

A LITERARY MAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

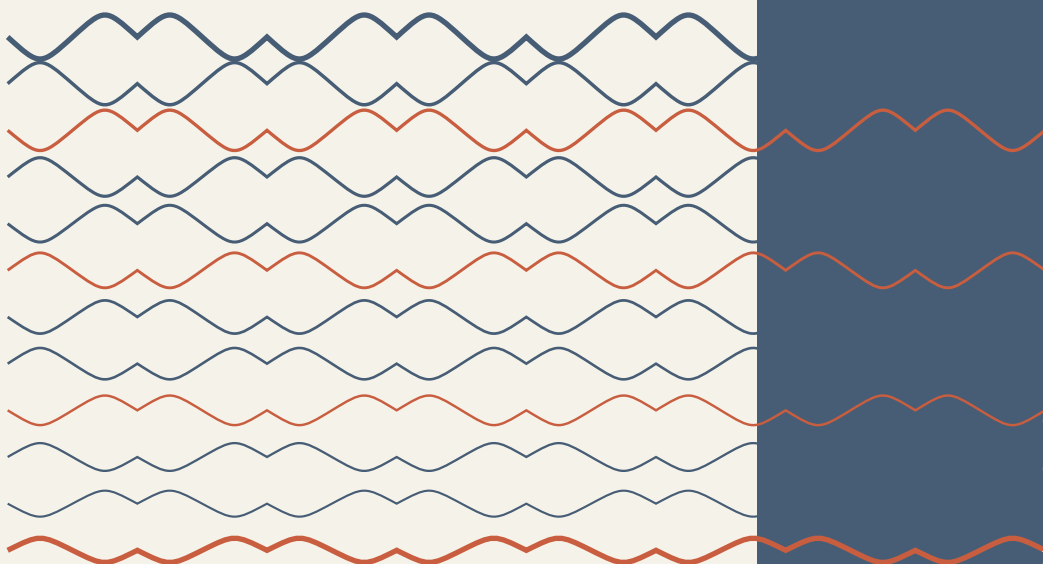
COAST LINES

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ISSUE 9

A Literary Magazine of California

Winter 1957–58

EDITED BY

Mel Weisburd

A CLEAN READING EDITION

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ART

Cover

David Lemon

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

RICHARD ASHMAN is editor and publisher of the New Orleans Poetry Journal and A Houyhnhm's Scrapbook, and a frequent contributor to little magazines, including Coastlines.

ELIZABETH BARTLETT's most recent print appearance was in New Poems by American Poets No. 2. Her poems have been highly praised by Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore and Alfred Kreymborg among others.

PAUL BARTLETT is an artist-writer and has been published in some forty literary publications, including Kenyon Review, Accent, New Story. With his wife, Elizabeth, he was a long-time resident of Mexico. The Bartletts now live in Atlanta, Ga.

JOHN CIARDI is the stormy petrel of the Saturday Review editorial staff and severest critic of 'genteel' poetry. His latest book publications are *As If* and a translation of Dante's *Inferno*.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT has a novel scheduled for publication next spring, to be published by Beacon Press, and is teaching at Barnard College. A past contributor to Coastlines, his work appears frequently in literary magazines, big and little, and his short stories have been several times honored in the Martha Foley Bests.

SEYMOUR GRESSER appears in these pages for the first time. A sculptor as well as poet, he is married and has four children. He lives in Riverdale, Md.

JUDSON JEROME is an associate editor of New Campus Writing and teaches English at Antioch College. He began publishing poetry about three years ago, has appeared in Poetry and many other places.

STANLEY KIESEL is a Los Angeles resident who has appeared in Coastlines several times before. He comes by his knowledge of children professionally, being a kindergarten teacher.

DANIEL J. LANGTON has published in the Nation. He is married, the father of a four-year-old son, and a resident of San Francisco.

CARL LARSEN is a previous contributor to Coastlines. A resident of Hermosa Beach, Calif., his first book of poems, *The Machine Shop*, has just been published by Hennypenny Press. Mr. Larsen is editor of *Existaria*.

DAVID LEMON, whose notes from a sketchbook comprise this issue's cover, resident of Berkeley, Calif. His drawings have appeared on three previous Coastlines

LAWRENCE LIPTON is a well-known poet, critic and novelist, and a previous contributor. His volume of poems, *Rainbow at Midnight*, was a Book Club for Poetry selection. He is the guiding spirit of a group of poets working in and around Los Angeles under the name Venice West.

ROY MacGREGOR-HASTIE, prominent Australian poet and essayist, is soon to publish a satire, *The Compleat Migrant*. He has been on a reading and lecture tour through various points in Europe.

THOMAS McGRATH is a frequent contributor to Coastlines. He has just published a novel, *The Gates of Ivory*, the *Gates of Horn*. His last book of poems, *Figures from a Double World*, won the Alan Swallow Award for 1954.

issue were written over many years and not put together or typed up until now. He also does other kinds of work; the latest a narrative poem based on the Viking sagas, called *The Dark Sister*, is being brought out by New York University Press.

PETER YATES is co-chairman of Poetry Los Angeles, which sponsors a monthly reading of poetry by various poets. He has appeared before in these pages and has contributed to the New York Times magazine section, Saturday Review and Partisan Review.

Four Poems

*Stanley Kiesel**Gregg*

Gregg, you cork, speck of a great saint, I wish
all your exits well.
The world's cold entertainment without you.
Never a detractor or an amuser, but a solid
occupant of the actual,
What you gave me never graced your mind.
Modesty was your grandfather.
If indeed, you were a child, you were better than
all the candy offered me,
Better than the apples because, Gregg, you were the
bite itself.

A child like you is a clearing, the era's arable
land;
Such a man that even your failures will find employment.
Gregg, there's no paper pleasure worth the thing you are.

Seven Children

David's eyes held his mind's reins so no thought stampeded.
Michael Dean gave his urine to secret agents and never
washed his hands.

Virginia was alone among us all, the baggage car of her
mother's care.
And Johanna was a sea that never conferred with anyone.

Where are you now, children? Rendered visible, I expect;
Wearing tight shoes, run over by a hundred trucks;
Terrifyingly suspect of planting aphids on your parent's
roses.

Albert, you leaped off conversation's cliff and never did
come back
Whereas you, Lynn, were the overtrained athlete of your
mother's tongue.
And John I remember you too - whose feigned deafness
Was all you had your mother could not bathe;
Your private mafia was the pants you filled from day to day...

To the mass-produced adult all children look homemade.
And so they are, who have not yet learned to do anything
on credit:
The world is whatever they pick up off the ground.
We, who swallow our duties like medicine
Our salutes are always on time.

April, fifty six. Children, the future's good if you endure.
Do not shave off those sweet mustaches.

Tanya

Her black bangs are better for her than any
cereal;
Exquisitely frame the independent votes of her
eyes.
Teacher must climb a stepladder to her answer
And only then to find a horse of delicious
anticipation.
Tanya, your tongue frequents a grassy meadow.
Unique child, this ball's a superfluity;
You laugh in your throat as you throw it to me.

Joey

Ink, jam, chocolate, what does not pay you its
respects?
There is not a grain of sand which has not been
invited into your shoes.
Was a comb ever elected to run through your hair?

Pinching, pulling, prancing, puling, the whole
day is prickled with you.
That small cluster of flexible parts which is
you, Joey,
Avalanches down on everyone's goodwill.

Funds are dolefully paid out to keep you clean,
To punctuate your warm palms with pennies,
But vengeful and mucid, you spill and shriek,
And welt the water glasses with your greasy thumbs
And buy up even more land with your homeless anger.

If this entire school despises you it is because,
 poor child,
Your wrath engenders fluids: you bring on all these
 old maids' periods.
Go, go be a paper on a Social Worker's desk.

Lord help us who can do nothing here
But aid and abet you like a crime
-- Grafters, all of us!
Pity shall always be a minor and never gain the vote.

God grant long life to your rages, Joey;
Our bruises belong to you if nothing else.

Song

When I was a bird, I was afraid
 Of the gods of the world.
When I was a bird, the sun drove me,
And the wind, to a cave of the dark and cold;
 And I
Was god of the cave.

My love was of worms; the stretch of the walls
 Was the stretch of my will.
My love was of worms, and of blind fish;
They were afraid; I was alone.
 And I
Was the will of their dark.

But the wind and the sun had fashioned my heart
 To be driven by gods.
The wind and the sunshine drew me again
To the world of gods and a memory of cold --
 When I
Was a bird, was a bird.

- George P. Elliott

I Was a Poet for the FBI

Murder, suicide, mayhem. Wow! The stories I could tell. See my agent.
Even before God was insulted at Yale I was at the U of I picking up
spondees and trochees in the Co-op and counting the condoms in the
boneyard on Monday morning.

I was Ed Hoover's man at YMCA College collecting free verse in the ladies'
room and once, disguised as Oscar Wilde, in the men's toilet. Cash
McCall is my co-pilot.

At the Green Mask, in the very shadow of the Tribune Tower - may I speak
freely? the beard of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was burned in ritual
orgy, hair by hair.

In Chicago I joined the Escalator Movement under the name of Gertrude Stein
and nobody suspected anything. From a poet named Rexroth I learned
about six different kinds of sex, all of them subversive.

In dives on Rush Street we lay on divans in mixed company and talked about
modern art, waited on by naked African pygmies. We sat on the floor
and read Edna St. Vincent Millay, aloud. I could name names and places.

On orders from Ezra Pound I infiltrated the Saturday Evening Post and planted
excerpts from Edgar A. Guest. One night I broke into the Saturday
Review and lopped off Literature from the masthead. Nobody noticed it.

Four times I escaped from behind curtains -- iron, bamboo, dimity and
shower, and once I barely made it by way of a bedroom fire escape clad
only in pajama tops. Danger is my business.

I found an atheist in a foxhole and reported him to General MacArthur.
Twice I was shot down in missions over Union Square, Waldorf Cafeteria,
Camp Nitgedieget and the League of American Penwomen. Arthur
Godfrey is my co-pilot.

I joined the Brownian Movement before it split with the Fourth Dimensheviks.
Big Jim Openheimer was its Party boss. I would tell you about my affair
with Tillie Zilch but that's still classified.

I was there when they dubbed the Communist Manifesto into the movie of
Charlie's Aunt, and nipped the conspiracy to smuggle quotations from
Karl Marx into the popcorn bags. Now they're plotting to foul up the
rhymes in the singing commercials.

Ten grand buys my tale of horror at the Cotton Club when Louis Armstrong sang Eli Eli on secret orders from the Elders of Zion, and the borshtcapades in the Holland Tunnel with Mickey Katz on Walpurgisnacht. Commander Whitehead is my co-pilot.

For an extra grand I'll tell all I know about free verse, free love, free lunch, free wheeling and free pop at barbecues of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Dadaist front controlled by Tristan Tzara and Ogden Nash.

o back in the free World, with he nope ties of hot Avise Minor of Culture I am Poet in Residence at Time, Life and Fortune. Zsa Zsa Gabor is my co-pilot.

- Lawrence Lipton

ROCKS AND STARS

Paul Bartlett

Ramon Tresguerras stopped under an Indian laurel. The heat of the afternoon bus trip had scorched him and he needed to rest. Looking into the black branches of the laurel he saw a number of canaries flitting about; he had not seen a flock of canaries in years. Somewhere in the tree a blackbird cursed the flock. Ramon wondered if the canaries would sing? But they fluttered quietly and the leaves of the great tree shook under a breeze.

Only a little further to go, Ramon thought: four more blocks --a vacant lot to cross, and then his own place. He rubbed his hands across the grass and noticed a woman servant eyeing him from the top window in Sr. Ramirez' house. It was the last house on this street. The sidewalk had ended a block back. This was the edge of town. Years ago this old laurel had stood in the country but now the town had reached it.

Leaning on his hands, Ramon tried to forget the bitterness of having many people stare at him: surely it would be a long time before another bus trip to town was necessary: it was degradation: he had seen blame in people's eyes. Pity was acceptable. Blame was unbearable. He had wanted to tell them he had not cut off his own legs and that it had happened years ago.

He began thumping along, stilting with his hands: his arms were his legs, his hands were his feet. His fingers sank into sand and then moved across gravel. Fingers and palms were calloused. Face close to the soil, Ramon observed some of his friends: the ants were filing through a green pass they had cut through weeds. Tilting his cap higher on his head, Ramon stopped to watch the string of red bodies. He wished he had as many legs as an ant; then the loss of two might not be bewildering.

One hand slipped as he moved along. His back hurt him -- as if he were still inside the mayor's office, under questioning eyes: What right have you to be in Guadalajara? Where you from? Where do you work? Who feeds you? How long have you lived here? Where do you live?

Along his path were daisies and Ramon studied them, noticed their slant away from the wind. Their yellow was a hairy yellow. Leaves were sanded -- they were the oldest ones. Hands beside them, face close to them, he smelled their pungency, an odor that trailed through time to his ranch days when as a cowboy he had ridden the thin fields and thinner hills around San Luis Potosi, where slaps of wind were wild enough, at times, to knock over a calf.

His path widened and Ramon came to the vacant lot and spears of timothy and oats let him feel his first release: they were tangled and yet most of them sloped away from the wind, the wind that came habitually from the Barranca de Oblatos: the thousands of spears were shades of yellow and their shadows were cool and immersive. Plunged in their secret mass, Ramon got the ease of the animal and, responding more and more to this screen that shut out the world, felt his muscles ease. Deep in the grass Ramon came on a low rocky

shelf and crawling up the rocks he saw the field where he slept. No one except Macias had ever followed him to his field; he wanted nobody else. From atop the rocks he took in the expanse of grass with rows of eucalyptus on two sides and continued open space on the other sides. The heat of the rocks troubled him and he moved on, simply plunged into grass and continued; the farther he went the cooler and fresher it was. Where wild artichokes grew he turned and in a few yards reached his old poncho, his sarape and, underneath, hidden, sodded over, his money - 90 cents. Enough to last him through another sick spell.

Sitting on his poncho he removed the leather pads from what was left of his legs and rubbed the flesh that trembled. Examining the pads to see how they were wearing he remembered Roberto Silva: Roberto had made him his first pads: it seemed yesterday he had sat in Roberto's shop: through the open door sun was leathery on the cement among leather junk : for a long while an old woman haggled over her bill as Roberto worked. Finally, she left, carrying her shoes by their straps.

The calendar, tacked on the door, said: October.

'Let's fit the leather now,' Roberto said, and knelt beside Ramon, remembering him as he had been, tall, proud, young like himself. 'Does it fit too tight and hurt? I want to make it fit right. It mustn't trouble you as you go around.'

How strange it had been, wearing those pads, almost happy at times. But those times had not lasted long. Only misery lasted long ... It was incredibly far back to better times, back to San Luis Potosi, back to the cowboy days. Lying on the poncho, eyes watching grass movements, Ramon fished for tortilla fragments in his pocket and munched them. They had a fine smell, a little smell of charcoal and a little smell of grain. His mother had made tortillas like these and lying there he talked with her :

'Mamacita, que tal? It has been a long while. A long while is bad or good -- you used to say. I've been here a long while and I'm glad to be here; it's home. You'd laugh at this home. We're not gypsies, you'd say. Yes, papa made us solid walls and they were cool in summer and when the desert cold poured in they were warm. I'm a queer gypsy, mama. And this room is mine...

He watched the stars appear and the brighter they became the happier he grew. The dark hid his infirmity. His body at ease, he stretched his arms over his head. It was a perfect night with no moon. His arms under his head, he let his eyes penetrate space. The air was crystalline on this Jalisco plateau -- as clean as in the San Luis Potosi country. He knew he could see farther into space with the passage of years -- he recognized it as a trick, the sliding of sight deeper and deeper. Sometimes, resting amid wads of quietude, he felt on the verge of a revelation. Like the feelings he had experienced as a youngster in the old church at Remedios. Tonight he felt no affiliation with mystery; he felt only gratefulness for this opportunity to shake off the memory of staring people. He had never learned to accept the city; even the town was alien.

Under his sarape he slept well for hours. His body was still hardened to

the outdoors. Toward dawn, barking dogs woke him and he turned and saw the sky had lowered into the grass. How near the grass brought the stars. A blue star was on a stalk and then stalk or star quivered in the wind. When the dogs stopped barking he slept till the sun rose.

One of Ramon's greatest problems was his distance from water. He usually woke feeling thirsty. He could go to a private house and wait beside the wall until someone opened the gate or he could go half a mile to an outcropping of shale where water oozed into a soppy pool. He preferred to go the half mile today. He strapped on his leather pads and set out, cap pulled low.

On the way he planned a murder: he would creep into Dr. Baez' backyard some evening and strike him as he lay in bed. Dr. Baez lived alone: at least at night his servants went away. He would knock him on the head and steal his money -- say 400 pesos -- and buy steel and aluminum and foam rubber legs. With legs who could refuse him work? In a year he would earn enough to return home. His friends would tap his machine legs and say 'What a miracle! -- How modern!'

Pausing to rest, Ramon watched swallows winging overhead, scarcely topping the grass. Bitterness blinded him to the beauty of their flight. He hated them for their ease of movement, for freedom that reminded him of his lost freedom.

At the spring, small lizards were chasing their tails. Ramon saw them scrutinize him and stand off suspiciously. He bent over the water and drank and then scooped water over his face; he tasted the heft of morning. He removed his pads and washed. When the water cleared in the sandy basin he drank again. Fastening the pads, he cut across the field to a fruit stall owned by Esteban Macias. Macias let Ramon lean against the wall of his stall and eat any leftovers: today he had tomatoes, tortillas and rice.

Macias weighed some two hundred pounds. He was an Iztlan del Rio man and resembled one of those corpulent and agreeable clay idols dug up there. He was a Cristero and liked to talk to Ramon of his Christ -- a lonely believer, a little ashamed of the pagan catholics, he was more fervent because of his loneliness.

As Ramon ate, Macias sat beside him on the ground, their backs against the stall, their faces to the broad Zapopan highway, a new thoroughfare. Ramon spoke of San Luis Potosi and Macias commented on miracles -- some he had read about.

* I hope I get to see one someday,' he said.

Ramon grunted.

They had known each other for three years and Ramon still made reservations for it was increasingly disagreeable to him to hear Biblical lore repeated. Nearly everything Macias said jarred Ramon's catholic background. He appreciated Macias most when he read aloud: the printed word was wonderfully exciting. No one had read to him since his days as a boy in the ranch school. Dimly, he saw the old bearded master and heard his falsetto, as Macias read. Macias' voice was plumbline deep and moved through wide mouth and shiny teeth.

Today, as they leaned in the sun, they got to talking :

... I have robbed,' said Ramon, as he lit one of his friend's cigarettes.

· You know about my robbing Manuel. Am I forgiven for that?'

'If you ask?'

'I ask.'

*Sincerely?' said Macias, ejecting blue-grey blasts through his flat bridged nose.

Don look how dacies greed. a serioubt you?

· I may as well tell you. I beat up a man, beyond the Rancho de Pedregal limits. He was a stealer of horses. I caught him and beat him -- until he was almost lifeless.'

'Christ will forgive you.'

'God or Christ?' asked Ramon.

'They're the same.'

'How can they be the same?'

'Aren't Mary and God the same and Jesus too?'

'I'm told they are.'

"Three are one'

*Two are one, when they marry,' said Ramon.

'Yes,' said Macias, uneasily.

Ramon had wrinkled lids and pale brown eyes and dark rings under his eyes. His hair was half-black, half-grey. Like a true Indian he did not need to shave. He was fifty-four. His overdeveloped arms and shoulders were powerful but not deformed. His short, slim body indicated a tall man:

'What happens, when you cut a man in half?' he once asked Macias, fighting his gangrene of bitterness. * They cut me in half. Now I see every man, every tree, every dog as twice as big as he was.' Ramon's face was wrinkled and thin for his diet created no excess flesh.

· Here comes a customer, said Macias, rising.

Macias' corpulent legs bumped him toward his fruit stall. He was reflecting on his friend's confessions and he was saddened by his catholic ways; he hoped to convert him some day. He wanted to find Ramon a home before the rainy season began. 'I've lain in the rain many times,' Ramon had objected. 'As a cowboy,' Macias had said. Ramon had hated that past tense.

He slept in the afternoon shade of Macias' stall. The wooden walls and canvas top were tiny but adequate for shade. Water from a bottle -- when he woke --and he sat by the Zapopan highway and begged. A child gave him three pennies and a fellow on a bike --a gringo or a Spaniard -- gave him five cents. It was enough for an afternoon.

Macias had no customers and toward the supper hour he split a red papaya and they sat by the stall and shared it and Macias said :

* I dreamt of Christ a few nights ago.'

'What was the dream?'

* I dreamed he spoke to me.'

"What did he say?'

'I will come'

'When?' asked Ramon.

' He didn't say. He'll come and teach us and help us.'

' And give me legs?' asked Ramon.

' Of course he will. He cured the sick and lame.'

' But they had legs.'

* Then you will need great faith."

· Did Lazarus have faith? How could he have had faith? He was dead.'

' He was dead,' Macias agreed, spitting out papaya seeds. *There are many things I don't understand."

' But I'm alive,' Ramon went on, ' then I deserve legs because I'm alive.

The train accident was not my fault. The ugly doctor who cut off my legs while I was drugged didn't ask me. I said: Why did you cut off my legs without my consent? He said: It was all I could do. You would have died of infections?

Macias went to his stall and sold two bottles of cider pop to a couple of maids. Giggling, they sipped and chatted with Macias, and Ramon bowed his head and watched dust devils ignite the earth between the Zapopan highway and the great Barranca of Oblatos. Behind the dust spirals, the cliffs of Oblatos were pale blue and dark blue and grey.

Not long before the train accident, Ramon had fished in the river at the bottom of the barranca; riding the hydroelectric workers' cable car down he had spent a day dawdling, catching a bass, eating hacienda mangos, happy with his girl friend; she had been loving: they had sprawled on leaves under an enormous chirimoya: head bowed, eyes closed, Ramon saw her small, sweet face in his lap; he heard her ask him to shake down more mangos, and he had shaken them and she had caught one as it fell...

Hands in his pockets, he felt the buttons and pins and nails and cigarette butts and matches he had picked up here and there. One button, a mother-of-pearl, he liked very much.

It was growing dark.

' Good night, Esteban."

' Good night, Ramon.'

He returned to his field slowly. Sky was stacked with pink and yellow. Pushing aside grass he surprised a rabbit; the animal plummeted away. Rocks were visible here: he had never seen these rocks. They were pinkish and sunken in a sort of crater. He liked the spot and thumped among the stones and sod and weeds. Sitting in the shallow crater he heard birds singing good night and then, as the sky color faded, as stars appeared, he thought he heard a rock speak -- a low, dry sound, full of assurance.

Next day he returned to the rocks.

For a few days he enjoyed his secret alone and then he told Macias and Macias smiled dubiously. Yet even his doubt was tempered by yarns of his boyhood when the family and townsmen had confused a hundred things, deliberately and accidentally. Ramon loitered about the stall all day, in a happier frame of mind. It was easy to go home alone. He brought his poncho and sarape there and re-buried his coins in a pepper can under a rock

A grass blade between his teeth, he lay in the rocky shallow and heard swallows fly close. Opening his eyes, he admired their quickness; a bird

snapped a dragonfly and Ramon smiled at the pleasant scene.

The days passed a little quicker. A vagueness checked his hunger and muscular aches. Nights were growing colder and there were showers but he shrugged off the chill and damp, remembering his cowboy heritage.

During a windy night he woke and felt numb and huddled farther inside his sarape. Stars polished the surface of grey stones and he watched the climb of light as night went on : the depth of space came to him and he turned and watched and listened. Grass blades hissed in the encircling field. Again he heard a rock speak.

Toward dawn he dreamt of being boy: he was running along a lane in a village full of willow trees and a boy was running with him. He began to run faster than the boy and then the boy called out to stop but he kept on alone.

After this dream, he woke once more and knew by an inner calm that this was the last dawn he would see. He stared at the fresh light lovingly and remembered fears of dying that had troubled him, during his boyhood and youth. He had not expected death to be so easy, reassuring and kind. He thought of his coins buried in his can and wondered if anyone would find them; he thought of Macias and then of his mother: her smiling face appeared among the stars.

Again a rock spoke.

'Rocks are kind,' Ramon thought.

When Macias -- moving through knee high grass with corpulent laziness -- found Ramon he bent over him and shook his head sorrowfully. Then he placed his friend's stubby body in a niche between grey rocks. That night as Macias closed his stall he felt a slight earthquake and people talked and laughed about it as he went home. Next day he returned to Ramon's field with pick and shovel, walking slowly since the noon heat hurt. He remembered the niche but could not find it. At first he blamed the heat and then seeing sarape and poncho as he had left them he knew there was no error. Dazed, he removed his hat where the niche had closed. Carefully, he felt the self sealed rock. Carrying his tools and the sarape and poncho he returned to his fruit stall, eager to visit his pastor and confide in him.

Three Poems

*Elizabeth Bartlett**Faena*

*Purer than snow
Though born meek and low
Behold the white bull*

*Higher the price
Cast up by the dice
The arena is full*

*Wider the gate
That opens to hate
Than led to his birth*

*Broader the way
That leads to the fray
With music and mirth*

*Simpler the load
With crossbeam and goad
For laboring ox*

*Surer the trial
By conquest and guile
In view of the flocks*

*Longer the night
Than the day in sight
O fiesta blessed*

*Bolder the voice
That made him the choice
Than the shepherds guessed*

*Braver than fears
The laughter and jeers
That ring him about*

*Louder than roars
The drums and applause
That silence all doubt*

*Kinder the stones
That tempered his bones
Before he was named*

*Richer the yield
Of the smaller field
Before he was famed*

*Quicker than rage
The horsemen that gauge
The blinded attack*

*Deeper than horns
The quivering horns
That now crown his back*

*Harder to bear
The friends he had there
Who shared in his plight*

*Lighter the yoke
Of a purple cloak
Than the loss and fright*

*Brighter than sun
The multiple one
With flaming red eye*

*Wilder than herds
The thundering words
That hurl from its cry*

*Swifter the scorn
Of miracles torn
Like shreds from his side*

*Fiercer the need
To finish the deed
And bury the hide*

*Greater than lust
The shimmering dust
That thirsts for a drink*

*Sweeter the salt
That drips from the vault
Behind his slow blink*

*Clearer than gains
The innocent stains
That humble the dirt*

*Stronger the will
That charges the skill
With patience and hurt*

*Truer the power
In the final hour
With shouts of Olé*

*Dearer the peace
Thus purchased by lease
Of glory this way*

*Prouder than love
The sword in the glove
That pierces his heart*

*Vaster than grief
The wave of relief
That flows to its start*

*Sharper than groan
The moment alone
Abandoned to sound*

*Darker than death
The mystified breath
That drops to the ground*

*Better by far
Had there been no star
To broadcast the day*

*Wiser if kept
A secret and left
Asleep on the hay*

Comes October

*Comes October
There's a humming in my ear
That lets no other sound come near.
I shut the suitcase mind
And lock the world outside once more,
But the hum persists above, behind,
Until it is a roar.*

*Comes October
Signs of storm sweep through my blood
That warn of rising winds and flood.
I clean the fireside grate
And close my windows to the shore,
But learn the prophecy too late
Of an ark, a door.*

*Comes October
Mounts a memory of the year
That will not let it disappear.
I turn the dated page,
Rewind the watch dropped on the floor,
But still must face the Shylock rage
Of promised time, before.*

*Comes October
Parts the jungle of my mood
To lead me where none dares intrude.
I push the webs aside,
The signs of death within the spore,
And find the summer's buried pride
The seed at my heart's core.*

Land of the Mayas

*Brighter than sun that blinds the eye
Louder than mounds that carve the sky
This silence*

*No shadows on the temple walls
No echoes from the darkened halls*

*Older than staring glyphs in stone
Stronger than tiger's breath on bone
This silence*

*No motion of the frescoed youth
No incense for the priests of truth*

*More startling than the jewels and gold
More surely than their stars foretold
This silence*

*No guardians in the spiralled towers
No artisans of eventful hours*

*Here where the ruins are choked by weed
Where drums and knives kept pace with need
This silence*

*No cisterns bless the fields with maize
No baskets fill the hands with praise*

*Here where their anger departed
Where their hunger ended and started
This silence*

*No more the warrior gods awake
No more the eagle and the snake*

*Here where we long for a word
Where we try to learn what they heard
This silence*

Epigraph for Simonides

All things grow old except love of gain.
 Kindness ages youngest. We have not been kind for gain
 but for kindness, to grow in one another.
 Fame is the end of unknowing, as print of the poem.

There is good reason in the rhyme
 and rhythm in the reason:
 the future likes what's out of time,
 the time what's out of season.

The aggrieved can remove mountains,
 yet a mob can never think:
 the abyss that was a mountain
 deepens. Man is at the brink.

If you would use my music, you must do it
 with deft finger and light wit,
 like as the mouse which belled the cat and like
 the cat lamenting it.

- Peter Yates

Female, Wildwood Type

*At dawn a nosey doe looked in
 our window like she never meant
 to pry; she quivered for a scent,*

*her lashes waxy with mascara,
 silk ears swept up, a painted face
 on a light-bulb head balanced in place*

*on an ungainly neck and narrow,
 shivering shoulders. She, combining
 the virtues of the hoyden, horse and sparrow,*

*appeared to be insulted when
 we caught her, bolted like a woman,
 thick-thighed and little-footed, ten*

rocking broad-bottomed hops and stopped
to see if we were watching for sure,
 then away with a white jogging tail for a lure.

. - Judson Jerome

The Dog Among the Rills

(Literary Notes, Part 1. These are roughly printed in roughly the order they were roughly written. To be continued.)

1. For My Friend Dick

*There's a groundhog in my field.
I've only seen its head yet.
Richard Eberhart need not yield --
My animal isn't dead yet.*

2. To Mr. A.

*Our poems keep separate domains
However fame befalls.
Sir, you write yours with your brains
And I mine with my balls.*

3. The Double Life

*Whenever in the fulsomeness of his fame
Mr. Oscar Williams completes a poem, he's
Likely to smite his forehead and exclaim
There's one for the anthologies!'

4. The Usual

*Some poets with long-tried temerity
Sat worrying over their posterity,
Unaware as the years went flitting on
"Twas only what they were sitting on.*

5. Autobiography

*This hare and tortoise race I've been assigned
I hardly can complain of, though it wears.
It isn't being the tortoise that I mind,
It's that there are so goddam many hares.*

6. On the Posthumous Award to Harold T. Pulsifer of the New England Poetry Club's Golden Rose

*Ask me no more where June bestows
New England Poetry's Golden Rose.
This year appropriately gave
That scentless burden to a grave.*

7. Hurrah!

*Madam, your little boy has
 Bat ears;
 And, Madam, some of my poems are
 Cock-eyed;
 But we had 'em -
 Di'n't we!*

8. Literary History

*When Robinson was young
 Who cared that he sung?
 While every critical prick
 Was raised to George Sylvester Viereck.*

9. Unquote

*' What is mind and what is bird
 That the grave is their last word?'
 (Lincoln Fitzell out on t'ird.)*

10. Au Revoir

*I've often seen a purple poet
 And now I'd rather see none.
 But I'll confess, lest you don't know it,
 Alas! I used to be one.*

11. Restrictive Adjective

*Now he is old they keep giving
 Every prize, and they love to bestow it.
 · Foremost living American poet."
 He says ' I must get rid of that " living":*

12. Several Thousand Epitaphs or Dollars All Rolled into One

*Let poets who turn betimes to prose
 To obviate their role as debtor
 Beware the world is largely those
 Who'll say ' I like your novels better.'*

-- Winfield Townley Scott

POETRY

Roy MacGregor-Hastie

One of the most appealing phenomena of the 'fifties has been the Naissance of Australian Culture -- a Naissance of a Ballet (" Matthinna ") divorced from both contemporary European and classical traditions, of a drama, best typified by Ray Lawler's Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (a current " hit" in the West End of London), above all a coming to adulthood of an Australian Poetry.

In the early days of British convict and free settlement, in New South Wales, the difficulty of wringing the means to economic survival from a largely inhospitable landscape made any question of civilization largely academic. To the first treefellers and graziers, to the first freed prisoners, the problem was one of survival; life was hard, and like Caesar's Gaul, Society was divided into three parts, each with its habits clearly defined. The English administrators of the Colony lived in a Little England at Government House and in the surrounding suburb; they read the latest novels and poems from the English Press, they employed musicians to play to them the recent compositions of European genius, and they were scarcely ever aware that they were living on an old continent in the Southern Hemisphere.

The second and third social groups, the free settlers and the convicts, had deliberately torn up their roots in Europe, and were anxious to 'forget' their place of origin and live a distinct and distinctive life. The first ' Australians' exaggerated the crudities of their existence, and consciously coarsened their manners; wherever possible they left the town for the 'bush', for the ' out-back ' where nobody would reproach a man for not washing or shaving, where 'toughness' and 'roughness' were esteemed above all other human characteristics.

And yet it was from the unwashed mass of the first graziers and farmers that the beginning of a literature came. The first artform to be born was a poetry in embryo, not the sober, accomplished and mature poetry of an old civilization, but the brash, vulgar, boastful doggerel of a dominantly masculine society; and these 'bush ballads', a genuine folklore with its antecedents in the England pre-Chaucer, were a living history of a country at a time when history was not considered to be one of its major assets.

The last of the bushballad writers were, strangely enough, urbanized peasants who felt at home in the atmosphere of their verse in a way they never could in an alien city -- Banjo Paterson, the clerk who wrote of the outback in a dingy office, Henry Lawson, even Brennan who preceded them and C. J. Dennis who followed them, sang the Songs of Sentimental Blokes, the songs of utter unsophistication and inarticulate patriotism. Their writings sold in millions of copies to the first Australian Expeditionary Force in the 1914-18

War, the first occasion on which the new Dominion had a chance to prove itself on the older European battlefields.

But if the Great War was the coming-of-age of a nation, it was also the end of an era of pre-Art, of pre-Poetry, or pre-Culture; the better-educated officers of the AIF found their country strangely 'primitive' after a taste of living in England, fighting in Turkey and France. It was no longer sufficient to draw on the limited resources of an indigenous literature, and yet there was a feeling that if only the 'way' could be found, the means to a transformation of human experience in the last empty continent, then an Australian Art would not only be possible, but inevitable. These years, 1920-30, were years of reverse migration, by writers and artists who promised themselves that they would go to England, France, Italy and Germany, see, learn and then go back to Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne with new and necessary technique; few of them ever went back. They live even now in London, still promising themselves that one day they will 'go home'.

Inevitably the 'thirties focused the attention of poets in Australia as well as in England on the economic and social disasters of the decade; the Australian poets of the decade saw Eliot, Auden and Spender at the head of what seemed to be a majority protest at the collapse of an economic system, and looked no farther for their remedies. Accepting the Social Reference Movement, with all its social, political and literary ramifications, they settled down to write the poetry of industrial change in a primarily agricultural community. They had one great advantage over their English colleagues and this lay in their membership of the society they were trying to lead out of an economic morass; where Spender and Auden were members of a ruling clique, educated at the minority universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Stewart, Keesing and Wright were engagé for the simple reason that there had never been time for the formation of an intellectual elite, there had not been any noticeable separation of artist and layman. And yet, they threw away their advantage in imitation not only of the form, but also of the language of an Auden and a Spender they could never understand.

After the Second World War, a reaction against conscious imitation of England took place. Australia was rich. Britain was poor and wanted to send some of its poor to the Dominions. The poets of the 'forties turned back to their country's own meagre history, to the surface of its geography, to the gum trees and the galahs, and wrote what they called the first Australian Poetry.

It is easy to underestimate the Jindyworrabaks, as they dubbed themselves, just as the ridiculousness of the Apocalypse in England too-easily concealed the genius of Dylan Thomas. The selfconsciously Australian verse of John Thompson, Ian Mudie, Ingamells and Flexmore Hudson is of no possible general literary interest, and yet this recognition that there was something 'Australian' which was quite different from anything 'English' was something quite new in the selfevidence of its truth. It is easy to point to Max Harris and all the other would-be Australian Whitmans and use the Angry

Penguins* to illustrate their shortcomings, but the fact remains that they did sever connection with a selfconscious art.

But something was happening to Australia in the years 1945 to 1955 that was scarcely apparent to either the 'thirties poets, now privately hysterical, or the Jindyworrabaks, lost in a landscape before their historically-misted eyes. A migration from Europe, from England, Italy, Germany, Poland and Russia added one million uprooted men and women to the population in ten years ; they came to a country traditionally British. They found inelegance, and opened tailors' and fashion shops; they found the steak and eggs diet of the and opened the first

publish their own periodicals and magazines; they bought land, and set up their own schools ... and in a short time, or so it seemed, there were vast areas of Australia where no English was spoken, or where everyone was bi- or tri-lingual ; there was a national newspaper, and only one, and that printed in Italian ; there were stalls selling vodka, and musicians, painters and writers in exile making Australia their own. It has been a migration, not primarily economically impelled, of all classes and types of human being, anxious to make a new society of which they would all be free and equal members.

The Jindyworrabaks, with their journal *Ern o'Malley*, the 'thirties " imitators', with their *Meanjin* and *Southerly*, are not going to disappear suddenly, overnight ; it is the most difficult of all recantations to admit that one has been consistently wrong for twenty years, and it is not to be expected that these journals will die of that admission for a decade or more, but this · lingering death is not important now. What is important is that the poetry of the poets, broadcast, widely published at home and in Europe and America, shows a vigor, an enthusiasm and a national characteristic that serves only to emphasize their belief in the existence of a hope for integration in the world community. It is a long way to come from the bushballads of 1890 to the anthology (Shaw and Edwards, Sydney, 1956) compiled by Professor Milgate and so ably reviewed by Professor Patané recently (*Letterature Moderne*, Bologna, Ed. Francesco Flora).

What are the principal characteristics of the new " school"? It is not easy to give a concise reply, its first characteristic being that the school is a non-exclusive one. Formerly, in many countries of Europe as well as in the Pacific, the arrangements by themselves of poets into 'Groups' or 'Movements' carried with it the implication that anyone who was not a member of the ' Group' or "Movement' was scarcely worth considering, and, equally, any-one whose writing was not obviously that of the 'School" was guilty of bad

*For those who do not know the story of Max Harris and the Angry Penguins: Max, a shop assistant, edited a magazine called the *Angry Penguins* with such a pretentiousness that two poets took a drainage catalogue and a railway timetable and manufactured what looked like the sort of "modern poetry" he specialized in; they sent it to him as the relict of a dead genius, *Ern o'Malley*, discovered by his sister, and Harris published it, believing it would immortalize him as an editor and 'literary expert'. Not abashed, he took the name of the bogus poet and rechristened his magazine, *Ern o'Malley's Journal*.

writing as well as bad thinking. Possibly this attitude is a legacy of the days in which poets, being few in number and confined to a metropolis did live in self-contained sufficiency. It has no relevance in Australia where the problems of communication in a country 3,000 miles in latitude affect every facet of human existence there; the physical community is an impossibility. More important than their extremes of intellectual loyalty, extremes of Marxism and Roman Catholicism, is the 'common ground' they share in the conclusions at which they arrive, which are fundamentally the same, no matter from what premise they begin or with what dialectic they reason; a whole apparatus of thought, constructed of the fabric of common conclusion is the catalyst over which their differently originated and motivated feelings pass, and from which their poetry emerges. Sharing an understanding of the position of Australia, they are bound together in a way more spontaneous and sincere than by any arbitrary labelling.

In this physical separation and emotional and intellectual community, the Poetry Society of Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Commission have a special role. The Poetry Society, with its headquarters in Sydney, acts as a sort of clearing house for letters from poet to poet, for ideas, for the publication of new verse in its monthly *Prism*; its informal meetings are an equivalent of the seventeenth century English coffee houses, of the bars and salons of Europe today and yesterday. The University is brought into the orbit of contemporary poetry by the membership of the University Chair of Australian Literature Committee held by the Society's President, and a close relationship between those who are studying literature and those who are creating it, is maintained informally and at the formal academic level.

The immense physical distance between the cities, and even between homesteads in the outback, have made for an acceptance of the radio as perhaps the most valuable piece of furniture in any house or flat. I have written elsewhere at some length of the belief held by poets of my generation that the apprehension of the poetic image is, by definition, ideally an aural one (Ausonia, 1957, June; Ed. Luigi Fiorentino). In a country where the printed word is scarce, or reserved for simple entertainment, the Broadcasting Authority has acknowledged its special duty to writers and artists, a duty adequately discharged by making available to contemporary poets an amount of * time on the air', envied even by the contributors to the programmes of the sympathetic British Broadcasting Corporation; the ABC has a staff of producers and a national executive who see in broadcasting neither a poor relation of television, nor a medium for light entertainment (this is and always has been provided by the commercial radio stations). It is odd to find so far away from the cultural poles of the past an attitude of cooperation in the agencies of publication; the 'technical problems of publishing' have no meaning in Australia, nor, for the poet, is there the time-lag between the writing of a poem which may have an important and immediate social reference and its communication to an audience of some millions. If this is sometimes productive of hastily finished verse, better revised and repolished, it has given to much contemporary poetry an urgency and an intensity of emotional appeal that come only from the writing and publishing of immediacy; there are academic 'metaphysical'

poets (A. D. Hope is probably the best of these), but the reworking and refinishing of a work in any art form can surely be better done when its inadequacies have revealed themselves in a social, not merely an individual, context of response. As an illustration of the sort of 'radiogenic verse' broadcast by the ABC (and published subsequently in *Prism*), 'The Philistine' by Gina Ballantyne is representative. It is from the *Radio Quarterly of Verse*, a programme in which the most significant poetry of the past three months is read, and critically appraised :

The Philistine

*Many rafters between you and the sky,
many roofs and chimneys shutting out
the moon's light and the disturbing stars.*

For you the cycle of the seasons
sets a barometer for changing clothes.
You walk on carpets, concrete, not the earth,
draw the curtains daily
against the strength and splendour of the sun.

Not in those walls will you be housed forever
nor with their substance defeat the lurking shadow
of man's essential tiny solitude.

Sometime

*coming casually from a lighted room
into the awesome still primeval night*
suddenly

you will know and feel the naked moment,
stand alone beneath the vast, indifferent
skies, upon the vast, indifferent earth.

This poem is typical of the 'new school' in one aspect more than in any other, and that is in language. The Jindyworrabaks, with their adulation of the aborigine and their uncomprehending use of the surface characteristics of the continent, the distinctive flora and fauna, as an essential part of their poetic vocabulary, could not feel the real difference between a garden Europe and a largely desert Australia; for them the gum trees and the kangaroos were not only symbols, they were the symbolic end, and consequently a great deal of their verse reads like a catalogue, or worse, a Tourist Bureau leaflet. And yet it is the abstract qualities of any landscape which give it its distinctive character, and react with the human foreground; the fertility of Europe has contributed to its attractiveness as a settlement, and made it seem ideally designed for human habitation. Australia is quite different -- potentially rich but seemingly unenthusiastic about Man as a cooperator; alone in the middle of the Nullabor Plain there is only a feeling of cold hostility, contrasting strangely with the hot desert and its high temperatures. Above all, the vastness and indifference of the dimensions of solitude occur adjectivally in many of the poems written since the 'new poetry' began. It occurs again and again

in my own verse, I know, and quite involuntarily. There is nothing complex in the construction of a desert, there is nothing recondite about mineral wealth or pastoral prosperity, and so the recondite and the manufactured complexities of over-intellectualised verse do not appear in any of the anthologies; the removal of the complex human to the simple natural, and the resolving of the equation in simplicity, is the aim of us all, however we try to reach its fulfilment.

The effect of migration has been felt in many other, less subtle ways, than in the reawakening and sudden maturity of contemporary Australian poetry: there are the bi- and tri-lingual poets, whose work is just as Australian as that of the monolingual, in a country where the typical inhabitant is only occasionally confined to English as a language. The *Corriere d' Australia* with its continental circulation is an ever-present reminder of this.

But to become an Australian, to be both a part of the past, geographically as well as temporally distant, requires a certain attitude of mind, difficult to describe; it is compounded of a willingness to forget and to learn, reluctance to lose contact with the past, and a belief in a communal future, tolerance, patience and humility. This self-assimilation is not easy, and its difficulty has formed the theme of many recent paintings and verses, one of which could well conclude an essay of this kind. It is by Nancy Cato, one of our leading women poets, in a society halfway between the American matriarchy and the Europe of masculine seniority :

No, you would never make a good Australian:
a swathe of golden cities and old School Ties,
of dim-lit bars and Parisian cafes
has insulated you from the primitive power of the sun.
Your eyes are blind with the glare
though in the harsh light perceiving, with surprise,
these odd Australian girls
with their wild dry names and long legs like horses,
brown skins and mocking eyes.

Yet some day in December, in another country
when the snow is falling, you will see in memory
the hills of sunburnt grass,
the wind in the gums, the hard blue of the sky
and the grasshoppers moving in a pale brown mass,
and the feeling of space that shrinks the human ego;
you will remember then
how the words that had to be said remained unspoken
because time was too short, and the landscape too large.

Two Poems

*John Ciardi**Faces*

Once in Canandaigua, hitch-hiking from Ann Arbor
 to Boston in the middle of December, and just
as dark came full on a stone-cracking
 drill of wind that shot a grit of snow,
 I was picked up outside an all-night diner
 by a voice in a Buick. 'Jump in,' it said. "It's cold."

Four, five miles out, in the dead winter of nowhere
 and black as the insides of a pig, we stopped.
 'I turn off here.'

I looked around at nothing.

"The drive's up there," he said.

But when I was out,
 he headed on, turned round, drove back, and stopped.

'You haven't thanked me for the ride,' he said.

'Thanks,' I said, shuffling to find a rock
 I might kick loose and grab for just in case.
 But he wasn't that kind of crazy. He just waved:
 'You're welcome, brother. Keep the rest for change.'
 Then he pulled in his head and drove away --
 back toward Canandaigua.

I thought about him
 a good deal, you might say, out there in the sandblast
 till a truck lit like a liner picked me up
one blue-black inch from frostbite.

And off and on for something like twenty years
 I've found him in my mind, whoever he was,
whoever he is -I never saw his face,
only its shadow -but for twenty years
 I've been finding faces that might do for his.
 The Army was especially full of possibles,
 but not to the point of monopoly. Any party
 can spring one through a doorway. 'How do you do?'
 you say and the face opens and there you are
 back in the winter blast.

But why tell you!

It's anybody's world for the living in it:
 You know as much about that face as I do.

An Island Galaxy

Once on Saipan at the end of the rains
I came on a flooded tire-rut in a field
and found it boiling with a galaxy
of polywogs, each millionth micro-dot
avid and home in an original swarm.

For twenty yards behind the sodden tents
and a coral cliff, a universe ran on
in a forgotten dent of someone's passing.
Clusters and nebulae of whirligigs
whorled and maddened, a burst gas of life

from the night-hop of unholdable energy.
Did one frog squatting heavy at the full
of its dark let out this light, these black rapids
inside the heart of light in the light-struck dent
of the accidental and awakened waters?

There on the island of our burning, in man's place
in the fireswarm of war, and in a sunburst
lens, I stood asking - what? Nothing.
Universes happen. Happen and are come upon.
I stood in the happening of an imagination.

Ten days later, having crossed two seas,
I passed that rut again. The sun had burned
the waters back to order. The rut lay baked.
Twenty upthrust shoreline yards of time
slept in the noon of a finished imagination.

And the bed and the raised faces of the world
lay stippled with the dry seals of the dead,
black wafers with black ribbons, as if affixed
to a last writ, but with such waste of law,
I could not read its reasons for its proofs.

Procne

The innocent, simple phrase that has a meaning
 slips through the mind with unadhesive ease.
 So let us toast the fussy, complex line
 that seems to mean but cuts the meaning fine.

Now, Procne ought to do for ohs and ahs.
 I'll look her up in Bulfinch in a minute,
 but while reflecting on her I shall pause
 before I read and hold her burnished claws

to learn the shade of Coty-pink she uses.
 Such sly details enhance the total impact.
 Procne? Let's see? This prissy Bulfinch fails --
 she might bring disrepute to nightingales

and, though a roasted pig with appled mouth
may goad the appetites of epicures,
a straight Itysian fare for Tereus,
 although it make my verses deep and various,

will hardly do. Let's choose Eurydice,
 be Orpheus, reformed, not looking back,
 and loving her hear all the anguished air
 pulse with the thrill of Proce singing there.

- Richard Ashman

Poem

It is marvelled that:

God so loved the world
That he gave his only begotten son.
 I don't like to deprecate God,
But he knew he was getting him back,
 And everyday fleshless states ask for begotten sons
 And chop them into kindling
 And sweep the saw-dust and chunks of blood
 Under history.

God was a son on earth.
 That was too fine, too easy.
 I wish to God he had also
 Been a father.

- Daniel J. Langton

Campsite

The culture begins
 with the birth of a river
not separate as sea
 from the harp of waters.
Prophets cry if we must break
 with the past, let it be clean
and whole as an anchor splits its links
of metal in the weak forged Vulcan.

The breaking was deliberate
for the lame hammer master
 knew that metal neither
 binds nor sets men free,
 neither shackles nor destroys
those myths of decay
 whose span we enter bloom.

Nature is not sly but a fertile spool
pure and wound clean as a wasp
 gathers mud like others honey;
we begin where the song must end
and the ground gives forth to the dead
 nothing but the living --gather
 armored by precincts of desire.

Begin and break
 until you make with weapons
peace lest the brick and building
 fall with exalted labors;
the lovesite smoulders,
decades older numb
 for the process of sheer power
and the small sweet breath you lip
 with forgiveness and forever
come hurricanes
 to blow the sand away
 and the hourglass of flesh
 its centuries of sound
 its desert of preparations.

- Seymour Gresser

Letter to Clarence Major

this is the day it is:

*things on a shelf across the room,
an empty ornate bottle of Seagram's finest,
bottle of typewriter cleaner, hardly used,
a quill pen, a dirty rag and toothbrush,
a cracked record with PRAY on it in white,
the key to the house, 6 thumbtacks on a board,
zippo lighter fluid, a pipe, a hookah,
kamchatka vodka, 3/4 empty, and 2 pickled
fingers in a glass of air.*

this is the day it is:

objects placed at random on a shelf before us,
we may pick among them, portraying a betrayal.
it is, so fitting, memorial day.

do you remember anything? Uncle death

(the last surviving relative of Brother rat
and Pal joey) does his bit on the bleached fence
beyond this window; gobs of paint freckle his
familiar face.

this is the day it is:

the hundredth anniversary of jesus christ.
we look up (from the couch where we are settled
with Gay Love Stories) at our windowframed,
object-placing Uncle,
and this time, for an occasion, we do not smile.
our picture window lacks a thing,
and we must reach inside our selves and offer up
the supersedure.

this is the day it is:

a day when tears are not enough.

- Carl Larsen

HANDIE REFERENCE GUIDE

FOR THE LITTLE THEATRE

OWNER

or, How to Wax Fat When Hunger Stalks the Lande

*by the Rt. Hble. Barding Dahl**

Seeing on every hande the dismay and confusion besetting the proprietors of those dramattick establishments known as little theatres, your servant modestly proposes a tract born of harde and bitter experience, hoping to be of some small assistance in piloting the storm-tost to a safe harbor.

ON BUYING A PLANTE

Propertie owners, being mortall, are of shiftie mien and call for close watching. Although as sellers they are disposing of an unwanted Propertie, they will dissemble and raise lamentations on what pain it gives them to part with the Propertie. It is a matter for Publick Griefe that so many of our Citizens are so uneasy in the presence of Virtue, but the buyer who is not aware of the state of Civil Moralls will soon be in straits. Therefore, do not be deceived, for like as not there are infestations of creeping things which driveth down the value of the building, or the roof may be sagging with years and be at any moment ready to descend on the astonished heads of the Audience, or the Roade Commission may intend cutting a wide highway through the Propertie, or any of a number of hazards may obtain. Above all, do not give evidence of animation about your intended purchase, for if ye do betray thy impassive mask, the owner will at once see his advantage and press home the dirk. Sign ye every paper with fear and trembling, for it is with this flimsy stuff that men are more easily strangled than with cord.

ON DEALING WITH INSPECTORS

After passing into the position of tithepayer, ye have next to deal with the Governmente of the Lande. Their Agents are everywhere, and mark them well, for they can visit ruin upon ye at no cost or effort to themselves. Know thy man -- is he new to the Service? Then marvel at his canny grasp of the Statutes. Is he ambitious? Then talk of politicks and other airy things to shew him ye have spied a man destined for grander stages than this. Is he humble? Then be humbler, for beware the sheathèd arrogance of the meek.

As a Civil Servante, the Inspector sees by lights unlit by him, and he knows little of Power, because he does not feel its effects. But the merchant of drama knows the roote of Power is in the fancies of men -- not in Lawes, not in Divine Visitations, but in the secret yearnings of the heart. Know ye then,

*An owner of the Dahl Theatre, Hollywood, California.

that the Inspector grants his Certificate to a rose called fair, if it be fair to him, and scant notice he takes of the seed catalog.

ON THE APPOINTMENTS

The bee is drawn by bright colors, and a man holding a ticket thinks he has booked passage to a fairy lande of Golden Knights and Dragons. The walls may crumble and reeke, but daube them over with gilt and let them cry splendor. The people will not rail if they can but believe themselves under enchantment. Cheapness and qualitie seldom go together, but in the Theatre they are boon companions, for Goodness here is how goode is thy Illusion. Let Parsimonie be thy guide in all else, but open thy purse to that which is directly perceived by the Audience.

ON CHOOSING A STAFF

Like as not ye will double in brasse from chimney sweep to orange hawker, but with fortune the footlights may bring helpers, drawn by the warmth. Look first to the Young, for they have more to give, and are more easily oppressed, drunk as they are with Visions of distante shores. Next looke to the Olde, for if they come to ye, they have need of illusions. Use actors for other employments only if the knife of want is at your spleene, for the sawers of air are in their minds grovelers, and promenade in the Royall manner to give the lie to their want of pluck. Looke sharpest of all for the man who would himself ply the Art, but for lack of heart cannot. He will find Honor in aiding the Troupe, and out of respect for the Art, will expect little.

ON BAGGING PATRONS

Turning from the heat of the Marketplace, anon ye may try for greener pastures in the Worlde of fat capons and bright fruits brought from Tropick Climes. The rich man hath many tricks, and to wot them takes an eye keen as a Venetian's. Ye must be the sheath for his bodkin, the tool of his desire. Launch him in Flatterie, keep him heading into the wind. Be amazed at his wit, stint no praise for his etiquette. All this with a fine show of Independence, for if he once perceives he is the Quarry rather than the Falconer, all is lost. However, being rich, he will from habit assume the worst. More important is to strike the nerve of his desiring -- does he aspire to the Penne, or to treade the Boarde? On no account yield to him, for his conceits will drown ye bothe. Rather do ye glorify the station of patron, he is the lighter of lanterns, the stripper of clouds from the Sun. Handle him gently, but plucke all ye can, for he will not abide long. The Art deals harshly with his kinde, and he is not long content to be roote instead of branch.

ON CATCHING THE PUBLIC EARE

Unlike bees, man is much subject to loud noises. He will travell an hundred leagues if the dinne be greate enough; therefore, gather ye a great assortment of drums, fifes, horns, and the like, and get up a brave parade to scour the countryside. No matter if the play is full of death, make free with the drums and the bawling, and they will troop to cry like hired mourners. Know ye this, a man who hears another say a thing is good is already half-convinced.

So if ye would not be a stiff-necked starveling, raise a great tumult with the crying of your wares.

Men dearly love lies, and they will believe anything that seemes strange. Make bold to magnify and so invent that they will be expecting Beelzebub and all the Saintes when they fille your Halle. When they find only your little play, they will forgive and forgette, such a craving has man for believing.

ON SELECTING PLAYS

For a humble Audience of labourers, tradesmen, commerciall travellers, and the like, simplicitie is the Key. Noise, color, surprise, fear, a shapely leg, these are things to gladden the rustick heart. Give the plaine man a brave show and he'll not complaine. Pander to the baser passions in the beginning, whippe them to a fine frenzie, and ende with a fanfare to Virtue. Thus does man make peace with the darker humours of his soul.

In the citie ye may try for Subtil Shadings. The folk there luste for dark corners, delighting in all manner of Unnaturall things. For the moste part, these are Gentlefolk who abhor the itch of homespun wool, and, lacking courage to seize Life with bothe handes, seeke for covered thrilles in the seclusion of Crannies. Know thy Audience, for if ye know them not, ye will attend alone.

ON KEEPING BOOKES

The Governmente being an insatiable Scylla, involved in divers fantastick enterprises which are enjoined without the Consente or even the Knowledge of the ordinary citizen, it behooves the proprietor to tread lightly with the Tax Collector. For if ye greete him with an open hande, he will eat thy monie, hande and all, so ravenous are these hirelings of the State, sent to plague honest men and vex them with outrageous exactions, so that in goode conscience a man must practise Sleight in order to continue delighting in the morning Sun. A word to the Sensible is sufficiente.

ON ESTHETICKS

Know ye that man born of woman finds travail, and the proprietor of a Theatre is among the unluckiest of mortalls. Obloquy and deceit are the common coins of his Existence, and, abjuring all notions of Dignitie and Pride, his feete are in the bedrock of Realitie. His knowledge of the bolts and bindings of the Art, his quickness in perceiving the false notes in the Songes of those in highe places, and his ancient discoverie that Truthe and Untruthe are but opposite ends of a glasse, are the tools of his trade. He bears abuse from swaggering cockerels unsung, unloved and undeceived. Without him, the Actor declaims alone or at indifferente Innes, the director turns Tossplot, and the playwright slips too soon into his memoirs. Though Heaven be unshrived by the claim, it is no great lie to declare that this humble Merchante is the Firste Lover of the Art.

READING POETRY ALOUD

Peter Yates

Anyone who elects to read poetry aloud should keep in mind the facts of performance. Fact one: if you expect anyone to listen and enjoy it, better make sure that you are being heard. I gave a fine reading myself lately - if you have access to the tape and turn up the volume --; but I hadn't thought enough about the shape and area of the room, into which I was throwing my voice diagonally from a corner. My best friends didn't tell me until afterwards, and when I reproached them they explained: 'We were too busy trying to hear you.'

Kenneth Rexroth read here in November for Poetry Los Angeles to an audience of 300. He delivered his verses sonorously in a voice like sour red wine, with only one mannerism: just when you thought you had his meaning he would fade. World-weary but exasperating. He may have been relying on the mike to carry his message for him; when he had been informed it did not, he discarded the mannerism.

Fact two: Whether you are reading your own verses or those of another, try to give the impression that you understand them. A flat, arbitrarily separated patter of words, unaccentuated, unphrased, unrhythmed, may arouse subconscious linkages in the reader, while disturbing for the wrong reasons the listeners who are being verbally spattered. The recorded reading of Wallace Stevens affects me so^{*}

Fact three : remember that the communication of art is a delicate matter.

A man who violently appreciates himself in public may be a good comic. Anyone is likely to be flattered by his first Haw-haw! from an audience, especially when he believes he may have said something to deserve it. So he tries for another. And the atmosphere for an evening of serious reading may be ruined.

More dangerous than inviting the audience to laugh with you is taking yourself so seriously as a bard the audience may laugh at you. It adds nothing to your message to strip off your clothes while reading, as a prominent young visiting poet did here some months ago, either literally or figuratively. The poet who delivers a poetic attitude or tone of voice as an adjunct to his words resembles the pitchman who sells his personality instead of a product. Several friends of an older generation have told me about listening through an evening of poetry read by William Butler Yeats. Each report agreed that the effect was first solemn, then serious, then, as the evening waded on while voice and manner did not change, provocatively near tittering. Yeats chanted bardlike on a fixed vocal tone in a compelling rhythm, imparting to every utterance a doomlike fervor. The fragment of his reading preserved for us on a Caedmon record could be the voice of Hesiod or the Ancient Mariner; when the manner conflicted for too long with the lyrical matter, a choking risibility set in among the audience.

*I have chosen to criticize as readers only poets whose work I particularly admire.

Fact four: like it or not, reading aloud is a performance. Whoever would perform must practise what he intends to do. An unpractised voice will not well up spontaneously to the proper pitches, control itself in making correct accents or mingle phrasing with silence to the best advantage of the poem. The reader should practise reading his poems aloud at a pace which allows the listener to hear them. This, let me assure you, is more difficult than it seems. Most of us, if we have not practised, read too rapidly and stammer ahead where we should pace each grouping of two or three words by a modest insertion of silence. In reading as in music silence imparts tone, silence determines the fluency of phrasing which permits inflection of the component syllables, silence gives the listener time to comprehend, detail by detail, what is being done. As silence permits inflection, so inflection, articulation, particularly of the consonants, distributes silence among the syllables. A slower reading, well spaced with silence, will seem relatively rapid; a faster reading, if partially unintelligible, will drag.

This is not to say that a slow reading is necessarily good. Dramatic pauses should be used cautiously and seldom. Some readers clot their phrasing by leaving too little space among the syllables, then clot their silences by lingering on them too long. When a listener becomes aware of silence following on silence, he forgets to listen. In music or in reading the projection of silence is the supreme art. There is an article by R. P. Blackmur, *The Language of Silence*, in which he tries to convey the presence of silence as the background of esthetic expressiveness, building around this quotation from Lear :

O! how this mother swells up toward my heart;
Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow !
Thy element's below.

He points out that 'mother' may be only 'smother'. Some of us have heard old-style Shakespearean actors who tried to put over everything *hysterica passio*. There is also the opposite fault, in much contemporary Shakespearean acting, of letting everything come down to the nerveless pace of nervous speech. In either the reading dissociates itself from the drama: one is conscious of the actor. The words serve as a scaffolding for the emotion, for the silence, the 'element below', out of which they emerge. There must be both passion and silence, outburst and waiting, 'smother' and 'mother'. No, you must rant a bit when ranting is necessary, but never let it rant away with you.

The great performer gives the impression of being so lost in what he is doing and feeling that he is artless; and the incompetent audience, believing him, believes that the greatest art is no art, it is just letting oneself go. It is because he has studied carefully, with attention to the text and the occasion, every motion of his art, every pause, has learned to project every silence, that the great artist can transcend the formality of his preparation, can appear transported in his action, while he is in fact linking every action by a predetermined continuity of art; and the perceptive audience, knowing this, will share his transport while trying to distinguish in its pleasure each detail of his method. When a critic informs you that in his opinion there was, yes or no, emotion in a performance, disregard him; pay attention while he is telling you

what the artist did. If he can see that, he will be impelled to tell you; if he does not, he is a worthless critic.

Now don't run out on me and disregard the argument by claiming, in peculiarly American fashion, that you are no artist, you can't read, you are not a professional. Americans think of a professional as somebody who does very well, for big money before a big crowd in the proper season, something nobody cares much about otherwise. A professional is a name read about in the newspapers, seldom seen in action. For the person who enjoys reading poetry aloud there is no time or season, very little money, small following, and seldom reputation. I shall not go so far as to suggest that no one can be a poet who does not read aloud: some of my best friends would prevent that. A composer may be no instrumentalist and a poet before an audience may be dumb. Yet I do believe that every poet should prepare himself to read before others and read as well as he is able. He should work his poems over thoroughly, but for consistent practice he should read aloud the work of other poets, consoling himself among the less adequate by reflecting that by so much as his skill is greater there will be worse poets. Bridges generously miscomprehended Hopkins, who from the high reaches of his inspired intransigent amateurism patronized Patmore. While Patmore during his own lifetime was more popular than either.

Too many readers prefer to live among masterpieces, like the musical amateur who assuages his judgement by listening only to accredited performances of accredited symphonies on his phonograph. The reader who has learned to read aloud will find fresh work for his discrimination in bringing out the essential virtues of poems that do not, in his judgement, entirely stand up by themselves, lending his skill of articulation to the most meagre measures. Thus when he is asked to read in public he need not be concerned what is put before him. There are poems that live only in print on the page. And there are poems that are never quite at home in print, because they do not fully live until they are read aloud. I would gamble that over the long stretch it is the latter will survive.

My final fact is that if you are going to give pleasure to others by reading poetry aloud you must take pleasure yourself in reading it. This does not mean that you should enjoy the sound of your own voice and let it go at that. Listen not for the sound of your own voice but for the silence of good listeners. They may not know they are good listeners, but a skilled reading can make them so. The purpose of art is to create itself where it does not exist. Artiness pretends that art exists where you go to find it.

In reading the intense silence by which an audience, forgetting its condition as an audience, becomes one with the reader in a projected esthetic experience belonging to neither and to both is the ultimate reward. Even the most gifted of us will not find this experience so often that we can afford to disregard it. There is no substitute for it. Applause clatters away into nothing; laughs distort attention; weeping, less common in our astringent days than in another era, directs tearful attention to one's own inadequate emotions. Whatever distracts from the immediate response is less than the response. The good listener will never be aware how well a thing has been done, unless his percep-

tion is linked with his attention in a continuous awareness beyond the complacencies of enjoyment. Otherwise he may applaud, he may criticize, but he will not remember, as a part of his own inward knowledge of doing, what has been merely well done.

We wish to make Los Angeles a centre of poetry, a community where poetry known, where new poetry is awaited. If we are to do this, we cannot do it halfway. Each of us who wishes to share in this poetic community must have an active part in it; the best way to have an active part in poetry is by learning well how to read it. Although you may intend never to raise your voice in public, you should know how this is done. Although you intend never to write poetry but only to share in the poetic experience of others, you cannot do so without an active poetic background. Looking at poetry on the pages of many books will bring you no nearer the art of reading poetry aloud. Criticism, even the New Criticism, avails nothing to apprehend a living art. And without that art there can be no living poetic community.

Poetry, Jazz, Etc.

Los Angeles now has poetry and jazz, and the bill at The Jazz Concert Hall* is a held-over success with plans in process for a new show to be mounted during holiday week. Also much heady talk about poetry being set to go with jazz in various bistros of the city. Also many records coming out, so that there is enough evidence around to build a case for or against it. Unfortunately the case can be built either for or against, depending upon what performances you think of, or what records you present as evidence.

So far the most satisfying performance I've heard has been that of Rexroth at the Tin Angel in San Francisco. Not necessarily because the poetry or the jazz was better than at the Jazz Concert Hall, but because Rexroth had had time to work with the band there, and because he was on long enough for one to get used to the style of things -- the voice, the band, the kind of poems he was doing. Jazz Concert Hall offers the interest of variety, but the poetry is somewhat scattered among the other acts and, with the exception of Rexroth, no one is on long enough to give the full flavor of the thing.

After hearing the show at JCH a couple of times (the second time a much improved performance; there had been almost no rehearsal for the first I'm left with somewhat mixed feelings and a number of questions. Concerning:

1. The audience. Who goes to these things? Everybody, it seems. In the audience at JCH the second time I was there was Stravinsky - and someone who was sitting beside me who started giggling uncontrollably when the poem-readin' began. Also what used to be called bobby-soxers. People with beards and sandals. And a lot of people who might have been found at the opening

*Los Angeles Jazz Concert Hall, 3020 Washington Blvd., First West Coast Poetry and Jazz Festival in association with Venice West Poetry Center, under direction of Lawrence Lipton, December 4-7.

of an art exhibit, a concert or a poetry reading, i.e. Card's 'person of (some) culture'.

It's certainly a fine thing to have a varied audience, but how many at JCH come for the poetry and how many for something else? I don't know, and I don't even know how relevant the question is, but it is a fact that the solidest hit of the show, to judge from applause, is Katie Lee, who sings some songs which are not all that witty. On the other hand, Rexroth, whose group of poems is the biggest single contribution in the poetry and jazz department, is received with some reservation, although that may be because he is the first live poet to appear on the stage. The question is: if you take away the big jazz names, will you still have an audience? Yes, you will - the fact that 300 or so turned out for Rexroth's reading at Poetry Los Angeles (probably the biggest crowd since the Poetry Festival at the Unitarian Church a few years back) is proof of an audience. But it probably will not be as big as attendance at JCH would indicate. There'll be a fall-out if the big jazz names are dropped and again when poetry and jazz ends its history as a fad and becomes an accepted form - supposing that happens. Still, there will probably remain a bigger and more varied audience than poetry has had in the past, and that is all to the good.

2. Gresham's Law. Bad money drives out good -- will bad poems drive out the good ones? Maybe. There's a lot of junk being waxed these days, and some of them cats can't blow, not when it comes to words anyway. A good example here is Mingus' "The Clown". The music is fine, but the flat-footed prose of the voice-man (I don't care if he is full of red white and blue lemons) might have made a fair children's record, nothing more. Yet the record is being talked about as if it were really part of the scene.

Or to take another case. Sitting beside me at the Rexroth Poetry Los Angeles reading (how come always beside me?) I heard the small voice of rebellion: 'And they call this avant garde?' - in accents of indescribable contempt. Now it is true that most avant-garders tend to be a bit old-fashioned, ill-informed and square in a sharp way. But this has the sound of Thermidor. These cats have been feeding on raw meat for some time (and Rexroth has himself presented them with the catsmeat of certain bad San Francisco poets as if he were putting out nothing but straight God's-body and blood) and it is not surprising when they start calling for wilder music and for stronger wine. It is ironical that the cry should be directed against Rexroth in this case; and of course it is ill-informed: Rexroth finished long ago with a lot of things that are now paraded as avant garde. But what are you going to do with an audience which, in part, is already hunting the farther out? If poetry gets a bigger audience will it, following that grand old American culture-pattern, debauch-and-be-debauched-by its audience? There is no guarantee that it won't, and some evidence that such is already happening. But poetry is in such a state just now that such debauchery might be healthy. It can't really damage The Grand Old Girl. But people who have a hand in presenting poetry to this new audience have a responsibility to the Muse none the less. Let them remember that a poem should still be a poem. E. Guest might go good, but it wouldn't help the Goddess.

3. Performance. Performance can make a good poem bad or vice versa. This relates to Gresham's Law above, but also to itself. At JCH the best received poem was that of Saul White. I don't think that it was the best poem of the evening, however. Why best received? Partly perhaps because of certain esthetically irrelevant aspects of the performance, but also and especially and the Wusic gested or creach on ure, to my way ip chinein a peas.

only sporadically in the other readings. To some degree this happened in Stuart Perkoff's * Alba' as well -- this too was very well received -although there the voice dominated the music, and there was little of the interplay which this form requires. Worst relationship of words to music was in one of Lawrence Lipton's poems 'How Jazz Was Born'. As one who does not believe that painting is about paint, I also do not believe that the proper poetry-and-jazz subject is itself; but the difficulty was compounded here because while the poem is talking about trombones, we are confronted by an excellent 'cellist. Not a trombone on stage probably not even one on all Crenshaw Bld.

That's a small point, certainly, and easily correctable. I am more uneasy about some of the other goings on. There is no reason, of course, why poetry cannot be used with or against any single instrument or combination of instruments, but I'd like to see poetry and jazz really worked out before people go to poetry-and-musical-effects. Rexroth has an interesting thing with two basses, but his poem --and Patchen's -- cum piano is apt to remind one of certain disastrous Sunday afternoons spent in the parlors of people of (some) culture. These wild "experiments" might have been left to the 'nineties or 'twenties or whenever they happened. A new sound? Then my name is Ethelbert Nevin. But the poems might go with a piano that wasn't pretty -- Cow Cow Davenport, maybe.

Conclusions:

1. Poetry-and-jazz can be very moving and beautiful when it works.
2. It hasn't worked very often so far.
3. It needs a feeling of spontaneity -- the feeling that jazz often gives even when it is not truly spontaneous. This, I think, means that the poem can't be tied too tightly to the music.
4. To achieve this feeling of spontaneity and ease of performance, and at the same time to avoid the goofs that would be inevitable in anything really 'improvised', the poet and the band have got to work together for some time -- long enough to get to know each other's qualities.

-- Thomas McGrath

must be content with Charles Humboldt's foreword in which he makes the rather sententious declaration : 'McGrath's story is a true prophecy. It is not an assurance of what will happen, but a warning of what may, unless... The answer is in our hands, only.'

McGrath's chief concern, according to Humboldt, is with 'perceptions of the self-destructive character of contemporary society and the publishers of Gates consider it 'a satirical novel of politics'. To my mind it might be more appropriately classed as an attempt to state a faith in a vague political-social future. The vague quality is not at all a matter of McGrath's writing ability, which is considerable. His writing is clear, his dialogue forceful, his 'satire' frequently explicit, and the reading time of the book, as the old Liberty Magazine might have noted, is 1 hr. 10 min. The rapid pace, deft setting of scene and characterization, and the unity of the time element, carry one through the book easily. But the vagueness remains; McGrath's future seems based, by implication, on little more than natural gestation and parturition, a successful revolt of the Workless Stiffs, and the reinstitution of reading, books, and unlimited public use of libraries. One of the most interesting suggestions, shown in his dialogue, is that the language of the so-called beat generation will become the common talk of tomorrow's exurbanites. But then language is constantly changing. Considering the American climate of opinion today, what meanings, literary or political, might be derived from a line (concluding a review) such as this? McGrath is a man to be watched.

- Lachlan MacDonald

BLUNDERBUSS

∴. What's going on up and down the coast

BARBARIANS TO AND FROM THE NORTH

Although well known by now, the Howl case developed into a sweet triumph for Lawrence Ferlinghetti, publisher of the City Lights Pocket Books, as well as for all the 'mature bohemians'. A feather in the cap of the San Francisco 'Renaissance' which, though aimless, is the first 'movement' of any kind to have reached the light of day in this administration. What with the guidance of Rexroth, the alert support of the San Francisco Chronicle and the publicity given by Time and Life, the movement became a matter of public knowledge, though an odd sign of the times. Ferlinghetti, Rexroth, Patchen and Kenneth Ford have been packing them in at the Cellar, Arts Festival, Black Hawk, Jazz Showcase and Pump Room.

Down south of the border, that is in the Latin fancies of Gordo, Patchen and Rexroth are packing them in. (The movement has not quite reached Dogpatch or Orphan Annie who is quite busy at the moment with Dead Eye

Sam). In Gordo we can hear such blithe verse played to a high cool trumpet as :

*Why is the infant dismal?
Dejected low and bitter?
'Cause the mite can't come
To hear us
It's stuck home with the sitter !*

A spoof -- perhaps. Not the free rolling cadences of Ginsberg, but certainly reducible to jazz sound.

While Frisco was jumping, William Margolis, suffering from a less romantic climate in Berkeley, continued his one-man venture with the *Miscellaneous Man*, copies of which were also seized by customs. Unnoticed by *Time* and *Life* and unpatronized by the capital of the Beat Generation, he might have been in Pasadena, for that matter. Meanwhile, the bosses take off for the provinces and Marianne Moore comes to town for a quiet but not so cool session at San Francisco State College. Allen Ginsberg is off to Europe, Jack Kerouac to Florida, and Rexroth and Patchen, going their separate ways (see Patchen's letter below), head for Los Angeles. San Francisco at this writing is a quiet town.

As the tumult diminishes for a moment, impresarios are wondering whether this movement will reach the mainstream of the teen-age craze. Victorian teachers of high school literature and other guardians of our sensibility are shuddering. There is concern shown from no less a key figure than Rexroth. "Most crazes don't have very much content," writes Rexroth in the December 1957 issue of *Frontier* (an article which is being extensively quoted here by the local Press), 'and it would be a shame if this all shunted off onto one of the crazy sidetracks of the American Geist like swallowing goldfish and pee wee golf.'

And speaking of *Mainstream*, Volume II, Number II (not to be confused with the one published by *Masses* and *Mainstream*) is devoted entirely to a full scale attack on the San Francisco movement. A plausible antidote to the San Francisco issue of the *Evergreen Review*. Engineered all the way from Palatine, Illinois, wethinks it doth protest too much, though much of the criticism is deserved.

Other activities in Frisco, to name perhaps a few new '58 publications : New series of *City Lights* Pocket Books including *Cora In Hell*, William Carlos Williams, a reprint of his first book ... Jaques Prevert, *Selections From Paroles*, Gregory Corso's *Gasoline*, with an introduction by ?... Allen Ginsberg. Michael Grieg will publish a whole series of books of poetry from his newly established *The Black Hand Press*. Watch for Hedley's *Inferno Press* with a new line of books for '58.

LOS ANGELES GOES REGIONAL

With Rexroth and Patchen down here, the town has gone crazy. Beginning with the November program of Poetry - Los Angeles, at Barnsdall Park, Rexroth drew an overflow crowd of 300, and then departed for Lawrence

Lipton's Venice West Poetry Center (see Blunderbuss No. 8 issue). With only a few weeks' notice, and with a vengeance born out of local controversy, Lipton staged a full scale production. Its first West Coast Poetry and Jazz Festival (see McGrath's review) was, at least from the point of view of the jazz ensembles, quite impressive. Aspects of these (eight) performances at the Los Angeles Jazz Concert Hall are too numerous to list here, but with a hold over, and more programs in the offing, one hopes that poetry will play a bigger part in these performances.

Of more, though less spectacular, significance for the reading of poetry itself, is the activity of Poetry - Los Angeles which has been sponsoring monthly poetry sessions since September. With a minimum of publicity, practically all of the readings were attended by capacity audiences. With readings now performed at Barnsdall Park, a whole and inclusive program of poetry readings by local and out-of-city talent are being planned. Performances for 1957 have included William Pillin, Stuart Perkoff, Guy Daniels, Alvaro Cardona, *Kenneth Rexroth*, *Gil Orlovitz*, *Peter Yates*, *Gene Frumkin*, *Mel Weisburd*, *Sid Gershogren*, *Edmund Teski* and *Stanley Kiesel*. All poems read so far were without benefit of musical accompaniment, and audience response was excellent. Other experiments are in the offing.

Another group meets at Bob Chuey's enormous Neutra designed home near the strip and has featured such poets as Anais Nin, the Costa Rican poet, Alvaro Cardona, Will McFarlane, Lawrence Spingarn, Peter Yates, Ann Stanford and others. On the air, it's Peter Carr's 'Poetry and Talk' on Tuesdays and Thursdays on KUSC which has featured Guy Daniels, James Boyer May, Kenneth Rexroth, Tom McGrath, Alex Trocchi and William Pillin as well as a series of criticism and analysis of poetry and poetry readings by Witter Bynner.

At Los Angeles State College the Chapparral poets have formed a verse choir to sing verse compositions of poets, including works by Helen Nonam. Kenneth Patchen, during November and December, has been recording poetry for Cadence Records in collaboration with Allyn Ferguson and the Chamber Jazz Sextet. This will be the first recording of poetry-jazz on a commercial basis. In Pasadena, that great patron of the arts, its Discovering Modern Poetry recently organized to parallel the Poetry Center of New York - YM and YWHA, located at the Pasadena Area Liberal Arts Center, 482 E. Union St., Pasadena.

Literary and miscellaneous: Wallie Berman's original and erotic art folder, Semina No. 2, will be out soon ... Nation contributor Gene Marine is acting editor of Frontier while Phil Kerby is off in the east on a Ford Foundation Scholarship ... James Boyer May, editor of Trace, writes the foreword to the special issue of the Beloit Poetry Journal's American Underground Movement and the British 'New Movement', which was also broadcast on Chicago's WFT . . . The Hennypenny Press (James Singer Jr.) is working with Outposts London in a joint publication of Ruth Forbes Sherry's Imperishable Gene... Out is a new pamphlet of poetry by Carl Larsen, Hennypenny Press.

A Statement by Kenneth Patchen

What I have to say is said for the purpose of throwing light on a situation about which many people have expressed puzzlement.

My name and activities have not figured in recent publication coverage of 'the San Francisco Scene' for the simple reason that in so far as I could I rejected all such identification.

I refused to be interviewed or photographed by Life magazine in connection with their story; I ignored all similar requests for material and the like from The Evergreen Review, The Cambridge Review, etc.

Again, there is a simple, uncomplicated reason for this :

I am not and never have been 'a regional poet'.

Moreover, my participation in, and knowledge of, 'the San Francisco Scene' is exactly zero.

My stay there was occasioned and colored by medical considerations; unfortunately those of a social or literary kind did not enter into it.

And now about 'Poetry-Jazz' -

My views and attitudes have undergone a great change since I first experimented with it through taped readings in 1950 (in Connecticut, by the way) :

I am convinced that the art direction may only be realized through the union of the poet's reading with music expressly composed for that reading.

The Chamber Jazz Sextet and I have made such a start.

It is Allyn Ferguson's distinction to be the first to have composed for this new medium; and mine, to have been privileged to share in its first public presentation.

This is for the record.

The rest may be left for such resolution as time sees fit to effect.

Editorial

A Squawk About 'Squeal'

Ane fruita the fand-of aly reples presto fet on tea deer have
 pages of The Hudson Review) who planted the seeds of acclaim firmly in the
 minds of the nation's best-type readers is Louis Simpson, himself a poet of
 note. His pioneering in behalf of our small, barefoot, sun-bronzed community
 should not go unrewarded. Being poor and shaggy, however, all we can
 promise are a few poems dedicated to Mr. Simpson in our forthcoming antho-
 logy of scurrilous verse and perhaps a mention or two in a long poem in canto
 form now in the throes of composition by a highly-rated poet whereabouts
 (name of Dante Delahanty), to be called The Divine Blasphemy.

Since few in our community, unfortunately, read The Hudson Review, it
 seems intelligent to quote Mr. Simpson's paragraph of adulation :

... I wish to add myvoice to the chorus of praise of the new Californian
 school of poets, located in Los Angeles. I am astonished that William
 Carlos Williams, Mademoiselle magazine and Mr. Breit, of the Times.
 have not yet discovered this youthful group of young poets (not one of
 them is a day over thirty-five). It is true they have not written much poetry
 as yet, and most of what they have written is unreadable, but they have the
 right attitudes; they look like poetse And their solitary, supreme master-
 piece, 'Squeal', cannot be criticized. It has to be heard.

He follows this up with the poem, "Squeal", composed presumably by
 himself, in a new bop meter which we, in our cool community, dig real fine
 and intend to study carefully in our bohemian hovels. This poem, it must be
 stated in all honesty, borrows a few speech patterns from Allen Ginsberg and
 the word ' bastards' we seem to have read in K. Rexroth. But the last stanza
 is highly original:

What was it Walt said? Go West!

But the important thing is the return ticket.

The road to publicity runs by Monterey.

I saw the best minds of my generation

Reading their poems to Vassar girls,

Being interviewed by Mademoiselle.

Having their publicity handled by professionals.

When can I go into an editorial office

And have my stuff published because I'm weird?

I could go on writing like this forever...

Here Mr. Simpson has really caught the hot, red-blooded pulse of our
 movement. But one question troubles us. What if he has confused us with a
 bunch up in San Francisco? After all, down here we are so unknown that we
 have barely heard of ourselves. Could it be that he did some deep research,

such as reading the editorial by W. D. in Epoch which lowered the broom on San Francisco and then, feeling sorry for our small community, said to himself, 'Why don't I make a clean sweep of California and brush off L.A. too?'

Well, we 'ppreciate it, Lou, but how much L.A. stuff have you read? It's not all hairy, you know. Some of it rhymes, too. And some of our best stuff isn't even neurotic. A few of us --now you'll have to take my word for this -- a few of us like Eliot, Tate and Ransom.

Let me tell you a secret, Lou. There are some in our community who believe the Social Lie : are married, have kids, work steady, and pay affiliation dues to Society (whose Board of Directors we don't like, but we stay in because we pay for lifetime memberships and there's no refund).

One more secret. Some -- not much yet -- of the stuff our bearded, barefoot guys put out is readable. Really. You don't even have to hear it. And even a lot of the Limberger poems churned out here have a quality called life (the one Luce doesn't publish), which the perfumed poetry you fellows sometimes print in Hudson doesn't have. This may strike you as odd. It is odd. Here we are, many of us hardly knowing a stanza from a cow's ass, many of us downright fakes, a few of us truly irresponsible, and still we have a life force, gusto, you guys back east often forget about because it doesn't scan.

'How that come to be?' Okay, Lou, just one more secret, but no more. mind you. Our own small community and big, loud brother up north are in opposition to the trend. We (ironic affiliates, disaffiliates, quasi-affiliates and pseudo-affiliates) think our stuff should be read, and heard, by people.

people. Sure, sure, you don't want to, Sitaps back in Ivyville forget aboutwrite down to the lowest TV-happy P-e-o-p-l-e. Contess it, sometimes yor

marblehead, and that's well and good. No reason to lower standards. Only you have to clue the people in somehow that our poetry is written in English (not the King's necessarily) and that they can read and understand most of it, at least feel it, if they'd only take the risk of perhaps not understanding for a while. The idea (Homer's or Eliot's or somebody's) is that poetry should be enjoyed and enjoyable, and that's why it's worth the effort.

Anyway, it must be dreadful to think the only readers of one's poems are professors and editors and fellow poets who immediately begin dismembering them, probably through habit, instead of keeping the poems whole long enough to feel them. That's necropsy, man. Real dead.

So keep that in mind, Lou and all you other critics at sea, when you read one of the poems from California. Don't go easy on the poem, but remember we're trying to free an audience. Our sins -- and they are many and noisy.-- are due to our not knowing how yet. That nonsense in Life a short time ago is probably the wrong way: it's news, but ultimately we have to stand or fall on our poetry, not on our publicity. At least, though, we are trying; we want readers and listeners.

- Gene Frumkin