

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume IV · Winter 1954 · Number 15

*Set from the scan of the magazine. The poems, their titles, the poets'
names and the figures at the feet of the leaves are the printer's; everything
in this color is this edition's.*

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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

[*The publisher's own advertisement, from the last leaf:*]

ENJOY THE OTHER EMPHASIS AS WELL. The two quarterlies, *Recurrence* and *Variegation*, differ not so much in kind as in emphasis. In *Variegation* you will find the contrasting rhythms of free verse. Each line of *vers libre* is a unit with a certain trend and direction, and there is always discernible the occurrence of accent, not at specific stated intervals, but still with a feeling for its placement which registers certain effects. For this reason free verse is not an attempt to undermine conventional methods, but actually reveals them in a new and valuable relationship. This relationship is further amplified by the editor's epigraph on the title page of each issue of *Variegation*: "Free verse is not a desertion of prosody; it is an exploration, intentional or unintentional, of the mysteries lying at the metrical core of speech."

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WIND

Eric Barker

Let me have you always in the leaves,
Oceans and rivers, fields, the wings of birds,
You whom I feel and hear, but never see,
Yet watch by you invisibly moved and stirred,
The figures of all landscapes that I love,
Deep forests and the single landmark tree,
Green meadows poured before you like the sea.

Let me have you always in the sky,
Cloudless or overrun
With fleecy travelers faint as the day moon,
Or piled with rainy mountains peaked with
 snow,
Shaped like all earthly creatures as they flow.

Be with me always in the night,
But in that quietest mood
The scarce-stirred leaves of river alders keep,
Moving as waters move,
Deep as your own full stream, too deep
To break the lightest sleep.

COAST FOG

Eric Barker

I cannot touch what is not there.
Familiars change to stranger things
Behind this soft and covering moth,
This blindfold dark with muffling wings,

But where all names of night are false,
To blurred and drifting ghosts are blown,
The foghorn's where it always is
And lets it mournfully be known.

What happens where the stars are lost?
For three nights, ignorant of heaven,
I've gone astray on shrouded earth
And only hear where sea is hidden.

FINE RAIN BEGINNING

Candace T. Stevenson

Fine rain beginning
Is wrapping me round,
Weaving and spinning
A curtain of sound.

Monotony seals in
My silk-threaded shroud
From multiple reels in
A gray bank of cloud.

Quiet and furled,
What a comfort is this,
Screened from the world
In a pale chrysalis!

ARCHETYPE

Candace T. Stevenson

That terraced tower built in Genesis
Again emerges from a different sod.
Out of a world in chaos rises this
Aspiring Babel, once called Gate of God.

The architecture changes and, perhaps,
A splintered atom hints finality.
The narrowed margin comes from widened maps,
And conquered air shrinks continents and sea.

Yet are the ancient problems with us still
Of man, the ever-curious, prone to thrust
Against the infinite his finite skill
Even if it should blast him into dust.

Just as it seems he's doomed himself to die
This stark, blunt building rises like a cry.

SPRING EXODUS

Sara King Carleton

Petal by petal, now the spring releases
its beauty casually in bits and pieces,
in volatile profusion and bright haste,
while ferns uncoil along the culvert edges
and leaves and flowers tangle in the hedges,
all surfeit, all transilience, all waste.

We leave loud zones of merchantry and litter
where coins weigh down upon our lids, their glitter
a crippling seal that narrows, blinds our sight;
from catacombs of stone and steel, from prison,
we flow out over concrete toward the risen
and nonchalant abundance of sunlight.

Intolerable monotony escaping,
we come upon this sprawling season, gaping,
where bloom explodes in every rose or weed,
with all green privileged; see waters wander
untaxed, unstoppered, and horizons squander
their stars and clouds beyond the wildest need.

Then wearily at end of day, returning
through the long avenues of spending, earning,
spring's careless blossoms fading on our knees,
we greet our grottoed cells almost with pleasure,
the grip of work outrivaling slack of leisure,
the shade of stone outshading shade of trees.

CAT IN THE CINDERS

Ethel Jacobson

Almost before the flames die,
There you lie
Deep in a bed of feathery ash.
Cat, how rash
To blink and purr
And toast your fur
Where the firelog still glows
Rose!

As, Cinderella-wise,
A far smile in your eyes,
You dream . . .
Is it of godmother's wand, or pump-
Kin coach, or the plump,
Bright-eyed, bewhiskered, lovely,
 long-tailed team?

AFTERIMAGE

Joseph Joel Keith

“If Rôshi is to be called a knower,
why did he write five thousand words?”
—From the Japanese (Hakurakuten)

Let the words
 be a bird’s
 quick note,
clean theme
 that the heavens wrote;
 dipped in the stream,
then let fly
 back to the sky.

DESOLATION

Joseph Payne Brennan

I cannot bear the sound of bells tonight;
My marrow craves a country mute as stone
Where deserts stretch their ribs in witches' light
To silent mountains desolate as bone.

I would sit alone and listen to no sound
By empty crags where no slight word is spoken;
I would rest my hand on sterile ground
Where no thing grows, no seed is broken.

I would listen to the silence growing bright
Until my thoughts turn hard and white.

CHILDHOOD SUMMERS

Leah Bodine Drake

Something, those summers, seemed to lie curled like
a fern

In the blue heart of day, something we might find
Suddenly, anywhere—by the twisted stump at the
turn

Of the wood-path or beside the frog-loud pond.

We lived with imminent marvel! In some little room
Of the sumacs, secret, hushed with sun, the more-
than-real

Might appear: a talking beast out of Grimm
Or the toad with the green gem blazing in his skull.

In noon orchards, with each tree pooled in its own
small

Shadow where wasps shrilled defiance from paper
castles,

We would pause, listening . . . now, now the
awaited call

Would come from the hot sky or the clumped thistles
Where the Painted Ladies clung—the fortunate rune
That opens the door into the true country!

The bark might swing

Out from an apple-bole and show the steps leading
down

To the crystal cave, the hall of the sleeping king!

It is never wholly lost, that hope, nor quite out-

grown:

Old children, we still half expect to see

In one form or another the crowned swan

Alight on the lake, the keyhole shine in a tree.

ANY WOMAN TO HER

Babette Deutsch

D eceive yourself, no other; but
E very fresh proof of whom you love
A nd how, though it stings like a cut,
R etrieves for a protecting glove
E xtravagant joy. You'd be believed?
S ay that you love me, love; then shut
T hese eyes that sparkle, undeceived.

THE ANIMIST TO HIS LOVES

Hanson Kellogg

Trees, do you recall
Clear limbs, their stretch against cold skies,
Naked but alive in fall?

And now, in spring,
Your thousand Samson eyes
Are veiled under shellac within the paneling,

Weeping green wood tears behind the scent,
The smoke, the casual, alcoholic lies . . .
Even a death may be misspent.

A LITTLE IMMORTALITY

Elma Dean

She is not dead whose print
in the mold of leaves
so fits my own.
She lives a little whose wrist,
slender of bone,
turns with my wrist—whose hand
I have always known.

Who grieves without end for the gone
cannot have seen
what they have left of themselves—
how they go on.

Often with the clothes discarded
and the small light of moon on the mirror,
I turn suddenly and exclaim:
My mother!

THE GREEN TEMPLE

Elma Dean

Bow the head, who wish to enter here;
Even the sun comes hesitantly. Now first,
Slip off the robe of care, the shoes of fear,
Before the temple door. Bring only thirst
For solitude to this still place. Oh, lean
Upon the great trunk's strength! No worldly sound
Offends the ear. Beneath this dome of green
Old summers lie, deep velvet on the ground.

At last, beyond need of any sign or word,
The self stands free and neither boasts nor grieves—
Is quite prepared to hear the hidden bird
Begin its sacred music in the leaves.

TUMULTUOUS ALTARS

Frances Montague

Now in these unbelieving times, man raises
Tumultuous altars to a misshapen god;
On every one a scarlet flower blazes
From a long-sterile rod.

The fire points a sharp accusing finger
At him who speaks no sacrificial word,
And acrid fumes from dark libations linger
Till darker dregs are stirred.

Writing suspicion on the heavy air,
Spirals of incense lift and coil and wind,
Till those who serve before these altars bear
The seared eyes of the blind.

CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN is the author of two books of poems, *Heart of Earth* and *The Humming Stair*. *Esquire* and *Weird Tales* have accepted his short stories.

ERIC BARKER lives near Carmel, California, and writes poems about this fascinating region.

The humorous verse of ETHEL JACOBSON is familiar to millions of readers.

Poems by LEAH BODINE DRAKE and HANSON KELLOGG may be found in the current issue of *Variegation*.

BABETTE DEUTSCH is well-known as a poet, critic and teacher.

ELMA DEAN's poem from *Recurrence*, "Lines for Ourselves," placed third in the Poetry Awards collection of the sixty best poems from magazines for 1952.

SARA KING CARLETON and Candace Stevenson are both contributors to past issues of *Variegation*.

The Canadian Poetry Magazine gives a prominent place to JOSEPH JOEL KEITH's article, "The State of Poetry in the United States."

Poems by Mabel Montague were printed in the Autumn issues of both *Recurrence* and *Variegation*.