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THE DAY ZIMMER LOST RELIGION

The first Sunday I missed Mass on purpose
I waited all day for Christ to climb down
Like a wiry flyweight from the cross and
Club me on my irreverent teeth, to wade into
My blasphemous gut and drop me like a
Red hot thurible, the devil roaring in
Reserved seats until he got the hiccups.

It was a long cold way from the old days
When cassocked and surpliced I mumbled Latin
At the old priest and rang his obscure bell.
A long way from the dirty wind that blew
The soot like venial sins across the school yard
Where God reigned as a threatening,
One-eyed triangle high in the fleecy sky.

The first Sunday I missed Mass on purpose
I waited all day for Christ to climb down
Like the playground bully, the cuts and mice
Upon his face agleam, and pound me
Till my irreligious tongue hung out.
But of course He never came, knowing that
I was grown up and ready for Him now.
ZIMMER AS INCHWORM

I am all pathetic rhythm
And fuzzy ripple,
All anterior, then posterior,
My head empirically placed until
The next bit of business is done,
The next poem or little triumph lived,
Then I haul the rest of me in.
I circle and circle in trees,
Grinding leaves, avoiding sparrows,
And hoping always to split and launch.
I am the color of what I swallow
And I hide in green conceits,
Comparing myself to an inchworm.

But what can I do? I am always
Measuring, measuring. I eat food
And I am food. If frightened
I hang by my mouth on a silver thread
While lidless eyes bear down
And great beaks clack about
My tender segments.

THE DAY YOUNG ZIMMER FOUGHT FOR HIS LIFE
WITH THE ONE-ARMED STOREKEEPER

Always he had seemed bilious,
Somehow capable of mayhem but
I don't know why he started swinging.
Perhaps because I only spent a penny
At a time; perhaps because he had
At last decided to make the world into
A place where one-armed men could
Wholly live. At any rate,
He sledged my pimply, crewcut head and
Abruptly knocked me back into confections,
He cornered me in boyhood and before
I could grow pubic hairs it was time
To defend my tender life and

The rights of two-armed people everywhere.
I aimed my scuffy Buster Brown
Right for his gonads and got him square,
And then I ran until I dropped.

To this day one-armed people make me sweat.
I avoid railroad tracks, wringers and bandsaws,
All places where I might suddenly be equalized.

Stuart Friebert

FOR MY MISTRESS, ON THE OCCASION
OF BEING UNFAITHFUL TO MY WIFE

the night men land on the moon and Teddy drives off the bridge
inadvertently and oh yes Martin’s brother dies drowning, given
to tragedy; for Delores, Iris, Johanna, Kay, Roxie, Diane and
in memory of Sandra, who sang the sweetest songs, amen...

When we are almost out of each other the others are
almost in and the announcer calls out to all to snap
fingers and pass hands over each other’s lips while
the moon hears our confession, takes a look at what
we’ve done—the grave of our first child lies next
to the grave of our second, and so on, acknowledged.

Men on the moon sleep, call to us in dreams as though
through the bathroom door, the water in their voices washes
the blood from our index fingers. Their signals are so
far off, your mouth is so tired, names bad things to eat—
liver and sausage and Swiss cheese, your eating life has
neither day nor night. I really feel dead and answer
your question: yes, I have slept away from home too, made
war and lost my way, so what are you after, you and your
terrible, hard menses at the mercy of the moon? Come come,
tell me all about it, that’s it, it’s coming out now, draw
nearer the vineyard water, lower the right side of the
bridge, hide your lights. You think I’ve done something

NORTHWEST
I shall never be able to make up for, back away and fling yourself around the next Kennedy, now there's one more in trouble! Put the moon back in the water, Love, rise from the car, it's not for you to die in judgment of me you know. (We can live to see the dawn of the other moon.) My large right foot presses down gently on the gas pedal, inflates your pelvis just enough.

Charles Edward Eaton Two Poems

THE WEIGHTLIFTER

Impacted with his own strength, the weight lifter abhors the notion of weightlessness—Anything too light makes his body float: Even pencils should be heavy as crowbars. Tell him your mood is low, he will lift it; Will him your quick, ethereal brain, And he will bronze it like a baby's shoe.

Circumstances conspire to make us what we are. The weight lifter knelt to the boost as to his fate And muscles pushed beneath the flesh like bulbs—This was what it was to have a body Packed with the controlled thrust of daffodils. Like the slow, silent lifting of the earth, It begins in his feet, shifts pebbles, then rocks: There's ecstasy in the heavy head of things!

Having derailed the caboose, lifted the wheels, He makes his move with mechanic things, Content as a hinge, ceaseless and grotesque. He, alone, remembers when perfection, Swollen, sacrificed itself to the obscene, Static, inaccessible to women, Jaundiced through strength, in a land with no myths.

THE WIG

The short woman wearing the foot-tall wig Who seems to have usurped a yellow hive Suspects this is not quite the head's true home: Her eyes will sometimes light with suppressed wings, She fears mauling hands as if they were a bear's— Only the passion to be someone different steadies her, and the knowledge that the brain May well be incubating under hair. So now her thoughts will have a yellow home; They can come and go, well-pollinated— There is sympathy among her wishes. One can almost sense the comb being filled. We must stand near her, let the spirit hum, Never regret the thousand flowers drained: The dynamo beneath the cotton candy Could have a revolution well in hand.

It may be sad at night to see the wig Faceless on its form, no longer alive With transformation, but this is the price We must pay for such a revelation— The woman asleep looks gray, passionless, Tubercular with terror—Ecstasy That set the cowl could not reveal the brain, Lucid, thick with amber, crawling with bees.

Thomas Brush Three Poems

IN THE DARK

Move quietly, move slowly, Avoiding shadows, with hands and eyes flatly open As the sweeping dip of ours. That only the night will know where you're going.
In trees where birds, waiting for light, make thin sounds
That float with leaves, falling through
The thickening air, stopping for nothing.

Move through darkness heavy and black, going
Where the eyes will see, with fingers touching and sounds
Swirling in a night of water, where thoughts
Like spiders float on strings of lights. Move with softness
In air flaking at your feet.

Go where the distance drops and slides away,
With echoes that are lost in the wind,
Where words rise slowly and stick in the trees.
When everything is settled and cannot move,
Sit silently in the dark.
You've got nothing to lose.

THE ABORTION

The door was closed and you had all morning.
The knives balanced in their own light,
You in the light that fell from the creases
Of the white mask and was lost.
You watched your feet in the iron stirrups,
Your blood slip away on your legs and you left
What only belonged to the air.

Floating out the windows, down streets,
Past trees, over people looking up in amazement,
You turned in light, slid on the water's surface,
Your arms curled, your mouth agape.
And you crawled just below the water
Like a frog and made for the mud and hid. But they found you
And pouring from every opening
You were pulled like a boot from the lake.

The soft walls are moving as your eyes move,
As the eye of the doll was bleached
And the thought of the shadow of stirrups flies by,
And you ride, ride.

THE BURNED GIRL

The moon falls like a fat, gold moth
To die in the dust.
The night swings once in the darkness
To sink in its own light.
A girl floats on her knees
In a land thick and alive
As breath. And the sky
Turns over and over.

Light flashes and grows in air.
New girl. Black trap.
In a night of dreams the shadows fall
From your eyes and are lost.
The drivers stand by and look
For a sign of life.

But you are out of sight around the corners
Of air, down roads bone white.
You step out of your skin and walk
Pure flesh on the wet grass
And fall through.

Gary Steven Corseri
Three Poems

MAGICIAN

Pity the magician!
The mad magician waters his roses.
They are lovely above all things he knows.
You will not leave me, he tells them,
stroking their longlimbed stems.

He is so happy. There must be a God
if a man can be so happy.
Watering roses! Like any happy
lunatic, he works hard.
The roots of his roses are caught in the hair of a woman and her son. The roots grow in the eyes of the son, sucking his brain’s cadaver.

This is symbolic poetry. The magician is only a man. Please do not think him extraordinary. Please do not think him more than a man.

The woman is beauty or death. Try death. The son is the fruit of their lust, under dust, conceived in stealth, like death, under roses.

THROUGH RIPLEY’S WINDOW

Hanamuma Masakichi striving for God carved his own image from a mirror in wood.

Today stands perfected gawked at by tourists revolves on a platform believe it or not.

Japan’s greatest sculptor spurned to be mortal planted his hair roots into the wood.

Crafted his skin onto the dummy Teeth, nails, and eyeballs, whatever he could.

Old friends betrayed him. Mocked at his folly. Proud Hanamuma too vain to die.

Friendship is silken as cobwebs in winter. Love is a flower of snow in the spring.

Art is forever just idle chatter. Nothing lasts always. Not even the wind.

God’s in the making. God’s the imparted. Whatever fades whatever fades into something.

He built himself outward to see what was mortal. Until there was nothing and nowhere to stand.

Look at him she says how incredible he must have been crazy he must have been some kind of nut who would want to do a thing like that practically to immolate himself to cut himself up like that his own skin his own body was he on drugs didn’t it hurt him now tell me what it means she says you tell me what it’s all supposed to prove I think it’s all a lot of bull she says I think it’s just a hoax.

THE LESSON

Suspending bodies in acidic foam we are better able to control the variants.

Yes. Yes. We put them in a vacuum. Be seated, please. We’ll watch them through this glass.
We give this one a knife, and that one flesh.
We have constructed a library
with yellow light and a buck's head
mounted respectfully on the wall.

We can wait now. Five years, perhaps, ten—
the hand is broken that has held the knife
fisted tightly, the bone arched circular.
The other's eyes are mostly always closed.

Gentlemen, be quiet please. Be still.
They cannot hear us; but, possibly,
they'll blame us, swear we whispered "kill."
Fat barristers will plead for mercy.

The luster of the leather chair is gone.
They cart their words out of cold storage,
battered as old tennis shoes.
It is no one's fault. Who said it was a fault?

They hope to touch
barbed corners strewn with fish
opening and closing wired mouths
in stagnant lakes like mantics.

We only give them time.
It grows out of themselves.
They accuse us of chicanery.
They are mere spectators, bystanders.

The bloodspot on the carpet spreads,
a dead, magenta seal.
See the other looking at the knife,
the little, murderous grin.

We can start again now, gentlemen.
The results, I believe, are conclusive.
We have a summary statement here
of the various procedures.
AT LUNCH ON MONDAY

I rambled on and on over the water
cress salad, the mushroom slices,
arthritic decorator, the querulous
paper dolls, the thieves of Song,
and stumbled over the body on the floor,
hidden in my mind's maze. It was you,
.drifting. Don't you see that big sign
over the door? No drifting, it says,
no drifters allowed here, all drifters
are deported, torn down from the walls,
defrocked and deported. Drifters
are unallowable. Must be discouraged.
Set bad examples for others. Drifting means,
don't you realize, going out on the tide?
And all these ties to be broken
are not simple sailor's knots, they
are embroidered and embittered, intricate
French knots, Dutch knots, English yeses
and no's, how can we distinguish
the knots from the tied. But you must not
drift. For god's sake, do not drift
away. wait, wait. don't die.

John Haag

Three Poems

THE PRICELESS SPREAD

Take yesterday's conversation, sliced and trimmed,
plus an ounce of affection, ground to a halt;
add aggravation, bring to a rolling boil,
fold in the anger, slowly; let the whole thing
simmer till the lid flies off. Then cool it.

Note: no matter how you slice it, love
just won't spread smoothly at room temperature.

A CURSE AGAINST UNFINISHED POEMS

Last night the moon sold
another million discs—
the old bitch.

Once I said: Happiness
is for peasants—all I want
is ecstasy.

The indiscriminate moon
shines on whom she pleases,
and I've changed my mind.

If she won't come to me,
I'd rather be someone else
—someone happy—

Someone who hears her music,
vaguely, but never worries
that he can't sing it.

What the hell good
is it, this having secrets
from yourself?

BILLET NOIR

In places my abyss
goes scarcely skin deep,
and nowhere, I think,
deeper than a grave,
but Love, none have crossed it:
moonrockets drop unnoticed
where no thing grows; even
Great Quixote would lose
himself, unless wild luck
and a random black wind
should blow him back before
he rode down to bare bones
at last. I don’t expect
to make it across myself—
I try to stay near the edge;
I invite no one in,
regardless of what you’ve heard,
and so you won’t mistake
my signals, I send you
this postcard.

Douglas F. Stalker Two Poems

THE INSURANCE MAN

A man in a dull blazer sits down
and speaks to me
about the X-frame: it’s simple—

money when you live, money
when you die . . .

his voice continues
spiralling into the night
like a television shadow turning
in its own pale glow . . .

On the last crisp page
we reach the policy,
the X-frame
about panty hose,
how it can swell at the ankles
yet cross at the top, right
where the pen dots the “i” he says.

I sign my name to the form
with the wild, red tip
of his cigarette.

THE LATE SHOW

Showtime, 3 A.M., I lay
a five-dollar bill on my desk—
the drama of kleenex and sperm opens
on a red-haired girl, the last
daughter of light, and her
third boyfriend. Their clothes are
knotted beneath them, clotted
beyond wearing. Focus
closes on a head like a doorknob
as it goosenecks and pulls at
soft corners of marrow; a quick
ten frames more and they
have found themselves
under a neon sign, the letters
like two lovers slowly dying
of carbon monoxide.

Kenneth Arnold

BALLAD
(After Paul Claudel)

Chromium dreams, these vessels gorged with salesmen and tourists.
Home was never enough for any of you,
nothing is, and you have ideas about yourselves to peddle.
You have gone but you know it least of all forever and will not
arrive anywhere.
Consumers of nautical miles, it is the sea being stirred for you
now in cosmic kettles. Will there be enough of it to fill
your hungry mouths?
Put once your lips to that cup, some say (but do they know?) and
you're hooked, you might snigger, for life.
It takes time—the word is scarcely long enough—to drain the cup,
but you are Americans and you can try.

On a perforated printout drenched in statistics the names of
torpedoed ships unfold, their crews blacken margins,
a thousand names, jawbreakers all of them. They wheeze aground,
their iron palates taste a shifting earth. You can hear the
breathing of submarines on a calm night.
The air is awash with commands, orders, the hoarse bump-and-grind
of a following sea
and fire. Your duty swoops on you with bared talons,
the merchant ship upends, unloads, charts a new horizon: get the
picture?
That is the sea approaching, forget about finding yourself or
anyone else. Open your mouth and let go for once in your
life, swallow all of it.

The last words you thought but the first you said (how clever
this world is), upandcoming passengers on transatlantic
nightmares,
were lost in the wireless: We Are Sinking. Below decks Third Class
emigrants played quaint music,
the sea drowned them out. Evening clothes struggled to be relevant,
but other thoughts, other staterooms, intrude. What good is
music, dancing,
Chateau Latour, what good is your life when you are about to lose it?
Can you answer that one? Can you remember, crushing panicked
women,
your destination?
Yes, it would be a good night for swimming or better yet for falling
in love for the first time.

Dumped like so much luggage, wasted, and nothing but a sea that
seems to be alive.
Do you see it that way? Call it the bane of your existence, a
newsreel passing endlessly between features,
that timeless expanse is yours now, drink, you are in it. Enough,
you say? Is it, could it ever be?

Ross J. Talarico

THE CONTRACT

tras de mí, sin rozarme los hombros,
mi ángel muerto, vigia.
—Raphael Alberti

The guardian angel keeps a gun
Under her wing
And flutters over my bed
Feeling under the pillow
For bad teeth.

Under the pillow
Her hands lift slowly
and I feel the feathers
Of ancient geese beat sadly
Against my bald head.

I am stark naked,
Frisked clean to the jaw,
Lost in the cold sleep
Of fear, dreaming heavily
Of a few coins.

All night long I am sinking
Into the open wings
Of my pillow, drifting off
Over the small white stones
Of a distant graveyard.

Toothless, I clutch my last coin
Against my chest. Behind me
The angel smiles
And spreads the white sheet
Of her wing.
WEEKEND PASS

Much bloody flux ago
you lady and I soared
in our green vertigo
during the something war.
Flight in a cage.

Though thoughtworn folk might fret
we blazed like those bonfires
piled with dry books in streets
encircled with barbed wire.
Flight in a cage.

And rollerskating waltzes
you glided, sailed, you steered
me stumbling—scorning halts
we danced and never feared.
Flight in a cage.

Still puffing and oblivious
we took off in your brother's Chevy
to the park where both lascivious
and good girls took the Navy.
Flight in a cage.

Beside the flower beds
on a newspaper mattress
we picked blooms, yawned, time sped
and ships burned south off Hatteras.
Flight in a cage.

You wore home a wreath.
At the Greyhound ramp
I had no thought for death,
I caught the bus to camp.
Flight in a cage.

MACDUFF IN THE INTERLUDE

After increasingly vicious skirmishes
conclude with your last hostage led across
the field, wired to the fence, shot,
because now all your pretty ones are dead
you can tell Fortune straight: Screw you.
No longer vulnerable, from day to day
you get the feel of defeat: austere and peaceful.
No need for a pact with the bitch and her favorites;
there can't be more reprisals, you think,
until you get where heart again
is yearning after these tender creatures
so easy to tear you know they will be torn:
and you remember the racks
as heart is taking them in with love and horror.

Nancy Price

A DO-IT-YOURSELF POEM

In Colorado once, Iowans,
farm-hungry, scooped up that western dirt
in their calloused hands. It was crumbling
and richly black.
They staked claim, out-waited the winter,
waited out the summer, and almost starved.

They had the seed; they had the plows
and the prayers
and the babies coming, yes, and the strong arms
and the willing backs. What were they waiting for?
Rain. That was all. And it never came,
and never would. Now you go on, like they did:
say, "That's life."
Make your own metaphor.
JELLYFISH

Brought in to the feet of the piers,
this thing succeeds the hurricane.

Hung in a dome
four sacs, a ruffle intestine
all in gelatin,
distended, calm.

Lordlike the rim flagella beckon in
a freighter's melon, swollen bread-bits.
Stoved boats litter shore. This thing shows up
like a bishop who survived the overthrow.

THE LAST POEM USING THE WORD NASTURTIUMS

1
No more poems about nasturtiums
my friend.
And they are taking the old ones
off the shelves.
Slender threads are pulled from
all the books
in which nasturtiums appear.
The librarians are startled;
they always liked those predictable
minutes among the nasturtiums.

2
At last the last poem
can begin.
The field is dark around the fire
in which the last poem
will be burned.

All the poets who have leaned toward them
with wonder
or with jealousy
stand in the shadows
like the souls of the damned.
They are waiting for me to finish this poem.

3
Oh dead language.
Dead word.
And yet so delicate.
We salute your passing.
A certain flavor has gone from
the tongue,
a certain stupid delight
from the scanning eye.
The alphabet is very sad;
never can it form again
that forbidden word.

4
But I am better off.
Beyond me the great mountains
of "carnation" and "archipelago"
and "stint" loom.
Beneath them the flowers
"perfidy" and "stark" begin.
My love and I will walk
there of an afternoon.
Perhaps in the air there
will be a faint aroma.

5
They were never any good.

6
In all the museums of the world
the nasturtiums are gathering.
Come, let us go and see them.
THE ROOM

I came into the room
out of snow and heavy cold.
Grease hung in the air
from the fry pan on the stove.
The meal was done.
Was this the right room I had come to?
No one was home.
I was a visitor
standing just inside the door,
waiting to be asked in.
The day bed was unmade.
Orange light came through the shades
from the street lamp.
Someone should take my coat,
ask me to sit down,
take the chill out of my bones.
All had been arranged I saw,
the family pictures standing
on a wooden chest,
a candle, shells, beach stones,
like relics in a row,
a mother, father, smiling through the dust.
The room must have belonged
to someone who had died.
No one else would come.
Books on the shelves,
three pictures on three walls.
What would it matter?
The refrigerator hummed,
the heater made a glow.
Unasked for at the door,
heart running on its own,
I heard melting on the floor,
saw myself sitting in the writing chair.

POEM FOR THE BODY

You move in your own direction
away from wherever it is
the rest of me would go.
You have a previous appointment.
The things you do amaze me,
and the things you don't.
And so I follow behind unbid,
subservient as a dog.
Attentive, I attend your school.
We major in "Temporary Significance."
We will wear diplomas for clothes
and graduate with honors.
Only in mirrors you escape me
or in the rooms of dark windows
where you pass: alone, in-animate.
In case of fear, I will break the glass.
Richard W. Hillman

TO THE CHANCE OF HIS CHILD

Now that you exist, I love nothing about you,
Bulging a belly I shall never see again
Or dream about as anything but firm and flat.
Do you not understand? It is for my sake
I grant you ears to take, for a moment,
My own version of nourishment.
I know it is difficult. It is her breath
Breathes for you, the seas of her life
Float you, her secret coils
Keep you moored close. But my pen aches
For your blood to flow through it,
By clumsy feet to know
One blade of grass has sprung up
After their trampling, though there is no
Going back. If only as a way
Of setting these words in motion, I need you,
Myself awash and alone in a dim place,
Seeking, not a way of moving towards you,
But merely a way of moving.
We may do each other some good, after all.

Raeburn Miller

Two Poems

ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS

It would not to do write (sigh) after a line,
Or, for modern proprieties (hysterical laughter),
Or even, as in the funny papers (sob!).
If the substance is essentially that of good news,
Such stage-directions would be gravely improper
Even by implication, even by a faint turning aside
With “Yes, yes, the reward is great, but the abjuring
Is always painful and half-hearted.” Such snide hints

That though all shall be well, we may hope the hour postponed
Are finally only one more hidden temptation,
One more vanity, one more pluming of our pride
That after all we have a choice and are making the most of it.
At worst it becomes a way of holding on,
The soldier’s parting aria to the fat soprano
While the enemy surely by now has pillaged the country,
The poet’s repeated protestations of intending
To decide art is worldly and toss it aside
As soon as this piece is finished and possibly just one more,
The European actor’s eighth farewell tour.
Yet, no matter.

Earth is our home, to be remembered foolishly
Someday, like the slanting peach tree we dangerously climbed
Or the dark hand-worn smells in the saddle-house.
If we show less than an angel’s crisp bravery
In feeling tender toward it and are slow saying goodbye,
We need only remember that we are still encumbered
With the material manifestations of being created,
That our flesh must eventually reveal its nature
As true earth, to share in the turbulent cycles
Of transmutation, wheeling, caprice, putrescence.
So long as we commit ourselves to saying goodbye,
It is of small importance if we make a production of it,
For in the act itself there will descend
Certain indecisive but urgent assurances
Which will be enough finally to bring us around,
Shepherd us with confidence toward a true taking leave
Accomplished in its moment of ultimately sudden decision
With a joy beyond any fanfare or fluttery regret.

And the choice is to strike a bargain, giving as consideration
All beauty we have sensed here, yes, even hers,
All love of created things, and all the pleasures
That arise from the machinations of body and mind,
And finally body and mind themselves, our only coverts,
And, hardest of all, our one distinction, by choice
Abandoning our power to make choices.
In return for such traditional tender we receive
Suffering, our body grown more raw
To darkroom acids, more congested in the wet gaps
Of our lungs and the thin framework of our circulation;
Our mind exhibited to the bewilderment and mockery
Of friends who so obviously wish us well
And are kinder and more gentle than we, that by rights
They ought to know best, but only succeed in leading us
Back toward doubts and dissensions and the throes of virtue;
Our resolve beset by slashing temptation, in utter obscurity,
Known even as a fool at last only to a few
Incidental strangers and acquaintances.
Then finally we are granted a bare death
Unattended by the dedication of libraries or bequests to eager cousins,
And burial in the dark beneath a wooden marker
With only the Vision we had put our whole trust in, waiting
Beyond the ravage of pale worms. (Reader, be glad.)

THE BLACK ANGEL

I can't remember the legend
Dorothy used to tell
about "the black angel"—

that cemetery marker
with an outstretched wing
on the side of the hill,

pointing, deep black.
Was it that whoever
lies there under the stone

had been unfaithful,
so that her white marble
uncrated from Europe

was found black with grief?
Or that chaste lovers
kissing beneath it will see

the dark figure finally
whiten? Whatever the story,
it was about love.

Dorothy is dead now,
but the angel's wing
still motions, still black,

pointing toward the distance,
toward the past, some other place,
where our lives come true.

William Doreski
Three Poems

HYDE

Masterful, no longer a parody of
the man he wanted to be, he stepped out
in the clothing of disease and fell.
Pity the poor doctor who died of lust.
He never dreamed it possible that he
would ever suffer for such pleasure.
The good in him melted like chocolate.

The monster didn't live too long but
while his clock still ticked off victims
he sprung the props bracing his mind
and loosed an avalanche. The widowed
whores of the world cry over Hyde.
Charcoal smolders like a dream of war
inside his cheap city-bought coffin.

Well and good. Murder can still happen
in the drawing rooms of manors
where butlers peep in keyholes. It still
stands around, hands in its pockets,
waiting in the stink of back alleys.
Nothing died with Hyde. The Dr. Jekylls still mourn the boiling in their groins.

The cities remain lit until dawn, factories busy machining fear. Dogs howl and creep into our hearts and we dream of running the bitch down. We laugh to watch the ancient movie but Hyde is in a corner of our bed and there sleeps all the heat of our engines.

SELF-ELEGY AT THE SEASON'S END

The world is a whisper
My little other-land lover.
Laurels have gone yellow
And are drooping like snakes
Left too long in the sun.

Brooks have been thickened
Glutted on pastel leaves.
October's ghost hums
Through woods smoky with sun.
Swamps float in their icing.

You stayed away while months
Passed like geese and I
Whom you will never know
Was a leaf as wilted and dry
As a poem about growing old.

THE TEMPTATIONS

To be Xed on a homemade cross
Stapled by splinters of pain
Was for him the weaning of his star.
I saw him stand in the dark
Where rivers fork to form a crotch

of sand spreading east and west
Enclosing in a ring of rock
The earth his father had cursed.
Drunk on his blood
And thin with wordlessness he shone
Naked through his flesh.
When the moon rattled its throat
calling him with its astronomical horrors and the tap of shoes on the sky he sat and cried and each tear in his lousy beard was a nail tapped with a stone sealing the sepulcher of the followers he learned to regret.

Jay Wright

MOVING TO WAKE AT SIX

I never wake at six, though I lie,
Wrapped to my scalp, twirled like a mummy in my clothes,
With my ears awake to a bus singing bass in the hills.
Though I am still not awake, I turn and catch the white shadows leaning at my door like drugstore cowboys.
I hear everything that moves, or would move.
I seem myself to have split and moved to every corner of the town, watching jeweled vegetables drop and float on the floor of the market; standing on the moldy arch of the bridge, watching a man unwind from the braids of a fat woman, and roll his mat, and there, at the governor's gate,
where two soldiers march,
smug and tight as clam shells,
to hang the flag in a wisp of sun.
The town is changing voices,
changing faces, moving from one
life to another, and I am still
at that point of choosing to move
and wake, or fall off again,
one of those who cannot scurry
to the solemn cluck of a clock,
one who cannot give up
the frightening warmth of shroud-like clothes,
where perhaps I could wake,
under a tinted window,
to conjure up a glazed lake,
a bearded man and a boy,
and a vision that could be my own.

FEEDING THE STOVE

The fluted stove is giving out.
It burns as red as a dog's penis,
then gives up some of its sides
as a share of the ashes.

No chance, no reason, to repair it.

It keeps us mushing through the snow,
going down, after dark, to the train's coal yard
to grub up the fine-grained coal,
or all over the city, where anyone is building,
to snatch a cracked, wet board,
or two, hiding them under our transparent coats,
walking from the limits of town to home,
like some version of the cross-carrying Christ.

This stove is insidious.
It makes life more dangerous than it is.

I remember one dark night,
the dry wind scenting the town with lilacs,
the tattonie trees whistling by the ditch,
we filed along the bobbed streets
to where I had seen a fine preserve of boards.
The gutted house was jack o' lantern sharp.
Its broken windows glinted in the hastening moon.
There was no sound,
except for our gruff shoes,
tamping the bricks and bottles
into the broken earth.
We entered in confidence,
sure that no one had heard,
sure even that, if he had,
he would not begrudge us
the warmth of a few, discarded boards.

But, from the shadows,
a black mackinaw moved,
lifting one ill-defined
and loaded hand toward our eyes.

The figured hood had lips that would not move,
eyes that could not change direction.
And there it stood, in the shifting moon,
the querulous wind whispering harshly around it.

It could not have been a man,
but some exiled figure,
ripped from the bowels of the house,
come to scream and guard against us,
come to send us cringing, ash cold,
toward our ash-crumbling and dry stove.
Daniel Lusk

APOCALYPSE

Seven times the dog brayed.
The rooster sang his thrice.
The scientist sat his porcelain throne
and plied his mice.

Jack Frost painted the windowpanes
oranges running red.
Fish coughed in their breather tanks.
Plants died in bed.

He chortled and wrung his hands.
He spoke and spoke and spoke.
The air grew thick with alphabet.
The mice began to choke.

Then the walls began to breathe.
Green moss sprang from the floor.
Bright throbbing pipes danced writhing
on ceiling and door.

The man in white clutched his head
which shriveled in his hands.
And after, quick, in order,
limbs, organs, glands.

His tied frock fell still.
From one big sleeve he ran.
Through bursting walls, pigs
crowned with pearls tripped in.

Shirley Kaufman

SEEING YOU IN A DREAM
(After Tu Fu)

1
From the last place you traveled,
losing books, leaving
trains to go on without you,
drowning in dark streets you'd never remember, I dreamed you into my room.

There was a continent filling with chairs.
If you stopped,
there were strangers' faces.

2
These gulls that have risen all day from the sea may, like the exiled, never return.

Two months now
I have thought of you as tender, intimate and real as though I am asleep.

Your fingers barely not touching my arm, you tell me your rides to undoing by water.
Over the side. And nights, the child who climbs into your skin.

Not moving closer, you sigh as if to breathe them out of you.
Our city staggers
with fragrant women,
while you are trying
not to be alone.

Thin books, a thousand years' fame,
and we, now that it's done?

Edward Morin

SEANCE

1
Tonight we are all shadow boxing
in foliage from our past existences.
Only Ann, my niece and imagined daughter,
knows the score of our magniloquent opera.
She cracks bubblegum, imitates squeaks and groans
which we say we hear from another world.

Because Ann finds reality pleasing,
a phalanx of adults has put her outside
to "find an appropriate cypress bough."

None grow here, yet we are anxious lest she discover
anything the rest of us know does not exist.

Left alone, she may stay pure of heart,
for she is most like you, dear Grandmother.

2
Since you unwillingly gave us your death,
none of us has been quite right in the head.

Perrie insists she saw a monarch butterfly
ascending with your orange and black soul.

Mme. Balonska, our medium, wearing loose silken
outer clothing, picks you up in three languages.

Blaise sees you everlastingly in politics
and fornicates mightily to escape past disapprovals.

Your garden straw hat is gone from the newel post;
it is now a dome that caps my favorite keepsake—
your tasseled floorlamp. Moths get trapped in its shade,
bumping their powdery heads at night
against the isthmuses and islands tapestried
inside out on that inscrutable landscape.

Betty Adcock

COMA

Her body clenched and leapt,
caprice like a girl's riding under the gray hair,
rare and canceroid.

Thrown by that rider, her soldier years dispersed
in hospital breath, she is a cloud
on the surfaces of instruments, a knot
in the tubes that try to be rivers,
a stitch the needles drop.

Wordless now, tall
as the leap she took,
(moment of moving as she had never moved!) and stopped
while faces gather beneath the stunt
with nets, with tears,
she keeps her static dance aloft.
Nothing under the hoodwinking skull,
neither wire nor mirror, to contain
this wait, these distances, or this applause.
THE REASON

Rooted in the air's flux,
long a vine-growth turning
note on note like rain on leaves
shrill rage too steep to hear.
Darkness of gullet, crotch, the sun
that bears this bloom, soundlessness
clinging to the trellises of words
leaps from face to face, tendrils
clawed as a cat.

And holding invisibly unless the flesh,
our light, should break too perilously
close. Then see the blood-red flower grope
from lips held open like a crack in stone.

Alvin Greenberg

Two Poems

the house of the would-be gardener

you can tell from the mail it's
almost spring. seed catalogues
drive you right out of your mind.
you call up an old girl friend,
thinking maybe things have changed.
while her phone rings you look out
the window, and watch snow patches
melt before your very eyes. then
she answers, with a breathless hello
as if she has come rushing from her
shower just to answer your call.
hello, she says, hello hello hello.
your own throat goes dry, and your
voice cracks when you try to speak.

you look at the phone as if it were
a gleaming piece of black fruit
and the vine from which it hangs
had only begun to grow. who's there?
it cries, then the wire comes after
you, winding its great loops around
your arms and legs, wrong number!
you scream, writhing among its many
tendrils, but remembering, as it
tumbles you to the floor, the dream
in which you planted the seed. who's
there? it whispers, coyly, at the end.

celebration

look! eight people and more
trying to write a poem about
one small cabin in the woods.

just look at them slinking about
between the beavers and their trees:
are there words there?
trust them: they'll find the words.

but what about the children?
what about the dogs?
cram them all in!
and don't forget the poets' wives.

there they go! is that the
"infinitely expansible cabin of the mind"?
hell no! it's only wood and stone.
nonetheless, it opens its doors

and they all rush to get in at once.
trees and islands plunge in among them.
that's an act of creation for you.
Linda Allardt

LOVESONG

How the marvelous body can dump out
its blood and mire—but not the mind—
a well-rotted soil, seeded
with savagery,
crossed with hunting trails,
a rain forest—and this one comes to cut
firewood in such a woodlot!
Light beacon fires,
fire shots in groups of three,
rings bells in the civilized areas
before the dark comes down.

Francis Sullivan

ADVICE FOR LIBERAL CURATES

I ran right through the screen door
and came out in hexagons.

We love you they said. We will seal
you with wax and store honey in you
because you have not trifled
with our love's hunger.

I ran through the ranch-window pane
and came out dripping O positive.

We love you more they said.
We shall become your god and you
our people. A pleasing holocaust;
whatever remains is yours.

I ran down the circular staircase,
spun like a skater into one leg,
one arm, one question mark
at the bottom.

We love you they said.
While England slept, you did a spin
and made us all laugh.

I run now over ice-fisher's lakes,
deer crossings, along fan-vaulted
ceilings arc-welded by stained glass,
over the tackle, round the end,
alpha, beta, gamma,
hammer! Latin, hammer!
make them laugh and feed on bread
and wild honey.
because there is a norm somewhere,
they say, a game plan,
a saving grace for all madness.

Stuart Silverman

IN OUR LETTERS

"The disease that caused most casualties on the Western Front was trench fever, which was transmitted by lice. Nearly everyone in the front lines up to the rank of colonel was lousy most of the time. The only means of getting rid of the pests, temporarily at least, was to delouse our clothes by hand or, out of the line, to bake them in ovens while we bathed."

—Basil Peacock, The Listener, 9/14/1967

They never give lice the proper play.
We had them all the time, of course.
Colonel to Jack Lackey carried his volunteers
from trench to trench across the belly of France.

Ardennes, Somme, Ypres . . . it made no difference.
We cleaned them out at times the way you empty pockets for the night:
the next day they'd be back; powders did no good; forgetting was best for those who could manage it.

When we could shower, we'd leave our gear stacked in ovens to bake the beasts out, but they came back.

On leaves, we'd wear rented clothing when we could, sick of the issue we'd shared for months with nits.

In our letters we spoke of mud, bad food, the hell of waiting, but hardly ever of these.

And when we died all in one piece, as happened, unpunctured, but wasted and yellow with fever, the lids they pulled over the glassy stares covered up what we'd seen of the guns' work, what we'd seen of the wreckage where mortars fell among men, shut out the leg hanging over wire as though afraid to step down having tested one mine too many, but left on the rapidly stiffening skin, until they scoured the hulk for its fitting into the grass, the legions of visitors claiming a final look round before they spread like a pool and ran to the ground their host having gone into disuse.

We thought it a little beneath us to mention these things. And we died in summer and fall and winter and spring wracked with the weight of war and the fever that hums Phyllis

Thompson

MY BOOK

This death inside, my skeleton, paces the length of days, winter and summer, blind. It hears nothing.

It comes no nearer taste than teeth packed in ruts of jaw. Odors of buildings, meadows, streets, bypass the insensible rods of bone I carry, that carry me.

How shall I touch them?

Wherever I go on earth or water or on bridges thrust over water, or higher than that, in planes, or beneath the broad surface of things, in caves or subways, what is outside reaches and fills the cavities of my body, space of all the passages of ear, warm places where my breath rises and falls, all soft hollows of love or waste or sense.

My darkest parts, hollows invaded every time and way I turn with different air keep their own secrets, are not mine, are a new mystery, puzzling each breath I take. Nothing I learn or love is mine.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO MY REALMS OF GOLD

I came back empty-headed as I went.
Not true, not quite true. My head was stuffed full, But whose isn't? when wasn't mine? If I sent a question nerve by jittery nerve, a rule-Of-thumb answer shot back my papa's bull.

When an answer filtered through the creaky attic,
It spilled out splinterly wrecks, a tug and pull
Tides of junk set up, a rubbery asthmatic
The only parts that live
finally are the unknowing bones,
the anonymous spaces they define,
and this.

Read it.

At dead center,
to which my body hurries, bone
grins with a grave rhetoric, and waits.

Stanley Radhuber Two Poems

ACCIDENT

Thrown into the posture of love’s recklessness,
Her knees spread like honey, her face turned,
She received the whisper of that other Lover
Who floats through the evening, ah, so soft,
So full of caresses, one was surprised
By the sharp punctuation of her legs,
The stunned car losing its own life all askew
In the intersection which was then wrong
Like a violin with one string gone.
I could feel the whisper rubbing
Again the fur of the wreck,
Locked in its own purring as a silent movie
Star Stokes the down of her arm.

No, not dead, though she knew more death
When she woke beneath that red flower
Than I, who had felt its corrugated breath
When it eased me out of sleep
With that cold, loveless, teasing grip.
And when she rocked the white starched arms,
Her stunned marble face full of innocence
In the softest light of evening,
Her eyes full of pleas like a deer’s
Pulling back to dark,

What fences, fields, and rivers she had crossed
In that intersection of perpendiculas,
What ways we do not walk.
Her life ran down like oil, and when the process stopped,
She rode the screaming ambulance toward full recovery:
Someone was already pacing off the skid marks.
One man was pointing up the street.

ON THE ORIGIN OF SEA CHANTEYS

All day his fingers moved around his nets,
Mending holes with line held by a boy.
His body rocked to the feel of the sea
Thick with fish. The river sang his tune.
Ask his dog, his wise ear twisted toward water.

Old man, I’m standing at your back,
And at my back the world is hunched.
It comes down three ranges inland,
Then levels off to sand.
You turned just once to look at me,
Just once.

Robert Hershon Three Poems

THE COOPER & BAILEY GREAT LONDON CIRCUS

In 1876
The Cooper & Bailey Great London Circus
Sailing from Tasmania to Australia
Suffered Grievous Injuries
During A Storm of Singular Magnitude

The Rhinoceros and The Lion
And The Alligator and The Silver Fox
And The Tattooed Mule and The Imitation Penguin and The Whitewashed Elephant
Furry women scurry
in the dark corners of the warehouse by the river
There are cracks of sunlight between the boards
Dust is thick on the alligator-sized crates
addressed to Tall Gals’ Footwear
The crates are stained and warped
by the ceaseless drip of mayonnaise
The giants work in silence
Bundles of lettuce are delivered each dawn
by luncheonettes as far away as Darien
The warehouse 10,000 years old is sinking
into the stinking Hudson
Furry women in purple shoes size 13
nibble in dark corners

Were Among Those Drowned
In The Bubbling Pacific

Cunning James Bailey
Had The Waterlogged Giraffe
Stuffed by A Gentleman in Sydney
Its Head Equipped with A Device
That Made It Nod Slowly and Regularly
Wily Bailey
Showed The Beast in A Darkened Cage
And It Appeared to Be Alive Which Made
The Australian People
Very Very Happy
And So They Remain to This Day
A Grand Triumph for The Grand Bailey
Mourner of Rhino Fisher of Lion
Resurrector of Giraffe
The Bold and Businesslike Bailey
Who Gave The People What They Wanted

This Has Been A Demanding Quarter
For Your Company Sales Decreased 14
Percent over The Corresponding Period
A Year Ago Nevertheless
We Are Pleased To Tell You That
Net Earnings (There Was A Fire
In Ohio In Which Several Clowns
Burned Up) More Than Held Their Own
Hold Your Own Hold Her Own
Hold His Own Nod Your Head

AT THE LETTUCE REVITALIZATION CENTER

High on a catwalk
at the Lettuce Revitalization Center
on Twelfth Avenue
giants with round heads
scrub off the shrimp salad
with heavy strokes of velvet brushes

NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT

I never met a fireman I didn’t like
Firemen are earnest and healthy
humorless and rubbery
Firemen proudly display their engines
but never hose down your books
Firemen’s leather hats are heavy
but their eyes are very light
Firemen wash their own little cars
when they are between fires
Firemen listen to white tile radios
and snore like brass
Firemen stand guard on my fire escape
and watch the noodles boil
Firemen come down my chimney,
and blow out the candles at dawn
Firemen express concern about my smoking
and listen closely to my heart
Firemen worry constantly irishly
about my children’s skin
Firemen cannot be told to stop
once they have been told to go
About Our Contributors

PAUL ZIMMERMANN's second book of poems, *The Republic of Many Voices*, has just been published by October House. He is assistant director of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

STUART FRUEHUBER teaches at Oberlin College.

CHARLES EDWARD EATON's fifth book of poems, *On the Edge of the Knife*, will be published this spring by Abelard-Schuman.

THOMAS BRUSH is a graduate student at the University of Washington. These are his first published poems.

GARY STEVEN CORSEU, formerly a student of Robert Lowell at Harvard, now teaches in the San Francisco public school system.

ANN DARR, of Chevy Chase, Md., has just won a Discovery 70 Award from the YMHA Poetry Center.

JOHN HAAG is currently on leave of absence from Pennsylvania State University.

DOUGLAS F. STALKER is a graduate student at the University of North Carolina.

KENNETH ARNOLD is Paperback Editor at The Johns Hopkins Press.

ROSS J. TALABRIO of Syracuse, N.Y., is a former student of Donald Justice and W. D. Snodgrass.

RICHARD DANKEFF teaches at Oregon State University and has published widely.

NANCY PRICE teaches at the University of Northern Iowa and is doing graduate work at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop.

JOHN BARR, a Navy lieutenant aboard a guided-missile frigate near Vietnam, will soon return for graduate work at Harvard.

GREG KUZMA teaches at Slippery Rock State in Pennsylvania.

JOANNE WARD is a graduate student at the University of Washington.

GARY MIRANDA is visiting instructor aboard Chapman College's World Campus Afloat.

RICHARD W. HILLMAN is a student at the University of Manchester in England.

RAEZIE MILLER teaches at Louisiana State University in New Orleans.

WILLIAM DORSEY'S first book of poems, *To Face the Sea*, was published this year.

JAY WRIGHT is currently teaching at Talladega College in Alabama after an extended stay in Mexico.

DANIEL LUSK is a jazz singer and teaches English at the University of Missouri.

SHIRLEY KAUFMAN'S first book of poems, *The Floor Keeps Turning*, was the 1969 United States Award Winner of the International Poetry Forum and has just been published by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

EDWARD MORIN teaches at Wayne State University in Detroit.

BETTY ADCOCK lives in Raleigh, N.C., where she is an advertising copywriter.

ALVIN GREENBERG is in Mexico this spring on a Ford grant.

LINDA ALLARD is doing research on Emerson at the University of Rochester.

FRANCIS SULLIVAN, S.J., teaches in Concord, Mass.

STUART SILVERMAN, a frequent contributor, lives in Chicago.

PEYLLIS THOMPSON'S first book of poems, *Artichoke & Other Poems*, was published in 1969 by the University of Hawaii Press.

STANLEY RADUBER teaches at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.

ROBERT HERSHON'S new chapbook called *Atlantic Avenue* will be published by Unicorn Press in the fall.

Poetry Northwest Prize Awards, 1970

HELEN BULLIS PRIZE: $100
Will Stubbs for “Three Poems” (Spring 1969) and “Three Poems” (Autumn 1969)

Previous Winners

Hayden Carruth (1962)
John Logan (1963)
Donald Finkel (1964)
Mona Van Duyn (1965)
Richard Hugo (1966)
Winfield Townley Scott and Katie Louchheim (1967)
Sandra McPherson and Gwen Head (1968)
Eugene Ruggles (1969)

THEODORE ROETHKE PRIZE: $50
Philip Booth for “Let the Trees” (Autumn 1969)

Previous Winners

Carol Hall (1963)
Richard Hugo and Kenneth O. Hanson (1964)
Kenneth O. Hanson (1965)
William Stafford (1966)
Carolyn Stoloff (1967)
John Woods (1968)
Thomas James (1969)