

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

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FLYING FISH

M. J. Closser

With shimmering fins the gliders fanned
the spray of the lunging prow;
a dextrous lascar caught one in his hand
to show the northern voyager,
who noted how
the eye of this small equivocal being,
like a captured sparrow not like a fish,
brightly revealed its fear—
as if it knew the wish
to leave the tropic sea was its undoing.

Reflective finger touched with wonder
the fragile symbol of all discontent,
and mind was stirred
by yet another creature that dared sunder
the limit of its destined element—
both trying to be bird.

IN FURNACES OF LIGHT

Adelaide Weston

In furnaces of light,
A hammer beat
The shape of shadow
To the stalk of wheat,

Fierce with burning
Until it is dead,
Beautiful, living,
Fire fed.

DERIVATIVE

Marguerite W. Truslow

Wolf-fear flows with the blood,
that ancient stream,
(shadow behind
in the twilight wood,
low half sound
of padding footsteps on the wind,
the bleached bone by the mound)
rouses ancestral shudders in the mind.

Yet the wolf's offspring lies
close at our feet,
by communal fire comforted;
upon our knees
his warm confiding head,
and in his eyes,
tidings that struggle through a long
disguise.

END OF SUMMER

Ann Stanford

Over the sea-range hurled
Heavy the fog lies curled,
Unhurried ebbs and goes
As friendship does.

Crusted with wind and spray
Summer deserts the day,
Slowly forsakes her part
As love, the heart.

WINTER RIDE

Ann Stanford

A night cushioned in snow,
Trees crowded white and close.
Encroaching heaps of cold
Parted to let us pass.
While in the gash of light
That led us through the wood
Snowflakes whirled at us
In furious multitude.

THE OYSTER

Myron H. Broomell

Lying, as does my kind, upon the floor
Of the great sea where it is not too deep,
And seeming not to breathe nor even sleep,
Though many do on the adjacent shore,
I sometimes wonder, as the current flows
Above my bed and chilly toward the land,
To what an end was spread this grainy sand
Where I lie buried half and feed on ooze.

I am myself the center of my world;
Yet over me there moves, the whole beside,
A watery heaven. Twice a day the tide
Laps at the coast whose folk are warm and pearled.
I scarcely know (I cannot count too well)
How many pearls are pangs inside my shell.

THE RAILING

Myron H. Broomell

The darkness in the human heart
Is deeper than the Carlsbad Caverns.
No guide escorts you from the Start;
No railing separates your Art,
Nor glowing bulbs define apart
The Troll, his guestless taverns.

There is this difference, too—
That through those glooms descending,
The tourists grouped by tens with you,
With cameras slung to catch the view
And over dark pools of the True
Companionably bending,

Do not so lightly thence return
As from a day's excursion.
Lights in the darkness seemed to burn
As if to urge the soul to learn,
And tremors shook, from stem to stern,
Each in his private version.

It was so black beneath the ground,
You could not even feel a sound.

COLOUR

Ethan Ayer

The dove is grey, the chosen bird of peace;
The hair of age is grey, the sky is grey,
The colour of wisdom. Does it follow then
The clouds are oracles, and a dismal fleece
That cuts the sun and moon and stars away
Is more than a banking of those fiery powers
That bring to the full the rage of innocent men,
Or the frail corolla of dim terrestrial flowers?

It follows no more than age must counsel youth;
It follows no more than fire must not burn.
Fancy an old man teaching a young to love;
Fancy a young man teaching an old to learn
Only because the wind was a moment south,
And the clouds that came were grey, and grey the
dove!

THE URN OF FIRE

Charles Edward Eaton

Our quarrel shakes the room,
The pictures rattle like a noise in sleep
And wake us 'cross a vase of flowers and fern,
The flame-dose blossoms like a torch combined.
There in all your mother's majesty you loom,
And I my father's hauteur keep,
Like two tapers set to burn,
As though there were not fire enough between us
on the table
To keep a bright or bitter glowing in the mind
And harass the need in us of being stable.

But still you speak and in your mother's voice:
I must listen with my father's ear.
Though the wind knock on the roof
And sigh at the window asking for the dead,
Obsession feigning heartfelt choice,
Denying that the dead are near,
Gives to every passion the rationale of proof.
Between the radiance, hectic, antipodal, unfurled,
The flowers flare, gutter down to ashes like a
fire unfed,
And, at the table, two have spoken from another
world.

THE HEART'S ILLUSION

Geoffrey Johnson

Dear form, too beautiful to be the prey
Of Time, why do you choose to live
Under the looming of cathedral towers
Whose solemn sounding of the mortal hours
Intensifies how fugitive
Your graces are, how brief your summer's day?

Flurry no more, a mite with frightened smile
Around the base of this gigantic pile
Whose rock remains as generations flow,
But come, O come with me
Where Time's old tyranny
Dissolves in light like insubstantial snow,
Yes, deep in that illusion of the heart,
Where no bell sounds, where looks immortalize
The moment with the sureness of great art,
And neither ages in beloved eyes.

THE SWIMMER

Geoffrey Johnson

An estuary on either side,
The tongue of rock flashed far to sea.
On its high tip in whiffing sun
I cared not what became of me.

Or did I care? Imagine, heart,
The tongue snapped backward with the fly
Chameleon-fashion into foam
And swallowing darkness: where was I?

The wing'd ephemeral quick enough
To dodge the flashed mesmeric snare
Dives into action: dive I did
To sparkling sea through sparkling air.

LEDGE OF MEMORY

Frona Lane

Through opening eye of morning
I saw love, bright bird,
perch on the ledge of memory.
Dust's dominion
held dimension of smile
grooved on the sill
with point of a pinion,
leaving, left me
legacy of twilight birds,
lunacy of familiar song
in unfamiliar faces,
hunger in narrow niche of heart,
fastened now to unaccustomed places.

BRIEF REVELATION

Elinor Lennen

Opened to give a flash view, closed again—
The diptych inwardness of butterflies
Has taunted ingenuity of men
To name or copy this which wings disguise,
Drabness enfolding such a jewel array
That one swift glimpse illumines a long day.

WEAPON AND SHIELD

Elma Dean

How often I said, "See the birds,"
Carried him in wind to the hill
And showed him the patterns of flight.
We watched birds gather and flow—
Saw them arrowing high—
Saw wings turning wheels on the night.
And I showed him a sun-red cloud
And water stained with the sky.

Yesterday, it was ... and now
The letters come from that place,
Not of war and the clatter of war
And the press of strange things,
But letters saying how the sun
Goes down in a splendor of space
And color and wings.

CONTRIBUTORS

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There is a poem by ELINOR LENNEN in the current issue of Variegation.

ALLEN TATE calls CHARLES EDWARD EATON's book, The Shadow of the Swimmer, a book "that I shall want to read several times."

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The Third Eyelid by FRONA LANE received a number of favorable reviews last year. It was published by Alan Swallow.

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MARGUERITE W. TRUSLOW's poem, "Cenotaph," was reprinted in Poetry Awards 1952.

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A poem by MYRON H. BROOMELL appears in the current issue of Variegation.