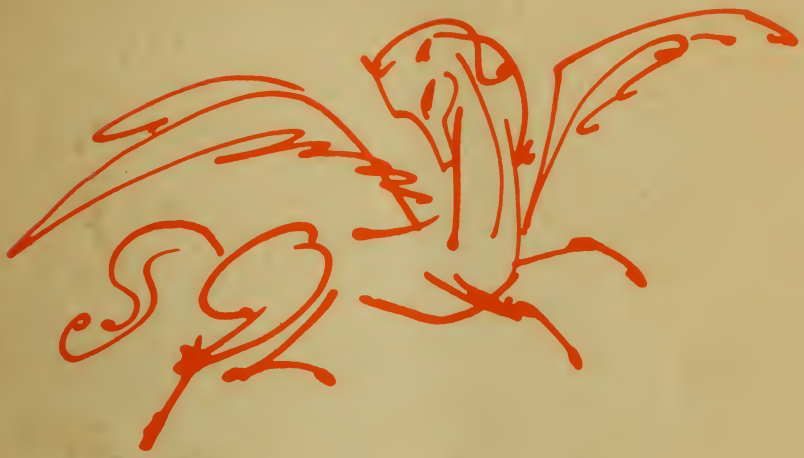
POETRY



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POETRY

SEPTEMBER 1962

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COMMENT

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TYPOGRAPHY BY GREER ALLEN • PEGASUS BY JULIET RAGO

POETRY

FOUNDED IN 1912 BY HARRIET MONROE

VOLUME C NUMBER 6

SEPTEMBER 1962

I. A. RICHARDS

TOMORROW MORNING, FAUSTUS!

AN INFERNAL COMEDY

The categories in terms of which we group the events of the world around us are constructions or inventions. The class of prime numbers, animal species . . . squares and circles: All these are "inventions" and not "discoveries". They do not exist in the environment.

Bruner, Goodnow, and Austin, A STUDY OF THINKING

And softly make a rosy peace
A peace of Heaven and Hell
W. B. Yeats

Dramatis Personae

Satan: elderly, tired, distinguished Personage; Chairman of the Board.
Beelzebub: harassed Executive; President.
Moloch: vigorous brimstone General.
Belial: elegant, dissolute Don.
Mammon: cultivated Financier.
Sophia: Clerk of the Board, Wisdom Herself.
Lord Faustus

Faustus has been becoming as much a temptation and an entanglement to his Fiends (who are Milton's) as they have been to him. The moment of juncture, his visit to Hell, has arrived. They have offered him everything to become theirs and the mutual explorations, the exchanges of view, have begun. Entering Hell, he is seated at the left hand of Satan in the Board Room of the Futurity Foundation, of which Satan is Chairman of the Board and Beelzebub is President. Sophia, the Divine Wisdom is acting as its Clerk. As the Prologue has declared:

What happens there is for the play to tell.

Beelzebub

What now of Milton?
We have of late—and may as well admit it—
Found Milton's final cosmogony
Less in accord with Eddington than with Hoyle.

Faustus

Cosmogony? No. It's his high seriousness,
His conscious zeal that should engage your study,
When his eye's full on the object, like a Gorgon's,
The thing he would be offering stiffens to stone,
Erodes away, decays to sand and rubble;
His decorations—you yourselves for instance—
Are more enduring, you have a life and being,
Yours while you live, not bounded by his wish.
It is the term of this free being you should care for.

Moloch

Ours while we live! The term of our free being!

Faustus

Why, Moloch, yes. It has its term, its end;
Terms too, if so you would, of free renewal.

Moloch

And what of him? The Torturer, the Tyrant
The Eternal?

Faustus

Dead from the start, a tombstone closing
An empty grave, long a memorial,
Now worn to wasting sands.

Moloch:

There's nothing there?

Faustus

And never was. You'd nothing to defeat.

Moloch

So I've been fighting
A figment of that faker Milton, eh?

Faustus

Agree though that he did you pretty justice
Gave you good words and used good words about you?

Moloch

Why not? "The strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven." You say that no one fought?

Faustus

You did. You fought yourself. He was your image.

Moloch

Man was his image once! Has man gone too?
I took him for the favorite and champion
Of that Almighty Evil we abhorred.

Faustus

He's been your champion rather, your pet and pupil.
In your real wars, when you made war on man,
You used him on himself. We would forget you.

Now that your tally's lost, how would you care—
Whose care was "With the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength" with none now left to equal—
Care not to be at all? There are ways open!

Belial

I doubt it still: that "that must be our cure;
Sad cure, to be no more!" How rend from me
"This intellectual being". I know it as
The source of all could rend, or could be rent.
Me too he gave good words, our maker Milton.
"Those thoughts that wander through Eternity";
"Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring".—Note; never-ending!
I grant you he liked Moloch better. Me, he envied.
He wasn't in my class. Faustus is right,
Where Milton most meant, "all was false and hollow".
Worse still, I could recall, if so I cared,
Some things in poorish taste—not taste at all—
He allowed himself to dictate to those daughters.
Forget all that. He made me, Belial,
The Imagination—or at least its spring.
O yes, our architect, ingenious Mammon,
Has some as well, but psychologically . . .

Faustus

I wondered when you'd come round to mentioning Freud.

Belial

Freud sometimes was my vehicle, sometimes Satan's,
Sometimes Beelzebub's: all very complex.
Don't look too prim: a bad joke's but a joke!
We may have undone one another's work on him
But, you'll admit, we did compose a genius.

Faustus

A Platonic genius, if you like. Remember Troilus:
"Hark! you are called: some say the Genius so
Cries 'Come!' to him that instantly must die."

Belial

Instantly must die! What's this! What's this!

Faustus

When Imagination finds its spring of being
Won't it hang there, *stuck* there like Narcissus
Admiring its own workings—involve the lot
Into tangles of the self-same psycho-stases?

Belial

You may have something. I'm finding Freud a bore.
I didn't foresee enough the things they'd do,
His Maenads, in the critic's rumpus room.

Faustus

It goes somewhat further than a freak of fashion.
You've set a pattern: when the instrument
Contents itself through turning on itself,
Like that old candle hung between the mirrors,
Anew infinity engenders.

Beelzebub

What need to be
So grimly hard to follow.

Faustus

Follow you must:
Like climbers on a wintry cliff we cling
With scarce what glues us to it. But this clift

Though solid as the sum of things it seem
Is biscuit thin and brittle. Mammon took
One look within one crack. That rattled him;
You others, tapping here and there suspect
Enough to take my word for it: with one twist of the mind
I can shoulder out exits for the lot of you.
Once through, you are that. That cold void gulf
Is you; not in it, IT. You're back; you've gone
Back to the matrix: aboriginal mirk.
To be reformed or formless, that's your choice!

Mammon
I can't see why things can't be left as they are.

Faustus
You should know why: the movement. There's that moment
Take it or miss. Between "Too soon—Too late"
You dangle your keys to fortune.

Mammon
This is all too soon;
Why not wait and watch how the thing develops?

Faustus
Must I show you my mind again? One more peep,
After that there can be no more showing. Seeing and seen,
Touching and touched, all chance of gain or loss,
All come and gone, all possibilities of being
Fill in between the origin and the end.
Fulfilled, close down! What could be further?
That's true for all of you, but first for Mammon.

Satan
And true for you too, surely?

Faustus

No, it's not sure—
Companionable though it might well be to think so—
But doom on man weighs heavier than on you,
Vaster his burden of the unfulfilled.
Mammon, here, for example, has not one more thing to do.

Mammon

No more! What a joke! I'm just beginning!

Faustus

What makes it seem so is the oncoming end.
When shortages cease there's no point in possessing.

Mammon

O, but I want . . . I want

Faustus

Want then being master,
Want and be wanting! (*Mammon vanishes*)

Belial

But this is appalling!

Beelzebub

Arbitrary and wanton!

Moloch

You mean he's there?

Faustus

Yes, nowhere: unqualifiedly NOT;
Utterly out and absolutely lost.

Satan
(*advancing with Faustus*)
Your dream that's not your dream, nor mine, nor ours,
No longer dream but world, now wrenches us
Out of lost being into other being.
On, out we swing, the whim to be converted
Converted by conversion, turning, turned.

Satan and Faustus vanish. All dark except spotlight on SOPHIA, *who rises and comes forward slowly as she speaks.*

Sophia
As once into the Serpent, Satan now
Into a greater is, still eddying, swept:
Possessing and possessed: Faustus as well,
Possessing and possessed, transformed as full,
Coil within coil consultant, in accord,
Now know themselves augmented far beyond
Their either compass, now sudden lifted high
Above designs of either; for this hour
Transcended as transcending—come what may.

Returning soul remembering old battles
Noting who lost, who triumphed, who rose, who fell:
The winner crippled, the abased upswung,
Red dawn's decline, drear sunset victories,
Has felt such chill breath of a new becoming
Compose her blood, engender a new clay,

Hence Satan-Faustus, Faustus-Satan, hence!
Leave Belial and Beelzebub their labors.
You have your journey. Henceforward, two as one,
Cancelled your clashing surnames: Demogorgon,
Quetzalcoatl, Mephistophilis,

Hesper, well-omened Faustus, Lucifer,
Falling as Earth, Sun, Galaxies are falling,
Falling whereunto, and through what amaze.
On with your fall within the Unamazed.

Moloch

He's had it, has he? Couldn't fight the void,
Well, since there's no one here, it seems, to fight,
Nothing to measure up to, let me go see,
See, try and find (*Moloch vanishes*)

Faustus

Non-entity as well.
Where nothing's to be had or won, those two
Couldn't continue. Clouds, they were that formed
Under their due conditions. These gone, dissolved;
No more occasion for them. You others here—
Beelzebub, and Belial, you were
Somewhat more spontaneous, were freer, were . . .

Belial

What's happening to your tenses: "were", "were", "were"?
Are we not present still?

Faustus

Not altogether:
Part past, part future. Do you not feel your change?
Into the vacancy comes what you couldn't think of,
Could but dream; your dream, whirled inside out,
Back-fronted, white for black—but still your dream—
Comes stalking up upon you, has you now
(*Taking Satan by the shoulder*)
Firm fisted in its clutch and drives you on,
Yours and not yours, its business now its own.

Beelzebub, at last, an administrator—
Capable, cool, indifferent, serviceable,
Policy-free, non-partisan and what-all;
Belial, steadily set now on designing
What can remake mankind, as Man his world.

Belial
Ah, flatterer: you know my weaknesses . . .

The excerpt presented in these pages is from Act III.
The play was produced May 22, 1961, at the Loeb Drama Center, Harvard, by Stephen Aaron. The parts were read by the following:

Prologue:	*Eric Schroeder*
Satan:	*John Finley*
Beelzebub:	*Robert Chapman*
Moloch:	*Perry Miller*
Belial:	*Dan Seltzer*
Mammon:	*Peter Davison*
Mammon Vehicle:	*Stacey Grandin*
Sophia:	*Barbara Blanchard*
Lord Faustus:	*I. A. Richards*

WENDELL BERRY

THE COUNTRY TOWN IN EARLY SUMMER MORNING

The town has grown here, angular
and white on its hill pelted
with thickets, in the passage
of a darkness; the houses, two-ranked,
peristyle of morning's long shade
—a thing of nature, made
deviously in all the black
filled hollows of its time, its
history of acts and briars.
It rose up with the first
singing and light to surprise
its dreamers. Among declivities
and groves of the inert hill,
channeled and splined by the
seasonal escapade of streams,
where its graves and garbage
choke the ravines, old shoes
in a milling of stones commemorate
the town laid waste. By morning's
instantaneous contrivance, mottled
shade and light, the day upholds
carved orange lilies in a calm
dreamers no longer dream but know.

BE STILL IN HASTE

How quietly I
begin again

from this moment
looking at the
clock, I start over

so much time has
passed, and is equaled
by whatever
split-second is present

from this
moment this moment
is the first

THE ARISTOCRACY

Paradise might have appeared here,
surprising us, a tackle of sublime coordinates
figuring over the trees; surprising us, even
though the look of the place seems not
altogether unexpectant of such an advent,
seems not altogether willing to settle
for something less: the fine light
prepared in the taut statuary of the oaks;
venerable churches of muted brick;
Greek porches presiding at the ends
of approaches; delicate fanlights over doorways
delicate and symmetrical as air, if air
prepared, preened, itself for Paradise

returning, stirs the mind again
to the ancient perilous advancement. Stripped
of the old cumulus of growths, cessations,
dreams, the house completes its seasonal closure,

having forestalled the winter, sheltering
as needful, its divisive entrances armed
against cold; having held a compacted light
tokening, in excess of necessity, joy:

at the window's interior the scarlet bloom
of tulips has burned and glowed in the reflected
light of snow. The inward and outward house,
containment of that gentleness, and its defense,

is continent of the intellect, venturing
with its dreams into the weather's judgment.
The young spring, returning, turns
the transparency of windows outward;

forked cherry branches figure the barren glass,
unleaved. We prepare this vacancy a little
for the coming of spring; the tree is cut back
for a fuller blooming, heavier fruit.

This waking wakes, advances to a new
envisionment, the old renewal of desire.
The mind lays claim to its summer,
dreams a perfect ripening, weighted harvest,

in the sun's cruel beneficence, foreshadowing
harsher culminations, sterner quittances.
Waking is a leaf, a hand, a light—envisioning
white hands among foliage, red fruit, gathering.

2

It's a weather of engines,
also, into which spring comes
—among the sounds of traffic
at the roadside, where bloom
the yellow first jonquils;
a drift of snow melted there
a week ago—now it's
just the memory of snow
draws back from the yellow
cup-lips. The traffic goes by,
the engines unwearying
as weather, gathering places,
tires pelting the asphalt,
moving to destinations
each way; the jonquils
bloom in their silence
and yellow. It's the wind
that stirs them, the wind at large
over the hill now becoming
green under the heavy weather
of March and the weather of engines;
the hill leans back to the root
of the wind, the flowerheads
lean away; having come a long
journey, unbroken, the wind
is voluble and strong, taking
its hurdles, surrounding the
stolid fenceposts along the roadway,
crossing the stream of traffic
which crosses the wind.

The color of the jonquils
has to do with the weather
of March—a cool yellow,

receptive of the smallest
light, the frailest warmth;
and has to do, by its silence,
purely, with the sounds
of engines—acceptive; the plant
dares its bloom above ground
to be lovely, or trampled.
The life in it is its motive.

Wakened and touched
by the thin yellow of jonquils,
the house stands in the cross-grain
of wind and the roadway, in transversed
distances comprehending cities
—approached, approaching.
The house stands in a vision
of journeys bearing recognitions
toward it; and in all degrees
recognizes and is recognized
by who comes to it, and who passes.
The house and the city, though
the bulk of a continent balks
between them, have to do
with one another; the knowledge
of one is a knowledge of the other,
acknowledges the other.

In the same dark wherein
the periled jonquils remain
—and the traffic beats on
between cities, continuing
into the tunnel of headlights
parting the embankments, entering
distance as by the force of light
blooming, entering the violable

blossoming of the desire
of the place of arrival or the place
of sleep—a dark craft, vaulting
its possible crash, arches
its mathematic trajectory
over the house, its lights
lighted, a tentative constellation
marking one height of the sky.
But it measures
one depth of darkness also,
and circumscribes the paltry known;
its course is a severance
above which lights are meaningless.
And outward from that flight hunt
the made moons of our darkness
and desire, their circuits
ticking and aware, leaning
to the void; our listening strains
into the galaxial silence
beyond expectancy, unmeaning,
wishing to hear.

And in the selfsame dark
the creeks, in the aftermath
of the first heavy rains,
are audible to the hilltop
—the wash of sound entering
the consciousness of walls.
Among the soaked grasses
along the down-meaning streams
in the weather of engines
the old singing of the frogs
begins. The dark breeds
dawn, a deeper melting.

LARRY EIGNER

SIX POEMS

I

Piercing the wall the window
reflection the streetlamp
all those channels from the sun
dangling to roots shut the room
you flicker through time

moon
riding holes in the ceiling

beds a landscape
to pass
nextdoor, panes

you back up, think of the end
that too, hold the mind

how many metals the reflection glassy
pouring off water
next day in the faucet,
an easy thing
so much of the past

the fresh rain-clouds
as the year wears on

2

They would not rent or sell the
building crumbles now
a fashion in the snow

fine flakes down all the
spiralling, that air
possible, released
bird can be easy and cold

small traces a single still feather
keeps flying the long hours
of whitening walls, the darkness
so many wires filled

something else
the thermometer
small arm to the window

3

The surgical waters, every 5 days
a plane goes over

Is anybody dying? I
don't know. Death or life
the pipes on a wall, cream moldings

Differences the whirr
in being sick

moments on the window-sill
the lives of the pigeons

next door in the day
hammering
piles

4

Ply with chocolates,
oranges

Death
you are attending to

the juicy imagination
spreading, silt, but a river

I woke up forgetting the dream
whatever I said last night

the morning again sky
blue bend wall, space
where the sun comes in

5

the knowledge of death, and now
knowledge of the stars

there is one end
and the endless

Room at the center

passage /in no time

a rail thickets hills grass

6

Walls or clear fields
Verona Mantua the lark
dawn some sound to penetrate death
doubled in music cut him up fine
pieces of the human meddlers blades
streets the sky harmonizes
shut down before the sea hothouse nurse
laughing apothecary
the priest of morning
and night the hot father
feeling himself tides
you imagine you hear strict forces, sizes
up and down, cords at the window, bars
at the door

the dance, connections fail
them bones come together
in cells, a cloudy morning

a noise he said
scared him away, so, we are not
deaf, what an idea
of hollowness, coming up out of the sky
over the household of
the joyful bride, linens
at the church

a clown
silver chest of
music, before he sets out
the plague, the plague, the plague
of both houses

WILLIAM CHILDRESS

FROM "THE SOLDIERS"

THE MISSION

To Philip Levine

In Korea, decomposing shit
Chokes the perfume of the stray flower
Still seen occasionally on hills;
And the paddies, heavily seeded
With napalm mines, can grow red flowers
At a touch, with a blossom that kills.

From the dark immobilization
Of earth bunkers, our probing patrol
Infiltrates forests. Distant searchlights
Paint ridges with something like moonlight
While the grey rain chills us. Winter's cold
Is not far away. It too will come.

Our ghosts meet other ghosts in the trees:
They appear pallid and luminous
In the eyepiece of a sniperscope,
A tool too complex for the Chinese.
But their simple burpguns never stop,
And their simple power murders us.

In December we start pulling out,
Having done little but christen hills
With proper names: Million Dollar,
Triangle, Heartbreak; names that matter
To no one but us. We taste defeat
And like it; victory is what kills.

No soldier can ignore tomorrow,
Though finally it does not matter
As much as it should. We have today,
And by the grace of Generals a stay
Of execution. Our lives narrow
Around living's uncertain center.

It is not likely a solution
To human problems will come of this,
But soldiers can't be soldiers and be
Human. The cold rain descends softly
On scorched graves, where, beyond human praise,
Men lie in stiffened resolution.

SHELLSHOCK

I am MacFatridge as he was then,
Torn by the mine he was defusing;
At the Aid Tent door his arm fell off,
And a Medic stooped to retrieve it
And stood as though lugging a melon
That had burst in the sun.

There are those of us who are not tough
Despite all they told us. If I cry
Now, no one seems to care, but before,
I would have been punished with a laugh.
I wish that underneath the green sky
Of this room, images of terror
Would come again: that the emerald door
I can't pass would let me out to sleep.

RAMON GUTHRIE

L'ENFANCE DE LA SIRÈNE

For L.V.

New canticle in mode of moss and amber—
sea wrack—
(bramble twitched by the sirocco
etched the diagram on sand)
scrived at last from the sheer headland,
emerges as first girl. Naked surprise
incised in every poise
to see her footprints patterned on the beach,
she threads through throngs of phantom lovers.
They reach to her. Not one of them perceives
she casts no shadow.
Assuming substance, they straggle back to cities
by devious routes. Later they will slake
bewilderments on trampled grass
bestrewn with cigarette butts and condoms
or on crumpled beds,
with botched fac-similes, hips creased with weals
of garter-belts.

For no clear mountain pool
spilling over white pebbles,
they will wade pelvis-deep amid
water-striders and frog spawn.

The wise among them
will ask themselves no questions.
They will plug their ears with wax, lean to the oars
—yet to no homecomings.

The fools among them
will find native lands everywhere,
expatriate themselves from all of them.

Wherever the girl that is a canticle has passed,
they will turn up there late or soon.
Once their feet have touched
the nightshade fringes of her shadow,
they will forever return
to where they have never been.
Their homecomings will be at furtive
street corners in the rain, their Penelopes
call-girls with forgotten telephone numbers.

Argus will bite them. They will be on their ways.

JAMES HEARST

LANDMARK

The road wound back among the hills of mind
Rutted and worn, in a wagon with my father
Who wore a horsehide coat and knew the way
Toward home, I saw him and the tree together.

For me now fields are whirling in a wheel
And the spokes are many paths in all directions,
Each day I come to crossroads after dark
No place to stay, no aunts, no close connections.

Calendars shed their leaves, mark down a time
When chrome danced brightly, The roadside tree is rotten,
I told a circling hawk, Widen the gate
For the new machine, a landmark's soon forgotten.

You say the word, he mocked, I'm used to exile.
But the furrow's tongue never tells the harvest true,
When my engine saw had redesigned the landscape
For a tractor's path, the stump bled what I knew.

LIMITED VIEW

The clutter and ruck of the stubble publish the time
That prompts my steps, I know what I have to do
For my bread before frost locks the land against
My plow and fire shoulders the chimney flue.

Rocks have a word that crows repeat over and over
On the cold slopes of winter where the picking is poor,
It echoes in empty granaries and I learn by heart
To say in the hard days to come, endure, endure.

So now I straddle the field and break its back
In the vise of my plow while a thresh of weather streams by
Sweeping up clouds and birds, leaves, banners of smoke.
I gouge out furrows, a starved wind ransacks the sky.

A JAMAICAN CHILD

It has been so long
Since I've seen
A child's head
Soaking in a bucket

Mama soaping him away
His clean screams
Bubbled over on the grass
As they both held on

HORSE LANGUAGE

From a window of Deep Hollow Ranch, Montauk Point

The language of those horses
Is in the swishes of their tails
Their conversation nods and grazes as loudly as they are

Nearby the field a bird is flying the pond
Dusk is near
The fog dissolves into night

The language of the horses
Unbridled feedings lags modestly
A mirror of breezes fondles ripples on leaves
The fly and tick stand still and buzz a horse's hide
In their language of feeding

YOU CANNOT PAINT NATURE

You have painted nature's contours with so many eyes
With the dykes where the road is the dock
The subterranean city crawling in water back to the buoys
The lighthouse leaking for sight the water there
The bells shrieking reaching outside to safety
A ghetto of the sea brought back
The lighthouse man sitting on the reef overseeing the fog
Where the horn is the sea
What man did is zigzag

Deep in the sea and near the shore there is a tree distantly
The seaweed crowds sand wind prevails
The truest scene seagull and tern
Two legged birds of size preside
The dykes are the seagulls a safety for their own protection
Men put them there against vagrants to live with the sea
A sea frothing indifference
You cannot paint heartless depths
Where the soundings unknown do not listen

THE FAMOUS KITCHEN

Have you ever sat in such a kitchen
Where everyone sits and listens to famous music
Where the dog meal is on the kitchen counter?
Have you ever sat in such a family kitchen
Where all things are cared for
Endeared by old ideas
Have you ever sat at the end of an evening
With ice growing in the box and water near
A sponge on top right near the whisky

I love you, kiss your knees
with words,

Enter you, your eyes
your lips, like

Lover
Of us all,

words sweet words,
learn wings instead.

EL-101

This evening I did not teach;
We all sat there, listening
to the rain—
It was Night Course 101.
Regular Freshmen, sailors
and a Greek nurse.
Finally someone said, Let us
speak truly,
let us reverence words, and even lie
as the gods would have us:
with sadness, conviction and all due originality.

LOST UMBRELLAS

She enters a room exuding displeasure,
strewing bits of string, grievances
bottle-caps
hairnets
law books
like largess
To all corners.

From the seams of her change-purse
leak
Travelers Cheques,
Photos of used-car salesmen
(dear brothers-in-law),
strychnine,
ragged old horoscopes
And gifts of broken glass.

Daughter to the planet Saturn,
Mother to my wife—

Her courtiers, we direct her,
Mix martinis for her
Find causes for her, lost umbrellas
and car-keys
Even at the gates of hell.

STEEPLE

The clock. Bonging away at midnight.

The moon a still, white, bent second-hand,
—at the peak of the spire.

The sky. The face of a black, stopped clock.

MARRIAGE

I lie down in darkness beside her,
This earth in a wedding gown;
Who, *what*
She is, I do not know.
Nor is it a question the Night
Would ask. I have listened—
The woman
Beside me, breathes. I kiss that,
A breath or so of her, and glow.
Glow.
Hush now, my shadow, let us
Day breaks—
depart.
Yes, & so we have.

AN END TO DOUBT

After it was quiet,
the dust reflected
on the dust.

There was an end to doubt.

The stars were shown
reflected
in the stars,

the brackish, white bleeding
triangles
of light.

There was an end to doubt.

And all things,
men and the moon,
men and the remainders
of men,

Cried out

And the stubbly,
now overgrown sea—

All, all things
a part of the dust,
not dead.

RUTH WHITMAN

THE LOST STEPS

Snow fell when my young grandfather arrived,
Behind him Moscow, Eden, Athens, Rome,
Bareheaded, eighteen, and a wandering Jew.

Snow covered up his footsteps leading home.

Defiant of history, he laughed his way
Through passover streets, under each arm a loaf
Of leavened bread. A forgetting snow that day.

*

The first snow was the laying on of hands,
Blessing and naming, while Eve looked up to see
The white erasure hide her Adam's land.

How she had come, how gone, when Jahweh smiled
Blew drifting in her brain. She turned again
Back to her dishes and her hungry child.

And those old men rocking round their ark,
Beautiful in their beards, prayed all that fell,
Manna or snow, be Jahweh's favoring mark.

And Leda knew, when feathers fell like snow,
The thunderous wings of God in bright sunrise,
And threw her arms around his swansdown neck

And wrapped him in a passionate surprise.
But in God's ravishing, Mary had wrung
Her hands beneath the bird who brought the sky

To cover her lament. Not knowing why,
Except she thought she saw her baby hung,
Shrunken, from the rafters of the world.

*

Was that my garden where I sang innocence?
Was that my cross that nailed the patient Jew?
Were those my thunderous wings? Was that my swan?

I cannot bend my knee.
All, all is gone.
I live on the charity of history.

Part ark, part swan, part cross over her hair,
My daughter stands before a holy fount.
Snow falls before my eyes. I cannot see.

I cannot bend my knee. I would not dare.

BRUCE CUTLER

FROM "A WEST WIND RISES"

THE MASSACRE

Trading Post, Kansas Territory
May 19, 1858

Spraddle-legging through thistle and dry
dissilient milkweed pods. The bunch grass boiling
up beneath his boots in humps, splaying
like surf along a shore. Cursing himself,
the mumping rifle balls, the slickleaved shade
cover thrown by osage oranges in plats
along the slope. Cursing the curse, the black
boa coils of happenstance, and the man
unseen, erect behind the blank stone wall.
He dives beneath a bush, feeling a warm
purling of air behind a ball, and thrusts
his head and shoulders underneath a vine.
Crowfoot. It is a leafy, bitter smell,
rooting in blindworm runners down to dark.

A sawkneed cricket chirrs into his ear.
He thinks God damn. You goddamned fool. Snyder
pinked you good. *The sun is slipping down its rim*
into the flange of hills. Twelve, he'd wanted.
Twelve for him to kangaroo.
You lost him. *A vial of leadheaviness*
spills into his blood.
He makes himself resist, biting the lining
of his mouth. Gonna write it on the wall,
he thinks; write it big, write it in blood.

The nib of powderhorn gouges his side,
the pouch of shot, the shotgun, dry and hot.
He feels a vapor tracking up his arm,
roiling the blood; now his shoulder, neck
start like a flickertail. It infiltrates
his body corridors, undoing hasps,
firing the puncheons of his brain. They fall
and all the feeding flames within shoot high,
whipped by the windmill arms
of prairie wind, swatching in sheets across
the sky, detonating groves of sycamores,
birling the horn-locked herds of buffalo.

And feels a thought he does not think: can feel
his head rise up, feels all himself plucked up,
the tendons of his legs snapping against
the bones, raising the shell of vines until
his arms and backbone burst
out of the overgrowth, and he is free.
He hears no shooting, now.
He runs along the slope, ramming a set
of charges home. Brockett! *His badger's face*
flinches in surprise. Get the goddamned horses!
Griffith's bad *the other says.* Dammit Scott
get yourself a move on!
bracing in the saddle and turning back.

And rides them down: the Abolitionists
hold their faces half a breath removed
from fear. Even his Raiders seem to wait,
unhoping what comes next. He can discern
the worm in all of them, looking across
to shade, where Griffith holds his tong-raked face.
Talk has never been
equivalent to commands. *The Captain looks*

at Luke and William Yealock, squat on mules
and blank as bassets; at Michael Hubbard,
robes and a bottle tied across his saddle.
Matlock balances boots, hung by a knot
athwart his shoulder. Brockett and Cordell
repose in shade, letting their horses graze.

Ready, Captain. *It is Sheek. In his bone*
and onyx eye, Hamelton perceives
something he knows. Something he has seen,
not yet, yet there. Knowing. He knows. As well
as he. By God we'll write it big, *he thinks,*
and calls: Fall in! *The faces stare as though*
they hadn't heard. Matlock! Brockett! Sheek!
Git to gitting! *sidling his stallion in*
amongst the Abolitionists, shouldering hard
until they give or sprawl. Belial! *the old*
missionary shouts. Moloch! *The stallion*
knees him down. Git! *And they form, and file*
slowly across the moundcrest toward a slope
fevered with sumac. Hamelton rides
around the column, shoves the straggling Halls,
kicks at the Yealock mules.
Only Sheek has seemed to comprehend
Hamelton's intent, riding herd in front.
He drives them up the slope to where a dark
declivity begins in yarrow. Now.
Hamelton spurs. It is as clear as glass.

It is the avenue. For them. For him.
He plunges in the mouth of the ravine,
trampling the brush. March in here! *he shouts.*
And they turn, with Sheek beside
tamping them through the orifice. Hamelton
turns to watch them coming in:

the first is Robertson, red enough
to boil. Snyder is next, Eli's kin,
and Read, swelling with belly rumbles.
Ross, the Irishman, smiles with half a mouth.
The Quaker walks behind,
staring stones to life, and limping. Amos Hall.
And rear, the pimply Hairgrove boy, who walks
eyes closed, father behind, looking back
and swearing now. The blinded Hall who holds
the Dutchman's arm. And last, the little clerk
and riflemonger Campbell, leading up
the rear, edging between the yarrow arms.

The Captain leads them down along a choked
descent that jaws them to a single file.
Here the sumac cools to cottonwoods,
the ground is smooth, grassy as a road.
Halt! *They stop.* Face right. *He smiles, feeling pleased.*
You tell them pick, they pick.
Up along the walls, *he tells the Raiders:*
they ride on either side of the ravine
to pastern-high above the line of men.
We're going to see what Abolitionists
have got for guts, *the Captain says.* Montgomery,
Brown, and all your men will have to look
a month to find your pieces. Raise your arms!
he calls, reaching for his shotgun. Gentlemen,
he hears, if you intend to shoot, then take
good aim. *It is Hairgrove, drawling now,*
mocking his very tone of voice: he spits
neatly between the hooves of Hamelton's horse.
Fire! *is in his mouth to say, when he hears*
Brockett don't obey. *It is Sheek, who points*
along the line to where the bay and rider
stand. You raise your piece! *the Captain cries.*

I'll be God damned if I will! I'll fight,
but I won't butcher! *Brockett turns his horse.*
Then Luke and William Yealock back away.
You stay right there! *Hamelton cries.* By God
Scotty you've got a cow turd on your neck
instead of head! You lost your nerve? You don't
cotton to this? You want to take them home?

He rises in his stirrups, voice and arm
and fist flogging against the flow of air
along the grass ravine: Remember Scott
and all the rest of you, your names are down
on Jim Montgomery's list. Screw me now or not,
they are. And my first charge is primed to fire.
Heist your asses now and see: anyone
not in line and firing gets the second!
Brockett swings his horse around and pulls
his shotgun from its scabbard. Will Yealock
points a rifle, Luke a Colt. Present your arms!
Now they all are up. And the Captain sets
his sight to where the ramping sun has rolled:
by raising up his hand
he can contrive to turn the iron valves of sky
and tap the utter shales beyond, to flood
the vaults of heaven with diluvium,
to ride upon the baulks of earth, the winds
beating around these molehill mounds, and swamp
the fires of all of them, drown them all
with one thunder-stone of Force, sinking the sun,
the mazing corridors of space: his arm
cocked like a Cheyenne bull-roarer against
the falling sky, hingeman to the helm
of history, joint to them all, the ruck
millenial since Cain, who watch from files
beyond the skyfolds he is flooding down.
Write it in blood. *And brings his right arm down,*

his Fire! *and roar of shotgun bounding back*
doubled again on down the line, his aim
centered on Campbell's belly, as the line
breaks, splitting and plunging, with aftercry
and murmur of surprise and lasting sprawl . . .

He is off and standing now, feeling a warm
gloving on his fingers, of blood that spills
slow as honey from Campbell's side. A shout
pulls up his glance along the rise. Brockett turns
his horse and runs. The Yealocks follow suit.
Hubbard looks around; he sees but does not seem
to care. They're not all dead *the Captain says.*
Let's finish them. *Sheek bends down beside*
a body holding its dead belly like
it ached. There's old Read *says Sheek.* And which
is he? There's the old bastard looking up.
Put the pistol to his ear, *the Captain says,*
shoot him into his ear. Turn the Quaker's
pockets out, *says Hubbard;* I heard him say
a hundred dollars. Here's his watch and fob . . .
. . . A crow calls from a pocketfold of tree.
No one ever wrote it bigger. Abol,
melting along the bunchgrass floor in slick,
uncertain rubrics. Prairie spatterdock,
crimson, weeding down to limestone springs . . .
. . . A wind rises along the grass ravine.
The Quaker holds a green and yellow flower
burst from the house his bellymuscles built . . .
. . . He is alone. Sheek has ridden down
the mound. He is clean. He is clear. He lifts
his boot, then heels into the stirrup. Behind,
the track of hooves, his boot-print. He turns,
descending. His horse, the bodies, and their dark
vital lava, convolve in shadowfall.

COMMENT

A PARADIGM OF RESPONSIBILITY

Medusa in Gramercy Park, by Horace Gregory. Macmillan. $1.75 paperbound; $4.50 clothbound.

More than ten years have passed since the publication of Horace Gregory's *Selected Poems*. Too long a time, certainly. We should be the worse, it's true, for not possessing the other riches that he has given us during this interval—the learned and charming literary essays, the masterly recreation of a lost age in *The World of James McNeill Whistler*, and the finest translation in three hundred years of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid—; but there is always the danger, in the run and roar of so much published verse, of temporarily dropping from the mind the establishers of contemporary American poetry, "those who are truly great", or of losing sight of the main work in the contemplation of something subsidiary. And clearly Mr. Gregory's contribution to criticism and to humane scholarship, great as it is, must always take second place to the body of poetry that shook our minds first in *Chelsea Rooming House* (1930) and that has accompanied us as a kind of conscience, at once gay and severe, ever since. It was time for this new book. We need to be reminded, every once in a while, of the poet's responsibility to his art, to his audience, and to himself. *Medusa in Gramercy Park* is a paradigm of responsibility.

The book is in two parts: "Dramatic Episodes and Lyrics", monologues and dialogues that recall in technic the Longface Mahoney soliloquies of the earlier work; and "Allegories and Parables", chiefly lyrics in a tighter, more sinewy form. There are two great debts, or influences: the classical tradition, specifically Latin, and Robert Browning. Both are explicit, and both have been wholly assimilated into what can only be called the Gregorian style. Mr. Gregory is the translator of Catullus and Ovid, Roman Anglo-Irish, and that strong pulse beats in his vividly contemporary lines—

> The day was bright—
> That was the day I saw her before rumours

Waked up to follow me, the kind of day
One sits with empty forehead to the fire,
Or at a sun-lit window, counts the grains
Of dust that falls in golden multitudes—
Mindless split seconds before time advances—
Again the time to go, and the phone ringing
Anonymous voices through the morning air.—

whether the speech be that of a Boris MacCreary, of an Effron Siminsky, or of the nameless guilt-ridden soul hurled, in the best of these monologues, past the Hebrides to the refuge of a hotel room. As for Browning: Mr. Gregory has edited a handsome selection of his poems; the "Dramatic Episodes" reflect in tone and structure the form perfected by the older poet, though here again the borrowing is a transformation. It is in these discourses, these spaciously conceived set pieces, that we recover the typical Gregory manner—the wit, the tragic gallantry, the subtle advances and retractions of sensibility, the earthiness, the nightmare vistas of emptiness. Occasionally the manner is too baroque, or so it seems to me. My taste prefers the grey drive of "anonymous voices through the morning air" to the elaborately decorated pathos of *Beyond the Pyramid: Heard in the Protestant Cemetery*, a dramatic fragment that falls crushed by its own décor. The truer force is instant and iron, complex yet batteringly immediate:

'Not to those islands—dark, lit by a crazy sky,
Hills, water to cover me where bones float to the sand,
Not there, naked to wind, sea, sun, moon, stars, bats, fishes—
I need a room to wear—heat, fire—then they can take me
Through a locked door in a hotel in bed between the sheets
Behind *The Daily Mail*, *News of the World*, *The Times*—not God.
And now, you're crying. You'll tell, you'll tell—half-lies,
Won't leave until you see me flat and dead. That's what you want.
You're another gull, white breasts and pink-rimmed eyes,
And a heart-shaped, round-teared stare. Do you hear the gulls
Make shore, feet flying above us? Take your God-haunted, God-feared,
God-damned islands.'

The lines are from *Flight to the Hebrides*, and they are pure Gregory. They are to be found germinating in *The Albatross* and *O Metaphysical Head*,

from *Chelsea Rooming House;* they develop with wider scope and deeper irony in the later discourses assigned variously to Longface Mahoney and other urban proletarian heroes; and in these new tirades—more cosmopolitan, perhaps, and certainly more terrifying in their instancy—they are an utterance of controlled violence that resembles the work of no other living poet. Or dead poet. The *cachet* is unique.

These monologues are the weightier poems. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to overlook the lyrics in the second part of the book, especially *Orpheus*, *The Teachings of Saint Jerome*, *On a Celtic Mask by Henry Moore*, and *Three Allegories of Bellini*. This last poem, a triptych cast in a rough two- and three-beat measure irregularly rhymed, is a construction of a kind unusual in Mr. Gregory's work, although again its germ is to be found as far back as his first book. Perhaps the two opening stanzas will give some idea of the curious hallucinated fixity of the writing:

> We keep the door locked
> Because the picture in that room,
> The tall Bellini,
> Takes hold of night:
> It shows a naked woman,
> An awkward creature
> With an ungainly face
> And female, half-dressed
> Cupids at her feet—
> One beating a toy drum.
>
> Bang! Bang! And yet no noise.
> One cupid has a horn—
> Silence again. The woman
> Points one finger at a glass
> That has a Gorgon's head
> Reflected in it—
> What was once beautiful
> A sight of horror—
> The greatest terror
> In its loss of beauty

This is time frozen, petrified. The insistent, iterated statement—state, declare, point—is the delicate music of the region of Medusa; and we should

not forget that the first poetry sprang from the Gorgon's blood. O metaphysical head! What has happened to Browning here? For he is here, or he was: that picture behind the locked door, Ferrara's Duchess behind the drawn curtain—but the source is absorbed as the Bellini allegory expands, an harmonic accretion in the circling melody of the poem.

As I have said, it was time for this book. Names in poetry rise and fall like fashions in skirts, and to less purpose. The fashionable awards and prizes are often inexplicable and always beside the point: it is the poem that bestows the honor. It is true, for what it is worth, that Horace Gregory has too long been denied this kind of recognition; but *Medusa in Gramercy Park*, together with the earlier poems and the exquisite *Metamorphoses*—to which we may confidently add the forthcoming *Amores* of Ovid, and God send us as many new books of poems again!—goes to the reënforcement of one of the surest and proudest artistic reputations of our day.

DUDLEY FITTS

WAYS TO MEANING

Fever & Chills, by George P. Elliott. Stone Wall Press. $8.50.
On the Morning of Color, by John Woods. Indiana University Press. $3.50.
The Tennis Court Oath, by John Ashbery. Wesleyan University Press. $1.25.

Fever & Chills, George P. Elliott's long narrative, seems to me a good poem. The handling of the story satisfies a modern sense of what constitutes interesting fiction; the poetic style, straightforward and fluent, pleases but does not mire the reader who runs down unstanzaed tetrameter lines to find the consequences of happenings; and the trimmed form of the verse relates and contributes to the poem's meaning.

The "fever" is that of a love affair between one of the husbands and one of the wives of two couples who are close friends, the "chills" are the failures of this passion to find its meaning, to become either acceptable or reprehensible in the terms of any believed system of values. The errant husband, "this man", as he is impersonally named, is the modern hero

whose disease is our own. In the view of science, as he understands it, he sees himself "matterless and nearly empty". Withholding his vote from the State, which had "used his will like a wrench" to bring forth the atom bomb and the destruction of two cities, he finds a sense of potency in sex. Yet in the perversities of the emotions he comes face to face again with his own helplessness. Left with Freud, he can see only that the past has provided him, not with power, but with a set of symptoms. The affair finds its ironic conclusion in the fever and chills of the most meaningless disease one can imagine, the freest from responsibility—a case of flu.

The shock of the poem, for the reader, resides not in such scenes as that in which the shocked hero is wrestled down by his mistress for her sexual satisfaction, but in scenes which register the pain of coping, unaided by acceptable regulation, with the tangle of human relationships:

> They were twilight riding home, full
> From a picnic, in the back seat
> Among heaps of blankets and baskets,
> Her child in his lap, his in hers,
> His puppy nestling her bare feet,
> In the front seat their best friends,
> All six singing "Old MacDonald
> Had a farm, he I, he I, Oh"—
> And the muscles in his shoulder,
> Arm, thigh less than an inch from hers,
> Shoved to fall towards her, till he burned
> All over from the not falling.
> He did not come to hate his wife
> But cared for her as much as before;
> For his friend, who was suffering
> No bed-loss, his affection held.
> He resented these bonds, but was
> So ashamed of his resentment
> He did not know most of the time
> That it was there, never what it was.

The gift of poetry to this story lies quietly in words and phrases which heighten one's pleasure in the narrative. The italics in the following passage are mine:

She left the paint can uncovered,
But zipped off her smock, shook her hair
Free from its kerchief, and led him
In the house for coffee. All he knew
Became silent and *spectacular.*
Waiting for the water to boil,
She leaned back against the sinkboard
Chittering tight of voice. He kissed her.
In blind avarice, they clashed teeth.

The clipping away of metaphoric richness, the shortening of line, seem to me to speak of the restricted world the hero inhabits. The poet uses a (surprisingly) effective combination of all kinds of iambic tetrameter, sometimes syllabic, sometimes conventional, sometimes "sprung", as these consecutive lines will show. (Note the difference in counting "indifference" and "consequence".)

Justified their indifference
To all consequence—merely friends
Whose fortune was to make love well.

The Stone Wall Press has given this poem a beautiful embodiment, handprinted and quarter-bound in English calf.

John Woods's poetry pleads for those losses—by flood, by fire, by failure of experience—which lead to recovery of a visionary sense of the world. And most of the individual poems in Part I of his *On the Morning of Color* strain toward the communication of that sense. He wishes to make trees which "hang fire", "loved-down grass, by nesting air" where "the hare lies gathered, tight and quick", "snow geese evenings", and all seen details of the earth quicken the reader to a state of mind in which his "senses [will] step / On naked feet into the garden / To ring, an anvil of the storm, / To name the kneeling animals", and in which the morning of each poem will be "the morning of color . . . the morning of first-seen". Naturally enough, the strain is sometimes in vain, but, delightfully, it is quite often successful. *When Senses Fled, The Flood, The Deaf Man* (except for the final lines), and *Poem by Water* are fully realized achievements.

Part II is made up of poems in a lighter vein, which, except for *The Log of the Ark* and *The Departmental, a Foxtrot*, interest me less. Two stanzas from the latter:

I reviewed a book called *Sudden Bed*
By Tilly Almsdale Rubbish.
The department head rose from the dead,
Singing publish, publish, publish.
O hexbook, blacklist, footnote O
Where'd that Fellowship go?

. . . . . .

The ladies pour, the scholars bore,
The janitor has the key.
The teaching fellows bow before
The Terminal Degree.
O doubleday, backbite, office space O
How does your lecture know?

Part III, poems of persons, or rather, love poems on personal and traditional themes, extends the statement of the first section. Poetry, our fullest and brightest reading of life, depends not only on the details of nature, but on the details of human love. *The Farewell* bids goodbye, tongue-in-cheek, to "the plum, / The underbelly, / Grape and bum / And eyeball jelly" so that poems "Torn from stone / For stony eyes" may rise "Blind and bright / With empty light". The final poem in the book makes explicit the volume's total concern. Here is its last stanza:

Let love be that intelligence
That rises from the funeral pyre
To sing a song of elements:
Earth, water, air and fire.

Formal, musical, sometimes a little "soft" in image or rhyme, once in a while derivative (Frost, Stevens), intelligent, rooted in consistent feeling, Mr. Woods's poems have their excellence.

Let me admit first off that I am not the reader for Mr. Ashbery. Still, perhaps a definition of my own position and a few sample quotes will help *The Tennis Court Oath* find its right readers. From *America:*

standing with the jar
in the door wrapper
of this year fire intangible

Spoon
glad the dirt around
the geraniums of last August's
dried in the yard
played for certain
person
of course the lathes around
the stars with privilege jerks
over the country last year we were disgusted meeting
misguided
their only answer pine tree
off of the land
to the wind
out of your medicine
health, light, death preoccupation, beauty.

If a state of continuous exasperation, a continuous frustration of expectation, a continuous titillation of the imagination are sufficient response to a series of thirty-one poems, then these have been successful. But to be satisfied with such a response I must change my notion of poetry, my reading of it, my source of pleasure in it. ("Aha!" I can hear Mr. Ashbery say hopefully.) I can no more do this than one can change loves in midlove. For me, "surrealism" in words does not work, for words are rooted in meaning and grow, phrase by phrase, toward statement. Meaning, image, movement can no more be disentangled from each other than the chestnut tree's leaf, blossom, and bole. ("Uh huh," from Mr. Ashbery.)

Isolated lines,

A feather not snow blew against the window
A signal from the great outside

The body's products become
Fatal to it

She is under heavy sedation
Seeing the world

and exciting juxtapositions,

. . . O K you win
But meet me anyway at Cohen's Drug Store
In 22 minutes." What a marvel is ancient man!

tell me of the strength and integrity of this poet's imagination. Affection for his definition of poetry I must leave to others.

MONA VAN DUYN

FIVE POETS

Selected Poems, by Charles Norman. Macmillan. $3.95.
Poems, by Francis Fergusson. Rutgers University Press. $3.50.
Book Like a Bow Curved, by Raymond E. F. Larsson. University of Detroit Press. $4.75.
The Long Street, by Donald Davidson. Vanderbilt University Press. $4.00.
The Islanders, by Philip Booth. Viking. $3.00.

Of the five books reviewed here, four are by men who have been writing for a long time. Early and late poems are included, representing the range and dynamics of these poets' craft.

Charles Norman is a relatively quiet poet. A man "In love with light and leaves, with earth and sky", he finds that "The naming of simple things / Is both praise and pleasure". He names them frequently, and the resulting description is itself a form of praise: "The evening melts to amethyst; / The slim brown deer swim in the mist." He writes also of people and love and cities, and of men and countries at war.

His forms range from the unrhymed sonnet to rhymed quatrains, blank verse, rhymed couplets, and free verse. Some of his best effects occur in the very short poems where a single image often unexpectedly flowers:

When the trees
  That grow from shadow
Make the street
  A little meadow

Trees, rain, streets at night, snow, the stars, deer, the air, appear often in these poems which are actually many variations on a few themes. Of recurring words, "lamp" stands out as keynote, theme, and symbol—"the sudden lighting up of lamps / That marks the transformation of the air", and in the last poem, "The world drifts in the fathoms of the sky, / A starry raft upon a sea of lamps." "Thin" is another word which the author has found personally useful: thin rain, thin hands, thin fathoms, thin tracery, thin hedge, thin stems, thin water, thin air, thin trees, thin gloom, thin fingers, thin-edged, leaf-thin, gold-thin, thin as ferns; frequent—but flexibly handled.

Sharpness of focus is sometimes lost by an imagery too mixed and unpruned or disproportionate. Weak or banal lines mar some poems—"Daisies demure, buttercups bold"; "A poet sees the metaphor in all things"; or "Ideas are important—but to poets?" Others are memorable for pictorial precision: "While all about go birds in flight, / Of nothing made but golden light", or "The whisper and waterfall of light / From leaf to leaf"; or "houses, lit like pumpkins", or forsythia, "A picture, three-fourths air, / Made for a mandarin".

Francis Fergusson is best known for his writing in drama and literary criticism. This is his first published volume of poems, though he has written these poems over a period of more than thirty years. They reflect the mores of the times, partly in a tendency to conceal the poetic sensibility under a gritty exterior of ironic attitudes and nonpoetic words, to get closer to the "real" by the use of "raw" elements. The section, "City Scenes", deals with manners and morals; its themes are the preoccupations of various kinds of people from various levels of the city's social strata. Like Pound's *Moeurs Contemporaines*, these poems employ satire and caricature. Fergusson's effects, however, tend to be heavy rather than edged, as in *The Blumenscheins, Or Liebe, Amor, Love and Libido.*

> Ach! *industrious* Liebe, which should make all Manahatta
> Harmonious as shining Louis and his Braut!
> Make Bruderschaft of Jahveh und Minnehaha!

His portrait of a lady, a Mrs. White, who comes "Through the disordered drawing room in the winter light" raises the ghost of that other lady who appeared "Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon". The eight-line poem, *Eugenics*, provides an example of the author's technique and vocabulary. The last five lines are:

But little M. Hérissé,
Watching the elephant, Sardanapalus,
Followed by Mrs. Sardanapalus,
Her trunk, marching, swinging his friendly tail,
Envies the healthful turdfall of Sardanapalus.

Penelope, A Theater Lyric, eschewing the "Attic grace", uses flat and matter-of-fact statement and terminology to dramatize the famous story in a style more in line with present-day taste. Probably the most successful poem, by its sincerity and depth of feeling and its wrought quality, is *On The Turning Earth*. The vocabulary is less conspicuous, less of a period, more connotative: "But time itself goes all one way", and, "I . . . Like any animal bereaved / Turned and turned in the empty place."

Raymond Larsson's poems in *Book Like a Bow Curved* exhibit certain verbal eccentricities of which the title is an example. Though his use of words may at first baffle or disconcert, a closer reading reveals precision and point. Recurrent terms such as dust, asp, bones, mist, winter, ash, are put to significant use. Elisions, denoted by *'s*, appear with great frequency and are neither irrelevant nor accidental, but are integral to his style, aiming at compression and an effect of urgent movement in the line.

The poem, *A Wreath, A Rose and England Still*, consists of a five-page inventory of national phenomena as varied as a well-stocked flea-market. The items are given a slight touch of unity by repetition within the line of vowels, consonants, clusters of letters, or words—"Oaken and stone, ivory, iron", or "Imperial diptych, Byzantine dishes", or "Gin, 'India Changes', 'The Pick of Punch' ".

Compression is a consistent and typical force in Raymond Larsson's work. It breeds intricacies, ambiguities, the tight word, excitement, as in the second of the two poems under the title, *Times Attend:*

Pale, the dawn pale
while yet the snow lies blue;
rose, a pale rose in thorny
boughs the winter morning,

Burns the winter, burns
as flowers amongst its thorn,
rife on the earth its thriving's
sign, lit clod as burning

Coal to quench cold, coal
to cauterize that wintry sore,
the heart, in its morning, one wintry,
yet lit's a clod, its burstings

Thrive, and enhived, by light
Quicks as a psalm its blight.

His style has an affinity to Christopher Smart's, and in some poems the resemblance, in animation and rush, in rhythm and strongly marked accent, is very striking. It is evident in the *Carol for New Year's Night* (*MCMLX*):

The mountains quake; the dead arise;
The lame leap, praising, whole;
Now death is ash, for sin is cleansed—
Behold, the *Burning Coal!*

There is an exhilaration in these poems, a burgeoning—buds bursting in air—an irrepressible vitality, a note of triumph no more to be kept down than grass in spring, exultation firmly grounded, affirmation with the eyes open.

The Long Street, by Donald Davidson comes with neither blurb nor testimonial. Seven engravings by Theresa Sherrer Davidson included in the book reflect the themes and tone of the poems.

Dignity and a certain unhurried quality in the poems make themselves felt at once. There is nothing of the spectacular; there are no violent innovations or distortions. The statements are usually unobtrusive and straightforward: "Late, by a hundred years, I come / To walk these paths of sand among your live-oaks." But there is intensity of feeling in the molded lines; there is clarity, and there is the eloquence which springs from inner integrity.

The forms vary considerably. The first poem is a *Verse Letter. Old Sailor's Choice* is written in verse paragraphs of varying length, some rhymed, some unrhymed. *A Touch of Snow*, has a neat shape and regular rhyme design. *The Case of Motorman 17* is a drama in verse; there are epigrams, and a lively fiddler piece in strongly rhymed couplets.

A constant theme in these poems is regret that certain good and quiet things and modes of life are receding and being replaced by others less

sound, less deep, less satisfying to the whole person. The author shows himself not so much a reactionary as a traditionalist, and his view toward progress is one of critical reserve. "For you and me the road turns strange," he says in the first line of *Country Roses*. And the poem, *A Barren Look*, ends: "No fish in the stream, no light in the head, / And what if, next, the land be dead!" The author's regret is not pessimism; he sees the deepest realities as surviving, and says, ". . . love is a durable fire / And will stay." And the last lines of *The Case of Motorman 17* are:

But if Orpheus bleed
His singing head
Will drift on the stream
To redeem men
Till poetry
And justice come again
Unless the world be dead.

For certain "eager souls" the nightingales will always sing, "Perched on their boughs of possibility".

Philip Booth's *The Islanders* is a book about the new men in a cold world. The world is not much of a place—"You wouldn't want to go there", he says in the first line of *Sable Island* which, according to the blurb "is our world in microcosm". No call "will get you help here"; you are "half-swamped" and "running, hull-down in the heavy / troughs . . . / and all false havens astern". The effect of cold and bleakness is cumulative: "a flat gray light", a "waking cold beside cold ashes", "Days . . . ebb gray without a thaw", "Faced with snow, and a North wind", "cliffs that might have been sheer ice", "thermals over those flat dunes, still / as fast ice".

These new men in Philip Booth's poems are trying to find themselves and their places in the face of "diminishment"—the key word. But diminishment of what? man himself? his values? the world? Do these poems tell us again, in their own way, Empson's *Earth Has Shrunk in the Wash*? The poems explore the problem from various angles. The didactic tone in this young poet is unabashed. Men "will not see", the author explains, until "they learn to look not to the sun, / but full, at high noon, to themselves". *The Narrows*, a prothalamion, is entirely given over to explanation and directives: "you must choose / your time", "bear carefully", "Lie luffed-up", "you must shape / your drift", and at last "bear your

luck back / to the old raw weathers of the sea outside". The last words of the last poem advise: "No / matter what new disasters to come, you must shape // your course into the breakers as though / it were the whole world, not just a strip / of blown sand you happen to be cast up on."

Short lines are much in evidence. The abrupt speech and flat expression aim at an offhand, casual, matter-of-fact tone, in an effort to present reality, stripped, strong, and intense. Sometimes the economy is effective. Only archness is achieved, however, with "Was a man, was a two- / faced man, pretended / he wasn't who he was", or "A man, then, stood / tall, as if to ask / a first question". The diction in the Eskimo poem, *Spit*, is deliberately unpoetic: "if spit hits / his navel, wins." "Far into arctic midnight, thick / with phlegm, they bet / on this old game. . . ." The poem ends starkly but symmetrically: "Spit. Spit. Spit."

Marin is one of Booth's more effective poems, crisp in its imagery: "initialed / mountains, ledged / towns (white as / Machias after / the hayrake rain) // sun-splintered / water and written / granite." *The Propeller* is another. It ends with the lines:

> But even now, as if geared to a far interior
> impulse, it churns the flat light: as far
> from here its cast will turn against time,
> and turn dark, and it will move the sea.

With Valéry, each of the five poets can say of his book—"the work is indeed by me, for my weakness, my strength, my repetitions, my idiosyncrasies, my light and shade are always recognizable in what falls from my hand."

DOROTHY DONNELLY

SEEING AND BEING

On My Eyes, by Larry Eigner. With photographs by Harry Callahan. Jonathan Williams. $3.75.

I like this book very much, for its closeness to things, its sense of their mystery and realness. At first it seems that Larry Eigner is an onlooker,

but as one reads on it becomes clear that he deeply inhabits the world. He throws away all chances to make commentaries or to philosophize, and he doesn't care a nickel for his own skin or to tell us "How sensitive I am!" At his best he writes in a kind of state of grace with respect to the real, an openness and trust between himself and the world, by which the two blur, and real objects keep dissolving towards a deeper, stranger reality. His best lines are less invented descriptions than the acts themselves of this contact. Here is a scattering of phrases from the poems:

I saw some sparrows today
disappear in a slope of dirt
below the road

* * *

the dark swimmers
their heads in the sun

* * *

similar trucks and so it is the same
dump

* * *

the fading, loose sea

* * *

gulls rear to the dead
sky
against the turned cloud
under the wind

past the width of street

my business being to taste the dust

tree and the dry goods store

* * *

the gulls flopping in nothing

* * *

the naked sea
stinking
is fresh
in time

I find Eigner's gift—though these fragments can't really indicate its quality—altogether rare. Many poets, of course, write of common, despised objects, but Eigner comes close to making these things the personages of a sacred poetry. But having said this, it remains for me to set down my reservations, which are no less considerable for all my admiration, and to me the graver on account of it.

Inside the cover it is stated, "Because Eigner's typescripts are often singular, the evidence of a careful attention all his own, every attempt has been made to stay close to the original typing of the poems." The real value of getting rid of rhyme and meter, I had supposed, was in order to throw the responsibility for the poem wholly on speech itself. Here this is not done. The laying out of a kind of score by typewriter-spacing only supplants those old devices with a newer one, which is, this time, not even integral with the words. Again speech is let off the hook. It is as if, writing what so unmistakably looks like a poem, Eigner concedes prematurely that it is one. If it were possible for him to write without the stimulation and camouflage of poetic devices—and I admit that maybe it is not—he would then at least have to face the real shortcoming of his poems. Which is, it seems to me, that they remain curiously unrealized, curiously broken off, as if the poet had underestimated his content, or, alternatively, simply picked an unsuitable form. Here is a complete poem from the book—not one of the best, but perhaps a fair sample:

Keep me still, for I do not want to dream

I live in this house, walls being plastered
all my life. the apple tree still standing
my life built, the minutes keeping on

the walls cross, standing around
a distinct company
projection, the clothes wave
briefly, touch beyond eyes

weed the garden
the light burns away the street
the peaceful corn salt in the empty night,
among chickens, sparrows and dogs,
the pigeons limping easily on the roof,
the cat sticking his limbs through the sewer
his claws agape, naked
pondering

he goes to sleep and wakes up
he plays dead, hanging . . .
rain melts
and hail fans on the wind

the thistles, when they get old

nearly everything gets in
and then we close up

the flowers are hidden lately

The poem opens up possibilities which it then proceeds to dismiss. It doesn't have a real ending, but a coy remark in place of one. In poetry similar in aim to the short story, the understated, parenthetical ending has had its successes. Here, in this poetry absorbed by things and constantly moving towards a sense of their sacredness, it is only bathetic. The slurred, unreal ending looks like a maneuver in which Eigner takes refuge from the demands of his poem. This would be to say that what is inhibiting to the poem lies near the source of his art. And yet Eigner appears to seek this refuge as a duty and even as an adventure, making one wonder if the difficulty might not be only at the formal level, merely a matter of some influence remaining to be discarded.

GALWAY KINNELL

A POETRY CHRONICLE

Collected Poems, by George Abbe. Richard R. Smith Co. $3.50.
A Little Geste, and Other Poems, by Daniel G. Hoffman. Oxford University Press. $3.75.
The Fortune Teller, by John Holmes. Harper. $3.50.
The New Book / A Book of Torture, by Michael McClure. Grove. $1.95.
The Lovemaker, by Robert Mezey. Cummington Press. No price listed.
Shoulder the Sky, by E. Merrill Root. Golden Quill Press. $3.00.
The Tree Witch, by Peter Viereck. Scribner. $3.50.
Origin of a Design, by Neil Weiss. Charioteer Press. $2.75.

The Tree Witch is presented as "a poem and a play (first of all a poem)". I would add, "last of all a play". We are invited to read the book either as a play or (by omitting stage directions) as a poem. I am unable to omit anything when I read, even the poet's portrait. Besides, I don't believe poetry or drama operates this way. Surely there's more to drama than stage directions.

The play has been staged, we are informed, but I have serious doubts that much happened on the audience side of the footlights. I can't conceive of any dramatic context within which Viereck's poetry would be accessible. It's too involved for the ear alone, with a jazzy diction, relentlessly up-to-date, but in no sense colloquial. The following passage is moderately illustrative.

> Castaways hoard the annals of beginnings,
> The alphabets of dawn before the split.
> Two signs, when first your campfire banned us, wrangled:
> Circle and line. Our cycle, your ascent.
> "Revere each season's own true swerve," we sang then;
> "Drain, build, stamp logic on," clanged will, male, steel.
> Clang-knit geometries of girders garland
> Your plumb-lines now
> and grid our zigzag ways.

A more convincing illustration would be the line: "O slogan me no Atlas from your engines." But I needn't overstate my case. Viereck does write interesting, hyperactive poetry.

The major problem of *The Tree Witch* as a play lies in its involved presentation. Viereck is trying everything at once. Even the production notes need explication. The play is built about a conflict, I believe, between spontaneous magic, as represented by a Hellenistic dryad, and various "anti-pagan" contemporary anatomies, represented by "adjusted moderns" and Guardian Aunts. The adjusted moderns represent "hedonistic materialism" and the Guardian Aunts represent "joyless, respectable 'religion' ". But this is no simple triangle; both the sides and the angles are so scrupulously qualified as to defy dramatic recognition.

E. Merrill Root presents his ninth volume of poetry. I can recall reading some of Mr. Root's poetry some fifteen years ago, and I can't say that his manner and technique have changed much. It is smooth, skillful verse, but predictable. He uses metaphor organically, prudently, but he operates too close to the surface of prose. Perhaps *The Palette* (*Mojave Desert*) will illustrate his poetry.

> This country has no use—but only beauty:
> Boldly the mesas loom like jeweled bosses;
> The whorls of hills are like the moon's blue wrinkles.
>
> Here is a barren land where gnomic cactus—
> Not wheat or corn—is sown for only harvest
> Except the greater harvest that is color.
>
> Red ochre, vitreous blue, and sulphur-lemon,
> Here violent colors are their own great meaning:
> Here is the desert that is Nature's palette.

I believe this poem ends four times. The first line, the second stanza, and the last two lines paraphrase one another. There is no development. And the last metaphor snatches us out of nature and sets us down in Mother Nature's studio. In short, it is studio verse. As a friend of mine once said about such poetry, these are the kinds of poems people write. Mr. Root satisfies a moderate appetite for poetry.

George Abbe has selected some ninety poems from thirty years and five books of poetry. His collective selectivity reflects his singular selectivity. The poems are very well-made, mostly lyrical, rooted in life, in no sense academic.

Abbe writes about important things—life, death, love, age—but he develops these subjects from the particular circumstances of our experience, seldom as abstractions. I'll show you one poem, *A Skill in Killing*.

Through the hanging turkey's mouth
I drove a needle in,
Straight up into its brain.

I felt the tissue give;
the will to live
ran scarlet on my hand;
and the breathing beak
gaped at my work.

Revolted, I forced myself.
This was the neatest way,
science had said: strike
the needle deep,
up through the mouth's roof;
the nerves are paralyzed,
the feathers made loose.
But as I probed and drove,
the tissues of my brain
broke with a thought that moved,
a pin-prick gentle as love.
Yet, numb, I could not feel.
Not method nor resolve
made the act real.

One gets the impression that the poet has discovered the form and subject simultaneously, has fully realized his discovery, and has left nothing over for error or wonder.

Robert Mezey has studied with Ransom at Kenyon, with Engle at Iowa, and with Winters at Stanford. What do you think about that? It's a question of survival, I think. What strikes me first about Robert Mezey's poetry is its coolness. What one might expect from the reviewer here is some sort of harangue about workshop poetry, about the enervating influence of literary innkeepers, etc. I'm capable of such a display, but I think that Mezey (b. 1935) moved rather directly from tricycle to meta-

phor, and that the workshops have not been strong influences, since he came more to work than to shop.

The impression remains that he holds his major issues—love, and its losses, faith and flesh—at arm's length, where they are weighed equally with his interest in form. Incidentally, Mezey has used up his lifetime allotment of acrostics (two) in his first volume.

In *A Coffee-House Lecture*, he asks:

> Come now, you who carry
> Your passions on your back,
> Will the insolence and envy
> Get you the skill you lack?

No, but one must carry his passions somewhere. Skill won't keep them off your back.

Mezey is most successful in *The Lovemaker; To Philip Levine, on the Day of Atonement;* and in sections of *The Wandering Jew*. In these poems, his contemplative approach suits his concern. Many of these poems are guarded, however, as "first" poems, or as renderings from Latin and French.

My first reaction to *The New Book / A Book of Torture* turned out, upon further reflection, to represent my final decision. I approached the verse warily:

> I AM BEAST O BEAUTEOUS MUSIC GLORIFICATION PRIDE MOVEMENT MOTION
> Beast's Hearth
> ((this is))
>
> * * * *
>
> PERSEPHONE! OSIRIS! BEAST! BLACK SERAPHIM!
>
> * * * *
>
> THE GODDAMNED BITTER FUCKED COOL AND SWEET DARKNESS OH

Such lines bring out the worst in me, but feeling an obligation to go beyond the responsibility of a man with two dollars to spend on poetry, I read on.

Although Mr. McClure provides a disturbed typography, with capital shouts, and other devices loud to the eye, his poetry seems conventional to me. After one has made his peace with the impressionistic format, he discovers that the poetry is quite direct, even prosaic. I believe it is conventional, too, in that Michael McClure has taken on the dreary apparatus of the Hip organ-grinders.

Daniel G. Hoffman writes a very lively poetry. He provides so much for the ear, the eye, and the imagination that he is nearly prodigal. Try this passage from *In a Cold Climate.*

> Pasture where the grass round granite grows
> and not immoderate greenness gives homage
> to the long fight with clutched root and snowcap
>
> with the sun near and spoondrift in the wind, and cows
> licking sunbaked snowsalt crusts on stones,
> hooves akimbo under the bright etched map
>
> of tropical isles in the goldribbed sky all summer
> bespeak, in the noonheat, the rigor of cold climates,
> as fishspine shoals, sunbleached when the tide's out, show
>
> the integrity of bone. Who would encumber
> these huckleberryfields' sparse opulence with tropics'
> richesse? Wise clouds withhold vermilion snow.

I suggest that it is difficult to find a reading pace which will allow one to give full measure to the headlong rhythm and the impedance of the images and the various tonguetwists. When one slows down to a serious examination of the language, he wonders what rationale can contain "not immoderate greenness", "bespeak", and "richesse". He asks how one is to program his tongue to manipulate "green round granite grows", "cow / licking sunbaked snowsalt crusts", and "fishspine shoals, sunbleached". Most of the poems in this collection are filled with this kind of fun, but there are times when the teletype is running well behind the transactions. Here's one shorter piece, so you can see Hoffman through in a poem:

In the Days of Rin-Tin-Tin

In the days of Rin-Tin-Tin
There was no such thing as sin,
No boymade mischief worth God's wrath
And the good dog dogged the badman's path.

In the nights, the deliquescent horn of Bix
Gave presentiments of the pleasures of sex;
In the Ostrich Walk we walked by twos—
Ja-da, jing-jing, what could we lose?

The Elders mastered the Market, Mah-jongg,
Readily admitted the Victorian wrong,
While Caligari hobbled with his stick and his ghoul
And overtook the Little Fellow on his way to school.

The poems by Neil Weiss clearly emerge as the voice of a man who has found style, a way of looking and a way of writing. All of these poems are gnomic, ironic, presented in short, incomplete cadences. They are not tentative, however; though it is fair to say that they don't add up to some categorical concern.

There is little preamble to the poems; you step right in. But these poems are actively spare. Here's the *Last Word from Count Dracula.*

Too late to wake
beating my wings
over Georgian breasts.

They've finally deciphered my sex
with the thinnest needle
of disbelief.

I'm locked in my box,
dressed forever in my evening clothes,
a silver stake sticking through my vest.

I vexed the late Victorians
but am now mere fretwork in the dark
for mothers with elderly children.

All the streets are swept.
I'm gone because I couldn't tell
the living and the dead apart,

the wheat from the chaff;
and that the dear delicate creature,
in between, was lost.

But such an approach is not forgiving. Such poetry provides little local interest on its way to its main terminal; and, if it doesn't arrive, the failure is absolute. In *The City,* he writes:

At the movie it's amuse me now
for I am fading fast and cannot feel
or touch the images.
These are the last songs of a people
locked in a hell where all the days
are yesterday. We are sold
events in cans, sit in the dark
to a flickering beam from behind the head
to the eye of the screen, a total trance,
heaven counterfeited by machine.

In this sequence I believe that a certain prose demeanor, inherent in ironic verse, emerges to spoil the effect. But this disposition is overcome in most of the book.

I'll tell John Holmes* (and overhearers) right now that I like his poetry. In many ways he is using language the same way as George Abbe and Neil Weiss, working with colloquial language, with conversational rhythms; but Holmes provides a colloquial, conversational effect within stricter forms.

John Holmes looks at the world which he has chosen to see as though it had chosen him. On style, he writes:

I have never forgotten a man who, planning a road,
First built the hill in modeling clay on a board,

* This review was written before the death of this poet last June. A long poem by John Holmes written last winter will appear in an early issue of *Poetry*.
H.R.

And ran his right thumb-end down around the slope,
The easy, the easiest way, as if to feel how the hill
Wanted it, if the road had to be there. But it was.
It was always there. The man did nothing but find it.

And in *Birthday*, to Richard Eberhart:

Stating the poet, the world I defined
Because of the poet, lived up to it.

What he writes of Frost in *Photograph of Robert Frost*, "The one with bark on the log wall back of him", applies to Holmes as well:

He has taken a lifelong look at things
Out of love and need, remembering them all
With five senses and a sixth sense, words.

JOHN WOODS

NEWS NOTES

Robert Frost, who launched our Poetry Day series eight years ago and helped this magazine to survive its worst financial crisis ever, returns this year as the Poet of Honor for our eighth annual Poetry Day and our celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary that he made possible. Mr. Frost will give a reading of his poems on Friday evening, November 16th, at 8:30, at the Studebaker Theatre, Chicago. Tickets are $1, $2, and $3, available by mail from the Modern Poetry Association, 1018 North State Street, Chicago 10, or at the box office of the Studebaker Theatre the week of the reading.

The following evening, Saturday, November 17th, Mr. Frost will be the guest of honor at the traditional dinner-and-literary-auction, on which this magazine will depend for its launching into its second half-century.

A reading by Mr. Frost will also be one of the principal events, a month before, at the three-day Poetry Festival, "Fifty Years of American Poetry", sponsored by the Library of Congress, October 22–24, in honor of *Poetry*'s Golden Anniversary. Some forty or fifty American poets have been invited to participate in this festival with readings and discussions.

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We repeat our announcement of last month that, except for manuscripts from poets who thus far have not appeared in *Poetry*, we shall not be in a position to consider any new unsolicited manuscripts until the first of December. We have on hand or are otherwise committed for all the material we need for our plans well into 1963. But we emphasize our interest in continuing to see manuscripts from poets new to *Poetry*.

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We set out as self-explanatory, and with the unreserved support of *Poetry*, the following letter, dated 28 May 1962:

Dr. William Kolodney, Educational Director
Young Men's & Young Women's Hebrew Association
92d Street & Lexington Avenue
New York 28, N.Y

Dear Dr. Kolodney:

In this open letter we wish to explain why we must dissociate ourselves from the YMHA because of its conduct with reference to the Helen Burlin Memorial Award. We were appointed by the YMHA to choose the best manuscript of poems submitted to the Poetry Center of the

YMHA before January 1, 1962. This manuscript was to receive a prize of $1,500 to underwrite its publication by The Atheneum Press. Our names as judges were used in the publicity for the contest, and it was unquestionably understood that our decision was final.

The manuscript that we unanimously chose for the publication prize, from more than 200 submissions, was Frederick Seidel's *Final Solutions*. The YMHA was committed to announce the award in February 1962. To this date, more than three months later, that announcement has not yet been made. Furthermore, Mr. George Frankenthaler, president of the YMHA, has summarily notified The Atheneum Press, in a letter dated March 30, 1962: . . . "we wish to inform you that we do not authorize your publishing in our behalf the book of poems of Mr. Frederick Seidel, in whole or in part, and we will not be responsible for any cost or obligation incurred in any subsequent publication of this manuscript or any part thereof." Subsequently you yourself have written Mr. Seidel a letter which can only be interpreted as inviting him to accept pre-publication censorship of his manuscript as a condition of his receiving the award. We who were not consulted at any stage of these proceedings respect Mr. Seidel's refusal of this invitation.

Your reasons for rejecting the manuscript of our choice have not been officially communicated to us, but we infer, from your letter of April 30 to Mr. Seidel, that certain members of the staff of the YMHA and of its board of trustees object to isolated passages in no more than two poems that you fear will give offense to two religious communities. The charge seems to us as irrelevant as it is untrue, but in any event if we had known beforehand that we were expected to pick the most inoffensive manuscript, we should never have consented to serve on the jury. In its pursuit of decorum the YMHA has apparently felt no compunction about offending the community of art. The well-publicized incident last year in which the curtain was rung down on a distinguished American writer, abruptly terminating his reading at The Poetry Center, could be interpreted as an error of judgment, an unfortunate but spontaneous gesture. No such interpretation or extenuation is possible in the present episode, where the administrative procedures have been as deliberate as they have been secretive.

Already, as a protest against the stubbornly insensitive conduct of the YMHA in this matter, you have had resignations submitted by Miss Betty Kray, executive secretary of The Poetry Center, and by one of the signatories of this letter, Mr. Stanley Kunitz, director of the writing workshop at The Poetry Center. As judges of the Helen Burlin Memorial Award we call on you to honor your public commitment to us, to The Atheneum Press, to Mr. Seidel, and to all those who submitted manuscripts to the contest in good faith. We take this action reluctantly in full

recognition of the great debt that all poets owe to The Poetry Center. Certainly no organization has done more than the YMHA to sponsor the hearing of contemporary poetry. Now, however, the administration of the YMHA seems determined to act as censors over the activities of The Poetry Center. Such a change in policy must be at the expense of the freedom of the artist. You should not expect poets to assist you in this enterprise.

Signed by the jury for the Helen Burlin Memorial Award:

LOUISE BOGAN
STANLEY KUNITZ
ROBERT LOWELL

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The poets awarded Guggenheim fellowships for this year for work in poetry are Galway Kinnell, Denise Levertov, Ned O'Gorman, and Louis Simpson. Harold Bloom, D. S. Carne-Ross, Edwin Honig, and Morton Dauwen Zabel are among those who have received fellowships for research. ✳ Reed Whittemore won first prize in the Emily Clark Balch awards for 1962 with his poem *The Music of Driftwood*, and James Dickey and Katherine Reeves won second prizes. The poems are published in the current (Summer) *Virginia Quarterly Review*. ✳ The Spring Choice of the Poetry Book Society, London, for 1962 is *Poems, Golders Green*, by Dannie Abse; and the "recommendation", *A Sense of Danger*, by Vernon Scannell.

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John Crowe Ransom was the principal speaker at a "convention and workshop" in Cleveland, June 29–July 1, sponsored by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies and the Fenn College Poetry Center. ✳ On July 4th a new work by Archibald MacLeish, *The American Bell*, was presented at Independence Hall in Philadelphia as a national celebration of Independence Day. Mr. MacLeish's pageant, re-creating the historical past through drama, music, and light, was the first American use of "son et lumière". Frederic March was the principal narrator. On the evening of August 2nd, CBS-TV presented Mr. MacLeish and Mark Van Doren in an hour's conversation. At a ceremony to be held at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Emancipation on the 22nd of this month, Mr. MacLeish will deliver a poem written expressly for the event, at the invitation of the Civil War Centennial Commission.

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For the past year the *National Review* has been offering a page of poetry, frequently a group of poems by one poet. Hugh Kenner is the poetry editor. Manuscripts submitted for consideration should be addressed to Mr. Kenner at Box 175, Goleta, California. ✳ The Wild Hawthorn Press, 24 Fettes Row, Edinburgh, Scotland, has brought out two numbers of a new monthly poetry sheet, a four-page folder in two columns called *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.* The second number has poems by Dave Ball, George Mackay Brown, Cid Corman, Lesley Lendrum, and Jerome Rothenberg, and translations of the Finnish poet Tuomas Anhava by Anselm Hollo, of Mayakovsky (in Lallans) by Edwin Morgan, of the Japanese poet Shimpei Kusano by Cid Corman, and of the Hungarian poet Attila Jozsef by Edwin Morgan. Subscriptions are 12*s.* or $1.75 for twelve issues, and 7*s.* or $1 for six issues; single copies are 9*d.*, plus 3*d.* for mailing. The editors are Ian Hamilton Finlay and Jessie McGuffie. The Wild Hawthorn Press also has issued small volumes of poems, including Lorine Niedecker's *My Friend Tree*, Louis Zukofsky's *16 Once Published*, Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Glasgow Beasts, an a Burd* (*Haw, an Inseks, an, Aw, a Fush* papercuts by Pete McGinn and John Picking), Gael Turnbull's *A Very Particular Hill*, Robert Garioch's *Poems and Verses*, and Edwin Morgan's translations of *Poems by Attila Jozsef.* ✳ *First Stage: A Quarterly of New Drama*, is edited by Henry F. Salerno at Purdue University, 324 Heavilon Hall, Lafayette, Indiana. The Summer 1962 issue (Volume I, #3) contains four plays, two of which are in verse: *The Monk Who Wouldn't*, by Oscar Mandel, and *After Closing*, by Roy Marz. Subscriptions are $4.50 a year in the United States, $5 in Canada and elsewhere; single copies $1.25. ✳ Some of the poets in the first number of *Outcry*, edited by Lee Hollane and C. P. Galle and published quarterly by Poet's Press, Box 12082, Washington 5, D.C., are Curtis Zahn, Anselm Hollo, William Margolis, Judson Crews, Sir Julian Huxley (with a *Return to Poetry*), Cid Corman, John William Corrington, Charles Bukowski, Ian Finlay, James Boyer May, Walter Lowenfels, Langston Hughes, and Marvin Bell. Subscriptions are $3.50 annually ($4.50 abroad, except for Canada and Mexico); single copies $1.00. ✳ *Blue Grass*, another new quarterly, "believes that the most valuable measure for writers now is Charles Olson's essay *Projective Verse*". In the first number there are poems by John Wieners, W. S. Merwin, Bruce Berlind, Edward Dorn, Winfield Townley Scott, and Frank Davey, among others. The editor is Hank Chapin. Annual subscriptions are $2.50, and single copies, 75 cents. Address: 111 Estherwood, Dobbs Ferry, New York. ✳ *Pa'lante*, a new magazine edited by Howard Schulman and published three times a year by the League of Militant Poets, P.O. Box 88, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York 9, N.Y., "is devoted to the American renaissance and the writing of a new world. This new world is the world of the future whose image may be found in the fraternal socialist

countries." The first number has poems from Cuba by Nicholas Guillen, Escardo, Pablo Armando Fernandez, Elvio Romero, and prose by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Jose Antonio Portuondo, and Miguel de Salabert. From the United States there are poems by Michael McClure, John Wieners, Thomas McGrath, Joel Oppenheimer, and prose by Allen Ginsberg and Le Roi Jones. Subscriptions are $3 a year; single copies, $1.25.

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New books by members of the staff of *Poetry* (not to be reviewed here): *French Classical Drama: Five Great Plays from the French Theater,* edited and translated by Wallace Fowlie (Bantam Books); *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study*, by Hugh Kenner (Grove Press); *T. S. Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited, with an introduction, by Hugh Kenner (Prentice-Hall).

RICHARD ALDINGTON

1892–1962

CONTRIBUTORS

The complete play by I. A. RICHARDS, *Tomorrow Morning, Faustus!* is being published by Harcourt this month. Dr. Richards tells us that he has now finished a new play, which has been produced in segments, *Why So, O Socrates?* "an acting version of *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito,* and *Phaedo*—more Plato's play by far than mine". A third book of verse is on its way, probably to be called *The Tenses.* ✳ WENDELL BERRY spent the past year in Europe on a Guggenheim, and this month will begin teaching at New York University. Of the group of new poems by Mr. Berry presented here, the long poem, *The Habit of Waking,* is his latest work. Other new poems of his can be found in *The Nation* and *Prairie Schooner.* ✳ The six poems by LARRY EIGNER mark his introduction to the readers of *Poetry.* He lives in Swampscott, Massachusetts, where he was born in 1927. Much of his work has been presented in *Origin, Sparrow, Combustion* (Toronto), *Yugen, Hearse,* and *Migrant,* among many other little magazines and presses, and is now available in his book *On My Eyes* (Jonathan Williams, Highlands, North Carolina), reviewed in this issue by Galway Kinnell. ✳ WILLIAM CHILDRESS also appears for the first time and has not been published anywhere else. He was born in Hugo, Oklahoma, in 1933 and now lives in California, where he is an undergraduate student at Fresno State College and is working on a novel about army life. He had seven years in the army, three in Europe and one in the Orient. ✳ RAMON GUTHRIE is the third of these "introductions", although his literary career goes back to *Vanity Fair, Broom,* and the old *Paris Review* and includes a half dozen books such as *Marcabrun, Trobar Clus, A World Too Old, Parachute, Scherzo to the Proud City, Graffiti,* and (in collaboration with G. E. Diller) *French Literature and Thought since the Revolution.* He is professor of French and comparative literature at Dartmouth. ✳ JAMES HEARST continues to center his life in farming and teaching. The Prairie Press this month brings out another book of his poems, *Limited View.* ✳ The epigraph for STEPHEN BERG's poem, *For a Friend on His Way Home,* "is from one of the most beautiful and instructive essays of our time, Loren Eiseley's "The Long Loneliness", *American Scholar,* Winter 1960–61". A volume of poems by Mr. Berg, *Bearing Weapons,* will be published by the Cummington Press toward the end of this month. A few years ago he shared with Robert Mezey and Ronald Goodman a chapbook of twenty-four poems by three poets published by New Ventures Press. ✳ HY SOBILOFF is the author of *Dinosaurs and Violins* (Farrar, Straus), *In the Deepest Aquarium* (Dial), and a new book, *Breathing of First Things,* to be published by Dial late this month. He is a business executive, born in Fall River,

Massachusetts in 1912 and educated at the University of Arizona and New York University. ✳ ROBERT SWARD had a Fulbright year in England, working under Charles Tomlinson, and spent most of the summer last year in Greece. Since his return he has been living at the MacDowell Colony and at Yaddo. His first collection, *Uncle Dog and Other Poems*, was published in England a few months ago by Putnam. ✳ RUTH WHITMAN's first book, *Blood and Milk Poems*, will be published by Clarke and Way this year. Last January she won the Reynolds Lyric Award of the Poetry Society of America and recently has been working at translations of Odysseus Elytis and Jules Supervielle. She is poetry editor of *Audience*. ✳ We end this month's presentation of verse with an excerpt from a long narrative poem (1800 lines) by BRUCE CUTLER, *A West Wind Rises*, which will be published this season by the University of Nebraska Press, with illustrations by David E. Bernard. His book *The Year of the Green Wave* launched the First-Book Poetry Series at Nebraska. He teaches at the University of Wichita, Kansas.

DUDLEY FITTS will be visiting professor in comparative literature at Harvard for this academic year. His latest volume is *Four Comedies of Aristophanes*, published this year by Harcourt Brace. An early issue of this magazine will have a long review by X. J. Kennedy of Mr. Fitts's work as a translator of Greek comedy. ✳ MONA VAN DUYN won our Eunice Tietjens Prize for the title poem of her book *Valentines to the Wide World* (Cummington Press, 1959). She is just finishing a second collection of poems, *A Time of Bees*. ✳ DOROTHY DONNELLY has won two of our prizes, the Union League in 1954 and the Harriet Monroe in 1957, and a Longview Foundation Award for her poem *People*, which appeared in *Poetry* in August 1957. Her first book was *Trio in a Mirror* (University of Arizona Press, 1960). At the moment she is working at some prose. ✳ GALWAY KINNELL did almost all the translations of Yves Bonnefoy in our special issue of last July. We add to the news in our notes on contributors to that issue his Guggenheim fellowship (see *News Notes*) and his new role as the illustrator of a book of poems by Pati Hill, *The Snow Rabbit*, which Houghton will bring out in November. ✳ JOHN WOODS is the author of two books of verse published in the Indiana University series, *The Deaths at Paragon, Indiana*, and *On the Morning of Color*, which is reviewed in this issue by Mona Van Duyn. Recently he has been giving readings of his poems at various colleges. He continues to teach at Western Michigan University.

BOOKS RECEIVED

VERSE

Run with the Hunted, by Charles Bukowski. Midwest Poetry Chapbooks (Chicago). $1.00.

Antologia da Poesia Paulista, ed. by Domingos Carvalho da Silva, Oliveira Ribeiro Neto, and Péricles Eugênio da Silva Ramos. Conselho Estadual de Cultura (São Paulo). No price listed.

Paradoxes, by J. Chiari. Villiers Publications (London). 15*s*.

Lyrics of the Middle Ages, ed. by Hubert Creekmore. Grove. $2.95.

Poesias Escolhidas, by Teófilo Dias. Coleção Poesia (São Paulo). No price listed.

The Graphics of Love, by D. von R. Drenner. Zauberberg Press (Coffeyville, Kansas). $8.00.

Forty Dartmouth Poems, ed. by Richard Eberhart. Dartmouth Publications. $2.00.

Glasgow Beasts, an a Burd (*Haw, an Inseks, an, Aw, a Fush*, papercuts by Pete McGinn and John Picking), by Ian Hamilton Finlay. Wild Hawthorn Press (Edinburgh). 4*s*. ($0.60).

Flowers of Evil: Poems of Charles Baudelaire, tr. by Florence Louise Friedman. Elek Books Ltd. (London). 21*s*.

Cántico del Retorno, by Juan de Gregorio. Talleres Gráficos de A. J. Fontanillas (Montevideo). No price listed.

Modern German Poetry: 1910–1960: An Anthology with Verse Translations, ed. by Michael Hamburger and Christopher Middleton. Grove. $6.50.

Poems & Prints, by George Hitchcock and Mel Fowler. The Bindweed Press (San Francisco). $1.50.

Poesias, by Francisca Júlia. Coleção Poesia (São Paulo). No price listed.

Thank You and Other Poems, by Kenneth Koch. Grove. $1.95.

Clothing Death and *Three Songs to the Sea*, by Illka Krupkin. St. Paul Publications (Buenos Aires). No price listed.

Espumas de la Sombra, by Henri de Lescoet. Ediciones Revista de Guatemala. No price listed.

The Secret Sea, by Hugo Manning. Villiers Publications (London). 15*s*.

Letter to an Imaginary Friend, by Thomas McGrath. Alan Swallow. $1.65.

Flowering Dust, by Lloyd Frank Merrell. Philosophical Library (New York). $2.75.

My Friend Tree, by Lorine Niedecker. Wild Hawthorn Press (Edinburgh). 5*s*. ($0.75).

Collected Poems: 1937–1962, by Winfield Townley Scott. Macmillan. $7.50.

Poetry Party 1961–1962, ed. by Ulrich Troubetzkoy. Poetry Society of Virginia (Richmond). Distrib. by the Academy of American Poets. No price listed.

30 Wierszy, by Jerzy Walenczyk. Wydawnictwo Lodzkie (Lodz). No price listed.

The Mentor Book of Major American Poets, ed. by Oscar Williams and Edwin Honig. New American Library. $0.95.

16 Once Published, by Louis Zukofsky. Wild Hawthorn Press (Edinburgh). 6*s*. ($1.00).

PROSE

Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, by Samuel Beckett, Marcel Brion, Frank Budgen, Stuart Gilbert, Eugene Jolas, Victor Llona, Robert McAlmon, Thomas McGreevy, Elliot Paul, John Rodker, Robert Sage, William Carlos Williams. With *Letters of Protest* by G. V. L. Slingsby and Vladimir Dixon. New Directions. $5.00.

Varieties of Literary Experience: Eighteen Essays in World Literature, ed. by Stanley Burnshaw. New York University Press. $7.50.

Recent American Poetry, by Glauco Cambon. University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers No. 16. University of Minnesota Press. $0.65.

The Poetry of W. B. Yeats, by Bhabatosh Chatterjee. Orient Longmans (Calcutta). *Rs.* 9.00.

The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study, by Steele Commager. Yale University Press. $8.50.

The Saucer of Larks, by Brian Friel. Doubleday. $3.95.

The Essential Tagore, by Rameshwar Gupta. Chetnagar (Banasthali, Rajasthan, India). *Rs.* 4.00.

The Curious Frame: Seven Poems in Text and Context, by John Edward Hardy. University of Notre Dame Press. $4.50.

Gutbucket and Gossamer, by Fred Miller. Alicat Bookshop Press (Yonkers). $1.00.

Stand Still Like the Hummingbird, by Henry Miller. New Directions. $4.00.

An Age of Enormity: Life and Writing in the Forties and Fifties, by Isaac Rosenfeld. Ed., with an introd., by Theodore Solotaroff. Foreword by Saul Bellow. World Publishing Company. $5.00.

John Crowe Ransom, by John L. Stewart. University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 18. University of Minnesota Press. $0.65.

Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War, by Edmund Wilson. Oxford University Press. $8.50.

PROSE AND VERSE

A Choice of Kipling's Verse, made by T. S. Eliot. With an essay on Rudyard Kipling. Doubleday. $1.25.

American Poetry and Poetics: Poems and Critical Documents from the Puritans to Robert Frost, ed. by Daniel G. Hoffman. Doubleday. $1.45.

We All Have Something to Say to Each Other, by David Meltzer. Auerhahn Press (San Francisco). $0.75.

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