

V A R I E G A T I O N

A Magazine of Free Verse

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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

FEBRUARY, 1959

GLANEUSES

Jean Follain

Des villages nombreux
avec leur forge éteinte
si vite s'agrandissent
dans leur amour de l'or.
Il reste deux glaneuses
qui ne savent quoi dire
voyant à l'horizon
les mêmes nuages
sur leurs paumes se croisent
de fins sillons qu'emplit la terre
et chauffe le soleil.

DIFFÉRENCES

Jean Follain

Autour de lacs illustres
d'impasses, de champs fleuris
d'aucuns se sont fait
vraiment tuer
sans penser à l'enfance
d'autres la revoient
qui sont sacrés des lâches
les uns comme les autres
ont passé près de haies
entourant les troupeaux bêlants,
ont bu, mangé, dormi avec des femmes
oubliant le temps.

OEUVRES

Jean Follain

Aux sillons d'un corps
s'arrête un doux regard
l'arbre bruit
sous un ciel pareil
à celui couvrant Herculaneum.
L'éloquence s'en donne
et près des jaunes fondrières
le chercheur de vipères
pense à son frère mort.
Après ces heures où des hommes
portèrent des sacs
à fibres résistantes
va s'établir la nuit sans astres.

PAR LE MONDE

Jean Follain

L'insecte veut aussi protéger ses demeures
il gravit la colline
avec la femme au corsage fermé
pas un mot à voix haute ne part de l'auberge
à vieux lion dessiné en enseigne
y git un voyageur
dormant face au papier
de fleurs poudreuses.
Du sel et du blé
dans des resserres
épuisent leur durée éperdue.
On entend des clameurs politiques
sous le ciel des Etats.

CRUAUTÉ

Jean Follain

Allant chercher au puits
de l'eau tremblante
il rêve de mort
pour sa fille adoptive.
Avec un vieux compère
plus affable parfois
il s'asseyait pour manger
sans regarder les cieux
près d'un animal
couleur de ses prunelles
qu'il fait souffrir toujours
mais qui n'en mourra pas.
Le temps n'y est pour rien
ni l'Histoire accablante
ni la douceur du soir jauni.

M A R É E

Jean Follain

Les couleurs des poissons morts
éclatent aux matins de nos jours.
Le cor des vendeurs se tait
toutes les barques sont vides
les congres sans voix
sur le marbre étalés
sont contemplés par de vrais connaisseurs
des hommes à l'esprit de revanche
qui dissimulent bien leurs tracas
cherchant une douceur inconnue
jusque chez les squales.

MARCHING TO WILIOS

Keran O'Brien

We are very weary now, after weeks of marching,
and tonight, when the land lies unmarked
under the handful of winter stars,
we seem suspended over an infinite white plain
with the light always behind us
turning with us
so that we can only feel it shaken by the winds
that race perpetually through the high aither
as the deck of a ship bent under full sail is shaken.
Without strong winds the snow would be deep
and marching impossible, but they keep the ways
clear;
at times hurrying us under their burden,
at times blinding us with a sudden storm, like death,
that staggers us under our insignia.
And when they hush, as tonight, the great blue
unmarked world
shakes like a bell around us.
Had the besiegers of Wilios been less desultory
there would have been no need for these
foolish cold and secret midwinter night-marches
behind blank devices and silent drums.
But a half-hearted alliance is to be satisfied, after nine
years,
with a token brigade sent out from the land of Hatti
across the plain, in midwinter.
The small valleys hidden in this wide plain,
each with its frozen river,

like a silver wire in the necklace of a queen,
shelter the villages of the Anatolian folk.
The smoke that hangs in the sky behind us,
staining the bright indifferent enclave of stars,
rises out of one.
Indifferent as we are to the ambition of kings,
we do their work.

I've come to think it would be wise
to junk this
cold bronze armor, throw it into the nearest ravine,
and search for another village.
There I might find a woman
like that girl of yesterday
and turn to some other foolishness
to earn a less bitter and troubling sort of bread.

NOËL POUR CHRISTIANE

André Frénaud

Puisqu'il n'était pas vrai que je n'attendais plus
et même s'il était vrai
Parce qu'il ne se pouvait pas qu'il n'y eût de promesse
ou que personne ne dût s'en charger pour moi
et que les étoiles fussent toutes indifférentes ou
impossibles

Parce qu'il est juste que la joie fasse naître un petit
enfant—
Et le berceau humide est encore si petit
recouvert de feuillage et d'herbe douce
avant que n'aillent se pelotonner dans l'osier les
membres criards —
c'est moi qui m'introduis maintenant
dans ce berceau premier
après tant de passages vaguer en d'autres lieux
pour la première fois
pour m'y faire naître dans l'eau pâle
et m'y réconcilier avec ma vie
pour la première fois
dans la seule issue que j'ai choisie
qui s'est ouverte dans l'exactitude douloureuse de ton
approche
c'est toi qui m'as appelé maintenant qui m'accueilles
et je reconnais que je t'attendais.

GARE AU FIL

Michel Faré

Gare au fil retenu sur le bord:
Il casse net sous la morsure des lames.
Tandis que l'insecte retarde la promesse des ailes,
La vie tenue s'évide et s'échenille.
Au creux du coeur qui s'éteint,
L'ultime flamme cligne d'une sève restreinte
Des guenilles de l'été se vêt l'hiver
J'ai froid au ras de l'âme
A mon brasier le bois trop sec se résorbe.
Le givre en larmes a déjà sévi.
De mort stricte est le gel au dehors
Qui lessive des branches de cheveux blancs

AMANTS, RESTEZ UNIS

Michel Faré

Amants, restez unis aux rivages du lit.
Bercez vos corps aux algues de vos bras.
Dans le geste des vagues, océans l'un à l'autre,
Goûtez l'apaisement des tempêtes du sang.
L'écueil du visage accroît la chance d'un baiser.
Dans l'essor de l'ombre trouble,
Un peu de brume s'attarde dans vos yeux.
Le hasard vous découvre les perles de vos dents
Dans l'écume des lèvres.
A contre-cœur assurément le temps se lève.
Amants, vos chevelures déferlent sur les plis de vos draps
Et la blancheur de vos sillages.

SPRING RAIN

Mary Child

There is no wind.
This rain falls straight;
Each drip draws a circle in the pool.
This rain is caught in the almond tree
And brims blossoms cups;
Drenched petals dapple the ground.
This rain runs off the robin's back,
Shines dark wings
And leaves breast red-wet.
This rain softens the clod
And finds the seed's need,
Soaks in ...
This rain falls straight;
There is no wind. Mary Child

INTERNALS

Ada Davies

What unspilled air shall buoy the legends of our
beginnings?
What blameless fields of forgetting
Have nursed our seeds of knowing?
Steeper than stars, our distilled innocence,
Our hard-won wills and separate words;
Only when the ancient, illimitable ocean
Has drained our personal rivers
And we shall fall uncrying
Through our own eye-sculptured skies,
Shall our ultimate cells resound, full-scale, unbroken,
All our instant roses echoing the sun.

OLD MERCHANT IN PEKING

Ethelford Carroll

He does not outgrow years of listening
To memories grown smaller
Than serene eating of watermelon seeds,
Than sips tinier than chirps of thrushes
Chained to wrists.
His ears keep fragment songs of crickets on bamboo,
Keep sounds from teahouses
When mornings were soft with sun.
In this city of his ancestors
Open now as a public mirror
He sits in his shop of a thousand concealments.
Sailors
enter —
Youth uniformed. They jangle coins for off ship hours.

Dragon-sleeved to fingers tiger-nailed
He brings from hiding
Chilled wedding gongs, gilded funeral robes.
His old hands unroll ancient scenes, their plots of
pagodas.
He sells to sailors inner centuries of culture.
Like heavy silk over an emperor's face
Newly dead,
He wears inscrutable lips. His eyes weigh loss with loss,
While they balance the upward unsteady tilt of roof
With the unsteady tilt of heaven.

OPHELIA DROWNED

Landreth E. Leaper

When perfection passes to the stain,
from ruin of moth and rose,
it is her touch, haunting the woods,
the golden day's restless shadow,
with its grey flight of wonder.

Ophelia drowned in the green water:
it will be a little wind over the water
whispering of her,
and the silent woods remembering,
and her music, and her lost land.

It was in a longing mood,
in a deeper hour, that the seed began
at dawn, but never to reach the end.
The dark child, her longer silence begun,
lay silent in water and reed.

VASE CLOS

Renée Riese Hubert

Je te demande de t'éloigner
d'emporter dans les paumes
ton moindre reflet
afin que je puisse
me pencher sans voile
sur un cristal pur
et sonder
la fleur éclore

Maintenant
que je suis penché sur le bocal
rebelle aux vacillements
des rayons et des ombres
que je suis penché sur la transparence
ceignant partout ma rose
les pétales éclatent

Hélas
je n'ai pu embrasser
la rougeur brûlante
dont tu avais emporté
les cendres futures

RÉPLIQUE

Renée Riese Hubert

Allégées de leur sève
les feuilles enjambent le gazon
et s'éparpillent en l'air
Sans monter en calice
la fumée déjà pâle se disperse
Les nuages brisent
leur pesanteur d'automne
et bourgeons de neiges futures
dansent à travers l'horizon

Et moi
géranium prémuni contre le givre
je me tasse dans la croisée

Renee Riese Hubert

FAIMS

Sous l'implacable horizon
brossé de coups de bise

un arbre réduit à son ossature
laisse choir ses nids
d'où s'échappe l'unique corbeau

Tenaces au champ désert
les becs éborgnent
des loques d'épouvantails

Et le vieillard s'acharne à ronger
les grilles de l'hiver

REFRAIN

Renée Riese Hubert

De la haute prison
se penchent tant de femmes
dont le regard ne frôle pas la cour
elles renversent la tête
pour dérouler comme une corde
leur chevelure

On leur a coupé les nattes
presque rasé la tête
mais elles continueront
caduques
à répéter ce geste familial
dans le vide

Aucune d'elles
ne remarque jamais sa voisine
pourtant si proche
elles se croient seules
même si elles se penchent
par la cloison
même si elles renversent
la tête

à l'unisson

LA BOUCLE

Renée Riese Hubert

Quand du pêcheur nocturne
l'amour lointain derrière les volets clos
conjure une dernière fois en songe
la lune déjà creuse
alors la passerelle vermoulue resserre ses fibres
la ligne déride son métal
et l'hameçon émoussé
étréint dans un lit d'algues
le poisson légendaire
qui dans ses entrailles a gardé intact
leur anneau

Renee Riese Hubert

LE TAILLEUR DE SA VIE

Marcel Béal

Deux anges au visage invisible
Soutiennent ma vie
Nappe tendue au-dessus du vide
Que sans répit je m'active à trancher

Tant d'efforts
Pour maintenir droite la coupure
Egales les deux parts
Irrémédiables lambeaux
Que chaque ange emportera
Dans son univers respectif

SUMMER NIGHT

Suzanne Sullivan

Shadows lean in doorways
like intimates;
sidewalk people have the flicker
of animal eyes;
darkness hatches a brood of hills,
and faint noises
make more of the silence.

The boon of night is antidote,
making one anonymous
as an unknown hand.

FOR OBSERVATION

Lisa Grenelle

Ward-white is a scoured question.
Silence here is not soft or sharp,
but without dimension
it falls like translucent fog
blurring the shapes of sound.

Here men are case histories,
destination: laboratory,
X-ray, surgery.

HERRENCHIEMSEE

Kay DeBard Hall

Take time and divide it in two dimensions:
One for the king,
One for the tourists.
The king will not be here -
Not here in his island fortress
Except as shadows fall on unexpected stairs
Or as leaves move in the park on windless paths,
Or a deer turns a startled head.
Hide, hide, back into time;
Here come the tourists.

Up from the landing they bound
By twos and threes, shawls and maps carried like
purses.
This is their wedge of time torn off bright calendars.
Cameras click, heels clatter.

Why should the little leaves sing now above paths?
It was in the king's mind they sang—
The king in the Sleeping Beauty's forest -
Who parted the vines with a bemused touch
To hear the swelling murmurous sigh
Where no wind was.

The gray women surround a voiceless fountain,
Arms woven together in a bracelet of stone.
As they lived under a sculptor's hand
They now live with weather

Still wearing the acanthus leaves.

The tourists click over the arid fountain floor;
Canes poke into decaying rock
To pick out petrified lichen ...
Tourists charge on the castle.

Is that the king there, where the giant frogs
Guard the stone women,
Carved reptilian heads supplicating,
Chipped throats dry with a century of thirst?
Only dry leaves scuttle across gravel
Moving where no wind is.

The tourists are sly in the castle.
They touch marble walls
And finger the stiff cracked fabrics,
Pluck at gold-leaf clocks.

The guide drones on,
A tenuous link of two dimensions grows
And dissolves in tourist patter.

Are the souvenir spoons really fine;
Is this marble imitation?
Why did the king live alone
And did he drink much wine?
Oh, was he really mad—
A really, really mad king they say!

There is a shadow over in that corner
Near the Sleeping Beauty's door.
What if she never came, never cared,

The king was only a little mad,
He built so on dreams.
There was always that tangle of forest
Where the leaves quivered like hope
And pale birds sang.
There was always wind weaving the green thicket
Where no wind was.

By sixes and sevens the tourists return
Down wide swept paths,
Shawls and maps carried like purses;
Fulfilling their wedge of time
They look at watches, their heels clatter.

The stone fountain sings with wind
That never was. What does madness matter?
Long sleep the king. Long sleep the king.

CHERISHED OUT OF TIME

Elinor Lennen

Moments cherished out of time
Build, cell on cell,
Counterparts of coral reefs
To defy the oblitative sea
That swirls about them.

After dismay and joy have gone,
Heart's memorable residue
Assumes an identity,
The more itself for the astringent tides
That purify what they cannot erode.

The loved, only the loved,
Is safe in this our world.

THE FALL

Myron H. Broomell

The obliquity of beauty is in rock.
Trees fringe it; the dark moss
Bathes in the torment of the
Dammed and misty water, a spray
Falling where sunlight only comes
In rainbows private like a summer cottage.

See it in winter: it is ice
And a poor trickle of its former roar.
The visitor is awe-struck at his distance
From warm home, his straw and canine manger.

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHEL FARÉ is the curator of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs located in the palace of the Tuileries.

SUZANNE SULLIVAN and ADA DAVIES are acquainted with the technique of writing evolved by Lawrence Hart. At the same time, however, each of them perceives and creates with a strictly personal approach.

LANDRETH LEAPER is a British poet whose work has been published in Outposts and Quicksilver.

Poems by KAY DEBARD HALL have appeared in Poetry (Chicago) and Accent.

MYRON H. BROOMELL is still living in Colorado, and it is evident that the scenery of that region has an affinity for both him and his verse. An occasional stream, mountain or lonely rock will not hurt the work of any writer despite the fears of the neo-classicists described by Irving Babbitt.

MARY CHILD has a teacher's certificate in voice from the Bush Conservatory in Chicago.

LISA GRENELLE is the author of a book of poems entitled No Light Evaded.

André Frénaud is mentioned in a list of the most prominent contemporary French poets in a book of criticism by Joseph Chiari.

KERAN O'BRIEN elucidates his poem with the following report:

"At about 1300 B.C. a treaty was signed between Muwatallis, King of the Hittites, and one Alaksandus, King of Wilusa. This poem is based on the assumption that the latter can be identified with Alexandros of Ilios,

the son of Priamos and the brother of Hektor of the shining helm. It is assumed that Muwatallis was not enthusiastic in his support of the Trojans during the war with the Achaians and sent out only a token brigade in the winter of the ninth year over the land of Hatti across the plain."

A volume on the work of JEAN FOLLAIN is included in the well-known series, "Collection Poètes D'Aujourd'hui." The editor of *Variegation* visited M. Follain in his apartment overlooking the Place des Vosges in Paris last summer.

Renée Riese Hubert is the author of *Asymptotes* and two other books of poetry. Her books were published in Paris, although she is the only French poet in the current issues of *Variegation* and *Recurrence* who is not now living in France.

In 1952 MARCEL BÉALU wrote the preface for the "Anthologie de la Poésie Française depuis le Surrealisme." Gallimard and other French firms have published his books.