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KENNETH O. HANSON
Six Poems

FIRST OF ALL
First of all it is necessary
to find yourself a country
—which is not easy.
It takes much looking
after which you must be lucky.
There must be rocks and water
and a sky that is willing
to take itself for granted
without being overbearing.
There should be fresh fish
in the harbor, fresh bread
in the local stores.
The people should know
how to suffer without
being unhappy, and how to be happy
without feeling guilty. The men
should be named Dimitrios
Costa, John or Evangelos
and all the women should be
named Elena or Anthoula.
The newspapers should always
lie, which gives you something
to think about. There should be
great gods in the background.
and on all the mountaintops.  
There should be lesser gods  
in the fields, and nymphs  
about all the cool fountains.  
The past should be always  
somewhere in the distance,  
not taken too seriously  
but there always giving perspective.  
The present should consist of the seven  
days of the week forever.  
The music should be broken-hearted  
without being self-indulgent.  
It should be difficult to sing.  
Even the birds in the trees should  
work for a dangerous living.  
When it rains there should be  
no doubt about it. The people  
should be hard to govern  
and not know how to queue up.  
They should come from the villages  
and go out to sea, and go back  
to the villages. There should be  
no word in their language  
for self-pity. They should be  
farmers and sailors, with only  
a few poets. The olive trees  
and the orange trees and the cypress  
will change your life, the rocks  
and the lies and the gods  
and the strict music. If you go there  
you should be prepared to leave  
at a moment’s notice, knowing  
after all you have been somewhere.

NEXT

One night in a bad mood  
alone in a foreign city  
merakia or worse  
a black mood, I went  
by cab to find a friend  
six times he was not home  
the neighbors had me in for drinks  
assuring me he will be here  
the taxi driver thinking  
drunk crazy American  
not merakia or worse  
and the last time I found him  
home, in bed with his wife  
who spoke no English but  
made me a cup of strong Greek coffee  
while I wept by the bed  
merakia or worse and  
he assured me his house was my house  
and in the world I had one friend  
gone home by cab to bounce  
off the walls and finally  
to fall in my bed alone  
dreaming of conveyor belts and pulleys  
and all those moving parts  
in which I only  
gum up the works  
and woke to a Greek morning  
rigid and at attention  
neither saved nor damned  
neither dead nor alive  
wondering what next
THE SIXTH FLEET IS IN

The sunlight glitters on the bay. The American sailors walk in schools like fish, with cameras and transistor radios. Their God is watching them. He knows all and it saddens him. They sparkle in their innocence and whites but they are anxious to sin and waiting to be taken in. And Greeks oblige and this is nothing new. Their God is older and he smiles. In hundreds of tavernas paramyth flows, in praise of ingenuity. In suburbs some 19-year-old Helen is always doing it. The sunlight glitters on the bay and in their blood the Greeks know life is good today is today, and everywhere the hilarious face of God.

THE GIFT

Some gifts have no history are late or early too soon discovered and too soon forgot. This eagle's foot the claws extended to a six-inch span the toes and ankle covered everywhere with beads of saffron mimicking the skin and the thigh where the feathers would begin topped with a pincushion tells some Northwest Indian's devotion. Boxed or shelved it shared the Pike Place Market with old shoes and mushrooms fish and first editions and the sounds and smells of lives lived always close to the bone. Quinault or Quileute no doubt it bought some Indian a beer at the Britannia Tavern. But medicine is medicine and having lost three confrontations with myself today I praise the eye that picked this token from a varied store to honor no particular occasion. Unique, original it holds its own—good medicine within it.

LETTER FROM A DISTANCE

Just at the opening of a long vacation your inscrutable letter came bearing a stamp of Delphi, stones in green, and from a cleft above the theater the fumes that gave the oracle the view of what the future held and paid the rent. I break the seal unfold the page although I can't
I do not understand.
make out your meaning
and my oracle, the friend
who reads the signs
has gone to San Francisco for the week.
I know this time of year
the sun is shining
on the corridors of Rhodes
and on the beach
where Venus rose.
Is this the news?

Or will the syllables
the genitive, the dative
in a careful script
disclose the usual
number of disasters
only money cures?
Last time you wrote you said
"I like you very much.
My heart is like a rag.
I do not understand."
And I was moved until
my oracle revealed
it's just a Greek expression.

Still, stubbornly I choose
to think it was the truth
although I know the Greeks
made patsies of the Persians
for their doctrine of shoot
straight and tell the truth.
Meanwhile the past
remains between the lines.
The future is obscure.
There's no one here
to read the signs. Yâsuo
Evangelos. I'm in good health
I hope you are the same.

END OF THE MONTH REPORT

I have washed the windows
I have signed the checks
I have arranged the books
according to the six principles
in my head
I have found my poems
in a new anthology
check by jowl
with Robert Lowell
I have taken this into account
I have bought the beer for today
I have re-read the material
on the Industrial Revolution for Monday
I have read the student papers
I am pledged to read
I have put my life in order
Why then do the bits and pieces
of another landscape
gather in a sidesreet
with obscene gestures
chanting fuck your order
long live doubt
long live the parasyth of the heart
the storm and stress
of the bounced check
the pure disinclination
of the who knows what
the shipwreck always
of the uncertainty at the door
long live the domestic
tranquility of chaos
the rocks and water
of negative capability
the raw discrimination
of the checks and balances
O burn the papers, put the books
again in the damp basement
Christopher Smart molding
alongside the Cat Man of Katmandu
damn, cheek by jowl with Lady Winchelsea
O to be merely clever
like the students of Salonika
who believe in nothing but themselves
or their uncles, which in this case
is something to believe in
O to have antecedents
without thinking them up
to have only
lies to contend with
the indiscriminate sun
in a plastic bag and the yellow wine
more clear than a washed window
week in and week out.

Jack Tootell

YOU WILL RIDE EARTH

You will ride earth as you did before,
you unincreased in stature, the land
as mountainous, as enormous as before,
the ink-blue sea as empty of sails, of smoke.
Winter will not wait for you, nor spring hurry
then, although you may have cunningly threaded
the needle's eye with a ponderous cable;
although you may have turned a snowflake inside out
with a red-hot poker for scalpel.

... Even though you turned time backward,
composing, for instance, beef stew into its elements,
various unripe vegetables and a sullen steer.
Earth is the same blunt pedestal, even though
your efforts should be successful in teaching Faith
to land-grant college student bodies.

Yet something of day will be changed, and of night,
of work, of love, of begetting;
water and fire will obey you, and wild animals.
Rivers will flow to your feet, asking your blessing,
the buried diamond speak, saying, "Here I am,"
the intense stars carry messages for you,
and carrots and chard flourish in your garden.

It is true that explanation, which is difficult
already, may be further diminished
to jungle drums, smoke signals, sign language.
Such disability is secondary. Do not grieve.
Nothing is new, absolutely nothing is new
but the tension to be faithful to the mystery
and, performing the experiment, to become the experiment;
then you will ride earth as you did before,
still apparently little in its vastness.

ELEGY FOR DIMINISHED THINGS

At this late hour a brief elegiac word
and threnody, a single tear on the cheek
and a crude chord on my homemade harp
for disappeared and vanished things
and for all dwindled and diminished things:

For the Chaldean lion, splendid-carved in Ur,
and the five-legged bull vast as a house
who, shrunken, made a British unicorn;
and for the Irish fairies, in their prime
eight, nine feet tall and thundering in the air.

And farther gone in time, the mammoth with
the wildly sprouted ivory spears,
direwolf, cave bear, cat with sabre fangs,
the giant elk, the European moose, the auroch,
the giant beaver of the interglacial rains.
Here on the mid-American subcontinent
where Manitou sat grand within the wreaths
of his Indian summer peace-pipe, the scarlet oak
and maple embers drifting down the universal haze
—no more. No more the Manitou
at the prairie's edge in Illinois, seeing
the wide Lakes outstretched northward, or Missouri
and Ohio gathering for the distant Gulf.

Lightened, dispersed like atmospheres,
the Iroquois, the Cherokee, the Crow,
Nez Perce, Pawnee, Navajo, Puyallup,
themselves forgotten, the Manitou forgotten,
his sombre tribes marooned on desert buttes,
thin Indians in alien blue jeans.

— no more. No more the Manitou

Questions break out, exclamations.
The dreams shatter like glass.
The guard yells into his telephone
but the line is dead. All the men
dumfounded, praying curses, crowd outward.
All the doors are wide and the walls down.
No alarm rings. All the men
stream out over the countryside
shivering in the night, to cry aloud,
"Where is she? Where has she gone?"

A. Poulin, Jr.  Two Poems

IN THE BEGINNING

As if called by a voice
inhabiting the sun
crouching on a hilltop
and brooding on the suburbs,
they come from behind
the grey, loose bark
of trees, beneath a stone;
they rise from the bone
and flesh of cattle
steaming in the fields
and alleys; they come
from the folds and seams
of our damp clothes, and
They come from nowhere.

This morning the space
outside our window
filled with a universe
of seeds. Tonight whole
swarms of newborn insects
FISH

The morning liquefies.
I take one step, spring up,
and I am swimming
above branches of coral.
I breathe water. Delicate
fish dart through my eyes.
Gold and black, they are
angels. Inside my skull,
nesting in my lungs,
they sing shrill, barbarous
arias, chorals of kyries
at some inhuman pitch.
They are shattering my bones.

But nothing, nothing weighs
me down, not even the drought
of darkness sweeping across
the states toward Asia.
Men flicker like matches.
Whole cities are burning.
The Mississippi’s brown
with blood. Still I am rising
higher and higher. Angels
are winging me toward
planets pulsing like pearls,
toward space infested with sharks.

FOXGLOVES IN THE DAWN

Foxgloves are stiff with the hoarfrost.
Each morning I watch tiny paws
Wag in sheer coats of rust,

Welcome, outlasting a few untidy days.
I watch them through my windowslats,
I watch them crystallize,

Thickening to the color of quartz
In the steel ambuscade of mornings,
In the sharp citron lights.

Now they are little tongues
Rattling the oak-ribbed arbor, numb,
Outspoken as starlings.

One dry leaf deserts the pear limb.
Fox tongues are browning. I confront a sky
Uninteresting as worn denim.

On the last morning, I will rise early.
I will find the horse, fleshless in the dull
White hoarfrost, scraped stone-gray.

I will not mind the absence of a saddle,
The fox tongues unhinging themselves. I will mount,
Not looking back at all,

And lose myself, climbing the weedy hill,
Steering the furious dark head, bent
Into the milkweed’s shell.
WHAT I KNOW

1
The morning glories decide to open—
Infection is running up my body
Like tiny flowers, each on its separate string.

2
Left out in a cold light,
These flowers are blue and watery,
The color of an eye all over.

3
They unwrap their delicate skin
Against the flaky paint of this old wall.
Here is an ancient itch.

4
The skin of a hand has such thin veins!
Under the torn mouths of the arbor
My heart stands up in its own wreckage.

Mel Takahara

NOVEMBER'S LESSON

1
"It's a way to go," I say. "Shift fast and trip
a notch." Up. Down. Subtle, subtle;
settle to a fine focus: bastard amber.
Now, stay. "I dare you to love," I say
and make you. Sit. Careful. Petulant. Petulant
membranes slip into focus and out and into
your turning. Sit careful. Believe, I come caring. Intent
on focus, I slip, catching on grooves. Intent
on shifting, I sit, loving the hue your face
assumes. This clarity quivers me cold. November

POETRY

16

says: This warmth is amber, bastard and brittle.
Quiver into focus, Love. These edges slip.

2
Dark's the flood that draws
headward flown from deep
as drawn breath my brawny
pump's primed so sleeping
cannot drown the paced
tides and waking weeps.
The dawn's full: your face
grown deeper richer
warmer than this light I taste
rising.

Now. Now, the latches
to the doors all are sprung.
Through leaves, through branches
high, higher dispersing
the common, a desperate run
of sparrows stalks this morning
burnt light and suns
snap in light-frames winged
burst to burst through honey
colored air settling
a moment caught tight
now slivering the air lifting
loose they soar from sight
roaring their loss roaring.

NORTHWEST
Christmas. Tonight we will work late, singing softly to ourselves, having a drink or two, thinking back to the thirties and before, to virgin birth, while outside the window, snow and the landscape's clarity will keep us this American distance from each other, as alien as the Burlington's 1:15 freight, meandering down the valley of the Father of the Waters, hauling our northern currents south, so that in imagination, at least, we can meet the sea, dropping our mortgages, our time, our flesh to face its blue mystery, as hungry fishermen would unfold their nets, hoping to gather in one bright and tightened string, a standard measure of ourselves.

John Judson

24 DECEMBER from Diary of a Lone Cold

For those with empirical experience of altitude, twice the distance between the bottom and the middle is up. It is the morning before
Paul Anderson

WISCONSIN WENT DEEPER THAN CHINA

"Man is a weed in those regions."
—De Quincey, Confessions

Fishing till midnight below
the dam in back of the Cosmo Theater,
we impaled nightcrawlers on Eagle Claw hooks,
heaved them on hand lines into the dark water,
waited for the abrasive ticking
felt in the fingers, message of mouths at work
from deep in the weedy water

Levis slick with catfish slime.
we walked home on the deserted tracks with ties
beneath our sneakers squishing the river out
or balanced along one moon-bright rail
parallel with our fish-heavy
happiness, lugging a soaked gunnysack of catfish...
most of them would live till skinning time
when we peeled their black skins
back to the finality of our own flesh...

then spilled our excess, easy as rain
into dreams of water wider than the mind
breeding weed beds infested with whiskered fish
yellow Buddha-bellies swelling, swarming overhead...

now, again, inscrutable as cats or khans
drilled in wisdom deeper than death
they mass themselves in the mourning
hours, swarming past my streaming hair...
like hordes in movies and history books
coming, coming, eyes flashing like sabres aimed
in a war that is a dream
that is a war that leaks
and drips and lasts...

David Galler

THE MOUNTAINEERS
For Tony and Rhona

In warm weather, they can be seen
descending with makeshift carts
to sell the valley people stone
to repair their houses,
pave streets,
or erect dividing walls
in delicate, good taste;
wood for the coming winter’s fires;
homely fruits,
which in their preserved state
are held as luxuries.

Now, what the valley dwellers see
is that these men are coarse:
many the maiden aunt
who in her youth
was rumored to have paled,
panels her lintel
with wood from the timber line;
many the mountaineer
who, having sold his goods,
gruffly accepted from his host a drink,
got drunk and stayed,
and, toasts later, announced
his wish to buy in town,
but, mortgage signed,
vanished, never to pay.
And, to the valley dwellers’ dismay,
their own sons
have traditionally been prone
to rise of a summer’s night,
secretly part the grain,
fare up the rocky slopes.
In dead of winter,
laid by a mountain arm
before their fathers’ fires,
hearing a sermon
on how valleys extend beyond each peak,
these sons have revived
between faintings to groan:
The heights, the heights!
Many a time,
a man has stood alone
with his son’s rescuer
to see him shrug.
Well may he frown:
year after year,
in wizened age
a mountaineer may die;
the valley people will bear his body to rest
near those of their own,
outside the town,
burial past what he could pay;
and, of his kin,
ever has one been known
to object
in any way.

Arthur Oberg

SUNDAYS

We visited the dead. Sunday meant
Pruning hedge, stooping to plant
And rip out what had failed in an
Eastern winter. As a child, I knew
Death signaled a new grave, a plot
We would drive for miles to keep,

Another stone hauled from the mason’s
Yard, its cost divided among the
Remaining children. Within two

Years, my four grandparents died,
Lowered to ground used to shovel
And pick, the breakage of love.

In my dreams, I was keeper of
The flowers, promised a favorite
Aunt flowers, city blocks of them,

When she died. She was young, and
She laughed. After one Valentine
Dance, she exhausted her life in

A garage, removing shoes and glasses,
A martyr for part of our Sunday
Love. As Sunday child, I guessed

Her wishes for what they were,
All your faces and laughter.
I give you back to earth again.

There is no ear here for what you ask,
Things obscene, austere, impossible
As air. And I had thought to be your keeper.
**Thomas Brush**

**WALKING WITH WHALES**

It's been so long since day has passed  
The dark spilling slowly to the ground  
And sticking, the light clean as bone  
Turning black and sky and breaking off  
At the ends of my eyes that I dream  
Of walking with whales. To balance  

On skin as wide and heavy as night  
Is to taste the wind and sea itself  
Holding a dorsal fin twenty feet high  
The slant of sight wrapped around it  
Like love, the blow opening out streams  
As old as blood and to wish to be sewn  
To her side like Ahab and dance  
Dance with the sea.

**Felix Pollak**

**READING POETRY TO FRIENDS**

To get unravelled in private  
is bad enough, but to re-enact  
the unravelling in semi-public  
(which even professional strippers find  
more public than a public stage) is plain  
indecent. Yet what is poetry but this  
unravelling into arty patterns? Here I am,  
exhibitionist of integrity, honest fraud,  
peeling off to an orchestra of peephole  
silence (embarrassed too?) and proudly  
ashamed acknowledge the applause as I step,  
compulsive dress rehearser of death,  
out of my coffin, to take a bow.

**Sandra M. Gilbert**

**from THINGPoEMS**

**TYPEWRITER**

Your fingers oppress me  
like ten insoluble problems.  
I count and click but I will never  
figure you out.

**SALAMI**

I am not as big  
as I smell.

**WINDOW**

How much longer shall I intervene  
between you and darkness?  
I am holding the sky up  
with these panes!

**CIRCLE**

Extension  
is always a  
digression.

**FACE**

I precede you like a curse.  
No matter what you do  
I will get worse.
Joyce Carol Oates

IRIS INTO EYE

the spheres are whirling without sound inside
spheres
deft as ivory
tails of vertebrae interlock
hard as ivory and ice
it is a miniature sun frozen hollow

tails like the finest bodies
of fossils
are locked together
beneath the grainy surface of skin
as the surfaces circle their surfaces

a ball of air circling itself
slicing the air slowly in its circling

daylight emerges as a small hole
an eye that achieves an iris
the collapsible space begins to breathe
the vertebrae lengthen into life

this sunless ether is silent
in every dimension
the sphere turns
I make my way up through layers of old bone
the ivory fossils of old blood
clenched fists of babies softened and unborn

coils are revolving
the hot fluorescent center of the globe vibrates
the speechless muscle of the brain spins slowly
slicing the air
continents shaping like raised welts
on the skin

the space between the ribs glows iridescent
warm as the most intimate mucus
of the soul

the eye widens
the iris becomes an eye
intestines shape themselves fine as silk
I make my way up through marrow
through my own heavy blood
my eyes eager as thumbs
entering my own history like a tear
balanced on the outermost edge
of the eyelid

Jarold Ramsey

A CEREMONY OF FALLING

Out here taking the edge I let
Old Faithful the wind play its one trick
With my hat, catching it thrown into space
Floating stalling hurling it high
Back over and safe to flat ground.
Three buzzards swing in for a look.
Well buzzards, well hat, faith and good flying!
But I have come to the cliffs
For a lesson in falling.

Closer, closer, Old Surefoot,
The world is nearly behind. A killer
Could nudge me now right over.
My tiny shadow below waves back like a lover
Vague on a bed of unthinkable scree.
Out of its depth as always my heart
Says Fall down fall down and worship
But my hands God bless them my ignorant hands
Faster and faster a world set free
Scrape on a teetering boulder and wrench it free.
Two hundred pounds of basalt like an idol,
This one human shove in a million years and it goes—

The long drop unseen
The mind letting go in delight
In its own heaven of falling
Through the wind not yet now crash
On a ledge rock speech vaulting out huge
And entire fire and brimstone spinning
Faster and faster a world set free
My world going down!

All around on the thunderous rimrock now
Wild men are rolling big stones to the edge
In the wind we are brothers
We chant the fall of each stone over
Hoya Hoya
If someone real ran out below wide eyes
White hands help up
We would not stop.

William Zander

A FAREWELL TO SURREALISM

There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure. . . . This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown.

1
I have come to the place of knots,
like a donkey. Knots that coil and stretch,
dip into heat and hold, like lungs,
enormous roots, whistling lianas,
wires and veins, all the ineffable
rags of the poor. Knots like eyeballs,
sistrums, tits and umbrellas. Slowly,
the lines stretch out like waves on a far

of course stand around like a pen.
They laugh at my underpants.

2
I go through the window,
gently, nothing is shattered,
fall against the porch post,
something is buzzing, furniture
is black, I'm twisting
my face to wake up, trip over
the coffee table and float
facedown to the floor.

3
Dreams are weird. God, who gives them,
gentle as sharks, fierce as bluegills,
says: I am. I lie around
with my antenna up, watching
the flickering screen. What does it mean?
I read the footnotes. Freud and Jung
give each other the finger. Bly
sits in his wig and hose, like Johnson.
I sniff my weirdness like a dog.
"TRANSLUCENT ANGEL—FIRE INSIDE!"
I tell my friends. "A GHOST LIKE THE MILKY WAY AROUND MY HEAD AND NOISE LIKE BOMBERS!"

They love me.

Smile and bring me wine. I pass out
on their couch. My head is a stone.
Bladder fills by itself. Heart grows mossy.
Mouth is sealed with mortar.

Still,
at some ungodly hour,
two little girls
jump on me;
I rise
through the weeds
and hug them.
MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER, & HOFFMAN

Boys it's good to see you
glad to have you back
didn't know you left or
that I was ever here
haven't changed your clothes
have you found the place
allright we'd better adjourn
or we'll never get started
how long has it been since
we burned our bank books
and got our new telephone
should be here any minute
Please put your feet up
make yourselves anywhere don't
spend everything on food
is this a meeting or is some
one knitting gentlemen should
'fraid to diet or take
their coats off too soon it'
s good to see you going hope
you never get there hurry
back but Please don't waste
my dime I'll be smoking every
cigar I get when I'm skating
up & down this classy table

THE LAST WORLD'S FAIR

Sometimes
I feel like a poet
in a world of Platos
or a radio in the tenth century
What it must be like
to be a small town suicide

spinning on a turntable
that is not attached to a speaker
Wrung through a typewriter
that has no ribbon
being ground into a helpless food

How it feels to rain
into hidden reservoirs
bloating the city & its sky
with badly needed shoes
To storm the nearest desert
keeping my books in the fridge
the rest of my life

I taste the weather for seed
breathing louder
than the warm tractors
which follow my bed
Whirling in the manner
that holds me up thinking not
that I'm blind but that I
haven't gotten used to the dark yet

THE FEEL OF A FACE

We have looked at each other like passengers—
always in the hallways in back of the eyes

where the drift begins
(the small rooms dreaming
of taking up space).
We have watched each
other trying to think through
the mirror of a moving window
as the train
finally tunes like a wire in the country.

We have looked until the eyes
hurt with faces

and the body sat as still
as an Indian at prayer.

We have watched
the flesh dough up with lies.

Nothing is happening
that we’ve not studied here.

We could be falling through water,
for instance, looking at each other.

**ANGST**

It comes down from the top of the head
like an air too great for gravity.
And it seems to fall everywhere,
an infinite debris,
through your whole body.

Sometimes it accumulates so heavily
your feet feel like bodies
all by themselves.
Or at the fingertips
where it knots, then finally drops off,

and you can’t remember
having ever touched anything.
For whole weeks you carry
it around, a perpetuity
of falling and settling, a dust.

You describe it as a kind of mist,
as if you held a body of water
inside you, and above that,
the cumulus of a brain.
Then one day it rises,

like a vapor beginning to realize
the limits of form. Until your eyes,
like clichés of what eyes do,
cloud up,
breathe back at the source.

---

**Morton D. Paley**

**Two Poems**

**ECOLOGY POEM**

Lampreys moving into Lake Erie
have eaten everything, even the chemicals.

The redwoods were rounded up and put
on reservations. A few maimed veterans

stand on their lunar battlefields and doze
wistfully through parasitical long moss.

Where gun-gray runways spike our marshes, shoals
of starlings fluster the great nacelles;
cormorants flap in the neap off Santa Barbara,
and grinning whales, *les fruits de mer*, are dumped

from wide-load trucks. In the slippage of our heartstreams
an ashy sediment grows. The hunter reaches the brained baby seal.
HEROES

We have seen them entering the sun and others entering black suns inside them, heroes emerging from all that turbulence with a metaphor or a monster's severed head.

The muscular boy tosses his shield at the sun, for heroes are lucky—Death's playful favorites; the woeful-jowled monster worrying Andromeda knows he hasn't a chance against Perseus.

Others, descending, thridding the passages of the mansioned heart, discover that labyrinth grows explicit as a golden bull whose power sprouts from your fingertips, a maizy palm.

Jassses Creeper

MORNING PRAYER TO YEATS

Most of the night I read A Vision.

And it came clear!

I drifted upwards in my body, and bumped along the ceiling of my skull, knowing now that there were worse things than being a man.

Now here I lay, mid-morning, heavy in my sad bed, hungover from so much delight, and still a man—what could be worse?

Screw matters of life and death, Yeats. Let us be turned loose among preschool children, where we can make pictures of no consequence, and converse quietly in a low gibberish.

APPLICATION BLANK

Experience:
Once I saw my own hand pointing something out. Once I quit looking for everything I had once looked for.

Awards:
Honorary climax after climax after climax. Curator of the part of my life that is over and done with.

Vocational Plans:
I hope to grow very old in your service—unless Jesus turns up again, or my wife finds work, or I get my megatheric unspeakable Rosebud.

Jassses Creeper

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Now here I lay, mid-morning, heavy in my sad bed, hungover from so much delight, and still a man—what could be worse?
TO SUICIDE

You are beautiful now,
sleeping by first light.
But—forgive me—afer
all I put you through
in the dark, I simply
cannot stay to face you,
your pleas, recriminations.

Michael S. Harper

ON THE INSIDE: VISION AS WONDER

The inner life is rich with blue
rocks chiselled in running water,
the minerals & salts intact;
we putty out the slick indentures
with homemade paste & an oil can;
the poems shine through with each
buffing as black men "x" in their
missing names, or a buffalo herd
stampedes over a butte without sound.

We get all this down in ink:
what to do about blacks
costs billions of dollars;
we educate & reeducate ourselves,
in weaponry & ballistics
as the polls come in.

In the space for our marks
the pen picks up the count
in decimals on the wires.
We get all this down in ink:

William Keep

SICK OF THE STOMACH FLU, I EAT UP THE NEWS

August 15, 1967: Grizzlies kill two girls in Glacier Park.
"Not where he eats, but where 'a is eaten."—Hamlet

At breakfast, queasy, scanning the morning news
Cold as lumped sausage fat, myself stalked
By the march of events, I remember once when I whistled
Up toward stunt-pine meadows like a motherless fawn
To lure a buck to my gun, how a grizzly came:
Lumbering, the great, light-pointed, mountainous
Slope of his shoulder, the little pig eyes
Neither curious, biblical nor uncertain,
Solid as nickels in the comfortable, U.S. Grade-A fat
Of the pig-face—Ursus horribilis,
Chief customer of permanently panic-struck
Chain stores featuring fresh venison, berries, roots
(Fifty-seven varieties), moles, voles, shrews,
Mice, sick rabbits, salmon, fathers, sons,
—Daughters wrapped still in wet spring fur. Humped.
Who never meant no harm, though we believe, with General Foods,
All life to be alive equally until slaughtered,
Until our lungs flap, our thighs go hollow in flight
Among fog, branches, stones, bombcraters, lying mouths
While trying to take hold of what
Persistently takes hold of us
Our too-thin wrists are broken by running water.
We are, the paper says, without benefit of Mark Trail,
Most dangerous mammal on the North American continent
Constricted now to the cries those girls cried smally
Toward faces, fires, the all-living affluence,
Richly starred, of that lovely autumnal Montana night
When they were kissed, hugged, moaned and died.
Smokey guns-and-butter smacks his lips
Because even in death his hair's electrical:
Tipped, a fat land's where he feeds until he falls.
NIGHTCRAWLERS

Baited by the night,
the black ground's meat,
they rise at dark
across the close-cropped lawn
to stretch the long
wet muscle of their flesh.
The darker the sky
the more incautious
is their reach
but never do they release
that one fixed end
or know untethered stretching
tip to tip.
If their eyeless search
is true, they catch
the reaching taper
of a neighbor worm
and let their wet
circumferences combine.
Startled by moonlight
and parted clouds,
the least earth quivers
and they retreat,
contracting to their single state.
Random couplings done
they coil to wait
the sun's descent,
leaving the surface ground
to tortuous passage of snails,
the seagull's laughter,
carrion and shrill.

CRYING WOMAN

She is making her sounds, the ones for everyone else.
She goes cri-cri like a walking bird and then
sounds of a big bird alert on the rocks.
Crying woman makes the sound of a baby about to be fed.
This one is the sound of someone alone a long time,
the sound of someone cast out at sea, the sounds
of wreckers guiding a boat to their reef,
of the ship's crew who are drowning
and the indignations of those who tell this years after.
This one is from the mountains, she makes big sounds
full of cloud and rain, she begins her infinity.
This one cries Mother, thinking of her people.
When she thinks of the south she sings
like someone asleep in the sun all day.
This one the otter. This one the gazelle
running for love of running. And this one
who is quiet a long time is a gull
pitching out from the cliff between land and sea
till she becomes the air she swings on. This one
begins shouting straight off and never stops,
a devourer that wants everything at once.
This one is creeping through grasses to ambush,
and at last she's a spilled song
finishing somewhere into the roofbeams.
Silence is hers, she makes that
when she thinks of another, when through her sleep
her children are running too near the water.
The cry of an animal kicked awake to its guard,
oiises of something lost in the thicket, she croons
the names of old lovers dead in the wars.
Some sounds come from nowhere, she wants
a man who lives on the moon's back, she wants
to die if she does for eternity what she does now.
The first awake in the camp, she's about
seeking warmth, she goes out of her self's house. 
She's the first creature to crawl out of the sea. 
She makes all sounds, I don't know if she's one or many. 
If ever she puts them together at once I shall drown 
and drift with her in the sea off Northumberland, 
crying forever forever, awake to the last star

G. N. Gabbard

Two Poems

APRIL 1521 AS APRIL 1968

So there stands Martin Luther 
at Worms, in a plain black friar's 
robe, with the little clear immovable eyes, 
and big bones sticking out 
under all the skin of his face like 
that great bump of a crown 
bulging through the tonsure— 
not much like the Imperialists 
or the ascetic Monsignors 
or all those meerschaum-faced 
steelplated Spanish soldiers— 
he stands: because he can no other, 

when a bang like the wrath of God's 
thunderbolt out of a sky 
quite clear blue, bright whitelight 
(this is assuming a 
more advanced weapons technology 
than could have been the case), 
knocks him down all red 
on black. The Spanish soldiers 
and Germans run, collide 
with the shafts of each other's 
ceremonial halberds, 
and curse their feet, slipping in blood.

Who was it? Oh some anonymous 
jangler with a harquebus 
(for the Pope had already long since put his curse 
on crossbows). He got clean 
away, down the Rhine via barge one 
dark night and over the sea 
down to Spain, where he spent 
the rest of his natural days 
running a Jesuit front, 
a smugglers' bar in Cadiz, 
drawing an annual rent 
from a well-concealed European source.

It was an expensive funeral 
(he wasn't excommunicated 
at that time). Bishops came with solemn faces, 
and crowned heads too with solemn 
faces. Giovanni de' Medici came 
to make a personal appearance. 
And after the requiem, 
he speaks about what a shock 
and loss this is to Christendom— 
though the man was less than perfect 
(the bishops yawn and hum), 
or he would have been more than mortal.

Then the peasants all come rushing 
in flocks to the burial, herded 
into some order by morioned Spanish lancers 
who hold swords flat and beat 
at bare heads. But when, still orderly, 
they mass-march up the street 
to the cathedral, where 
they present their demands 
turned by the recent murder 
into uncertain questions, 
bland faces under miters 
answer: "Reformation? What Reformation?"
REASON FOR A PALINODE

He took the Sirens for muses, slipping past
That fabulous rib-encircled isle of theirs
With deafened oars, himself tied to the mast,
All wax carefully reamed from his open ears.
After which, he was never entirely sane,
But his most manic gibber run in rime.

Sailing around the isle a second time
In hopes of renovating his inspiration,
He found that singing altogether tame.
He fidgeted in his ropes, said: “I’ve heard
All this before,” yawned, and looked bored.

Greg Kuzma

GOOD NEWS

1
Good news. You’ve arrived
with your eyes like just snuffed candles.
Had you come sooner
I might have been
up to my elbows in radishes.
Here. Eat one. Feel its woolly cool.

2
Good news. I’ve slept.
I slept in timber tall
as our lust.
I slept with gorgeous beaches
and then I came back.
Brush this sand map
from my shoulder.

3
Good news. Sorrow has
had a blowout. It
will never reach you,
the night so black and wet.
Hug this new harmless curve
till darkness opens on the oyster
of daylight.

4
Good news. The bicycle that
was stolen that bore your
initials is back with
the presents of your ninth
tenth and eleventh birthdays.
Do not fear.
The days of your life
stretch behind you
complete again—
like a long open road.

5
Good news. The letter
this morning contained no
untrained misery.
The closing was courteous
as a kite.
There was no libel in
the adjectives.
And it was from you
whom I miss.

6
Good news. We worship
together at last at the spigot.
This water was once part of
Africa. Or sweat off a llama’s
bedroom fur.
We drink and are warm
and jungly.

7
Good news. The weather
this morning, blank and
indifferent, is pictured
at last on my Kodak.
I leave it parked
on a park bench
for someone to steal.

8
Good news. Good news.
You were really terrific.
Your bread was terrific.
The joke you told,
the pots and pans collapsing
afterwards,
spelling out such Good News
on the floor.

Jack Matthews

Two Poems

THE BICYCLE

So young this infant someone's daughter
toddlies into the shining spokes
like sunrays sucking bright rainwater
and with a detonating clatter
pulls the bicycle down upon her
dismaying herself with sudden screams
and then the thing is suddenly lover
and penetrates her uncertain dreams
in which each thing becomes another
and subsiding in the insistent hoax
she awakes to think she is a mother
which dream has vanished and now
it seems
that she is past and turning under
the revolving wheel of earth and soaks
her wrists and hair in the falling water
of an infinite rain our God the Father
who turns the clock around again
and all her life dries still like rhyme

BULLETIN

The news is out:
A passionate neglect
has cast this violent day.
The engine of the cities
roars and misses.
Warm air in the late spring
abrades the skin
with hot whisper of frostbite.
Hypnotized fish
surviving in the garbage water
tap their ceiling of gas
with tentative kisses,
and blow diminishing rings.
No apotheosis here.
Only this subtle Armageddon
of orange days and bottle-green nights.
Bronze armies are waiting,
haloed and wrathful by the dead trees.
Only the tick of cinder
on the skin,
and only the electric hum
in the empty streets.
BEING IN LOVE

Being in love, the earth rising as if in your stomach, 
rising against the sky, rising out of its own shadow, 
out of its skin, like a hill, like a wave, 
crunching, spreading, growing larger, 
rising as if to conduct music, 
if we reach out we could touch it, grab some of it, 
how could it mind, it has so much, grows so much.
The newly mowed field which can see again takes a breath, 
angels in the form of raindrops land on our faces, 
they slide down holding their skirts up, 
your kiss slides down into my mouth.

I wanted to know what love is like. 
I was standing behind my back. 
I was leaning over my skin. 
How the earth rises! and 
the hair of love falls from the trees, from a window, from 
my hands, 
it makes the side of a hill soft 
and the hill is in love, 
it lands on the fences, trucks, on the heads of bald men, 
in China it lands on the trees falling out of the earth, 
in England it lands on the Queen's shoulders, 
in Italy it lands in the fountains. 
The hair of love lands in our bed, 
it breathes and sighs, 
each hair pulls off and breathes with its own mouth, 
each one kisses our skin and sinks deep in our flesh, 
and we rise out of bed, float in the air, we enter things, 
windows, nests, the caves in a stone, the shelves of space 
between the sun and the sky, between the water and the shore. 
Nothing has edges! Our skin grows together 
and makes a dress, the dress dissolves; 
our pores drop off, 
we jump out through each pore!
About Our Contributors


JACK TOOTELL was born and raised in China and teaches in Orange, California.

A. PAULIN, JR., chairman of the Humanities Division of St. Francis College, Biddeford, Maine, is editing several anthologies of young American poets and is looking for material.


MEL TAKAHARA, a jazz pianist, is attending the University of Hawaii.

JOHN JUDSON is the editor and founder of Northeast, now in its eighth year of publication.

PAUL ANDERSON teaches at the Air Force Academy and the University of Colorado.

DAVID CALLEN’s first two books of poems were published by Macmillan. He is at work on a third tentatively titled Travelers.

ARTHUR OBERS, teaches English at the University of Washington and has published widely.

THOMAS BRUSH is a graduate student at the University of Washington.

FELIX POLLAK’S newest book, Say When, was published this year by Juniper Press.

SANDRA M. GILBERT teaches English at California State College at Hayward.

JOYCE CAROL OATES, a National Book Award winner for her fiction, will have a new book of poems, Love and Its Derangements, to be published by Louisiana State University Press in 1971.

JAROLD RAMSEY teaches at the University of Rochester and has published in numerous little magazines.

WILLIAM ZANDER teaches English at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

AIVON HOFFMAN is an M.A. candidate in creative writing at the University of British Columbia.

STANLEY PLEMMY’s first book of poems, In the Outer Dark, will be published this year by Louisiana State University Press.


JAMES CRENNER teaches at Hobart College and is an editor of The Seneca Review.

MICHAEL S. HARPER is a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois at Urbana, and is author of two books.

WILLIAM KEEP teaches humanities at Western Washington State College.

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KEN SMITH’s second book of poems, Work, Distances, will be published soon by Swallow Press.

G. N. GABBAIRD teaches linguistics and Chaucer at the University of Nevada in Reno.

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JOHN VERNON teaches at the University of Utah. His first poem was printed in our Summer 1969 issue.

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If anyone would care to establish, or help establish, a new prize, in any amount or of any kind, the editor would be glad to discuss the possibilities by correspondence.