

VARIATION

A Free Verse Quarterly

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*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.*

*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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GROVER JACOBY, *Editor*

DIVORCE IN THIS YEAR

Winifred M. Johnson

The house,
no longer sum of all parts,
departs purpose.

Clocks hang hourless
all calendars ending with June.

None will intrude,
not by lift of a dust mote,
not by a fistful of tears.

The morning kiss will not come
nor children rise from their rose leaves.
All small threads
have lost to scissors.

And ever the unconceived
cry at the doors,
cry at the faceless doors.

Winifred M. Johnson

ASCENSION

Hanson Kellogg

The end of the world is always set
For just before daybreak tomorrow morning,
But the fog is in and the day is bound
As with winding sheets within it.

“Redemption,” cry the minor, starving prophets
And never face the holocausts they plan on,
But dwindle into shreds of smoke,
Upwards, of course, forever upwards . . .

A MANSION ON THE COUNTY LINE

Hanson Kellogg

Finally it is silence, ambition's goal—
Silence filled with small contrapuntal quietness:
The cool movement of leaves,
The almost frozen struggle of the grapevines:
Laocoön alfresco.

A dirt road winds beneath the dusty poplars.
The carp pond stands, level with longevity.

All our mazed escapes are into silence,
The unachievable, while the womb splashes with
movement,
While the grave is sonorous with sermons, and
the moving clothes
Of alien mourners, crowding a painless sacrifice
Of time to immortality between appointments.

NIGHT SEA

M. A. Mays

Compare no quantity of stars
to this dark coast;
they are a part of sky:

port lights and starboard
give surface to night sea
in the roadstead of homeward ships.

BEGINNING AND END

Arthur Simms

Fingers of sand divide the conduct of the stream
Like roaring tigers down the leaves
Until the river becomes a sleeping tongue,
A failing bird by the oceanside,
A lantern guttering in the waves.

INWARDNESS

Ada Davies

What falls in loneliness is only that brave, timeless
water,
Filling fervently the cold crevices of mind,
Shining through the waiting skulls of dreams
And covering close the immediate peaks of sleep—
lessness;
This is your own self's unwilled pearl,
Centered through you, shaping your breath and
blood—
Even now, through the cavil and corrosion of cen—
turies,
Through history's dissolution and the desert of your
molded memories,
That Substance, immaterial, immutable, unsplintered
as air,
Is still the incorruptible core of all your tongues and
blossoms.

HOW ON THE ROCKS

Ada Davies

How on the rocks, winds bend in violent
Elbows from the tall grass!
Turn the pages of the hills, mold their inverted
Sculpturing with water!

How on the hills, rocks and sky turn
Their spheres to center flowing.
And how shall I know rock from tree,
Or water from the wind,
Where One turns all,
In this blue labyrinth
Interminable?

Eyes of the shadowed ones,
Their skies are blades of wheat,
Straighter than lancing rain!
Even the blinded hawks,
Have still their stems of light,
Sharper than wings to air!

Whirl, wings and water!
Whirl, clouds and hills!
Light holds the stars to steer by.
You, the unshadowed ones,
You with the eyes of eagles,
Stand on the hills,
Taller than pine trees!
Straighter than stars!

NO RETURN

Ada Davies

Here, in a film whirling with wheels and hills,
Lacking the moments of hours, days or nights,
They walk like stilts through unvarying webs,
Inevitable crossings of grapes and watery stars—
Walk the long roads without turning,
Only their slow feet tangling smoke
Never lifting their ankle-arches,
Their flat hands loose, like fishtails hanging.

Oh, the branched horns of the iron deer
Rust-blurred among the dandelions,
The old apple tree, gnarled and gray,
And the dim brass tiger on the door panel—
These are but feathers floating on the wind,
Or the scratching of rats' teeth on dried leather,
Tracing half-remembered wheels
In ashes and sand of the gutter.

POINT OF LEAPING

David Borden

I see you have not ventured
To this lonely place
Questing a tortured god in stone, gloom
Beneath shattered cypress strata,
Gull-thronged sky . . .
Or you would not say: World, farewell.

Nor have you immersed your strange eyes
As plummeting sea hawks
Into these wild tides; or you
Would see the gates of love torn open;
You would not find a god
Gone down before you.

FACT OF SIGHT

Waltrina Furlong

The people on bicycles are distant
are an instant of rain
behind our wet hair before we turn
in the rain.

And because we travel like a wall
our failure goes before us,
will already happen,
is a smell like sharks
in the museum.

What do we hear under the sun?
The metallic fact of sight
is a bazaar of wall,
is the winged lion on the palace wall
painted like the double eyes of Semiramis.
Painted on our eyes.

The world appears and has no back.
The child cannot see under the hems
of its robes; so many heavy hems,
and the big feet of sandstone shuffle in the dust.

It will already happen,
and lions of heart in the arena of stone windows
divine the death of the child,
the scheduled archeologist.

If this wall of sight makes my skull

a black nut, and me outside it,
then it is a paper of figures and voices,
thrown against my face.

We shall wait for wisdom
through the hideous night
of the unvisited statue.

And find our fingers asleep, numb
to the thickened elbow,
its pebbles and lunacy.

In the garden,
under this rope of trees
we perish in the blue mirror,
a mottled figment of grapes.

W I N T E R

Arthur Simms

The fearful roots murmur in their dark net
While falling snow is like nymphs swarming
Their voices ringing as the sound of velvet bells
On the peaceful oars of winter, gliding.

MILKWEED HOURS

Laurel Trivelpiece

While the mind is yet
perfumed in mass, the body moors;
bones congeal; hitch again.
their joints,
slide under the patched harness.

Brush out the swollen bees of sleep.
Morning has many corners
to bruise those arms still
curved to fit the pod of night;
and light can come
two splinters against your eyes.

AGE OF NEON

Rachel Harris Campbell

The city needs no crier.
Night by night for miles, it proclaims itself
with diffused red glow of neon
tingeing the clouds.

It shouts: I am here!
Here life beats fully.
Here sleep is a stranger
and death a nonentity.
Where I stand, the night is a red noon,
and I stand forever.

It has forgotten
the blacked-out nights, the cautiously shaded
street lamps.
Nor has it wisdom to foresee
an end to cities:
the loud, proud neon quieted,
and night come softly home, the empty country
under long washes of the moon.

RINGDOVE

Rachel Harris Campbell

The pale tawny ringdove
walked the pavement,
bewildered, wanting rocks
and canyon spaces.

With plaintive voice it asked directions
of hurrying strangers.

White splayfoot ducks,
Iridescent-shouldered blackbirds,
And finicking bantam hens
Oustared the rose-breast strayed one,
Too distant from its kind.

EDITORIAL

Grover Jacoby

COUNTING STRESSES IN FREE VERSE

Reckoned accentuality characterizes a considerable body of free verse wherein it signifies a chosen count of stresses to the line with much less regard for the number and position of the unaccented syllables. T. S. Eliot made use of this principle in the free verse of *The Cocktail Party*. It is, perhaps, outside the scope of these two paragraphs to consider Gerard Manley Hopkins' sprung rhythm in this connection.

Some free verse with these tendencies does appear in *Variegation*, although a preference has been shown for poems without a set number of stresses to the line. Vers libre of this latter type is to be found in such poems as Pound's "The Return" and "Andenken" by Friedrich Hölderlin. Such free verse ordinarily evinces a more subtle disposition of accented and unaccented syllables than that holding to a reckoned accentuality; it promotes more feeling for the contrast in texture of dissyllabic with trisyllabic feet from line to line.

CONTRIBUTORS

A poem from last Summer's issue of Variegation by HANSON KELLOGG was reprinted in The Indian P.E.N. of Bombay.

RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL'S work has been published' in Recurrence.

All the writers in this issue live in California with the exception of DAVID BORDEN. His home is in Sutherlin, Oregon.

The poets whose verse fills the greater part of this issue have studied with Lawrence Hart. They are ADA DAVIES (whose poems have appeared in Poetry and Voices), ARTHUR SIMMS, M. A. MAYS (a frequent contributor to this quarterly), LAUREL TRIVELPIECE, Winifred Johnson, and WALTRINA FURLONG.

WALTRINA FURLONG and LAUREL TRIVELPIECE are as youthful and charming as their verse is experimental and exciting.

Paintings by ARTHUR SIMMS have been exhibited in Michigan.

WINIFRED JOHNSON edited at one time a column of verse for a journal in Piedmont, California.