

RECURRENCE

A Quarterly of Rhyme

Volume VI · Summer 1955 · Number 21

*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
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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

[*The distributor's card, boxed at the foot of the same leaf:*]

VARIEGATION and RECURRENCE are being widely distributed
to bookstores and newsstands by B. DEBOER, 102 Beverly
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[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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SLOW POTTO IN CAPTIVITY

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Hand over hand the sluggish potto creeps;
He swings suspended in prehensile sloth;
There are no runs, no animated leaps;
The creature's progress is devoid of both.
He, whether loris, potto, kinkajou,
Is much the same in looks and manners too.

His rhythm is legato, paws that pause,
And great globed eyes investigating light,
The ill-timed dawn, the daybreak without cause,
The click, the sudden bloom that dazzles sight.
There were no bulbs within his native thicket
And these, or so he fancies, are not cricket.

To curl, a fuzzy ball upon the limb,
To hang suspended by his feet and thighs,
Were habits of the usual day to him
Who waked nocturnally to tropic skies.
Now in captivity let him rehearse
His concept of a normal universe.

The potto ambles, awkward, pigeon-toed,
Finds slumber where he never thought to sleep,
Is offered that which would not pass for food
In any tropic glade however deep
Till, reassessing all within its range
His sluggish heart adjusts itself to change.

ANTIQUE STATUETTE

Eleanor Glenn Wallis

Bronze cat from Egypt, poised as for a leap,
Rests on his pedestal with ears erect,
Ears that are pierced for earrings. We suspect
These stolen by an infidel Ubastet may have smitten
In vengeance for her kitten.

If his original wore golden hoops
Or carvings set with jewels who shall say?
Bubastis held his bones until the day
The goddess was discarded and her one-time sacred
creatures
With furry, blunted features.

A man devout and likewise skilled in art
Modelled this cat and set it on a base
Nor could time from the permanent bronze erase
His record of a creature caught before the narrow
Gaze iced a rodent's marrow.

ACE ON TEN

Ralph L. Kinsey

Sitting there intent with thirteen cards,
Thin brows knit, perfumed and poised,
Her brittle world shatters into shards
And never, never, a harsh word voiced.

Ace on ten, and the neat trick taken
With sure finesse, cruel and subtle:
Lost in a lace of mental bracken,
Her sword broken before the battle.

Her face a small flame, dim and oval,
Studies the score pad, while the terse
Syllables fall like something evil,
And life goes by in a black hearse.

DAISIES WILL TELL

Raymond Roseliep

where promises anoint the air,
the body pillows knowingly.

Soon knucklebone is casually
aware of grasses pressed and hot;
then fingers meet a broken stem,
the telltale petal “loves me not.”

Raymond Roseliep

SMALL COMPLAINT

Mitchell Lifton

If I can't move you with my
Whistle's penny song,
Then try my dollar's long
And wistful mask.

But need you ask?
I love you. So why make a task
Of long refusals?

Come, I even slide the knife
Into my aching life;
There is no hurt in other's death
If you won't let
Yourself be near.
How queer,
All I can think is love
Even as you shove your fears into
 my mouth.
Well, it's a rout,
But need you ask;
I love you
So why pout?

AFTER HURRICANE

Kathryn Wolcott

A tidal wave of wind from ranging spheres
comes sweeping with it in a raped array
rent branches, cluttered leaves, and as it nears
the countryside becomes a swirling fray
of ghoulish shapes in bruised and purple light.
A flood of rain flings wide a watery wake;
great trees salaam, bend low from their proud height.
The rafters of the strongest houses shake.

At dawn a scintillating shaft flares through
retreating clouds, on earth, disheveled, spent.
The morning air now fountains a sun-blue;
doors open wide, we gaze in wonderment
at seeing peace made manifest, more true,
because such awful anger came and went.

UNDINE

Helen Nonam

Now I am alone.

Children fluttering on the edge of tears
swam from my hair.

They clung about me, begged my arms;

I sent them away,

drove them out in the sea's blue spray,

sailed them like paper boats into the wind.

Now they are gone.

I twist my hair on a sea-cold finger,

must sail or swim by myself,

not go under,

learn which scattered star is north,

decide the known.

I am alone.

DESTINATION

Elinor Lennen

I went a journey east, a journey west,
I measured north and south but could not find
A place which our delight had not caressed;
Things missed or seen alike brought you to mind.

From any arc in space the radius ran
Toward center; all the miles my thought could span
Led back to you, where my heart's life began.

STRANGE RUNNING

Elinor Lennen

I see a running without legs and feet—
No whence, no whither, instantly complete—
Wind following, pursuing wind in wheat.

But more than eyes make answer with their gaze;
My pulse perceives the timing and obeys
Wind rhythms as the driven wheat field sways.

Thought set in motion surges past the fence
That bounds the wheat, and space becomes intense
With energy unresting and immense.

KUAN YIN, GODDESS OF
MERCY

Ethel Jacobson

Curved and cool as the lotus
She gazes undismayed
Across the inconsequential dust
Where dynasties are laid.

How much deeper, bitterer
Must grow the mortal rift
Before a torn world pauses
To take her quiet gift?

UNDER FUNERAL LILIES

Leah Bodine Drake

Under funereal lilies, here lies one
Of subtle lip and glittering, false tongue,
Whose words, too deeply prized, so flowered
 my mind
That even now, great tigerish blooms, they
 burn
Long after words of truer men have been
Scattered and lost, dry petals down the wind.

WINDFALL

Barbara Leslie Jordan

Thought is a wind which shakes us loose from sleep
To lie like apples flung on frozen ground.
Across such flinty earth, slow hours creep
Like hungry worms that gnaw us without sound.

SEED TIME

Marguerite Janvrin Adams

Seed time is all time:
endlessly the clock
stirs earth from heavy sleep;
arrival of the birds, moons interlock,
and on the hills young sheep.

Under the sea, the ice,
the curling valley stream,
root and tendril pushing into sun;
ever the dreamer and the latent dream;
always the ritual that is not done:
seed time is all time.

USE OF EARTH

Rachel Harris Campbell

Not that the earth is better than the sky,
nor that the works of earth so surely stand;
The subtile spirit, stemmed from the
 Most High,
is finer than the essence of a gland.

But we are men and women, and the flesh,
poor Brother Ass, requires its dole of hay.
Rather than nerves in civil war should clash,
sometimes give earth its way.

There is healing in the satin feel of wood,
the straining shovel in the compost pit.
Nor is pure spirit jealous of such good.
The soul, too, shares its ancient benefit.

CONTRIBUTORS

On November 17th LEAH BODINE DRAKE will read from her forthcoming book, *This Tilting Dust*, before the Poetry Society of America. Basil Rathbone, the actor, will read verse on the same program.

The editor of *American Verse*, Loring Williams, was kind enough to suggest that RALPH L. KINSEY submit his work to this magazine.

The Arkwright Press is publishing a book by BARBARA LESLIE JORDAN this year.

RAYMOND ROSELIEP's classes at Loras College have shown considerable interest in *Recurrence*.

MITCHELL LIFTON is very familiar with modern French literature. He lived in Paris for more than two years and spent many years in Mexico as well.

ETHEL JACOBSON is the well-known writer of humorous verse. She has her serious moments on occasion, when she evidently invokes Kuan Yin.

Two poems by ELINOR LENNEN appear in the current issue of *Variegation*.

HELEN NONAM is a leading figure in one of the most important literary groups in the city of Los Angeles.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY issued a book of ELEANOR GLENN WALLIS' poems a few years ago.

KATHRYN WOLCOTT and MARGUERITE JANVRIN ADAMS are former contributors to *Recurrence*.

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL is one of the two or three best poets living in San Diego, California.