision down,
lest I forget.

TO MY BROTHER

from his keeper

You knot your Windsor morning round your neck,
snatch a toast and coffee, kiss the wife;
in time but out of breath you reach the track
at 7:43 to catch your life.

You've managed it in less than seven years,
a lot as simple as a laundromat.
First Federal's where you keep your hopes—and fears.
Your head's a handy place to keep your hat

beneath whose natty brim you've put a face
which laughs at random, but would rarely weep.
In back of this, a small but tidy place
without a single hand-made thought
in it (for these are dear, and those you've bought
you got at prices ruinously cheap).

Lawrence P. Spingarn

UNDERLING

for Richard Bret Harte

I'm waiting for them all to die and leave me the advantage:
The man who lives on spinach in the larger flat upstairs,
The eccentric pianist who inherited millions from an aunt,
The collector of steam-calliopes who wins every contest,
The pedant who cast doubt on my favorite line in Marlowe—
They who filter my sunlight and keep me from passing
Over the fog-line to the green kingdom once promised.

I'm hoping that the tall house on Telegraph Hill burns down,
That the prices of sirloin and champagne totally collapse,
That my creditors fail and cabs take me on endless free rides,
That the Opera sends me two tickets for each mink opening,
And finally, starting at fifty, that I may walk the streets
In hushed noons of acceptance with the most expensive girls.

Three Poems

MIST PLACE

mistish liftings
 above
of barren stalkless
wearing fertile
 once
 now
on a withered porch
a woman sits
weeping scarecrow
 mourning

~

OLOGY

through a streets deserted
 faces
 probings
 laughing
conjured
 jeered
of an only
 could see
 innards
would the meek vent
 squeeze a bee's leaf

~

SUBSCAN

flections scan abroad
train haults
forward cars
beginning ride seven/
 an old hat
 two blues—
hair— sleaks
cuts couples
 distogether
moving doors
 met
in burr side out sight
hearing disca blinking
face blindly passing
car' slights of sound
flinging lies beside
in the glass something
never seen
again a face
onthe wheels
inolding water
where sounds taste
 like Puma's tail
 a ring on a pole
 as ice breaths

~

HIGH COUNTRY POEM

RAFFERTY CREEK

When you're gone the person stays
I kept in my mind. I have
no exorcism.

In the High Country
I walk to drive you out of me
till I've turned my body into one thing
hard as leather and stone
pack-wire
burns on the bone, endure
as dwarf-pine clutches rock

here, circled, the fire-hole
dangle white feet
in the slow pool
eyes answering that void
where water circles
a hollow in stone
rest the pack and wait
lean into where you left me
the stream falls into the
Lyell Fork, swiftly
Tuolumne, San Joaquin

CATHEDRAL RANGE

rock stumbles into sky
dim lakes below us, the dreamt
world (we stiffen on the stone
hands above us, we circle
the ledge, cross into a gully,
traverse onto the face
torn ridge 200 feet higher

the highways don't lead here
peak given no name by
Sierra Club or US Survey
you might even keep me
if you came here
though I came here to leave you
and hurt of the yielding flesh
flowering tree

(this has been to tell you
but you are still here,
come like some secret
shadow, branches edge
crossing touch of vision
one walking behind us

trail ends
some mountain or highway

~

Lenore Marshall

APRIL AUTUMN

Bird on the April sill
Is it happiness makes you sing
Obeying nature?

Old man, old lost lover,
With the autumn red rose that you bring
Is it sorrow pleading in your kiss?
A chill has made you shiver
For spring's remembered jonquils
For crossroads long trodden over
For all your roads whose forward course leads backward still.

~

Robley Wilson, Jr.

ON WAKING UP
AT THREE IN THE MORNING,
THINKING I AM KEATS

I sit up from the dream, coughing, and wet
Because the room is warm—I have forgotten
To set the thermostat back. I feel rotten;
I smoked too much today. Sometimes I let
The habit have too much will of its own,
And it pursues me through my very sleep.

The dream goes this way: I am waking up
In this same bed, this same room, and the dawn
Is spilled across my pillow. My chest pains
Me, I reach for a handkerchief, I bring
It to my mouth, and—here, the striking thing—
It turns the brightest red the mind can paint.

The dream sun lights it like a scarlet lake.
“Severn! Severn!” I cry; and then I wake.

~

Barry Targan

LET THE WILD RUMPUS START

It looks like early autumn.
I am sitting on my porch,
Minding my sons' business,
Rocking slowly in a chair,
Saying something like, “ump, ump.”
“*Get the Hell out of the mums,*”
I scream at their rough tumbling.
Two mallards explode from the pond.
“Pow! Pow!” I finger them to death.
ump, ump. rock, rock.
“*Get off his God damn head.*”

Now me and love's rage duel it out.
Day after day, the same bruising fight,
All of them pummeling me,
The small one biting my knee,
The large one wanting to know,
And the mother, O the mother is light.
“*For Christ's sake don't eat snot.*”
I am rocking faster now, baby.
I am hanging on tight.
HERE THEY COME!
I quickly light a butt with shaky hands,
But too late. They have me out
And down upon the grass
Rooting, like a pig, for mushrooms.
“*Don't eat them till I say OK.*”
I make a break for my chair,
But they tackle me in the berries.
Scatched and torn by thorns,
I knock one off and cuff the other.
Freed, I run for home,
But they come hooting after me,
Mad singers on the hoof.
We reach the house in a dead heat
In time for the last half of Popeye.
“*Don't pee on the rug.*”

The mother of light eases me
Down into my rocking chair.
The hour of bourbon has come.
From a far quarter of the sweet house
The wild things twang and thump.
ump, ump. rock, rock.

I am dying, Egypt, dying.
This is our gaudy night.
I mock the midnight bell.

~

Irene Schram

Two Poems

SWIMMER

Half girl the boy comes striding down the
swinging down the yellow beach.
The sun is nothing to think upon,
the sun's a huge and blinding is.
Under the water
inside the glass his mask
the rubber his breath
the flat black of his feet,
out he swims, out to the rock where
green horny lizards are long as
their ancestral dragons, and as old ;
and there on his back he lay too, lay still,
safer there than here,
the hundreds of meters of sea away,
seeing only into the sun's eye.

~

SHADOWS OF BIG BIRDS

Because of the way
the room's aimed at the sun
all day dark birds
move across the striped wall
and window, drawn out of sun
they come from sea, upriver ;
and finding London's great wastes,
stay ; and live here,
where the wide of their wings hardly fits
in the narrow sky ; and fly,
in slow terror at the sun, in wild
circles ; and brush hard
against the close city. And die.

Robert Sargent

Two Poems

JACK THE RIPPER

Trembling, in the fog, in the dark, in an East End alley,
With his sharp knife,
He waits for small sounds, Sal's heels, Bett's cough, to sally !
And add a life,
With the usual screams, to his set. All one can say
For his dark ghost :
He must have felt the *strangeness* of women, their way,
More than most.

~

THE DIVORCEE

Establish unstable relations
With serial men,
And when they approach too near,
Start over again.

Discuss your marriage with women,
Your sufferings votive,
In the most open manner—unless
They question a motive.

Fear the judgment of children
More than your peers' ;
Use them for your protection
As middle age nears.

Be warm when it's easy to be ;
Of disclosures, chary ;
And since one must keep reaching out,
Remember, be wary.

~

Three Poems

COUNTERAGENT

The enemy deploys his agents everywhere.
So also, friend, do we.
We spread out in all sorts of circuitous manner,
Wrapped in brown glasses.

The code behind apparent events :
Listen without betraying anything.
Put coins accurately in mechanical devices.
Avoid revealing disguises. Walk correctly.

Step with caution. Do not lose the code,
Do not trap yourself. Be careful. And watchful :
The clever hawk with eagle eye sees much.
Develop lines of communication

But do not contact anyone.
Guard against overtures,
Concede nothing under conditions,
Refuse all offers.

Everywhere are immediate dangers,
There is good chance to not succeed.
One's counterplots are everywhere broadcast against,
The policeman is not to be trusted.

Get directly back with something you uncovered,
Do not try to pass a report, or recognize us.
Put what you found quickly in a book.
Go out as though nothing happened.

THE MOVIE BOX

Light, and the overexposed nudie,
Drawn through the jiggling film
From one photographic frame to another,
Smoked on the reflector screen.

The clattering box was a movie
Of what John Milton said we lost.
A light bulb provides catharses.
Flickering nudie gesticulated

As instructed, through a system of mirrors
(I with a gleam in my eye)
Viewer glass, prism, projector,
Camera lens and rented apartment.

Someone has a pyramidal gag
That goes : adventurers to descend
Dusty labyrinths and tricky passages,
Like Milton's intricate numbers,

And to search inscriptions for ancient codes.
I never have the catharsis.
The light shuts off. Only an after image
Of nudie's prancing gesticulations

Holds, in my temporary descents
Towards her white silent shape
Beyond the gates of horn.
Well, Milton strode from line to line

Unblinking, just as Peachy Eve, in her luminous
Frame, slips shamelessly out of the last
Light, beyond computing or any address
Where leafy sunlight flickers.

THE GOVERNESS

"You see, the mind is such a delicate thing,
Derailed by a nutshell or mosquito's wing,
Stable, yet tender; though unsevere, a force;
The executive director of the crematorium;
The pilot riding his burden to a three-point landing.
There is, you see, this balance. I hope I have made my point."

—And the mind's ashes, after an event, drift.
Or fall through the frame of memory, the bars twisted
Into some instant. Somewhere in a section
Of the brain is left a dry flame of something
That once glinting fell out of the bright noon
And burned. And now memory will not hold.

—But a flame of this sort must surely be theory,
Something to account for in the evening,
Something to feel a fading chill of at its going,
Something to think of as the cause, perhaps,
Of ashes flaking upward from the mind,
From the brain's wrecked idiom of white smoke blowing.

Barbara Sousa

Two Poems

WAITING

The wind is harsh in the sails
of a green boat;
When twilight climbs from the stone
steps of the porch, kneeling
in lilac.

The cricket caught in an iron door
Caught in the wind
the green and white light
of the moon;

In darkness your breath
deepening the rib; the thicket opening
the boards of the floor,
The night grasses—

The lurch of a woodhawk.

~

THE SQUATTER'S NIGHT

The red sun glides
behind the wall of the asylum,
The blue crow.
Below, the squatters in the field.

Today slowly
the rain stopped; the field
in wind, rip tides, mud
And perfumes that lightly
cling;

The sickle-rose.
The glow of a firefly.
The honeysuckle moving
toward the broken wheel—

The willow trees have silver leaves—

In the shed your children dream
of Genghis Khan—

Endless, O endless night.

~

Darrell L. Gray

Two Poems

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

If one carries matches in
his pockets there is a great danger
that his legs will blaze.

Fire will sweep clean
the shores of the chest
leaving only the mark to
remember—like vaccination
white in the flesh.

And if one's clothes are soaked
with gasoline it is not
wise to become emotional.
Such action would inflame the
nerves of the skin, triggering
disaster in the form
of human heat.

There are many things to avoid.
Arid places. Dark swamps.
Old football fields
where young victories are laid.
Sleep in fugitive attics
amidst the scrap and shavings
of weddings, deaths, and
pictures of men fishing.

Often houses are built on thin
sheets of ice . . . and dreams.

~

MORNING

This is the thing I heard
coming over the hill.
It sounded like an explosion
still needed by many.
The present Use will fool us,
the hot wires shaking.
You hold the telephone
to your ear and hear it.
The dial tone . . . or,
without so near a death—
the bang of hammers
on the top of our house.
It is the hot laughter.
They who should know
call it morning
It stands like god
with terrible light.

~

Michael Miller

Two Poems

PROPHECY

This desire, experienced constantly,
When your need is stronger than your
Thought, Estrada, is a threat, violent
And sudden, when you steal a girl from
A dream,
 taking this touch of innocence
Without asking, tormented woman of time,
Until you wilt in winter without lover
Or friend.

~

IMPOSSIBLE WOMAN

Now get this, impossible woman
Barefoot in jeans, we came to
Rest, drink, eat, swim, then
Sleep on the sand, with no guests,
As we both decided; but now you
Want to clean up the clutter, my
Poetry under the bed no less,
Invite friends, then threaten the
Air with: "Jane got a Fulbright,"
"Bonnie eloped with what's his
Name," "Bob and Cass are together
Again," "Lonny Jones is back in
Town!" But no, absolutely not,
There's going to be peace and
Quiet, so hang up the phone, don't
Touch the beer cans, begin this
Weekend here and now!

~

Frances Collin

Four Poems

ANNIVERSARY: THE WARSAW GHETTO

She has been dead for twenty years, but still
you cannot eat a piece of bread
without wishing she were here to share it,
or you had died instead.

While we, your children, seeking flesh found air,
a mind so far away we came to doubt
ourselves—for we had all been born of one
somehow there, but seeming here.

~

FAGOTS FOR A WITCH

It wasn't the fire or the screaming,
it was the unbearable stench.
(They never tell you about the smell.)
I left Joan and the French and the English—
they all had more at stake than I—
and lit out for parts unknown.

A man was pulled apart by horses,
quartered in the Place de la Concorde.
The pavement was slippery with entrails,
and the ladies watching from their carriages
had busy hands under their skirts.
It seems I hadn't gone far.

Someone stood on a parapet
wavering over his death.
"Jump," cried voices from the crowd,
and though I could not see them,
I heard the tumbrels clatter
over stones I'd seen torn up.

~

"IL CIELO INCOMBE"

Acrid exhaust of another body,
Sweat stings my skin, while above,
Weight forces a return to shoddy
Surroundings—reality—pain and love.
These again fade out of range.
Awareness is liquid joy that grows
Slowly, like a great bubble. Strange,
Defying description, it bursts, and throws
Sweet syrup through the soul's wild
And secret places, refuge of the child.

~

OF TIME AND DAYS

Measured time, world's time, has the rough edges
smoothed away, is patterned and parceled;
but my minutes flow unpolished into you,
clock and center of my universe.

Beginning at the inmost point, time and you
uncoil in silence, outermost widening,
spring unsprung, powering the world,
pacing it. Passing hours divide the day
into light and shade marked by your presence
or absence,
and where your golden fall of sunlight rests,
white in daylight, time grows bright.

~

Gena Ford

Two Poems

ASSIGNMENT

I

Rain, and two nights running
the same dull slur
under passing wheels.
Elsewhere. Somewhere.

Then clearing, the lights
across the river
never softening under
that present face, the moon.

The snapshots stare
across a bare back,
saying where in the world
is alone? or far enough?

II

Now days to be learned
like definitions for
words not yet invented.

Remember this, I think,
skirting the flat spread of
rain backed up in gutters,

how the line of the curb
defines that cloud, a sky
stoppered by rotten leaves—

remember this. And this:
how you saw it coming,
that drowned corner ahead,

and crossed where you could.

III

Begin, now, with birds, how they
know how waves break but not
the way windows keep wind and rain
from my naked rooms. One slams
against glass and falls, silent
as impasse: the window is mine.

My hands would warm it, those
soft flecked feathers ruffling
in the wind. But heartbeats
shock my fingers back. Crazy bird!
What answer is that, to lie there
dying on a green porch?

Waves break on a far shore.
Glass thuds under impact.
This time. That space. Let it die,
that quiet, natural bird. Pick
at your own bare brain, the small,
cruel child you've been. Begin.

~

TO THE WIFE OF A FAMOUS POET

Yes, you told us : we're brushed
from his coattails, plucked
from his crewcut, picked out of
his navel, one of us curled up
like a worm dug out of his ear,
and still we come : two of us
crawl down his socktops, three
swing at all times from his laces—
one puts his head in the loop
and turns blue, garroted by two
lacetip deadweights. H. Kley
would have loved him ! So gross,
so hairy, so glare-eyed, raking us
out of his fur. O ! He scratches us
out of his groin ! We hang on
for dearlife like the chinstrap
on the clownscap and die a
thousand deaths by drowning.

Vive l'hommage!

We're trying
not to love him since he handed you
his coat and you picked his pockets.
He took off his trousers
and you took him to the cleaners.
You told us. But what we'd like
to know, Madam Exterminator, now
that your poet naked as a jaybird stands
at the apogee of his race with fame,
have you sorted us out yet ?
And where on his itinerary
may we call for the bodies ?

~

Jon Anderson

Two Poems

THE SKILL

The cat's eye's quick
but damn ! the glasses
fly from hand
to dunk and gleaming
up to dry.
My woman is
a good one, turns
me outside in.
Say ! how can we
miss out ? there's all
that funny business
where I lie.

~

SELF PORTRAIT AS A SPARROW

In his room,
alone, he hears
within his head
a music for harpsichord :
the intelligence
of birds, of
sparrows. His eye cocks.
Lost in the upper
branches, surrounded
and shadowed by leaves,
he feels his
high house weave
in the wind ; his
world bends
everywhere. Now
small bones,
built on threads,

toss in the wind as
he races toward town—
small-voiced
and whimsical,
whimsical,
the ecstatic bearer
of false alarms.

Marilyn Krysl

EMBARKATION

I couldn't swear you were here—
I remember lifting my head
from deep in the pillow and through the brine of my dream
saw you stepping into your pants.
But you might have been dancing
or stealing my jewels. I never saw you leave,
heard the door. What for these departures
if not to wake, to know
what you take with you, where you go?

I fall back from the light like all dreamers,
foundered in my own salt. Oceans of mattress
close over my head. The sheets Charybdis,
and I cannot or do not turn back
to where I lost. Surely Isabella
slept less, was certain of rounding horns,
knew who came and went under her banner.
Columbus' queen gave him resources
I know not of and only sometimes dream.
I sleep too much, swear I love,
but don't know when you've gone, what globe
you circle for Newest Indies. Without land
to stand on, I drown in the hot water
of older oceans than we suspected.
You may discover America. Meanwhile a receding horizon
keeps me from falling off the edge of bed.

Gladys Ely

Three Poems

AUGUST THANKSGIVING

Driving by the dusty camp-sad lake
With cellarless cottages sliding toward decay,
We saw, at the edge of the road, four turkeys, or rather
Four black upended tambourines edged with white sequins
Rocking near the ground with orange-red bobbin heads,
As neatly designed as plants or wound-up painted toys.
We stopped, all curious, the three-year-old boy perhaps for color,
The five-year old, a connoisseur of dinosaurs,
Pterodactyl's friend, an eager listener
To the adults' surmises on exactly what the species was.
Animals, plants, and curiosity running in our heads,
The sly trap-door spider, the snapdragon's
Hinges for convenient bee welcoming,
The mad size of sunflowers, marsupials'
Maternal totings, delicate skunks,
Mincing along at evening oblivious of their smells,
Neat daring hanging basket oriole nests,
Holly trees' marriages, children's curiosity.
Bizarre and beautiful, the turkeys and the children,
The moment as curious as a special stone found on the beach,
An old coin, a painted box, a clear miniature primitive dream.
We watched the strangely native creatures
Zigzag and peck and pick their historically irrelevant way
Up the bank of third-growth copse across the road
And disappear. We stopped for all of us
But would have stopped if even one had asked.

AFTER READING PHILIP LARKIN

There has been only one I hated, to whom I said, No.
He-she-it has gone away
From my piecemeal, slowly
Reconvening day.

The hate-space vacuum almost filled,
I have a flicker of a yes for that hate's success
Because it is silly to waste
A thought on less.

Now perforce my he-she-it hate is I.
So. But more than I
The more than usually
Great world reconvenes my day.

Those horses' flanks! The movie
That I saw in my hate-time,
Those horses' flanks, flashing in corrals.
I thought: this is my corralled, but still my proper, day.

And now, this fall, in gold November,
At a wide curve, a grave white moon
High over a deep white bay:
Yes, there the nature of love, there love's hendiadys.

~

NEW ENGLAND: LATE FALL

This is the art the day has made
In the low relief of fall's brocade:
Trees richly molded into place,
Rome-red and ocher, gold and black,
Chrysanthemum burnished, limned and staid,
A view through a stereopticon
Or a strawflower garden under glass.

Gravely bannered oaks and elms
Weave statements of their flattened realms;
The copse and sumac underneath,
Hushed and heavy, do not speak,
Respectful in their slow red helms
Holding the pageant afternoon
In a thickened stasis, still as death.

The day is clotted fast in peace.
Too weak to battle through and cease,
Too wise in color to revive,
It waits a white sun's western wake,
Above the sentiment of release,
Cooling and obliquely fine,
In nerveless mourning, to arrive.

~

Herbert Scott

Two Poems

SHULER AND LATONA

Shuler,
Big, slow, blond,
Muscles built too high
To hide beneath his shirt,
Works the vegetables
Like a mother caring for small children,
Peeling the leaves from lettuce
With the gentle touch
Of comforting a hurt,
And with thick fingers,
Caressing the veins of a cabbage head:
Calmly, quietly,
Doing his job.

Latona,
Like an ant
In his quick scurrying activity,
Works around Shuler
As if a rock were in his way,
Flicking his knife through the vegetables
With nervous intensity,
Never pausing
Except to flip a grape or cherry
To his mouth,
His tongue curling
Like a lizard's,
Devouring.

Yesterday,
Over a crate of fresh turnips,
Shuler coldcocked Latona.

THE MAN IN THE CLOSET

He tried living in a closet
and the closet held all his dreams
for him to see,
with the broom smelling
of Mexican factory workers
and wine fields from the broken jug,
and the raincoat he never wore
feeling like the oil table cloth
in the tenant house with red mud at the door.

He lived in the closet
rustling fond papers from the shelf,
having meals brought
by hitting his head against the door,
relieving himself through the keyhole,

but giving that up and using
a small, enameled pot, chipped,
with a handle, and a strainer,
in case something precious
had been taken and passed.

Phil Gibson

BIOLOGICAL HOLIDAY

On a porch full of cages
one female moth
sent out the radar
scent, five male
moths beat the screen.

Butterflies and big-bodied
moths may copulate
around the public sky
because they are so virtuous:
they do it once, then die.

When it is dark inside
the icebox, children, do you
wonder what goes on?
A monster purple moth
lies in the ice cube

tray, waiting to be
photographed. The vegetable
crisper is full of cocoons.
The tuna will go to outer
space, after you eat it.

Gordon Quinlan

ROCKVIEW

Tonight there is silence.
In the clearing, snow begins some unknown dance.
The birds have gone in ;
they do not sing on the naked branch.
Only the wind speaks without meaning.

Twenty miles from this spot
in the Rockview Asylum
lunatics look into the white air.
What is it that leaps in their eyes?
What strange belief?

I beat a circular path in the snow.
I know the wolves that prowl
behind surrounding trees
have a wild stare.
What do they read in the deep sky?

What breaks inside their hearts
to make them howl?

~

R. P. Mariels

IDLE

Fish hatchery—concrete streams, feed net ordered from above,
where idle there's no lunge, no moth in mid-air snapped,
no need to run before an otter's ripping bite.
Not hunted, they hunt each other, and slash one eyeless trout
whose flesh peels back and flutters down his spine—
perhaps sight went beyond a flooded cage,
skin first broke in one wild leap that ended on the wall,
bringing blood, then preying fish—
or a fumbling runt who'd never measured up.

One chill Alaska night years ago,
laughing boys locked a storehouse door on Grandpa, cold.
Almost home from fishing through the ice,
he paused to gut the fish stiffening in his hands.
Once latched behind the door his eyes began their nod,
and frost seeped in and spiked them to the bone.

~

Peter Simpson

AFTER FINDING SOMETHING OF MYSELF

to John Logan

Now I have felt with you
some herons settle in the paint of Morris Graves
and today would fold my clever wings
into a summer field, where flying things
disturb the basic peace of bones.

"I cannot see what flowers are at my feet"
Blinded by the finest famine in the land
my "troubles" rest and hover
sucking at the surface of the grass,
bees at their stinging holiday.

I bring my daughters by the hand
into a poet's home ; sons with smiles
sit at the doorstep, waiting.
Will I take them to the world?
Can I? Roots tangled at my knees?

~

Three Poems

AFTER THE VISIT

Friend of so many years,
(at fifteen we wept together because Jesus
wasn't a thing to believe in anymore
and because we were afraid of sex and death and Latin)
it was good to see you again.
How is it that I am thriving, too plump
on nothing a month and the same old fearful questions?
You are so sad, so thin,
nervously smoking in a rich house,
having seen the world and found Zen.

~

THE SECOND TIME AROUND

This is exactly like the time I cried all night
over a spic I was illicitly in love with,
father groaning at foreignness and my catholic taste.
I wept myself to boarding school, to lines of girls
whose stricken, sixteen-year-old faces wore a grief like mine.

Then gentle rules took over. Finally,
like even numbers in arithmetic, we added up
to neat, round, sensible figures, quite unscarred.
The various horrid experiences
that had thrown daddies into panic and us
into scratchy, all-alike green tunics and manners
vanished. We grew up green and lovely, forgetting
our several bad boys, dagos, spics, polacks.

This is exactly like that sweet sick weeping I grew out of.
But no one made me end this love; I have my own fears.
This time I shrink from foreignness, the strangeness
an affair would bring into our ordered lives.
Again the same damned thing.

Where are the rows of good, green-tunicked girls?
All careful married ladies sans frantic daddies,
red-eyed matrons of the scattered towns.
This too we share. Let us draw near
from our respective distances.
We will not outgrow this ending, only greenness bends.
But let us click our heels in unison and pretend.

~

THE ANIMALS AT THE FAIR

Before even the glorious ferris wheel,
we wanted the animals. "Wild!
Exotic!" cried the menagerie man.
Inside, we saw the molting hawk ignore,
for the third year in a row,
boys and their sticks. The fox
caressed his cage door with a furious muzzle.
He was new, unused to noise.
We counted splinters in his nose.
The giant bat uncloaked himself, a mouse-mouth yawn
and wing-tips touching wire on either side.
One old wildcat stalked his shadow
while his eyes stood still.
When we had seen them all,
We moved to the music and wheeling lights
where people were passing each other.
Behind their fixed looks something quick walked,
jerked at the end of its chain,
then turned to cross a face again.

~

Cid Corman

A BATCH OF POEMS

How dry the
channel is.
The bottom

littered slime.
Is that what
knowing is?

How everything
death is. The sun spreads
through the mist over

the mountains over
the mountains. An edge
like that, this, persists.

Old ladies
among the plums,
as if there

werent a
moment to lose,
lost in it.

Mist mountain or sky
Everything fades
into something so

complete that breath is
the one limit as
love is the one grace.

~

Will Stubbs

Four Poems

THE WHITENESS

Your skin and
the skin of
apples keep
whiteness in

the air an omen
for meat
repeatably seed
remote

in shape without
opinion. Grass
ends
to begin you.

Though the eyes place
whiteness at
the center
of absence

your whiteness makes my hand
touch
you as shade touches
the orchard

with no blemish
but the sun
involving
apple fiber as your body

involves my touching
hand after hand
in sun weight. See
I suspect

how you
and apples
finish
with weather.

~

A VIEW OF THE APPLE TREE FROM THE KITCHEN

The window frames
the rain light limbs
of the apple tree
after drawing

no fruit. Wind
without occasion shows
leaf and branch moves
in the pane. The house

surrounds the air
winter matters. The leaves
fall in
what has held and fed

the shape I accept
as the topic
of the dark. Seeds
at the center

bear
the symmetry
of a square
eccentric in the weather.

~

YOU THINKING ME

Your brain is
a speed
for my body. Approximately
breath in

me entering
as you see it. Let me say
the love
you near me with

deepens
like unthought clouds
crossing flower structure
with the sun.

~

VISITING THE NEW HOME OF A FRIEND

The wall in
the stones in

your house continues
the vision nearing

a tapestry
entirely it

as windows
as doors. Opening in

to weight. The house
verifies the stone

in the stone. One
half eyes. Your skin sleeps

in the stone. Your earning
limits. The shadow

in space
is unspeakable.

~

William Hunt

THE OWL HAND

A child who with its eyes bandaged had lost several of his fingers by amputation, continued to complain for many days successively of pains, now in this joint and now in that, of the very fingers which had been cut off.—Biographia Literaria

And when he slept this child's hand grew,
each finger stalk-like, tipped
with a dark nail whose curve resembled
that of the degenerate Khans. He gripped
the sides of his body, his thighs shuddered
like a bird caught in a change of wind:
The soft bones were not there. Then
the bird that grew at the edge of his finger tips
began to talk, "You" he said & disappeared.
There was an itch in the replica of the *mons veneris*
that he recognized lay in his middle finger.
For him the Mount of Venus was a death trap
complete with ax and the curse of the Pilgrims,
progress. As he slept his fingers wove the delicate
wing jointures of the bird one by one
and his mouth was a cone of heavy bone,
and his voice once shrill was deep
as it whispered, "You" & struggled to escape.

About Our Contributors

KATIE LOUCHHEIM is the first woman to achieve the rank of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. And her first book of poems, *With or Without Roses*, will soon appear from Doubleday.

ROBERT PAWLOWSKI teaches at Mankato State College in Minnesota and has poems appearing in *Colorado Quarterly* and *Minnesota Review*.

CHARLES BLACK of New Haven is a teacher of law as well as a poet. Alan Swallow published his first collection, *Telescopes and Islands*, in 1963.

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LAWRENCE SPINGARN teaches at Valley College in California. His most recent book of poems was *Letters from Exile* (1961), and he is finishing a novel, *The Jersey Giant*.

NORMAN PRITCHARD of Brooklyn has a collection of poems, *The Sudden Distances*, awaiting publication and is currently completing a novel entitled *The Mundus*.

JOHN OLIVER SIMON (who wishes not to be confused with the "acid" critic of that name) is a graduate student at Berkeley, with recent poems in *Approach* and *Prairie Schooner*.

LENORE MARSHALL serves on the boards of both the P.E.N. Club and the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. Her most recent book of poems was *Other Knowledge*.

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BARRY TARGAN lives in Tully, New York. Recent work appears in *Prairie Schooner* and *Carleton Miscellany*.

IRENE SCHRAM and her artist husband, recently back from a year in Spain and England, now stay in New York City. She appears in the *Nation*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and *Iconoclature* (England).

ROBERT SARGENT lives in Arlington, Virginia, and works for the federal government. He has published in *Shenandoah*, *Western Humanities Review*, and others.

JOSEPH MALOF studied under John Crowe Ransom; he has just completed work on a book-length *Introduction to English Meters*, having tested his theories teaching modern poetry at the University of Texas.

BARBARA SOUSA of New York is assistant to the editor of the *Columbia University Forum*. First publication anywhere.

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MICHAEL MILLER has had plays performed by workshops at The Actors' Studio and The Circle in the Square, in New York. First publication anywhere.

FRANCES COLLIN lives and works in New York City; this marks her first publication anywhere.

GENA FORD of Portland is currently appearing in *Poetry*. Her most recent collection of poems was *A Planting of Chives* (1964).

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MARILYN KRYSL has returned to Eugene, Oregon, after living in Berkeley.

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HERERT SCOTT, one of three Iowa poets in this issue, lives in Iowa City, attending classes and teaching at the University. His poems appear in the *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *December*, and *Harper's*.

PHIL GIBSON lives in San Francisco. He has done intermittent motion-picture work and intends to persist in that field. Other publications in *Critic*, *Statement*, and John Logan's *Choice*.

GORDON QUINLAN was attending Schiller College in Germany when last heard from.

R. P. MARIELS, an assistant editor of *Northwest Review*, teaches at the University of Oregon. His poems have appeared in the *Galley Sail Review* and *Southwest Review*.

PETER SIMPSON is an alderman in St. Louis and the executive director of a committee to promote the cultural and economic growth of his city.

BETTY SHARP ADCOCK lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

CID CORMAN, poet, translator, and editor of *Origin* (of which a second series recently began publication), has lived in Kyoto, Japan, for several years, where he studies the Noh theater in theory and practice.

WILL STUBBS teaches in Indiana, Pa. Current poems of his are appearing in *Wild Dog*, *Fiddlehead*, and *Southern Poetry Review*.

WILLIAM HUNT of Chicago has appeared in *Choice*, *Kayak*, and others. He also is a successful playwright and works with Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation.

Every poet in this issue is new to *Poetry Northwest*. So is MARY RANLETT, who took the photograph on our cover. She is also doing an essay in photographs of the artists and writers of the Pacific Northwest.

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THE EDITOR