

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

Volume 18 - Number 1

Fall 1967

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## CONTENTS

- |    |                       |  |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1  | MARIA INGRAM          | <i>Silver Horn</i>                     |
| 2  | ELVA MCALLASTER       | <i>The Ugliest</i>                     |
| 3  | MATT FIELD            | <i>Hopscotch</i>                       |
| 4  | GREG KUZMA            | <i>Spring Fishing</i>                  |
| 6  | JOSEPH COHEN          | <i>A Jew's Joy</i>                     |
| 8  | NAOMI GLADSTONE GRADY | <i>Two Poems</i>                       |
| 10 | EDNA MEUDT            | <i>Agenda for Autumn</i>               |
| 12 | LORRAINE ELLIS HARR   | <i>Three Haiku</i>                     |
| 13 | TOM WAYMAN            | <i>The State of the<br/>Revolution</i> |
| 19 | PETER WILD            | <i>Rain</i>                            |
| 20 | JACK CRAWFORD, JR.    | <i>A Grateful Nation</i>               |
| 23 | STANLEY COOPERMAN     | <i>Three Poems</i>                     |
| 26 | EMERY GEORGE          | <i>Triptych: After the<br/>Floods</i>  |
| 35 | E. L. ARMSTRONG       | <i>Two Poems</i>                       |
| 40 | MARGARET H. BERGER    | <i>Fight Night</i>                     |
| 41 | ANTHONY EDKINS        | <i>The Human Being</i>                 |
| 43 | RICHARD GUSTAFSON     | <i>A Canticle of Corn</i>              |

Cover design: ROGER LEWIS

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**SILVER HORN**

She came home this time  
With amaranth garland and tobacco in a gauze pouch  
Tied with string.  
And when she closed the door behind her,  
The workers' song went back into the hills  
And died with the earth.

No, the man standing by the fire had a beard.  
It was not Carbonne who was always clean-shaven  
And played the clarinet.  
But to be sure, "Carbonne?"  
He stood bent over, warming his hands  
And, glancing sideways, knew she was there.  
"Carbonne!"

She danced laughter around the room  
With flowers in her hair and sang:  
    "O I have come from kingdoms far  
    To fetch the world before thee here . . ."

But his eyes made the fire grow dim,  
And hers, punishing the almost, drew free.

"Two summers ago," she said quietly,  
"With the silver horn."

She lay the amaranth garland in the fire  
And, drawing the pouch close to her breast,  
Was gone.

**Maria Ingram**

**THE UGLIEST**

How could one woman be so ugly?  
Twisted face and twisted body.  
Misshapen fish-curved jaw; strange bloated cheeks;  
Small hideous eyes, eyes borrowed from some sow  
Or snorting greedy boar.

Malformed, malformed, malformed.

At first we thought that life had crippled her:  
Mauled, savaged, pummelled with hard fists.

We heard her speak,  
And knew that, rather, she has crippled it.  
At every sentence toads and writhing snakes  
Drop from her lips.  
Her hands, her house, her neighborhood  
Are always getting smeared with demon dung,  
The ordure of all seven deadliest sins.

If Mary Magdalene  
Had seven to be cast out, how many live in this  
Tormented heap of self-tormenting flesh?

Perhaps  
We hate her most because  
Her hideous demons whinny, neigh, and bark  
To claim a cousinship  
With our own manicured and perfumed pets.

**Elva McAllaster**

## HOPSCOTCH

On the walk  
 of the thin house behind sooty privet  
 mark squares  
 with a stolen lump of chalk.

Number  
 each square for the voices in  
 the room upstairs.

Two and then one and two again  
 up to ten  
 the half circle at the end  
 is safe.

Count. Jump in slippery shoes  
 Jump  
 if you stop you can hear them.

Stoop  
 pick up the lucky marker  
 thick  
 bit of blue glass medicine bottle.

Wear out  
 the grey afternoon. If you touch  
 the lines  
 you miss. If you don't

stumble  
 and scratch your best shoes  
 you get home safe.

When you stop jumping you lose.  
**Matt Field**

## SPRING FISHING

for my Father

1. The sky paled  
like color leaves  
a dying trout,  
we went under it,  
our eyes spotted  
upstream to where  
even canoes stop.  
We stood where  
South Inlet falls white  
over cold stones;  
he pulled sleek trout  
thrashing from landscapes  
not wide enough to tent on,  
where thin streams  
iced by winter  
cut deep.  
Tails flapping rock,  
far off gunfire,  
we brought the fish ashore  
to our knees.
2. When he hooked  
the big one  
I was there  
netted round the ankle  
and caught  
in trees  
on the other bank.  
He couldn't get there  
so I did,

catching the bank's  
one branch  
with one hand,  
one foot  
like a log  
bobbing toward current,  
I dug deep with  
my arm shoulder long,  
fingering that  
slick weight.

3. Later, we knelt  
by the stream,  
the fish around us  
like presents.  
He taught me how  
to open them, and,  
on the ground,  
arrange and name  
their perfect contents.  
  
Pale bellies where  
the colors end,  
to look almost  
like sky;  
skin cold as spring water,  
greased for speed.  
I felt the thin  
swim bladder  
pop like a blister.
4. Then, back down river,  
fog closing in,  
standing up front

he let me steer home;  
we drank the air.

Much later,  
by the fire,  
the coals peeped out  
and popped,  
I remembered the fish.

**Greg Kuzma**

### **A JEW'S JOY THAT ISRAEL SURVIVED**

israel on june 11, 1967

does not exist  
unless myth exists.

saturdays we kids  
filled movies helter-skelter  
like penny candy  
stuffed in a storekeeper's bag.

hoots, bubblegum, cracker-  
jax were integral as arms  
& legs to the weekly peril  
which never ended for once and all  
but suspended till next week  
with pauline tied to railroad  
tracks, villain shining like a dire  
sun, and tom mix single-  
handed, six gun pure as pasteurized  
milk, repelling apache attacks.  
jack slid down beanstock  
with the giant's goose. truly  
he did, after I fell  
asleep and before there was time  
to awake. merlin  
knew of the singing  
sword. launcelot slew  
the ogre. together  
they whisked classrooms  
from the mailed grips of syntax  
and the pythagorean theorem.  
in the hearth's crackle was chatter  
of elves who lived in aesop's  
house. houris married alladin's  
genii and one gave birth to mighty  
mouse. impossible  
for them to exist.  
they were israelis.

Joseph Cohen

## TWO POEMS

## From Female Relatives

My lizard,  
Gideon,  
lost his tail  
in the  
egg slicer  
my  
Aunt Grace  
gave me  
for Easter.

My cat,  
Cynthia,  
burnt her paw  
on the  
bun warmer  
my  
Cousin Dolly  
sent me  
Memorial Day.

My snake,  
Burt,  
swallowed  
a  
heating pad  
my  
Sister Mona  
lent me  
Election Day.

I,  
myself,  
am quite  
concerned  
since  
I am  
also  
a female  
relative.

## In Focus

Today the storm ended,  
having swollen Mrs. Riley's ankles  
and torn down my bamboo curtains.

The kitchen is invaded by lost ants  
that find the pretzel crumbs  
Stanley's cat hid last Christmas.

Yesterday's wet newspaper, drying in the oven,  
turned black overnight  
and is now unreadable.

How will I know about Peanuts and Dick Tracy?  
My neighbor, a Republican,  
is unwilling to tell me.

The back yard is flushed by water  
that drowns the patched grass  
and uproots the rusty flowers,

And stacks of wood  
piled beside the house  
won't be dry for next week's fire.

My neighbor's wood is dry;  
it was protected.  
He's always prepared and very careful.

The wind uprooted a peach tree  
that gave my neighbor sweet fruit.  
I'll give him some of mine this summer.

On Haight Street, local Bohemians  
are sweeping debris from the sidewalks  
as a public service,

Having also decorated the parks  
with waves of colored chalk  
swirled onto the asphalt.

The police are unhappy:  
They disrupt outdoor conversations  
and give tickets to Morris Minors.

A motorcycled Sergeant follows a Microbus  
and orders the driver (a bearded gentleman)  
not to stop for ladies crossing from traffic islands.

My husband shaves his head and wears a beard,  
but he is no anarchist.

I do other things, equally effective.

Another storm, being predicted for tomorrow,  
will unlock the sea wall  
and sink houseboats in Sausalito.

Naomi Gladstone Grady

## AGENDA FOR AUTUMN

### 1. *Gather wood*

that casualties from summer storm  
may live again as fire sprites.

*Store* broken desks of children gone—  
imperiled on highways, in lakes and planes,  
and youth devoured by wolves.

### 2. *Bring a hollow log*

where raccoon can hibernate—

aware his cat and puppy playmates face farmer-  
cold.

*Think* of cave for his counterpart:

hider of candles under bushel,  
conscientious objector to change.

3. *Clear pasture stream*  
that running free it may not freeze  
where the wild ones drink.  
*See debris*  
of beauty cults, sexatives and gadgetry  
as things to foul the hidden rivers.
4. *Move block salt bait*  
from clearing into woods  
and out of rifle range.  
*Review guerrillas, and people-plaint*  
on reservations, in tenements and camps,  
or approaching killer ambush.
5. *Caulk stables*  
that comfort babies born for slaughtering.  
*Help* community chest charities  
and other fiddlers playing tremolo  
while worlds explode.
6. *Rake leaves*  
for cover, compost, and fire.  
*Clean out rancor, probe my indignations.*
7. *Tighten fencelines*  
to find dryrot at the base.  
*Show* uses for leftover men,  
mindful life is a stile which I descend,  
arthritic of knee, but not of eye.
8. *Oil hinges*  
lest there be unopened doors.  
*Remember:* No friendship force, or anyone coerce;  
my house is clay and stone,  
when vacant  
cold.

## THREE HAIKU

\$ \$ \$ ¢ \$  
 Cash register rings Haiku  
 \$\$ \$ ¢ \$

○ ○  
 ○  
 ○ ○  
 Ripe plums drop . . . autumn Haiku  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○  
 ○

| | | | |  
 Haiku from leaves dripping dew  
 | | |  
 |  
 |

Lorraine Ellis Harr

**THE STATE OF THE REVOLUTION****Part I Jan. 8, 1967**

The capitalists have Peterfreund.  
He mopes in jail, won't come out, outlines  
his next one hundred and seventy-  
five poems. The charge is burglary; he  
is not permitted to talk with the  
outside world; please come back tomorrow.

The Commissar Cleclack's wife is sick.  
She coughs in the bed; he must go out  
for medicines, which fact he recalls  
in the driveway of the Mayfair store,  
cutting short our discussion of post-  
Freudian schisms in the movement.

Dennis sulks in front of his telly.  
He wants to be a secret agent,  
says he doesn't understand *anything*  
about politics, if they won't let  
him be a secret agent. He has  
discovered a poem meaning nothing.

This answers one of the short-story  
writers, who wrote a verse essay on  
Poetry As National Concern.  
The Mexican General Staff, now

having concluded their treaty with Fidel, say they have nobody to shoot. The husband of the girl with the tight corduroy behind who cashiers for the Bonanza restaurant, once shot trees flying with the Navy in California; now he is in Japan. *My* round and lovely girl has returned to Canada to inform the Committee of response to my pamphlets urging young Americans to defect to Canada. My car burns too much gas; my directional signals now blink only twice, then stop.

### **Part II Jan. 23, 1967**

YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD AD-HOC COMMITTEE UNSUCCESSFULLY PLANS A MARCH ON THE STATE CAPITOL TO PROTEST THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL POLICIES . . .

The highway patrol screams through the night.  
 "Saleh? Saleh? Where is that bastard Saleh? He sent telegrams to our governor, press releases to the newspaper, gave a certain pirate radio station some obscene bits of his revolting biography . . ."

Sue Schwartz calls Sacramento, whispers the correct sequence. Instantly, all local chapters of Young Judea, One World-One Zion, and the Jewish

Agrarian Party converge on  
the Capitol. A hoarse cheer rises:  
"This year, this year in Sacramento."

Peterfreund slugs rats in the gutter.  
He chortles to himself, bottle in  
hand, re-reading the newspaper scraps  
which give an account of his trial.  
"I take on nothing I can't handle:  
As soon as I beat laundromats, I'll  
think about taking on colleges."

Wayman swings from his front porch railing.  
"I would have used my shower curtain  
rod," the note says, "but who would have seen?  
Saleh always says go for yourself  
in this world. Still, I just hope there is  
a big brick wall in Hell, so I can  
run up and bash my head against it."

### **Part III Feb. 7, 1967**

#### **IMPORTANT VISITORS FROM NEW YORK**

Someone has slipped up somewhere.  
Maloff and Leggett of the  
New York Group are in the midst  
of a denunciation  
of their state's literary  
culture, when a woman stands  
and exposes the Chinese.

She has it letter perfect,  
right to the capitalist  
fronts: the Italian paper-  
back houses. Dennis is so

amazed, he says later, he forgets his silencer as he follows her to her car.

"Engine noise covered it," he reports to Leggett. "She said nothing though." Maloff, looking grim, goes to the Dean's tea. Poor Professor Hall, who had planned the meeting, stands with his wife.

In the pub an hour or so later, Hall's hands still shake. "The Chancellor was in the back," he keeps repeating. Leggett, very formal, leaves early. Editor Maloff, despite his promise, does not drop by.

#### **Part IV**

**ROUND UP: SPRING VACATION,  
MARCH 18 TO 27, 1967**

Just before he leaves, Hall calls Wayman in, asks him to sit. "I think," Hall begins, "you have misunderstood the climate of Orange County," He stops. Wayman considers his past, wonders who told the Legion. Hall leans forward. "Take a bath," he says. "We've had some complaints."

Steingass meanwhile gives up on smoking. Little by little,

his huge frame starts demanding  
the drug. "It's for the movement,  
for the movement," Steingass cries,  
his gigantic paws clenching  
and unclenching. As days pass,  
he becomes violent, assaults  
Dennis in a bar. His wife  
hustles him to Mexico,  
his teeth tight. "No, I *don't* smoke!"  
he shouts at the border guard.

Wayman gets leave and drives north  
through the rain. He returns weeks  
later, eyes blank from days on  
the capitalist freeways.  
"Lots of activity there,"  
he says, "though strangely enough  
I find *myself* a victim  
of some direct action, their  
*sexual* revolution . . ."  
His hand presses his forehead.

### Part V

#### THE LAST ROUNDUP: LATE MAY

Peterfreund and Wayman and Pritzker and Bell  
drive north to Frisco for the rally. Night falls,  
and Wayman breaks a tooth on a carefully  
packed peanut butter sandwich. To console him,  
he is allowed the wheel, gets carried away  
during some revolutionary singing,  
just misses a truck. "Psychedelic," the back  
seat states calmly. "J-j-jesus," Wayman says.

Freund picks up a socialist disease and two hitchhikers coming back. The cockroaches have Wayman's place, and the Department announces no TAs will be granted to the anti-status-quo applicants. Rain falls for thirty-nine days, and the Department relents. At the victory party, it is clear this poem is becoming institutionalized. Terry complains because he hasn't been mentioned. He abuses two fascist policemen to prove his qualifications; *they* write down his name.

Despite the Governor, Saleh is given a job—watching some books in the Elite Corps' lunch room, to make certain that no one reads them. Then he is put in charge of ensuring that the chairs there are not sat on, the rugs are not trampled. He sells out completely, acquires a badge and gun, won't permit our leafleting. While anti-reactionary plans are formed, the Marines push north, Egypt moves eastward, and India swings west against Kashmir. In the south, the jokes begin to pale: "How do we get out of this chicken outfit?" and "Why worry? Did you want your poems to live forever?"

**Tom Wayman**

**RAIN**

I smoke my corncob pipes  
    down to the nubs  
and hope the smiling macaws  
    will forgive me  
    an insolence  
of dreams.

walking through the rain  
    I splash puddles  
    of bugs  
into the dark legholes  
    of my pants;  
at night they will itch  
    my shins  
    like wet sand:  
in the drizzle  
    my head has become a flowerpot  
sprouting wild showers of vines.

perhaps an adventure  
    of firetrucks  
will burst on the page;  
    when I was young  
I dropped a fishbowl  
    on the asphalt—  
that was my original sin . . .  
I have switched to sweet tobaccos  
    laced with liquorice  
    and wine . . .  
a miniature garden  
    flourishes  
    in the charred hole of my pipe.

**Peter Wild**

**A GRATEFUL NATION  
WOULD HAVE SLICED STEAKS  
OFF FROZEN MAMMOTHS**

I hear vague rumors and snatches of report  
About a space shot from Russia.  
A man, or men, are up. Something about  
A second ship to shoot and sail. I'm not sure.  
But enough! Bertrands de Born,  
I remove my head and hold it up to speak.  
That Russians suck air into their lungs.  
That but for freak they could be living in spaces  
Occupied by Chinese, Bedouins, Egyptians, Africans.  
But for the planetary chance they might be  
Americans! They have their mammoths. Woolly.

Some

Frozen in five thousand years of Siberia or more.  
They have their male and female. Suppose  
You lived there. Or suppose, when you woke  
You heard the Nile's whisper. The tongue you lifted  
Confusing you momentarily with Arabic or Swahili.  
I have jumped about. I hear voices in Hebrew.  
It is hot and the year is vague. Maybe  
The dove might have some inkling, sitting in that  
tree.

Maybe the waters are rising. Maybe Ararat.  
Maybe that dust in the far-off city is Christ  
On his way up the hill. Dear me! It was  
A good day when they woke. They knew the shot  
Would go. They could have had anything for  
breakfast.

A grateful nation would have sliced steaks off  
Frozen mammoths. I've heard it's been eaten. The  
flesh

Which stopped in ice. Their wives are sleepless.

Kisses wait in mouths of leaders. They said goodbye  
To small children. They are people.

Are the wires working? They worked. The air  
Sails past. The round world turns below.

Will two crews switch ships? Is God  
Watching? Do Roman Empires or Persian  
In distant galaxies muse on magic screens?

Does Alexander the Great see what's happening?  
Is he bored? Does he click the dial off?

Does Socrates brood in a portico? Is there enough  
Space out there? Can we all get into it?

Do the leaders of advanced galaxies chuckle in their  
beer?

Are they amused at the shrill screams of people at  
each other?

The pulling up of guns to bristle on frontiers  
Like dogs barking across fences?

The astronauts are in contact. They radio  
Their words. They eat. They relieve themselves.  
Their wives eat and relieve themselves. Their children  
Are bright faces in school. Warm with fame.

The mission could fail! They could burn up or fall  
Crisp into American plains and be trampled by bison.

Or plip! Into the ocean! Capsule rocking miles  
Down. Miles down. Then we'd have nothing to worry  
about!

But I imagine them up there. Tense, thinking,  
working

Swiftly. Their fingers. Faces. Eyes. Their lungs  
Breathing. Their arms with elbows. Wondrous hinges.  
The swivel of hips as they bend this way and that.  
The blood going with quick soundlessness out of  
their hearts

To their toes and fingers at last. The flesh still pink  
With health in space at a great rate. Swinging in  
ellipses.

I go secretly with the capsule. I remember Zhivago.  
Pushkin. Dostoyevski. Ghandi. Martin Buber.  
Russians in love. Moons rising  
On snow and palm. And Igor Stravinsky's wife  
Escaping from Black Sea pirates to Paris!  
She danced for them!—in the teeth of their eyes!  
And blue wolves in ice forests! O tundra!  
O the liquid leap of Valery Brum!  
O Lara! Lara! in the ice village  
With your lover! Let  
All go well in the Russian capsule. Let  
All go well in the Chinese and Egyptian capsules. Let  
All go well in all the capsules of the planet. Let  
All her rivers flow. Let her seas come upon her shores  
In vast flotations. Let populations be controlled. Let  
Us save ourselves from pollution. Let  
Alexander see we can do it. Let Socrates. Let  
The Russian astronauts have a good flight. Let  
Their wives clasp their hands with joy. Let  
Great kisses descend upon them from Russian  
leaders. Let  
Us put the bones of children back together. Put  
Their faces right. Put their skin back on. Put  
Water buffaloes back in water. Put rice grains  
Back in rice bags. Let us encourage  
The whooping cranes. Let us make great herds again  
Of bison to thunder on western plains.  
Let us chip ice away from woolly mammoths  
And tug them on their beards and whack them and  
send  
Them lumbering alive. Let us save  
The hippopotamus, giraffe, lion. Let us  
Ride on the necks of elephants with their trumpets.

Jack Crawford, Jr.

**THREE POEMS****Metamorphosis**

I am obsessed with the edges  
of things: where  
your face  
    stops  
and becomes something  
I breathe;  
  
where the hyacinth  
turns  
into bee, or rubbing  
    changes  
into electricity . . . .  
  
and love: that too  
has its shape,  
a line  
carved somewhere in the brain,  
a swelling  
of possibility  
  
like stones  
at the edge of the sea:  
when foam  
    breaks  
into sky, or your hand  
dissolves  
    into me.

**Cappelbaum in the Darkroom**

Why  
should the shape of a breast  
be printed, fixed  
on paper?  
under your fingers  
the bright napalm of earth,  
the soft mouths  
of women or trees,  
become arrangements of acid:  
a room  
filled with glass.

No:  
I will open my veins  
to every thorn,  
in gardens  
where flowers and lovers  
are rotten with scent . . . .  
I will hang from my own feet  
and wave my eyes  
at the sun.

A bird  
worn in the buttonhole,  
an owl dancing  
wing-deep in  
mud,  
are greener than all the neon  
fires of your brain:  
and the smallest  
aphid  
eats roses  
all the way to December.

**The Heretic**

Have I ever bothered  
you?

Seriously.

Why  
does it mean, if  
I choose  
to dance in the cave of  
my own nostril?

You sit there  
smoking  
like an ape with its ass on fire,  
nervous, in-  
flamed  
about something  
everything,  
eating barbed-wire spaghetti  
and crying at the taste  
of rust  
in the sauce.

Why does my mouth  
scare you?

Is it my fault if all the cooks  
in the world  
use dirty spoons?

All I eat  
is my own grass, salted  
with snow, and sometimes a red  
leaf.

Am I hurting anybody?

**Stanley Cooperman**

**TRIPTYCH: AFTER THE FLOODS**

“. . . and Italy's losses diminish us all.”

—**CRIA FOR HELP** (NOV. '66)

**1. Fiorenza mia**

News strikes like a lightning bolt of ice  
 from poet-fashioned stone skies over hell.  
 Phantasy is a toy we have no time for.  
 Campanile bells ring; sirens wail;  
 newspapers flash bundled headlines, then float,  
 wiretied, to clog up unseen sewers.  
 And my heart flares in its thaw, turbulent  
 out of ice winters of forgetfulness.

Apocalypses have their ways of riding  
 over you early, like the Peace Corps. And now  
 the city that Underdeveloped Man built  
 to the beauty of Man, lies under water  
 and oil: flammable winter *malebolgia*.  
 Utilities are knocked out. Shops collapse.  
 (Thought consoles you in chaos. Just think: Lorenzo  
 didn't miss electricity, either.)

Archives are submerged. To the Quattrocento  
 inclusive, manuscripts are packed in deep freeze.  
 The number of paintings lost or damaged  
 has to date risen to over a thousand.  
 In the Piazza della Signoria,  
 inside the Basilica di Santa Croce,  
 water stands more than ten feet high.  
 Baptistery door panels are floated loose.

Red plush period chairs that lined the walls  
of the Accademia, now wallow  
like capsized automobiles in piazzas.  
Three weeks after the river's risen anger  
the basement archives of the Palazzo  
Strozzi are still "a vile reservoir."  
Michelangelo's David walks on water.  
Experts try first to clear the mental smog.

Apocalypses fly: millions to Florence.  
Fly your emergency dollars to: Let's Feel  
Good About Saving What's Good, Inc.  
But stay home. Only boys given to daydreams  
ask to accompany expeditions.

As archaeology was once my science  
of dream-hunting down artifacts age buried  
so that youth may dig up and fondle them,  
so in more modern years you, too, loved Florence  
as Blake dreamed Jerusalem: sight unseen.  
Not just because of Dante (and Dante  
came to damn this city), or because a  
whirlpool of politics caught in art  
could leave the unmodern cesspool for two.  
Photography, the travesty of verse, have  
left sparse ways to wade downtown unescorted.

One: the scene answers Mann on Venice dying.  
There the art of painting reached decline  
(see below); here, it began and ended.  
Here some of it, we'll hope, begins anew  
in who knows what high halls: the Pitti, I Tatti,  
on tottering scaffolds, with precision paint,  
onto woods five hundred years old, in lifetime  
laboratories of the Restoration.

Two: what I say now is public *entre nous*.  
 Let's not be telling the tourists we viewed  
 art treasurers "Before" and "After" without them.  
 For how *did* we do justice to it all  
 in the unwounded flesh? There were the hours  
 all these decades. You could get in between  
 ten and twelve; one-thirty and four. Old guards  
 whisked you around; spoke what they learned in  
 guard school,

then left you footweary, wondering what they, you,  
 any of us could ever hope to learn  
 in light thus pilloried and mocked, passed  
 in charter-flight, conducted-tour review.  
 For, who cared? Christ's green body hung there.

#### Virgins

got crowned, slain; fled to Egypt; Samsons tumbled  
 temples. Now the Bible is told in pictures  
 for the seven thousandth time. Who does care?

Three: let's not go on telling each other, either.  
*Ars brevis, vita brevis*. Don't remind me  
 of Chinese un-silkwrapping Buddhist bronzes  
 once a year to redefine art by eye.  
 Don't rehearse those other injustices,  
 Dresden, Hiroshima (where it's never  
 the galleries; I think clearly of children),  
 mushroom cloud garlands, lost Ghirlandaios.

Four: the whole world can't fly to Florence now,  
 to clear with rubble crews, that much is clear.  
 It cannot drop all its other griefs  
 to go wash oil stains from countless marbles,  
 or it would be no world; no Quirinale  
 could license ontological explicit.

But may we co-wonder: "How long before it happens all over?" or "Shall the Arno be dammed?"?

Contrition forbids me the engagement  
it takes to attend funerals on Sundays.  
My soul now clings to Italy the way  
Cimabue's sodden flakes of paint  
cling to the ruined *Crucifixion* (still  
the sire of Giotto's vision); the way Christ's  
drowned presence clings to the cadaverous form,  
His Passion to the cruciform's bare boards.

## 2. Reflection: Venice in Lieu of Photograph

And  
what about  
poor Venice,  
    O genii of the press? Yes,  
        what about her? Dante  
        never got this far. He  
        was only going to get here  
        as the Venetian ambassador  
        of his lord at Ravenna  
        when he caught  
        the marsh fever  
        of the Veneto  
        and died.

I  
didn't get  
to Venice

until recently, either. Her,  
unlike Firenze (see  
above), the which city  
I visited longer ago  
as the dubious ambassador  
on a three-day goodwill tour,  
I first saw  
but two summers  
back; I caught fever  
of joy.

Filled  
with water  
was Venice

and with colored stones, clothes, air; there  
the sun shone expertly,  
you might say. Lifted shapes,  
weightless like nowhere else. White bridge  
upon bridge, domes on Venetian domes!  
And on the Campanile's side  
a sight most  
local: sets of  
hydrographical  
dials.

Now  
the sea walls  
of Venice

broke down; the sea took, by crook,  
the floating city, we're  
sure, aware, in macabre  
anticipated surprise. Rushed  
in, did this ambassador of death,  
freedom in death. *Der Doge*  
*hatte sonst*  
*keine Freiheit,*  
you heard a guide say  
and learned.

That's  
how things stand  
with Venice.

A noble city dies, implies  
*The London Times*. And you  
should know what dying is  
if you've ever jumped and landed  
heels first on Venetian marble floors  
in the Ducal Palace, the  
great state hall,  
and felt how the  
whole city shook un-  
der you.

Then,  
while walking  
in Venice,  
you think of those instruments. Sense  
tells you better, but still  
people look, then whisper  
slow doom all around you: it's time  
to send home all dry ambassadors  
with the news: this dream town will  
be no more.  
The mayor asks  
the world for slow help:  
"We Die. . ."

Far,  
very far  
from Venice  
you remember good friends now: how  
they said, The place sinks,  
or at least dared think that  
and wrote home such things on postcards  
showing well-loved Venetian corners,  
and in language as obscure  
to natives  
as *turismo*  
fever that breaks out  
and spreads—

you  
now thinking of  
doomed Venice

think of its townspeople and you'll  
see scores of sportshirted  
Americans emerge  
like buzzing flies from Harry's Bar:  
ambassadors to Doges, maybe  
to buy Tintoretto's, the  
Teatro  
La Fenice,  
Peggy Guggenheim's—  
the works

sink;  
think: all that  
*was* Venice,

the city dies. Corpses, rats, bats  
fatten her purse, not funds.  
And now— *Let's talk about  
something a bit more cheerful, shall we?*  
*chez* our ambassador: Venetian  
fashions; fragile Murano  
glass hats, high  
rises; raising  
prices rising cities  
sinking . . .

### 3. mit durchgängiger Metapher

No,  
 Hölderlin,  
 lie still. It's  
   not your fault. We thought rivers grew  
     like peaceful geniuses,  
     too; nourished dear children,  
     then, hungry like Saturn, ate them.  
     Now con-(Florentine)sular aid by-  
       passes the river issue,  
       diverts the  
         flow of interest;  
         operates through wider  
         channels:

Italy's centers battle mindless floods.  
 Moribund cities sandbag greywashed walls.  
 Cataract rivers crush jewelfilled bridges.  
 Last frescoes fade in bombed-rebuilt cathedrals.  
 Mourning onlookers talk about sharp-pointed days:  
 Uffizi vandals gouging eyes on a Lotto;  
 enemy madmen stealing well-known collections;  
 civilized armies waging total war.

**Emery George**

**TWO POEMS**

**Pink**

Anybody for a pink refrigerator?

Anybody for a pink telephone?

A decision has to be made —

whether tis nobler in the heart  
not to choose a pink refrigerator  
whether tis nobler in the mind  
to walk irretrievably into the dark interior

of defense factories  
of pink refrigerators  
of mental institutions

A decision has to be made now

does the pink telephone  
 go with the orange sofa?  
 does the pink refrigerator  
 go with purple love ?  
 does pink salmon  
 go with white bread?  
 how do the colors look to my government?  
 how does the signature over the oath  
 fit my soul?

She signed for a pink telephone  
 while he refused to sign the oath  
 He challenged the government  
 to prove it existed for him  
 so it shot him to death

— by accident — it said —

then it notified her of the emergency  
 via the pink telephone  
 and she was very happy  
 that it matched the pale purple wall

From the dark interior  
 of the mental institution  
 we hear the babble  
 of a crazy man

**THERE ARE NO RIGHTEOUS WARS**

Anybody for a pink telephone?  
 Anybody for a pink refrigerator?  
 Anybody for a pink idea?

— Oh come on —

have one pink idea

if only to establish your superiority  
your innate right over any government

to have one  
inconsequential  
pink idea

that goes well with the pale purple wall

He was never one to be afraid  
to watch a pink sunset  
When they freed him he went back to Italy  
never pausing to consider  
whether t'wd have been nobler to the purse  
to have been docilized  
among pink telephones  
in pale pastel rooms  
going well with his red beard

Buy em here — buy em here  
the last batch of pink baby blankets  
manufactured before the ban —  
buy em here —

Anybody for a pink refrigerator?

Anybody for a pink sunset?

Anybody for a pink telephone?

Anybody for one

gnat-sized

irrelevant

government shattering

pinkish  
idea?  
Anybody for the last  
dyed pink  
easter bunny  
allowed under the new law?  
Then one day  
in the square  
in the rain  
that slowly put out the fire  
were the ashes  
  
of the last pink refrigerator  
of the last pink baby blanket  
of the last can of pink salmon  
of the last pink telephone  
of the last dyed-pink rabbit  
  
while at the horizon  
was one pink sunset  
obscured by the smoke.  
  
and hovering  
in the still air  
in the rain  
was one  
abandoned  
pink  
idea

### **Documents**

The Serbian Blue Book contained 52 documents  
to prove Serbia didn't start the war

The Austrian Red Book contained 69 documents  
to prove Austria didn't start the war

The Russian Orange Book contained 79 documents  
to prove Russia didn't start the war

The British Blue Book contained 161 documents  
to prove Britain didn't start the war

The German White Book contained 27 documents  
to prove Germany didn't start the war

The Belgian Gray Book contained 79 documents  
to prove Belgium didn't start the war

The French Yellow Book contained 160 documents  
to prove France didn't start the war

America being democratic  
joined the side with 531 proofs  
that it didn't start the war  
—against the side with only 96—

Altogether 7 million people were killed  
and 20 million were wounded or missing

in this war  
that had altogether 627 proofs  
that it never started—

**E. L. Armstrong**

**FIGHT NIGHT**

Cigar smoke climbs the light over the ring  
And lighters tap the haze they're adding to.  
Use your right! I'm with you, baby, all  
The way, all the way! From a nearby  
Reservation, Siwash reels before  
The low-slung sailor with a melted nose.  
The Indian hides his middle in his shadow,  
A lopsided comma, or wounded bee.  
Then, with surprising sting, he uppercuts  
The Virgin Mary on the sailor's belly.  
Let's have four pepsicolas! Come on, step back  
And fight, you bums! Boooooo! The fighters' feet  
Attract each other's stumbling. Siwash and his  
Swollen eye see half the bell-hung, bobbing  
World in red. Keep working on his eye,  
He ain't your mother! Heavy on their foam  
Seats, digesting beer, the crowd roars action  
As long as it's not theirs. After all  
The searched-out blood, arms surround each other,  
And a loser's game shake trails outstretched  
At the end of baby's disappointment.

**Margaret H. Berger**

**THE HUMAN BEING**

Thousands of years ago  
I lived for a long time  
and grew to a good height  
in the form of a tree  
in what's now known as Muir  
Woods, California.

When the Romans conquered  
Britain, I was a dab  
swimming in the Thames; I  
avoided other fish but  
got caught by a Roman  
centurion and fried.

Hundreds of years later  
I was briefly a bull  
born brave and black, and bred  
to fight—but bulls are born  
losers: I was butchered  
one Sunday in Madrid.

Once again I'm going  
through the motions of life  
but this time I'm human  
and it really opens  
your eyes; it makes one hell  
of a big difference:

I have been to Muir Woods  
seen the giant redwood trees;  
I have been to Madrid,  
seen the brave bulls butchered;  
I have lived in London  
and have eaten fried fish.

When I was in their shoes  
I just shovelled the shit  
with the smooth; now I ask  
questions, get no answers,  
am frightened of dying  
and don't dig the moral.

**Anthony Edkins**

## A CANTICLE OF CORN

In August a dome caps Iowa.  
Steam hisses from the pores of the corn  
And you float on the odor of green.  
Walk down the railroad track. Trip on the ties,  
Creosote shimmering in your nose. No breeze.  
No birds. Only the sound of the corn breathing  
Outside the tunnel of leafage around the tracks.  
The rails are rusting, the crushed rock dusty.  
No birds. Only the buzz of the sun in your head.  
The rails echo heat whining in dizzying circles  
The sweat stings, a bumblebee in the eyeball.  
You start to melt, you cannot smell sweat or  
sperm anymore,  
Only water, soapless bathtub water, trickling down  
Your back, your deepening ribs, pouring out  
at the cuffs.  
You are drying, watering, growing, melting, coming  
to know,  
Like a candle of water and leaving no puddle.  
You are spinning up over around on the arms of the  
sun,  
Your stomach is boiling green steam  
You are losing your fingers your skin is turning  
green.  
It compresses your thoughtless piston brain  
You break out in a run and vanish along the tracks.

**Richard Gustafson**