

*THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL*  
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CHARLES IVES (1874-1954)

"New England Suite"

A seer shrunk to his own eyeball  
to see rock locked in rock—to hear  
sound grounded in sound *he* snail-  
like curled himself to just an ear.

A hermit ear pitched to the whis-  
tle of Walden ice, hum of Merrimack—  
*his* tuned to tones between the tones  
plashed low by the Housatonic.

And felt a Jew's-harp twang as  
orphic as the hooted schoolmaster;  
the snow *he* scooped his shapes in was  
virgin as the most lilac daughter.

A priestess dared a god to knife  
his righthand flower with his left,  
then bled to white to prove her love—  
in crooked chants *he* caught such craft.

A crafty miner carved a scarlet  
heart in secret stone of cairn  
and altar—from Berkshire granite  
*he* loosed the wounded heart's moan.

Hearing their spectral voices hymn  
deep in each village monolith  
he struck the rock with rod, and psalm  
sweeter than Meribah gushed from the cleft.

John Wheatcroft

**TWO POEMS****Concerning the Hidden Nature of Things, Which  
Does Not Seem to Be Hidden Equally From Everyone**

Some years ago, before I had seen  
My pileated woodpecker at last,  
I was tracking across timbered hills—  
I don't mean following a trail  
Although there was plenty of animal sign—  
What I mean is tracking like radar  
Or a listening post:  
First this ear,  
Then that,  
Lost in a rush of wind,  
Waiting in silences,  
Trying always to keep the signal  
In the middle of my head,  
The signal of that classic sound  
"Like a man chopping wood."  
Tracking and moving in until  
I parted one final screen of hemlock  
And peered out upon George Vincent chopping wood,  
Clearing a fallen tree out of the service road.

No. that's not quite what I mean.  
After all, it was good to see George Vincent  
And talk with him about what a pileated woodpecker  
Would have looked like if I had really seen it  
And about the fur on animals, the thickness of the ice  
On all the ponds, and about the snowy owl we had  
that year.

Try this. Was there ever an Indian hunter  
 Lost in the deep woods (perhaps Indians never got  
 lost—

I don't know about such things) but if not lost  
 Then hurt or sick or starving on a long march  
 In a bad winter—

Yes, this. This surely is what I want.  
 Did the Indian, I mean to say,  
 Tracking the secret call  
 Of his hunting brothers, never part  
 Some final screen of hemlock and peer out  
 Upon a mere cardinal whistling in a mere tree top?  
Daniel Curley

### **Monday: Hamburg: Kokoschka**

What other fool, refusing to sleep on German soil,  
 Would sit up from Copenhagen all night  
 On the express to Hamburg and there stop off  
 To see the Kokoschka show and that alone,  
 Planning to go on at evening, sitting up all night  
 again

To London? Can you tell me that?  
 And can you tell me why you won't admit  
 It was all a fiasco—or worse?  
 For museums in Hamburg are closed on Monday  
 And always have been, time out of mind.

Surely it was not those red deer standing against the  
 wood's edge  
 At sunrise across the longest fields or lifting their  
 heads  
 Beside the track itself as if the rush of all that pride

Were nothing but a wind that blows and blows and  
blows again  
With nothing of a personal danger in it.  
Not that, of course. There are limits even to your  
foolishness.

The small rain fell in Hamburg all that day  
Between two nights that had no bed for you, not to  
speak of love.

And everything in Hamburg was under the sign of  
a face seen

In a mirror in the station washroom, the first  
Confrontation of the day after the truth of cold water  
Cut through the hoarded hallucinations of the night:  
A face, I say, where you expected to find nothing  
But your own face, more or less, that could tell you  
nothing

Except that you were still there, a comfort of sorts.  
A face more familiar than your own face which you  
think

You could not recognize among a thousand in the  
street,

A face you saw and saw and saw again and really saw  
Each time: that small mustache, that hanging lock,  
That tightened mouth, the brood and madness of  
those eyes.

Even for you that was too much, but the train had  
gone by then,

And you were left to Hamburg for the day, your  
choice.

It can't have been discovering a broad and grassy  
Walk beside a river you still insist on calling Charles  
As if Boston were the world, no less.

Not that and not the courtship of the swans—  
You never knew a swan can dive, did you?

At least a lady swan can and does  
Until she tires of games like that.  
And you never knew either—not really with your  
senses—

What the fierce beak must have meant to Leda.  
But none of that even begins to explain anything.

And not the woman with the wet face, who stood  
Beside you on the grass and watched, her lips just  
parted,

Until the end and turned on you one look—but not  
for you—

Of simple wonder and delight and clear and shining  
Undisguise and ran as women do to wring your heart,  
Her arms held out, the elbows crooked like wings,  
Ran down the grassy slope toward where She crawled  
Upon the bank to rest while He, indifferent, sailed  
Along the river and can be compared to nothing but  
a swan.

How then do you explain the fact that you  
Heard yourself say aloud like a mad old man  
Standing there in the rain in the middle of what  
You insist on calling the Esplanade  
As if the world were somehow merely Boston—  
How do you explain the words, “I am very happy”?

**Daniel Curley**

### **THE JEWESS OF PINSK**

I am the dirty Jewess of black Pinsk.  
I squat in subways and I leak black blood.  
I am black resurrection and the life.

My home was inland near the black marsh fields.  
My home was on the margin of the plain.  
I am the dirty Jewess of black Pinsk.

Men came at midnight off the western roads.  
Men came at midnight loaded in big black trucks.  
They called me the dirty Jewess of black Pinsk.

We rode their black trucks and we dug their ditches.  
We dug their ditches and they were our graves.  
They shot us in the fields and in the ditches.

They shot our rabbi and they shot our girls.  
They shot our husbands and they shot our sons.  
They shot the child. It spilled out of my arms.

I am black resurrection and the life

because they shot me but I live I live.

Soldier: I am that Jewess of black Pinsk  
who crawled up from the ditches of the dead

and saw that esplanade of creeping death  
as though it walked. I shrink because I live.  
My heart is punished by a continual mourning.

I squat in subways and I blow black farts  
in curly places. I shrink because I live.  
My black heart prospers by a continual asking.

For I am the Vengeance over a bloody ditch.  
For I am black resurrection and the life.  
For I am the holy Jewess of black Pinsk.

**Robert Clayton Casto**

**TWO POEMS****Prohibitions**

When Grandpapa, like Luther, nailed the rap  
On the indulgent cops of Kansas City,  
Damned demon rum and published from the pulpit  
Names of the brothers of the paying order,  
The bootleggers, the officers, the mayor,

Blood, love and guts he knew, but never pity  
For self or syndicate. He told his story  
With documented gospel-facts; ignored  
Martyr-omens pinned upon his door,  
Bulls *ex cathedra*, promising in stages  
Concrete cassocks, one-way pilgrimages.

Bible in mind, he braved the bootleg mob;  
Faced sawed-off muzzles, barrelled through the bluff  
Of men whose loaded customers and dice  
Made speaking not so easy; broke down doors  
With G-men at his heels; collected bones  
And bottled relics, bits of evidence.

The hoodlums came—came one, came ninety-five.  
By faith alone my grandpa stayed alive.  
Let other saints fight Roman, demon, dragon;  
He put the city on the water wagon.  
And till they shrined him under Kansas sod  
His only thesis was the word of God.

Meanwhile his not-quite-cloistered oldest daughter  
Could pitch a curve in hardball, ride a mustang,  
Make speeches, love and cocoa-fudge; could pull  
Jerusalem through a holy slide trombone



Until old ladies wept in prayer meeting.  
New revelation, golden fishline to God,  
Apocalypse! Till one old lady felt  
The devil coming on the clouds of heaven  
And threw an inkwell at him. So disturbing,  
The stewards recommended kindly curbing.

Depression summers, she worked the national parks,  
Heaved trays to tables, culled the skimpy tips.  
Loaded for bear, she hit the parks; inveigled  
Trout from the lake and silver from the tables.  
Played for the dudes, and danced a bit, and smoked,  
And bluffed a drunken fisherman to love her—  
Purely, of course—also the boys at church camp.

Tipping the purse just right, she broke her way  
By streetcar through the local Quaker college.  
Majored in math, too broke for music lessons.  
Quick but untriggered, she tried the trajectory  
Of a rifle mind that seldom missed its shot  
At small-pond frogs, but never found a target  
Worth telescopic sights. She ricocheted,  
Chipping a bit the walls of old cathedrals,  
Back on herself in a quarry of uncut thoughts.

At graduation, staring the depression  
In its lean lip, she married a good man.  
After five years he bought her a piano  
And after ten, a car. Deliveries  
Came from the Jewel Food Store every week,  
The obstetrician every year or two.  
She gave her children Testaments to read,  
Alice in Wonderland, Beginning German,  
And Richard Wright with the dirty words inked out.  
And washed the goblets, cut-glass running round  
And round. Washed windows, too, and wondered at  
The world beyond the Judas-tree. She kept  
The doormat clean. A brief vocabulary

Provided operating premises:  
 Good was a word to carve a family by;  
 God was a word for all the good she knew.

At forty-eight she modified her vows:  
 Went on a diet, practiced typing faster,  
 Bought abstract paintings and a book of Bartok,  
 And hung a new can opener on the wall  
 For her good man. She worked her married daughter  
 Quietly through a Radcliffe Ph.D.

And sent her second son, a shiftless sort,  
 Around the cutting world by cattle boat,  
 Oxcart, Berlitz and bluff. And paid his way  
 Through years of pounding paper pads and pave-  
 ments,  
 Through years of smoking thoughts and shimmied  
 words,  
 Concrete images, telescoped horizons,  
 And printed no's from third-rate magazines.  
 Through two divorces and a year in jail;  
 Through faith and works. Until his book came out:  
 The family pride, in ninety thousand words  
 Nailed on the broad door of the universe.

**Barbara Overmyer**

### Poetics

The tales I told at fifty cents an hour  
 To pop-eyed children six or eight years old  
 Upheaved the total baby-sitting trade  
 And crushed the competition. The bedtime epics  
 Accompanied by pablum and the bottle  
 Were masterworks, immune from Aristotle.

Pity, purgation, plot—such spectacle!  
 There was Quicksilver Pete, and Angus the kind  
 Apache;  
 The moose who married a cherry tree and raised  
 A family of hatracks; the centipede wth corns;  
 And Stephen Hero, who saved his little sister  
 From a gigantic blob that rolled like a spoonful of  
 jello  
 Eating bad children. He saved her, swept her away  
 On the back of a flying horse called Pegasus  
 To Axel's Castle, where they lived happily  
 Except for Lord Weary who snored too loud in the  
 tower.

Sometimes, in a pinch, a dialectic effort:  
 "What do you think happened next?" "It ate him!"  
 "That's right!"  
 And on till the time the gopher burrowed a hole  
 Under the covers, like so, lights out, good night!  
 Leaving them flabbergasted but in bed.

I answered an occasional mystified query  
 From frantic parents, confused by a phrase or a jingle  
 The children had chanted ritelike all week long.

These were the triumphs: weekly re-engagements  
 With Attic chants as I walked in the door—  
 "Tell us a story!"

But one distrustful child,  
 Inscrutable mind behind small leopard-freckles,  
 Refused. "No, don't tell me that.  
 I want a *real* story, something from a real book.  
 Something printed, with pictures, on real white  
 paper."

Fiercer than teachers, child, more coolly decisive  
 Than any New Critic—you have torn up my poetics.

With such an all-harrowing standard, you have left  
me  
No page to speak on, pulled out Athens from under  
me.

What boots my pap? *Real* is prestige, is presses!  
What boots mimesis or verisimilitude,  
Energy rhythms, suspensions of disbelief?  
Your paper standard of values will last, perhaps,  
Until you have learned to smoke. About then you  
may find

That ink runs thinner than truth, and thinner even  
Than hot air distilled from ink. But now, for the  
moment,

As you sit happily holding your real live book,  
My formula fails; my tongue and my pen are water.

**Barbara Overmyer**

## MILK AND HONEY

The train lags in a moonlight clear of clouds,  
and far away my child cries, clear of sleep.  
Hurry, hurry, the wheels click. Lost in crowds,  
I ride in secret splendor, I ride deep:  
milk swells in my breast; all milk and honey,  
I ride among you paper people, dry  
and solitary skins, shrunken to bony  
loneliness, craved by no hunger cry,  
no blind mouth—his cries rise like the moon!  
I ache with my dim answer, bounteous,  
brimming to slake his newborn terror soon,  
while the long, slow swells of peace wash over us.

**Nancy Price**

**THREE POEMS****deviations on the littlest vampire**

but one lowly mosquito with a tooth strung  
 through her heart lives and is swatted  
 with a garlic palm. Kick the abbey stones  
 aside and tell me where the young artist  
 keeps brushes away from dead canaries  
 and palette knives from living throats.  
 the merry-go-round of touch and go  
 sings a lovesong, but a mosquito's embrace  
 is a song of death.

I'll be buried  
 in odd hours — steamiron the shroud  
 to sterilize it and I will plead a mist  
 of insect repellent before possession  
 itches my skin.

Alice M. Tealey

**Lines**

the steeples soared in a windy night  
 and we entered the old cathedral  
 to see a movie in the basement.  
 blown in the heavy door, we downed  
 umbrellas and stripped plastic from heads  
 bared to the rage of God.  
     past the ticket agent  
     past the waspish nuns in brown  
     tulle — past the serenity  
 of the courtyard beyond.

we rushed with the black nuns to the  
winding staircase

wound in marble and blood of the lamb —  
for we were in His house and as long as we  
clutched his curved brass handle, we could not  
fall — or so we thought.

but a crowd of black nuns  
enveloped us — pushing us, following, shouting  
“keep going” with silent voices, down.

and from the deep cellar came  
a stream of white nuns ascending  
brushing one against the other,  
rising to the angry steeple  
and beyond.

but we could not stop nor turn around  
but kept the descent. . down, down, down  
and when we reached the deep cellar,  
where a great guillotine should have been  
we were ushered into a great room  
and sat in darkness to watch  
a man escape from prison.

Alice M. Tealey

### Mamie's Reply to the Adman

“cash on the barrel, shoot  
the IBM electric brain — whither thou  
stumblest, I follow not,  
my people shall not be your people  
and your whole stinking campaign  
can sour forallicareforallicareforallicare  
For All I care, but not for you, you with your  
electric razors, shock-proof watches and

bloody hams.

Let the you that's you  
 give me a wood without a Salem  
 give me a kiss without Listerine  
 give me warm oatmeal without Quakers  
 give me a world without a tiled roof  
     and I will accept your paper of pins  
     and give you me for one penny  
 cash on the barrel, shoot  
     the IBM electric brain — whither thou  
 goest, I shall follow fallow  
 and your people shall be my people forallicare  
 For All I care and for you. . .”

Alice M. Tealey

### LI PO DISCOVERS AN ORIOLE

(To Ezra Pound, after reading his Translations)

He jaywalked down my small adobe garden  
 Not minding the slingshot stares of servant boys.  
 The tail of my eye followed the cool shape  
     of shadow tailing  
 His trip to the pool, last night's collected rain.  
 The clarity of dawn became alive in  
 His throat. The slim light shook briefly  
 On his wing as he fluted out of sight.  
 Then was I certain it was a bird I saw.

Emmanuel Torres

**THE OWL BALL**

Not-wanting-to-do  
Makes thighs heavy, slackens the calf muscles.  
Feeling-there-is-no-  
Point-in-at-all draws down the mouth's corners.  
And then one would gladly make a Whitmanian turn  
And live with animals, for their comforting  
    unconcern  
With evaluation, their direct doing what they do.

In the woods lately I came on an owl ball.  
When I poked it apart, I saw it contained all  
The usual items of owly regurgitation  
(Feathers, and fur, and little white naked bones),  
And something to boot: the hard legs and the feet  
Of a crow, with the horny scales entire and complete,  
And the claws complete, in their perfect scratchy  
    blackness.

The tough barred owl, as he made his meal in the  
    night,  
Was troubled, I judge, by no hesitation at all.  
Nevertheless, it is somewhat puzzling to know  
What to think of that startlingly thorough eating of  
    crow.

**W. R. Moses**



**TWO POEMS****Comedian**

The act begins with his nose  
Thrust through the curtains.  
Spot-light, roll of drum.  
We see the nose and laugh.  
The act has begun.  
After the nose he comes  
Out to us, too thin and frail  
For such a nose. He strokes it  
The way you stroke a pup,  
Then pulls out a handkerchief  
Large as a tablecloth.  
He starts to blow his nose.  
The drummer backs him up.  
He blows. A trumpet **blares**.  
He sighs. A trombone slides  
Down a greasy scale.  
He talks about his nose,  
The problems posed by his.  
And as he talks it grows  
Larger, and larger still  
Than what we first saw,  
Until it fills the stage,  
Until we can see nothing else.  
The nose is his prop, he shall not want  
New material  
Until we stop laughing  
And we begin to see him.  
If we saw him we would see  
The tax of ridicule

The six-a-day at Minsky's  
Claimed, the scars of the switch  
He throws before he straightens  
His tie, shoots his cuffs,  
And thrusts out his nose  
To us to beat with laughter.  
But we have never seen him  
Alone without his nose.  
And so the show goes on  
And on, with him or,  
We might suppose,  
Without him.

**Barry Targan**

### **Sanborn Abromowitz**

Sanborn Abromowitz baptized by  
An immigration officer's dull jest  
Is sailor-gaited. He rolls on legs  
Bowed by the tailor's pose,  
For Boston is all he knows.  
He has sailed only one sea  
Once beyond the child's memory.  
His land is here in this crescent,  
His people the *goyim* he saves.  
Sanborn Abromowitz eats periwinkles  
Picked from the rocks of Hull.  
He takes them home to cook  
And drown in butter and lemon.  
One foot in Nantasket, the other in Nahant,  
He is the wonder of the harbor.  
He gives candy to children  
And love to unhappy wives.

Sanborn Abromowitz knows  
The clam-flats of Revere  
Better than we know our homes in darkness.  
In war he gave the Coast Guard facts.  
In peace he gathers seaweed and shells  
To dry and leave on the bulwarks of Lynn.  
He gives packages of cigarettes  
To the old men in winter.  
Sanborn Abromowitz, the ubiquitous jew,  
Wanders in and out of the lives  
Tied to Boston Bay. Watching him you think  
Of Winthrop or Quincy or Charleston.  
He threads those distant patches of lives  
Together with the skill  
His tailor heritage provides.  
Sanborn Abromowitz in ignorance cruises  
Like a mad, unheeding barge  
Caught in the ripping tide of his love  
For this place and these people.  
His waters swirl after him and sweep away  
Even the dirty Boston snow  
In laughter. Behold the crazy jew his people say.  
And in that rare communion they are one.

**Barry Targan**

**CROWS**

Don't doubt they talk, nor doubt they are the way  
fallen rapsallions have found to air their views ;  
there's more than birds could know in what they say,  
and corn and weather's not the only news

that's published in these brazen bulletins  
crows scrawl in rasping black chalk on the sky ;  
harsh and implacable ambition grins  
from this dark impudence ; these jeers advise

that trolls are not content with hills, that furies  
dispute their chains, are unsubdued and burn ;  
and deep in vaults of chaos Alberich worries  
the villainous details of his return.

Listen, as that derisive cawing shatters  
the peace ; don't doubt these birds know what's  
proposed,  
and hills will split apart again on matters  
that only the victorious think are closed.

**R. E. Sebenthall**

### THE FIFTH TRUMPETER

*And the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star fall from heaven . . . and to him was given the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit;*

He had seemed so normal.

His first words after a perfect lift-off—  
 censorable but normal: Hello down there, you  
 miserable lead-assed earth crawlers!  
 Communications from three orbits—normal.  
 (“That jaded word! What is the norm for ‘normal?’ ”  
 one analyst scoffed later.)

I feel great.

Tell my wife I'm fine. Suit temperature comfortable:  
 Adjustment changes a terrific help.  
 Morning Star rides smooth as a hearse.  
 Man, this is it! I've been shooting for this star  
 since I was eight years old. My name is on it.  
 “What do you see up there, Jon?”

(His name was Jonah, but he would not answer to it.  
 "The boy shall be called Jonah," his father had said.)

Nothing! Nothing at all,  
 just as I told him. (The last a bit far out, especially  
 its exultant vaunt, but no real cause for alarm.)

So the easy messages  
 whirled back, until, above Australia:

"Jon, you haven't released the funnels—"

I haven't time.

"Control to Morning Star: Release  
 the funnels for the drag experiment. You have three  
 more orbits. Time and overtime."

There is no time.

I'm observing the "fireflies." They don't look  
 like frost to me. They seem. . . Well, they seem. . .  
 How in God's name can I race infinity  
 if I must linger on your time-bound questions?  
 Then silence—obstinate, unappealable—  
 No breakthrough from the Canton Islands past  
 Corpus Christi.

*To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden  
 manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the  
 stone a new name written, which no man knoweth  
 saving he that receiveth it.*

Father. Father. Why do I  
 see you now, old prophet deliberately forgotten,  
 preaching from the prow-like pulpit of your seacoast  
 church?

The Morning Star rides southerly, and tracks  
 no firmament of northern childhood home.  
 It should not rip the shrouds from battened graves.

*“. . . and I will give him the morning star.*

Jonah, you never listen to my sermons. I see you  
 with your science book tucked behind the hymnal."

*Thou God seest me.*

Facts are my compulsion and necessity—facts and not your fairy-tales. Clean hard realities. Proof.

*“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. You will not make a scientist, Jonah, for the true scientist knows a poetic reality truer than facts. I have marked you for a missionary. You shall warn your godless world that it must die, condemned as murderer and suicide. You can’t escape your fate, no matter how you struggle. God has ways of netting those who flee his presence.”*

The manna drifts past his capsule window . . . He sees the morning star—*a white stone, and on the stone a new name written. . .* It is mine, the true scientist’s. I have given proof, haven’t I, Father? You know, don’t you? All the taut grinding disciplined years . . . You do know?

*“Why must you avenge yourself on me?”*

Father, you are inconsistent.

*Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.*

*“You will thrust me to my grave.”*

I buried you, Father.

I buried you, as surely as if I had pushed you in the grave and shoveled hasty dirt on you. (The rain graveled on the coffin louder than any clods of earth. In the cemetery awash with the salty rain, he stood alone, although many folk had come to see their preacher off—sailors tilting stiff-legged and mistrustful on the heaving enemy ground, wives with sleep-deserted eyelids. He bowed his head against their lashing glances and the accusing rain—but not in sorrow . . . )

Why did I cut him from my heart and mind, try  
to cut him from my flesh, as if he never happened?  
After the funeral, I rasped my pocketknife across my  
wrist

and watched the pour of thick dark blood . . . This  
is my father, leaving me, I said . . . And tore his Bible  
to drifting ashes . . . One ash fluttered on my  
sleeve . . .

I read the clinging words against my will:

*. . . and the beast was given a mouth  
uttering haughty and blasphemous words . . .*

One day, in tracking the woods behind our cove,  
I came on Indian Pipestems, their flaccid dirty white  
recalling my slashed wrist. I saw them later  
in my father's face before it hardened into stone—  
dead flesh deserted newly by the blood  
which rushed for orders to the despot heart—  
only to find it limp, deflated. And no more commands.  
No authority, neither father nor Father.  
This is my father leaving me . . .

Jon switched to manual control.

And to the sputtering crackling voices in his ears  
he said, Morning Star to Canaveral. Come in,  
Canaveral.

“Where the hell you been?”

I've been drifting, but

I've had my fix on the stars . . .

From there on in, a passionless voice spoke normalcy,  
reported with precision on designed experiments  
and some impromptu. Fuel consumption:  
low on automatic, spending fast on manual.

Hawaii could not possibly have heard the jangled  
cries

that disbelieving it received at the seventh final orbit,



cries later written off as static.

These, too, began in normalcy:

“Jon, you’ll fire your retrorockets soon.  
Are you in shape?”

I’m fine. No nausea.

Just a little tired.

“Son, we’ll bring you back as safe and easy  
as your dad once brought you from a driving lesson.”  
Then silence like a shock.

Father. I fled his presence  
from the start. I wounded him. And yet he tried  
for love, my old Jehovah—tried, especially  
in the little years, to don a mother’s tenderness  
awkward as a woman’s apron. When I cried out, lost  
in nightmares, he came to me and brought me back.  
(No. It was not that way. Jon had forgotten.  
The ether dream came first: The crisis of his  
tonsillectomy

crumbling this granite man. The rocky face cracking  
into sorry love—Jon’s last revelation as the surgeon  
clamped the ether cone on mouth and nose, and—  
smothered him. Then the horror—his body leaving  
him

and hurtling into space, hurtling away from him—  
spinning—small—smaller in the distance.

Father! Father! Bring me back.

Afterward, the nightmares. And his father running  
to him, seizing him, and bringing him back home.)

“Jon! Morning Star!

Prepare for retro firing! Your fuel on manual  
is depleted. Switch to automatic.”

I can’t. I can’t.

I’ll never land this craft if I don’t retain control.

Why are you here beside me, hoary zealot,

when I dug you out so many years ago—now, when I veer my racing life against your revenance?

. . . *and to him was given the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit. And he opened . . .*

It was then that California heard the unbelievable cry: Father! Father! Bring me back.

There was one more message, just before the capsule tore the ionization layer and broke communication: a despairing, *The name of the star is Wormwood.*

Reentry was a spaceman's dream, the attitude exact, the retros firing to the second, the capsule parachuting neatly by the waiting carrier.

And Jon seemed normal, fine, although—

“On landing at Grand Turk, did you see him bend and scoop a handful of sand, and slip it trickling through his fingers?” Although—

“Didn't he appear a bit remote and drifting,

as if the triumph and the celebrations were outside his orbit?”

Still, he made the proper gestures, cooperated in debriefing, kissed his wife on their reunion at Canaveral, flung a jovial arm about his son in the right American male pattern, grinned for the photographers, interviewed the press with a fencer's dodging parrying skill.

On the third day, they granted him a night alone with his wife, and he had her like a rutting animal, then turned his back and snored in whimpers. She wakened from defensive sleep to sounds of vomiting.

When she hastened to his side, he stared in blank refusal:

Why are you here?  
You can't be here. You are my dream of you.  
"Jonny, Jonny, let me help you."  
But he explained with twisted care:  
The nausea will soon stop.  
Scarcely any food remains, or water. Oxygen is nearly  
gone. . .  
I am sorry for your sorrow. I tried—  
Who would have thought that the journey forced  
to Nineveh would circle endless, timeless?  
And he whispered to his dream of her:  
I love you, darling, and I love our son.  
And the shifting steady floor of sand.  
And the little wind that drifts at evening.  
I love your yielding flesh, and the tender sheath  
of petals, and the slick hard skin of good machines.  
I wanted to return to all of these. I tried.  
I tried. But my father would not  
bring me back.

**Margaret Masland Lavin**

**REQUIEM FOR JOSE O'TOOLE**

He walked on the desert  
Stretched between windworn rocks  
Lustre-dulled in the near sun.  
He came from the bottom-lands,  
Through wheat still scorching  
In the July madness  
And by a thin thorn tree  
Whose roots had failed  
To hold roweling winds.  
A new season uncovered him  
In the flaking streets of a dried town,  
Asking directions to the country  
Of new planted pines,  
A place that had forgotten  
The rudeness of rusted plows  
And the nightly sleep  
With terror of bearing  
Women living on a barren land.  
Toward the colder hours of November,  
After the stubble had dried brown

And began to lie in snowtombs,  
He recalled unheard arguments  
Offered at ends of hard rows.  
As death's season ended  
And death's beginning began anew,  
He thought of the days spent  
In spending concupiscence,  
And of the nights gone stumbling  
From sawdust floors  
Into dark streets shadowed  
By imitation.  
A gay girl's laugh, lost,  
Echoed from empty cups,  
Rattling in memory  
Like hollow chessmen  
Moved on an unmarked board.

He stood reaching a twig  
Unfirmed from the gully wall  
When summer's last bouleversement  
Caught him in the moment  
Of returning.

Moss grays

On branches in transition  
And flame-specked water  
Appears to rest in its redemption  
Of hard leaves falling  
Unseen by the claying  
Bones of a man  
Who had learned

but late.

**Carl Wooton**

## TWO POEMS

## The Eye of the Stag

A lithe boneless stag was leaping and flowing  
In silver paint on the dark side of the coach.  
With approval the boy saw it; shot a finger  
Square in the stag's eye. His mother watched,  
uneasy.

"Keep hold of your bag—" She stopped. He appealed.  
Squabbling starlings, hot-footed on soft asphalt,  
Screamed and flaked off, as she advanced graciously  
To grant him this boon. Her red ruby-nail flashed,  
Tapered and tearing, across the stark eye  
Of this stag, ever running and flying.

But late that afternoon as the boy and the stag  
Fled through forests, and fields ripe in the late sun,  
He saw the black birds appear, swerving and  
wheeling

In sudden cool gusts blown up from the river,  
And cried at the gall of asking his father  
(Who was meeting the boy at the station that night)  
To touch, and believe that the magic stag's eye  
Could bring them together again. He felt  
So sick and despondent he thought he was dying—  
He *actually* thought he was dying.

Philip Roberts

**Death of the Astronomer****Jacob Cukierman, Ph.D. 1896-1957**

Steel-bright blades drove into his neck and thin  
     wrist  
 And withdrew, sounding livid the rings of his years.  
 Night wind topped the razor-edges of dark grass  
  
 Where he lay on the hill. His eyes were now closed ;  
 Whirling dippers scooped flame along twin folds in  
     his brain,  
 The line-humming wind sang in praise of his blood.  
  
 Then remembered stars snapped his feet up by the  
     laces,  
 He, upside down, skimmed the road with his hair,  
 Felt grit gnaw his cheeks and the wind crack his  
     trousers.  
  
 Cold starlight glanced off the soles of his boots :  
 This astrolabe universe—well-charted, reduced  
 To light-bands glibly girdling his dark sphere,  
  
 Ordered—was run wild. In gusts his old tie flapped.  
 Then aghast eyes flew open, only to see  
 The last lamps below in the village flare out.

**Philip Roberts**

**OCEANS, CORRIDORS AND THE DESPERATE  
SONG WHICH IS ORPHEUS**

The descent was child's play ;  
no one would have thought he'd do it in broad day-  
light. The tiresome and tired beasts were there ;  
Charon grunted his usual greeting. Flesh clear  
as amber, the several-headed dog ambled  
over, barking the daylight away. Orpheus stumbled  
to the throne, the thorns of darkness, gun-grey  
bays slapped his throat. "Don't say  
it", said King Midas in the mist, or was it Sisyphus.  
Persephone slouched in the obscene seat, Pus  
slipped out from the flesh below her feet. Cerise,  
    crimson, gloss  
y purple, the background, where her legs were  
    crossed,  
the rooms were a muck of clay. Persephone a whore!  
or so she seemed so unlike the girl who dropped her  
    flowers  
for Pluto by the dim lake called Pergus,  
where swans honk a kind of lust,  
their webs clogged in lily pod and tendril.  
Cyane watched him bend her  
on her back, her belly shimmered, his hand hid in  
    her hair.  
At the sight, her waters turned chill:



Cyane said, "Winter is here" (or said, "Winter is hers").

Persephone recalled aloud, "There is little purpose in that place." But Orpheus dreamed snow drove at the blue-white drakes.

Persephone blinked and said, "For your own sake explain your presence." He watched as she prepared for bed,

beckoning to him with a toss of her head, red as a pomegranate. Orpheus had meant to sing and threaten that he'd stay if he could not bring his wife back to life. The Queen said, "We sleep more here in Hades to keep no memory of this our winter home in mind for long."

Orpheus observed the throng below her bed and said, "This Hell is of the mind, or mine alone." "Not so," she said, "You'll find your wife no longer knows the meaning of her name when called, though she'll follow just the same as when her father purchased room and board for her from you. Her flesh is tamed, and dreams no further than the sting of snakes. The scene is still the lake, and she forever screams upon her wedding day. The poison in her brain is just this mist you stand and wish to sing within: The dead are One

and you among them. *The Invisible*, my Lord, decrees all wealth (His dead) to the living. The health of your wife, Eurydice, will be fragile dependent on your lack of guile for love. So don't look back, your thoughts, your lust are stronger than your song. Our lack of trust

in you comes from the fact you'll not bring her to  
life:

You are too curious

Orpheus."

Cerberus whined as she lay back to sleep.

Orpheus turned and was in the steep  
hall, at his back he heard the bark of dogs,  
the halting steps of a woman's clogs,  
the warm breath of Hermes, then turning to the girl,  
Orpheus saw in her eyes the beginning of the world.

These gardens have known snakes.

Now the tall grass would reach the thigh,

would be an harmonious sigh

on a lady's girdle. The wake

of Persephone was held on this hill

where the dove and peacock still

wrangle. At midnight the mind recalls

the thin arm of a young girl, the eye stalls

on the aureole of blond hair that the sea wind

stirs. Her fingers slim and cool to touch,

her back as you clutch

her waist is pliant, yet stiff

with the first awkwardness of a wife.

Once here too was a temple,

Minerva at her simple

task turned to find

the red eye of Neptune, his mind

a hurricane of desire,

astraddle Medusa, the dark mire

of that lady's virginity shone on the altar.

Orpheus dreamt Eurydice had such hair.

He was everywhere he had ever been.

Perhaps Eurydice would shudder,

in stupor of a death she was not  
 rid of, touch his wrists.  
 In this corridor  
 of red clay, ridged as are the rapids  
 before a waterfall, the candle  
 flickered.

Light roiled shadows where reeds  
 quivered in the branch water. The lake nearly  
 drained.

But that was below him.  
 when he thought he woke.

He sat half-way  
 up the hill, shifting his legs  
 to catch the certitude of sunlight. He was strict,  
 except in dream  
 and leaned against his lute. Who would not  
 be unconsolated, as those women  
 who shuffled his sleep. . .

his head, his eyes,  
 ears, feet, the foetus  
 of recollection

sundered from his sinews. His was a final  
 ignorance of time. He nods between the waves,  
 whose high grey waters turn his face  
 ever to face us. Only in sleep did he find  
 that her gown was still white.

He thinks, "This is; this is." And a joke,  
 he thinks of. The trees, the ruins, the goats  
 (with their imperfect heads) why hadn't he thought  
 of them. How simple death  
 is, and not what he was thinking of.

Orpheus was stunned, but not by this.

Torturous, it is  
 unpleasant, twists his sinews, his

pubic hair lifted on the wave  
 and not to move except  
 at crest. Whitening foam  
 booms  
 along the shore  
 his head rolls on. And the animals,  
 alone,  
 know when they surely will die,  
 even now, if it is neap tide.

Return is habitual, not a comment  
 on time. Still nothing is certain  
 in these hills he learns to love again,  
 rocked in stupor of backwash—  
 that image never meant to hold a means  
 to passion. "You'll never love again.",  
 the sweet women sing and wet their girdles.  
 They slide. They watch their dresses rise.  
 That is a future. Though to end now  
 would be to bite tongue, and that effort  
 so familiar to you, Orpheus, I would,  
 as women, sweep to trances  
 and murder you, to hear your song;  
 you, who'll not return to this other shore.

It was not what he wished,  
 except for Eurydice, who came back—  
   her eyes shone,  
   her yellow hair stood out,  
   as if in bed

(the coverlets thrown back,  
 the silk, the perfume, the lemon musk—  
 then the sense of bones  
 drained like a small lake  
 and left to hum with the honey hives of insect eyes)

But what happened  
 to their marriage? Her death was but  
     an hour ago,  
     a day ago, the week  
     before, last year:  
     in hell nothing occurs;  
     he was still there.  
 At times he heard the timbril  
 and tufted breeze — the laughter of ceremony —  
     but the grass was fur  
     or glass  
     at least  
 perverse. Nothing to tag a proper name on, or  
 make a proper hell of,  
 but Eurydice in the hall.  
 He had not turned. He had not turned and thought  
 he turned, but had seen her in the cavern; the maw  
     smoky in the sunlight, the sybil  
     suspended in her basket by  
     the thread of Ariadne howled  
     and moon could move no closer.

**William Hunt**

**NOSE TO THE GRAVESTONE**

That man blowing his lawn on his nose  
(or his nose on his lawn—he's working so close  
it's hard to say which)  
is a passionate man, not rich,  
asthmatic, allergic to half of his garden.  
He's unwilling to part with any part of his burden.

He hacks at tree-branches, and hoes, his breath  
coming heavier and heavier. He thinks that death  
*must* be a bed of roses.

No law of his country, nor Moses'  
Commandment, forbids overwork in the yard.  
Besides, it's Anyman's right to love to work hard.

He hoses the ivy so long you'd think  
he thought every leaf of the ivy could drink  
upwards of a gallon of water.  
Each plant is a son or a daughter  
one cannot possibly spoil with overmuch  
heart-hurt, bone-ache, shortness of breath, hand's  
touch.

**Laurence Lieberman**

**FOR LOVE.** *By Robert Creeley. Scribners. \$3.50.*

This superb collection of short poems by one of our most expert poets is disgracefully overdue. It contains a decade of verse that deals with feeling, sight and sound in perfect union. The brief pieces have a surface simplicity that makes their power to move all the more profound. One of the most important books in a long while.

**WATERLILY FIRE.** *By Muriel Rukeyser. The Macmillan Co. \$5.*

This is a finely balanced sampling of the work of 30 years. It has many finely evocative pieces. It contains just about all of Rukeyser's highly personal statements about the world and its changing conditions. Presented in this selective way, we clearly see her as certainly the finest *engagé* poet of her generation.

**VIEWS OF JEOPARDY.** *By Jack Gilbert. Yale Univ. \$1.25.*

A short book of brief, tight and tough poems written in a style highly individual for one so young. There is a fair touch of mysticism here; some of it probably related to the Beats but wholly opposed to their frantic disregard for discipline. An impressive debut volume.

**IN THE CLEARING.** *By Robert Frost. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. \$4.*

While this final volume from Frost may not contain anything that ranks with his greatest work, there is more than enough here to demonstrate the command of character and insight which have always marked him at his best. Published on his 88th birthday, there is more seeking and exploring in these poems than in the work of most younger men. He still had things to say and compelling ways in which to say them.

**ANCHOR BOOKS.** *A series.*

For years Doubleday has been producing a superior series of paperbacks called Anchor Books. Many fine titles have been issued. Among them; antholo-

gies of French, German, Russian and Spanish poetry; a selection of Kipling made and introduced by T. S. Eliot; a collection of poems and critical documents called "American Poetry and Poetics." Anchor now launches a new 17th Century Series. Among the first titles are the complete poems of Milton, Herrick and Jonson. Like their predecessors, they are welcome additions to the low-price, high-quality shelf.

**OXFORD ADDRESSES ON POETRY.** *By Robert Graves. Doubleday. \$3.95.*

These six witty and unorthodox lectures no doubt rattled the quiet halls of Oxford University. Most of them deal with Graves' familiar and explosive ideas—the White Goddess, the poet as mystic priest, etc. But their ever-fresh presentation stirs us to re-evaluation each time. Here we are offered a new view of Virgil that is bound to produce apoplexy in some readers. But surely, no one will ever call Graves dull!

**IN ENGLAND'S GREEN &.** *By Jonathan Williams. Auerhahn Press. npl.*

Further evidence that Williams is one of the most satisfying of the young poets who prefer iconoclasm to conformity. He is terse, witty, urbane, wildly literate and a bit of a show-off. He is also firmly in control of his language and ideas. This alone would make him exceptional in his genre but there is obviously much more.

**CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN POETRY.** *Ed. by Carlo L. Golino. Univ of California. \$1.95.*

There has been a continuing tradition in Italian poetry since the Middle Ages. Too little of it is known in English. This is the first collection which makes Italian writers of our century available. The sampling is sound; the translations uniformly good; and the Italians texts are presented for those who would compare.

**NOTE:** A former editor of the Journal, Bink Noll, has published "The Center of the Circle"—Harcourt, Brace & World, \$3.95.