

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

Volume 9 - Number 3 Spring 1959

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TIGHTROPE WALKER

You scolded Frost for boasting he had sought
forgiveness of the Lord for little jokes
he played on God, and he'd forgive the Lord
His bigger joke on Robert.

Then you walked
across your tightrope, and I saw you fall.

My poor psychologist unsteady as
the feet that struggle; ready to condemn
the other who is you again:

shake off
the sawdust and retake your step. A ring
of us are watching. Though a ring won't mind,
a friend will. Find him on a single hand
and still count fingers left.

The plaudit is
my faintest effort to be brave and have
a faith in you, my young denial and
my blinded friend.

While you and God play blind-
man's buff on what restricted cable, I
regard your turn, less eager than my love.
There's nothing funny in this business of
a searching out, and God is not your prank-
ster though He puts *His* metaphysics in
the sport.

Go walk the fibre taut as truth
and pity all the bobbie frosts enroute
on thinner rope. Yours is the absolute.

Raymond Roseliep

TWO POEMS

SR Personal

BRYN MAWR GRADUATE, quiet, cultured,
 (BA, English, thesis on Keats)
 would like to rent small apartment
 NYC, for year beginning
 September. You'll hardly notice

her at all. Ravel, not Bach,
 Schubert, not Beethoven.
 (The heart in separate notes
 of sweet emotion, take care
 not to sound the fragile heart.)

BOX F-601. She'll have such
 a tidy life. The sound
 of living makes a crystal
 fall, a cascade of jewels
 exploding the level of whispers.

A rainbow fall of intimacy,
 color, so much color tints
 the ivory players, cocktails,
 glasses like thin bubbles,
 talk, quiet; Oh, the deaf heart!

Blue cheese on yellow Ritz,
 yellow drinks in blue glasses,
 a liqueur subtle as fire's edge;
 light the cool palate, burn,
 burn the Arctic throat.

A ruby bird's humming would
 shatter the poised breast.
 Yet here's a bird, too—

but, oh, the wings are clipped,
the cut wings have blown away—

how many years does it take
to blow away a bird's wings?

And why won't the bird sing?

Quiet, the music is to start.

The bird sleeps. The ivory

figures freeze in place.

God! They've put on

the wrong record! Eroica?

The heart - the heart's swelling—

the heart (BOX F-601) the heart's burst!

Walter Albert

The Jewel Thief

1. Let's say a spider took them.

See him at the light

Sketching a skein - pearl;

Fetching a fly - opal.

2. self-conscious, pearls
spread out, milk veins
make a bleary eye
to see morning by

honey, honey, honey
drones a dull bee;
what's a dry powder
pressed from an eye
weigh to a flower?

3. Titan's lost her way
in the heart of a pearl.

Let her cry; she'll find the pupil.
It was Puck shut the pink lid.
He's still chuckling under the lash.
Call Oberon. Blow, blow the snail's horn:
It's a slow crawl to midnight and elves
but a horn travels fast if the sound's sweet.

4. Spider's had breakfast now.

His furry legs slipped
on the wet pearl -
it takes a jewel's tear
to trap a wily thief.

The web's all a-tremble.

A shower of pearls, opals, tears -
how they tumble
into the hungry cup
of a bee's lunch.

5. Who's the thief? Tongue.

What's the prize? Salt.
How's the queen? Dead.

Lay it to Puck.
He fell asleep on the eye.
That's one way to close it.

Walter Albert

TWO POEMS**Non-Definition No. 7**

Go silence all the dogmatists, you sage
 reluctance of MacLeish and Marianne
 to specify the 'what' of (rather than
 the 'shoulds' of) poetry. They did not cage
 the thing in iron terms or try to gauge
 it by a genius; no true poem can
 be more defined than: 'happens when'—when man
 goes walking, for example, to assuage
 his grief; and, at a certain point along
 the road, perceives that poem (or a part
 of it) outhung before him in the sky:
 "one quarter moon sunk like a haggard song
 in someone's chimney"—this, like all his art,
 transcends the categories we apply.

E. R. Cole

Hierarchy

Sidewalk:
 fussy squares
 of cement
 leading
 to

Grass:
 full of
 the lack of
 daisies -
 where

Ants:
 erect
 cities
 of unconsciousness
 under

Dogs:
 slow-marching
 auto-
 mata
 toward

Men:
 who
 go
 fathering
 poems.

E. R. Cole

THREE POEMS

Question

“ . . . or what man is there of you, whom if
 his son ask bread will he give him a stone ? ”

Matthew 7:9

But this man starved before he died
 (For all Your word assures).
 Could You not hear him when he cried?
 Was he no child of Yours?

Where were You yesterday,
 Among Your cherubim,
 Turning Your cloudy face away,
 Stretching no hand to him!

Sara Henderson Hay

The Inquisitor

How well God knows me, that He could
With so exact an art
Measure the weight of agony
To lay upon my heart.

How patient He withheld, until
It grew a muscle more,
Then added the precise degree
The heart could next endure.

Enough, no more; so kind was He,
So scrupulous with pain
That though I buckled at the knee
I hauled erect again.

Sara Henderson Hay

Souvenir

This heart-shaped bauble that I wear
May, in a certain light, appear
Pure gold, with honest gems inlaid.
Not so; the pretty trinket's made
Of gilt and colored glass and paste,
A careful copy, nothing more,
A skilful replica, a token
Of something that I had, and lost,
Or rather, something that was broken
Long, long ago, beyond repairing.
But, since I was so used to bearing
Its little weight upon my breast
I find this likeness comforting—
Though not, of course, a genuine heart,
A creditable counterpart,
A not entirely worthless thing.

Sara Henderson Hay

THE POETRY WORKSHOP

Seated, against the room, against the walls
 Legs extended, or under chairs
 Iambs, trochees & knees . . .
 We surrender, each of us, to the sheets
 At hand. The author swallows his voice. Still.

Page two—page one is saved (and for the last).

The poet has here been impressed

By the relationship

Between blue birds and black. In the octet

We note the crow. And its iambic death.

On page three, "The Poet Upon His Wife,"

(By his wife) we note the symbols

For the poet—the bird

In flight, the collapsing crow, the blue bird . . .

(Note too the resemblance between sonnets.)

We vote and stare at one another's crow.

Ours is an age of light. Our crows

Reflect the age—Ike-Dick-

Colored stripes, rainbow-solids, blacks & whites.

(Ruffling their wings, the crows refuse to vote.)

Page four, "Apologies To William S."

Apologies—the third sonnet.

(And those who teach, who write—

And teach—the man at hand, apologize

For themselves, and themselves at hand; themselves.)

The 'love' is *his*. The form, the words, the love.

Epigraphs—footnotes—transitions.

It is all a matter

Of course, of one's course: "The Collapsing Crow."

Chaucer—Shakespeare—Donne, Self . . . *Apologies*.

*Poets buy their socks at 'Brooks & Warren'
Like Du Pont—like Edsel—like Ike.*

—Anecdotes, whispers, cliques
Whispering—then aloud into prominence.
Brooks & Warren—Du Pont—Edsel & Ike.

Order is resumed. *We have been here, now
Forever. From the beginning
Of verse* (one has written
Nothing—and it is inconceivable
That one would, or will ever write again).

A class has ended: —they pass by, gazing
In. The poets gaze out, and grin.
They gaze out, and through the
Electric voice, the ruffled sonnet-sheets
That stare against the faces staring in.

Page one. Walled-in glances at the author;
And then the author disappears
(The poem anonymous).
Voice. Voices—there are voices about it:
Anonymous. The self. A sonnet's self. . .

The room is filled with it. It is a bird.
It sits beside us and extends
Its wings. Someone squirts it
With a fountain-pen. Blinded, it shrieks, dies
And sprawls upon the floor. We surrender

We surrender to its death—the poem breathes,
Becomes its author and departs.
We all depart. And watch
The green walls take our seats—apologies.
Brooks & Warren—Du Pont—Edsel & Ford.

Robert S. Sward

A SMALL BOY FISHING

A small boy packs his hook with ragged bacon
And sucks his finger for the grease. He's small,
But grown enough to know the biggest fish
Bite bacon. He wades in after fish
And cold explodes around his ankles like fire.
He knows the feel of little stones that stir
The inlets of the stream, but stalks his sulking fish,
Speckled in the rocks, and dark mosquitoes
Dance around his neck. His fingers clamp
The bend of sudden rod; he leans against
His silver enemy until he aches,
And now his dance is slow to tame his wildest
Dragon, speared to blood, until the scales
Lie luminous, like oil spots in the rain.
He slits his fish and spreads the silken belly
Like a purse laid open on gold entrails, and throws
The gut far in the stream.

His mother's fire
Has smoked away mosquitoes; his dragon steams
In state, its eyes still gloomy from the pond,
And blood rinsed from its slack gills. The flesh
Is soft as bread, and the spine lifts out,
A fern in brown fingers. The boy is eating
His whole day and drinking milk like wine.

Liane Ellison

TWO POEMS

**Emily Dickinson Speaks to the Reverend Charles
Wadsworth over the Wireless**

They thought that mileage drove a wedge
Through muted lanes of space,
Certain that departure's void
Would curve us into loss.

But they forgot the vibrant bridge—
A property of air—
The nervous waves that streak and bounce—
Our vaulting messenger.

Larry Rubin

The Hitchhiker

He stood, organic warmth beside the road,
A human fragment under asphalt skies,
Sculptured in levis, staking smile and thumb,
Invoking the oldest law among the Greeks
Before Thermopylae.

We sat, weighing possibilities,
Coolly placing prudence in the scale.
Riding that metallic virtue, lost
In vacillating memory of law,
We shot past smile and thumb.

We could not stop. Newton's First Law
Held us inert. Besides, our wisdom knew
What cold, post-Grecian metal is wont to lie
Beneath organic warmth.

Larry Rubin

