

# THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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**TWO POEMS**

**Home Country**

Rain that falls at patchwork dawn  
greases the cracked hides of barns.

The whole state is sticky  
with elms and spit of sun.

A woman with two shopping bags  
climbs out of the auto cemetery  
and hobbles past a brown school bus  
that is rusting behind the gas pump.

Beyond the Funk's Hybrid sign  
a windmill has a face of broken bones.

I think of the ruined houses  
of run-off Mormons in Nauvoo  
and the empty skulls of steamboats  
blinded on the Illinois.

These trampled flowering weeds  
by the old interurban tracks  
beg me to lie down and sleep awhile.

But a boy is building a new tree house.

### Country Graveyard

Cows with eyes of buttered moons  
doze along the barbed wire.

Weeds grow to impossible heights.

I call out my family names  
across the camp sites of stone:  
Etter, Wakefield, McFee, Goodenow.

Cedar trees shake fat crows  
from their ragged beards.

In the farmhouse back from the road  
shades are drawn against noon sun  
and grace is said before the meat.

I stand among these gravestones  
where a wet-nosed wind coughs  
gray dust on my pinching shoes.

The rusty bells of the black church.

Goodenow, McFee, Wakefield, Etter

Dave Etter

**TWO POEMS****The Descent of an Early Winter**

The afternoon is ending,  
the country colors waning  
in the dark logic of sepias,  
and, besides us, only a slight chill  
in the air is taking  
into account the vacant wind.  
The clouds collect  
noiselessly overhead, distort  
the landscape and, ignoring  
our present resistance  
to the weather, release  
an obscure cover of snow  
quietly falling, a picture descending.

For some moments  
a few small birds gather  
in the accumulating snow,  
much as we  
stand, momentless but awed,  
changelings in our history  
of a thousand other days,  
geometric figures walked off  
on some imaginary summer morning  
we all have known.  
But nothing can hold  
the moment, whitened by the snow,  
to itself: it moves,  
like ourselves, in a memory  
all its own;

and we must in the end descend  
in the final despair  
of letting go  
what no dream could ever call its own.

### **Ideas of Order at Key West**

We take what symbols we can  
find and undress them  
in our mind. In this stage  
of disbelief we can only guess  
and be marginal. Take  
the *Amanita Vaginata*, tying  
up spring with its red cap  
and milled edge  
pushing up through the earth.  
We can only assume  
in it the hint of green;  
no facts, but guess work,  
and we remain  
perfectly partial in our charm.  
We tear the mushroom off  
its slender stem,  
examine it for pitch  
and tone, become specific  
in our diction, and put  
what's left in a glass jar.

We have come upon this  
prism of Crane and Stevens  
as if the bars  
of refracted light have  
led us into seeing  
the almost unseen.

We are alone. The rain  
has left us,  
the children, too, gone  
to the corners  
of their imaginations.  
The sun still  
beats against our bodies  
and we have  
only ourselves to answer.  
We try to make  
some sense out of chaos,  
but you  
hesitate, looking up  
past me into the sun,  
your years  
held like sun spots  
under your eyes, unbelievably.

The waves pile up  
before us and we listen  
to a seashell, our blood  
crashing like brass  
behind our eyes. We look  
longingly for some gulls  
once seen flying  
in impartial pairs, wing seeking  
wing with the wind,  
to remind us of Crane and Stevens:  
but all that remains now  
is the sense of the long,  
eccentric snow of being somewhere  
else falling  
through this perfect weather.

Alexander Kuo

**PACIFIC EPITAPHS****Rabaul**

In far-off Rabaul  
I died for democracy.  
Better I fell  
In Mississippi.

**Palawan**

Always the peacemaker,  
I stepped between  
One buddy armed with an automatic  
And another with a submachine gun.

**New Georgia**

I loved to talk of home.  
Now I lie silent here.

**New Guinea**

A mosquito's tiny tongue  
Told me a bedtime story.

**Tarawa**

Tell them this beach  
Holds part of Brooklyn.

**Iwo Jima**

Like oil of Texas  
My blood gushed here.

**Espiritu Santu**

I hated guns,  
Was a poor marksman,  
But struck one target.

**Luzon**

Splendid against the night  
The searchlights, the tracers' arcs,  
And the red flare of bombs  
Filling the eye,  
And the brain.

**Bougainville**

A spent bullet  
Entered the abdominal cavity  
At an angle of thirty-five degrees,



Penetrated the *pars pylorica*,  
 Was deflected by the *sternum*,  
 Pierced the *auricula dextra*,  
 And cut off my medical career.

### Vella Vella

The rope hugged tighter  
 Than the girl I raped.

### Borneo

Kilroy  
 Is here.

**Dudley Randall**

**"Where there are no gods there are ghosts"**

*— Novalis*

Ur sumer nippur  
 hattusa gods of the  
 kaffirs and goats Gil-  
 gamesh we  
 are not interested in  
 believing we are

interested in talk-  
 ing      As  
 long as the disease follows the  
 prescribed course we have  
 nothing to worry about. Fever  
 as expected. Lights under a  
 bushel light falls  
 off by squares. Seed the  
 clouds. Audience falls  
 off by squares. Cataract  
 signify  
         badsex goodsex nosex  
         Pharisee and Sadducee  
         were two little fishes that  
         lived in the sea and  
         they both looked alike so that none could see  
 which was platyhelminthes  
 and nemathelminthes  
 nematodes. Two—  
 the girl of the golden triangle  
 him and his golden section  
 Bushmen: prehensile nose  
         prehensile toes  
         prehensile flaplike labial polyps  
 proletarians — artist.  
 a different principle operating.

**Carol Tinker**

**THREE POEMS****No Doubt**

No doubt about it, my mother would have kept me  
in curls if I'd had any;  
men, though she married one, she didn't especially  
care for;  
her days were spent up to her elbows in Ivory Soap  
washing the stain out,  
her nights, a question of quiet behind the bedroom  
door.

No one had a penis in our house, even the dog  
didn't—  
like male statues in the Vatican, we wore her fig-  
leaves,  
in dreams came leaking to life peeking behind  
innocuous pictures  
where women of dimples and nipples had us in mind.  
Her secret immaculate silence made me more eager;  
I thought I was going to piss when I kissed Lois  
Grant  
in that first garage of greasespots and black widow  
spiders  
and didn't know what  
groom of the future was budding inside my suddenly  
outgrown pants.

I'm not blaming my mother for my having been  
a virgin at twenty-one, she'd never even heard  
Sophocles' version let alone the dirtier one

and might have hanged  
herself if she had in her doodaddy bedroom.

It seems to me nevertheless that if she'd kept up on  
things  
instead of by hiding them trying to keep them down  
it might have saved all the men in her life from  
ignorant aches,  
but on the other hand  
sometimes learning from errors of darkness is what  
enlightenment takes.

### **Berkeley Dusk**

Those two and their baby came into the room—  
young as our yesterday—he  
the genial blue jeaned student protestor—  
eagerly beautiful she,

and tinkling casual drinks, spoke of  
rafting upriver as if  
such journeys were simple—just climbing on  
and poling against the drift—

they told of their interest in liberal causes—  
the baby babbled, robust—  
and we sat conversing high over Berkeley  
as though with ghosts of us

against the gemwork of bridges and streets  
in the blue of Berkeley dusk—

oh there were differences—we only dreamed  
their present into our past—

but hadn't we once come into that room  
from a run up the twilit hill  
with a dimpling daughter (now a young woman)  
and met ourselves sitting still

and hardly could guess as we mentioned our lives  
in that light, to a music of ice,  
why the strange older couple responded so oddly,  
as if they had met us twice.

### **Deciding They Need Each Other, The Nations Get Together**

Pretending peace, the wild tribe visited,  
dressed in their skulls, their neighbor cannibals—  
they had a plan—conferred in secret, closeted  
with drums and bones and telling guts of animals.  
Only the wisest went, those with the most  
bracelet teeth—trophies from dead enemies—  
and grinning greeted their advancing host  
dressed in their skulls and just as many teeth.  
And all sat down to watch the dance of masks—  
some friendly symbol hiding knives beneath—  
dinner was passed—the chiefs bent low to laugh—  
meat of a common foe served up on leaves—  
and each tribe saw, while licking off the juice,  
the toothsome others tense to make their move.

**Harold Witt**

**A Kind of Prayer****for Bill and Gertrude**

That man on that bed is my friend.

he is not alone

the lady with the face of stone

twines her fingers through him tugging

swaddling mother come too soon

her arms are cold

Legs water, arms stone, voice a bubble

he bubbles a joke

They have cut a hole in his throat.

and the other

who has borne him sons and can only touch

fill his eye and joke for joke

heart big enough for a man to enter

and warm him—wyf

Not alone.

Give us this day others a life come and go no more

Is asked busily no more can be or wait (I) no less

**Weyve**

She seems a woman turned in flesh,  
interned in trim containers edged with days,  
who, tautened by a child's lament,  
counts coin against a list of purchases.

yet notice how her fingers move  
elegance into the run of hours  
how at the curving of her lips  
brightness softly bursts  
how when she walks hints of dance  
infuse a measure gather shape  
within a dominance of grace

She seems a woman turned in flesh  
and is the swallow's strength,  
the sea's inturned caress  
along the crags and shallows of my ways.

**Homer Blinded**

lightsong  
lancing birds  
the curve of a surfing sea

I knelt upon a field of sand  
let the sunlight fill my hands  
and drank the sun

I drank the sun  
and sang by the winding sea

galehowl  
sudden birds  
wail of a changeling sea  
  
dead voices cursed  
sand split my tongue  
  
a thing for wings I fed cold beaks  
torn bits of meat an eye of blood  
by the winding winedark sea

### **Night Rain**

we don't die  
we disappear  
  
(haven't they all  
ways said so)  
  
it begins very early  
and when it ends  
you can't call it dying  
there's too little left  
  
only the lucky ones die  
those who've survived  
  
or so it seemed  
in the window  
after rain  
smelling the earth  
waiting



**Brutal More Gentle**

If that cloud there slipped  
ribbons into its hair  
while flowers sang blue  
for birds to dance  
still I would stare  
wonder at this child  
  
single as any hawk  
thrust blur brutal  
more gentle than a little  
beautiful and mad  
  
amid the furniture  
beneath the voices  
the lips the hands  
learning wonder how love is  
bartered for behavior  
and still able to laugh.

**In Esse in Posse**

"A nickler is a pickler that . . ."  
"No!"  
"Anicklerisapicklerwhopickspicklesforanickel."  
—for a couple of kids  
wanting them to laugh  
and they did  
and for christ a second  
it was good  
it was all  
right  
everything

I laughed and they laughed  
and pow we were angels  
clean bright and high on wings  
and we cored a hole through the middle of the dark  
riding laughter alike a posse of knights  
me and a couple of small boys

**Coronation: New York**

another night has died  
day revives  
thinsceptered under clouds  
the city poises  
lances raised  
to take the stain of dawn  
  
birds are sparks now  
towers bronze  
the crimson cock  
that cracked the glaze  
while seas beneath him burned  
is crowned  
  
purple:  
    the color  
    of an empty vein

**Seven of Japan:***1. Under Mt. Asama*

early  
 wet lovely  
 strange world of mist  
 half in dream  
 I sit to smoke  
 one forbidden cigarette  
 smoke mist mingle  
 dream voices faces a dog  
 barks a train couples  
 far and  
 one drop burns  
 on a leaf  
  
 dawn

*2. Kyoto*

bright  
 In the markets of Kyoto  
 dance of steel in the fishman's fingers  
 whisper of water on wood and stone  
 old wood and stone  
 flash of the eye in the light outside  
 glistening flesh on the altars of Kyoto  
 odor of incense chicken and bones  
 worn wood and stone  
 blood thinned to wine by the waters of  
 chalices of fingers in  
 in the markets of Kyoto  
 death  
 is



turn to blue  
cool  
cadenced quiescence  
  
then to darkness  
and the Moon

*6. Archer's Song*

three stars)  
    one rises  
        in the west  
            another leaps  
flames out—  
        who dies now  
            between dawn  
            and cockcrow?  
(point east

*7. My Hand*

where sound is scene  
and colors weave  
tones of intricate harmony  
my hand  
thing of bone and tissue  
limits all I do  
            a paw  
however fabulous  
must root its mother clay  
for forms that will not  
crack  
beneath its weight

**Thomas Fitzsimmons**

## ELEVEN JAPANESE POETS

Rendered into English by  
Thomas Fitzsimmons  
R. Fukuda  
and Tadayoshi Onuma

### STRANGERS' SKY

Koichi Iijima (1930- )

The birds are back  
Pecking the black void of the earth.  
Circling up, down  
Round the now alien roof-top.  
Lost . . . ?

The sky buries its head in its hands  
As if it had eaten stones.  
Broods.  
Blood it cannot bleed veins the air  
Like a stranger, circling.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

Koichi Iijima—Books of poems: *Strangers' Sky*, *My Vowel*  
and *Microcosm*. Known as poetry critic; wrote *Introduction to Surrealism* and *Essays on Art for Exorcism*.

飯  
島  
耕  
一

大  
椽  
堯

**WHAT WAS EATEN AT THE SOUTH POLE**

**Gyo Inuzuka (1924- )**

Gull big in the pot insisting he still has wings.  
A seal, boiled and boiled, asking, demanding  
"Water. One glass of water. Sea water."  
My guest sits quietly;  
He might be dead.  
And on the table (I can see icebergs  
drifting by) my  
whiskey monotonously proclaims  
"Born 1820, still going strong."  
It takes vigor to cut the soul  
to just the right size, carefully, and fork it.  
Wrapped in smoke, I eat  
furiously, a demon.  
And sometimes I almost shout  
"Remember these, my canine teeth."

**English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda**

Gyo Inuzuka—Works for the Asahi Press; accompanied the Japanese expedition to the South Pole as a reporter.





## NOTHING MORE TO BE LOST

Saburo Kuroda (1919- )

Even if more had been asked  
I had nothing more to lose.  
Leaves blown into the water  
Flow down with the current.

Once, in a boat on the sea of death,  
I could do nothing but stare at the sky, seeing  
nothing.

And once I sat still by a friend on a tropical island  
As he raved through madness to death.  
Now looking at this swollen city,  
Safe in the window of a white building,  
I doubt that my way has changed—or its end.

Fate crashed upon my head  
Like a girl hurling herself from a roof,  
And I turned over to meet . . .

But it was not death.  
Who lifted me, drew me?  
You. A young girl.  
Whispering,  
Offering  
All I had lost.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

Saburo Kuroda—For his first collection of poems *A Une Femme* received the H Poetry Prize, the best known poetry prize in Japan. Other works: *Thirsty Heart* and *With Little Yuri*. Also known as poetry critic. Works for the N.H.K., Japan's national broadcasting station.

## BIRDS

Taro Kitamura (1922- )

I love birds. Water life is foolish.  
And the things that creep on the ground,  
Wriggling through dust, are base. Butterflies,  
Flickering against grass, bees, winged ants  
Live but a portion of an hour, a day. . . .

Held, a bird is warm—  
Silken feathers, knowing eyes—virile,  
Lonely and virtuous.  
Yet their legs are the limbs of a man  
In agony.

The piled clouds rub darkly together  
And the rain floods down. Heavily. Slowly.  
Suddenly, there: blue for a moment,  
And into it swings a bird. . . . I

Am human, a creature proudly erect  
With ideas and images;  
A meat grinder spewing hate and desire.  
And so I like the limbs of birds—  
Rigid even in life.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

北  
村  
太  
郎

Taro Kitamura—One of the most promising post-war poets  
in Japan. Works for the Asahi Press.

## HOMECOMING

Tsunao Aida (1914- )

Finally I returned.  
To my desolate village.  
Returned  
Where my home had burned.  
Wheat,  
Wheat feeding on the ashes.  
There I squatted  
And emptied my bowels  
For the last time  
And fell along the earth  
Like molted skin. . . .  
Some wandering dog  
Will take my shoes.  
And I  
Will rot into earth,  
To feed the wheat.—  
Grind the fat wheat  
Into flour.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

Tsunao Aida—Visited Nanking in 1940, then worked for a publishing house in Shanghai. Returned home in 1945. Given the first Kotaro Takamura Poetry Prize for his collection of poems, *A Lagoon*. Works for a publishing house in Tokyo.

**OLD HUNTER'S TALE**

**Tadayoshi Onuma (1943- )**

My nights were once harried by bears:  
From fear to fear they chased me round.  
So many bears. All night  
They drank my moons up empty and flat,  
Snatching from my hands anything I had.  
They scared me. But now I can't  
Really remember them as they were:  
How they banged around, how they roared.  
Only know there were bears in my nights.

I sleep well now and love my dreams.  
Waving at those who are still hunting,  
I call the trees by their names again.

**English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and Tadayoshi Onuma**

Tadayoshi Onuma—Sankei Publishing Company Fellowship  
to the U.S.A. 1964-66. One of Japan's promising younger  
poets.

尾  
沼  
忠  
良

## IMAGINARY GUERRILLA

Yoshio Kuroda (1927- )

Days and days of walking  
a gun on my back  
the road twisting  
threading one strange village to another.  
Beyond is a village I know well.  
And to which I return.  
Must return.  
Eyes closed  
it is there: shape of the forest  
a path through fields  
roofpeak  
how to pickle vegetables  
all the relatives  
a scrap of farmland to haggle over  
petty formalities and whitewashed walls  
white always  
a broken hoe and other people's soil  
fathers and their fathers cringing into death  
mothers driven off. . . .  
I return.  
On a secret path I remember well  
I jump from ambush, rifle poised.  
This is the season of revenge  
keeping blood fresh in the old old wounds.  
The village is beyond.  
Here the road knits strangeness to strangeness  
and I find nothing I know, as if in a dream,  
alone on the road.  
I ask the way to a house  
and find silence:  
walls with no windows  
no doors.

Another house  
no windows or doors.  
No one.  
No sound.  
Now the road hides in a village the color of . . . what?  
Where am I?  
Where does the road go?  
Tell me, please.  
Answer!  
The gun in my hands again I face the silent houses.  
But something is wrong . . .  
the weight in my hands is wrong . . .  
wood—a rod of wood three feet long.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

黒  
田  
吉  
吉  
夫

Yoshio Kuroda—Engaged in the agrarian movement after the War, ruined his health and came to Tokyo. Awarded the H Poetry Prize for his collection of poems *Anxiety and Guerrilla*.

## IN THIS COUNTRY

Rumiko Kora (1932- )

Here, in this country  
where the last of the flyers is waved away  
and the ship he hoped to return to is sunk

Here,  
where they pack off the children for safety  
and burn the cities, fathers and mothers

Here,  
where the hand of a boy is taken  
and he is smiled into a suicide plane

Here,  
where soldiers are cheered to the front  
while the land they die for is betrayed

Here,  
where the young are welcomed to factories  
that slowly change them into machines

Here,  
where the people's weapons are seized  
to be leveled at their backs

Here,  
where hands offered as in friendship  
slip new weapons into people's hands

Here, in this country

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

Rumiko Kora—Publications include *Pupils and Birds* and  
*Place*. Obtained the H Poetry Prize for 1963.

高  
良  
留  
美  
子

## INVISIBLE TREE

Ryuichi Tamura (1923- )

On the snow I found prints  
and for the first time knew  
the world of small life,  
birds, beasts in the forest:  
squirrel, footprints down an old elm.  
across the path . . . gone among firs—  
no anxiety, hesitation, nowhere  
a question;  
a fox, coursing straight down the road  
through the valley north of my village—  
my hunger never drew so straight a line,  
never in my mind so smooth, blind, sure  
a rhythm;  
a bird now, prints clearer than her voice,  
claw-marks sharper than her life,  
feather-flicks frozen in the sloping snow—  
my terror could never tremble to such pattern,  
in my mind never such a pagan, sensual,  
affirmative beat.

Suddenly—sunset  
big on the summit of Asama.  
Something not known has built a forest,  
pushed open the mouth of the valley,  
split the cold air.  
Back in my hut  
I light the stove  
thinking an invisible tree  
invisible bird  
invisible small things living  
rhythm invisible.

English by T. Fitzsimmons and R. Fukuda

Ryuichi Tamura—Formerly an editor of a publishing house in Tokyo. Publications include *Four Thousand Days and Nights* and *The World without Words*. For the latter he was given the Kotaro Takamura Poetry Prize in 1963.

田  
村  
隆  
一



## RIVER

Kikuo Takano (1927- )

Up. It would—wouldn't it—be good to rise?  
But for you it is always down. Today  
(yesterday, yesterday, yesterday . . .)  
you claw and tear at the channel that holds you,  
wanting . . . yes, not to be a river.  
And the drive and swirl of that madness is fine.

But finer still is the suffering you hide.  
What is this you would claw away?  
What are these limits you cannot tear away?  
Earth?—Not even that.

Something . . . something I think about,  
think about always whenever I cross you,  
knowing you suffer as I suffer.  
And I look at the sky, the sky  
you, falling, would seize. I look at clouds.  
Birds. Fishes. The whirlpools of your despair.  
And I know, whatever the sky is, whatever  
a fish is, I  
am as you, river:  
channeled by failure,  
caught on the rocks in my depths.

English by T. Fitzsimmons  
and R. Fukuda

Kikuo Takano—Teacher of mathematics. Publications include  
*A Top and Existence*.

高野喜久雄

**THE FINAL PEACH**

The night was wrung a final dry,  
so I nudged the wedding quilt slowly from  
my sleep and sidled out of bed.

The mattress kept my hollow,  
not a spring sprung,  
my bones too young to creak.

I crept out of the farmhouse door,  
removed the ladder from the barn, and shouldered  
it rung by rung across my back  
and lit out for the orchard,  
feeling strange.

What dark moment

could this be? Was I a hawk,  
out this late to steal a sleeping pheasant  
from someone else's orchard?

Full moon, and the yellow peaches  
fat on the branches  
sting my tired eyes.

I pause, then lay the ladder tight  
against the bark, and kick the bottom rung.

I climb and wonder at myself,  
newly wed, yet trying  
to elope a peach.

Making a round basket

of my pajama top, I  
begin to fill it, slowly, rung by rung,  
branch by branch, peach by peach  
and leave the wormy ones  
behind, climbing,  
climbing, not too high.

for high the peach tree is as thin  
as my wife's leg, and that's too thin for climbing.

All but one within my reach,  
and that's too high. But

I came this far,  
waited years, played

the hawk, dry but for the dew  
which licked my ankles dry. I reach and stretch  
my arm, the bone edges from its sac,  
one leg lifts

off the rung,  
the ladder wet, my bare feet

slip and thud. I raise my bones  
and poke my eyes through the burning

leaves and howl  
and howl at the final peach.

**Steven Orlen**

\***THAT GIANT** bear frozen  
With daisies in his stomach,  
With his beautiful nails, his paws  
Tangled in more daisies—  
When the surmised white mist  
Sered the upright beast,  
Incased him in ice, what what what ?  
Syntax didn't matter,  
All his is was, the scream lost  
And the joke of it chokes forever.

**Sheila Pritchard**

\*(News note in 1964, Paleontological discoveries in 12,000  
year old ice, the above, duly reported)

**FOUR THREATS****Threat by Etiquette**

Hush, now, hush and hide.  
Her tongue talking and his tied.  
Her arm easy and his jerked,  
Her body graceful and his quirked.

Demanded, she decreed, laid down the law  
Of table elegance, a martinet  
In the domain of full obedience  
To silverware and napkin folds, glass galore,  
Service plate soup plate fish plate meat plate salad  
plate dessert,

A maze, a gauntlet she required the boy to run  
Jerking quirking slopping spilling  
In command performance Sundays,  
Thanksgivings, Christmases and other holidays  
With grace to God  
And odd diversion to the guests.

She made his foolish body the outward and visible  
sign  
Of the inward and invisible fool she was told it  
housed.  
She flaunted him revealed for all to see,

For parents, sister, cousins, minister,  
And for the servants in particular.

If a family breeds a fool, no point in hiding him.  
No use pretending he has skill where no skill shows.  
Profitless to set a different place for him,  
To temper etiquette, to cater to his needs.

The Fool must find his place in life.  
Let him begin.

Hush, now. Hush and hide.  
The lady's tongue is talking and the fool's tongue is  
tied.

### Threat by Maid

Starved waitress, personal maid, the best  
At any price and almost free from the brogue,  
Went about setting the places, silver and glass so,  
Table cloth down in long folds so, napkin and ring so.  
Competent, quick, came on the boy,  
Caught his arm,  
Kneaded his leg,  
Tripped him up,  
Laid him back on the floor,  
Rolled him under the table  
Her foot in his face.  
Erin laughed from her heels a great grin.

That's how easy it is. All over so  
Before you know what hit you.  
Young fool under the table like the old one,  
And nobody better able to handle them than me.

A quick knee so, a kick so—  
Watch my table cloth now, keep those filthy hands  
off it—

And if he comes back let him have the toe in his teeth  
So.

No use struggling, my foot in his face.

Up now and be off  
And remember who's boss and don't tell the old lady  
I put you back down on the floor.  
Don't tell her I laid you.

Erin fed on the Fool to his face,  
Boasting the fact of her feast.  
Her starched apron emerged unwrinkled from the  
match,

Not a hair on her head out of place,  
And his clothes rumped and parted,  
Hair over his eyes,  
Tie under one ear,  
And the echo of laughter behind him.

### **Threat by Water**

Black were the boots laced  
Over stones swelling the ankles,  
Doubling the size of the shanks,  
Black laces tied tight at the knee  
To keep the stones down, to pull down  
The Fool in the water.

Black was the night as he stood on the dock,  
Isolate, islanded son and grandson of the lake.

One step was all he thought needed,

One slip, one suck to receive the stoned body,  
And he pictured the pain gone then,  
Drained away under the dark waves,  
Under the brown water,  
Under the thick dock-logs stained rusty with iron.  
Pictured his foolish body stuck standing up in the  
mud,  
Weighted stone-dead in the wet grave,  
Never to rise as corruption infected the flesh  
To inflate it for floating,  
Never to trouble the living with sight of the  
drowned,  
Never dead to disturb the life up above.

He did not fear the lake because he could not swim.  
Under the pine logs, slime over their chains,  
Colored like wine with rust where the spikes drove  
down,  
Under the weight and worry of his island world,  
Loved its offer of death,  
Its chance to forget.

Grace held him from that black baptism,  
Inherent island grace, unknown, unbelieved,  
Cried to him out of the dark,  
O Fool! this night  
Your life is not your own.

### **Threat by Earth**

Never had amanitas grown near the house  
In all his years. They were rare,  
These mortal mushrooms with the dead-white cups,

Found only deep in island woods and even there  
He'd never seen so many at a time,  
Never such shining tops and perfect shapes.  
It was the best of mushroom weather, damp and hot  
But still these clumps of two and three, so lush, so  
near,  
Surprised him and he wondered why they'd come so  
suddenly  
Rousing the echoes how his grandmother had warned  
Against their poison rings, their fatal cups,  
The tell-tale flyspecks sprinkled on their crowns.

He wondered walking up the trail  
To join the party for his nephews and his son  
Where the old mushroom books had gone,  
The lovely illustrated guides  
His grandmother had used to spot the edible—  
The chanterelles, boletas, puffballs,  
Red and green russulas not good when peppery  
To taste—where they had disappeared  
With finely colored prints  
Of amanitas, deadly, vilely poisonous.

Walking up slowly in the afterglow  
With evening coming on and shadows stretched  
And candles lighted in the house above,  
He passed a hollow where the day before  
A clump had sprung up overnight.  
He did not see them now in the new dark  
And stopped to take a closer look.  
No bird or animal would eat such things,  
Only the worms and flies.  
He bent down to examine where they'd grown  
And caught a knife mark in the ground.



He walked on quickly,  
Found the next clump gone,  
A knife mark there again,  
And then it came to him  
And then he knew  
And ran.

Raced to the house  
With warning pounding in his veins  
For son and nephews, family and friends,  
Seated around the table for the party meal.  
Rushed with the knowledge of how soon death  
comes,  
How little use how late the purge,  
Flew through the kitchen fighting for speech,  
Dove through the pantry  
Gasping, grunting  
At the frightened group.  
Stretched his arms wide lacking words  
And swept the table clear.  
Fell to his knees  
On top of broken plates and shattered glass  
And food for dead men spattered on the floor.

**Albert Fowler**

**THE TREES OF ISRAEL**

Almond, sycamore and palm,  
Myrrh, cedar, galbunam—  
The corded wood of Israel  
He shaped with Jewish craft.

Sweet the blood of trees,  
The smell of sap;  
Sweet the perfumed dust  
And the glistening carpenter  
In the listening heat.

Cypress, oak and willow,  
Acacia, poplar, vine—  
He planed and nailed  
The luminous wood;  
The trees of Israel sang.

Man, alone, in the bright air,  
Pausing to watch the drifting cloud,  
To hear the wind whine in the wood,  
Pausing to drink dark shadows:  
Did he know the wood  
He shaped was destined  
To shape him?

Simple sun and water  
Nourishes man and tree.  
Both ripen to maturity.  
Almond, sycamore and palm,  
Terebinth and galbanum:  
The man rests at the root.

Israel was green in the antique air

Before the trees were cut  
And rain, unheld,  
Fissured the land.  
Myrrh, cedar, vine,  
Terebinth and galbanum  
Were green notes in the air.

The wood he shaped  
A hundred ways—bent  
the willow, crossed the oak—  
Was destined to bend him.  
And so a man may finely shape  
What crudely will weight him.

Acacia, poplar, vine,  
Blow free, grow free.

Heavy cross upon the hill,  
Cross that breaks the knee;  
He is nailed against the sky.  
He ripens on the tree.

Terebinth and galbanum,  
Palm and oak grow free.

**Sy Kahn**

**TWO POEMS****Day Full of Gulls**

Now it is dusk: the lifeguard smoothes  
his gritty girl, and seagulls stand;  
and the shadows of clouds appear like pools;  
and the surf falls back on itself like sleep.

All day I walked the living beach,  
day full of gulls, in a storm of gulls,  
wheel within wheel of caw and sweep,  
never seeing enough of them,

how they tilt the air, and glide, and ebb.  
All noon in the surf a raucous boy  
had made them scream, wings batting bodies,  
vicious for lumps of last week's bread.

Now women scatter arcs of crust  
like a sowing of love; and fathers aim  
bits plucked like cake crumbs from the loaf  
to be snatched in mid-air with stern elegance:  
grace without effort, and godly.

A girl in the drift of the sea-edge strains  
on tiptoe, skirts held up. A gull  
ends flight, like an indrawn breath,  
on the small of his shadow.

**Swans**

Among the tourists along the banks  
Of the shimmering river at eyelid hour  
I watch the swans, who pick at their feathers  
Like one-legged beggars cracking lice.

One drives off a duck by the scruff of the neck,  
And one walks alone down the highway, leaving  
His pastoral function, plodding, ungainly;  
Whitened by dusk . . . a priest defrocked.

And evening spreads like the shadow of light  
Grown large on the water. And pairs of swans  
Sleep on the banks, connubial;  
They tuck in their heads like unbaked loaves.

Afar, two rise and grow through the sky  
Like sparrows becoming hawks . . . becoming  
Swans, swans flying above me, lovely,  
Ah they are lovely in unheld beauty,

Soaring, length of their bone-necks pointing,  
Rowing the dark of the air like a river;  
Nordic ships bearing tons of body  
Silently with them; outsailing night.

**Barry Spacks**

**DOCTOR IN THE HORSE HOUSE MOUSE**

Is there a doctor in the horse?  
 There's a lady in the horse,  
 A doctor, a lady, a horse.

Is there a doctor in the  
 There's a lady in the  
 A doctor, a lady, a

There's a lady in the  
 A doctor in the mouse  
 Lady in the doctor

There's a lady in the mouse?  
 A doctor in the lady  
 A horse/doctor lady

Is there, there, there's a  
 There's a lady in the mouse  
 A doctor, doctor in the house

Doctor lady horse house  
 House Is there, there, there's  
 A doctor in the horse

House in the doctor  
 Lady in the mouse  
 Doctor a lady horse mouse

Mouse in the horse, horse horse  
 In the mouse doctor  
 In the doctor lady in the lady

House in the house, mouse in the  
 Horse, doctor in the lady in the  
 Lady/in the lady mouse mouse.

**Robert Sward**

**TWO POEMS****Acts****1.**

How sparkled the sea its  
 light the first we  
 pushed back breakwaters  
our

wake white as the  
 gulls wings white  
 as the soul itself

in a watch of water;  
I

said to him Sailor  
 we are on our way now!

**2.**

Caught you once,  
 bird, I did

soaring to heaven;  
 what an overtake

that was! you  
 and I, just,

O yes my bird just

I saw you  
 pushing it back the  
 Sky, and sideways  
I

was with you,

in a minute.

**3.**

Struck and burning I  
saw him out the  
tree-tops struck and  
burning in the Morning

Light; blue as the  
sky he was after:

I

cried watching him

Go straight home, bird  
straight Home my bird!

**Tenants**

When Mrs. Pingree asked me  
if I liked it here I said Yes  
I like it here I like it here  
fine, but I don't think she  
quite believed me  
because she bent forward  
and tapped me on the  
shoulder and said Wait  
till spring.

Mrs. Pingree  
and I were friends after that.

Well she died the other day  
Mrs. Pingree did;

the sun was blinding  
when they put her down:

I

was thinking as I looked around  
she must have liked it here  
very much.

E. F. Weisslitz



**SLEEP INCANTATION**

I don't want to die though my teeth are cut off at the  
gum  
and clink together like seashells  
in the beach bag;

I don't want destruction—  
black hair tangled around my strangling throat  
razors splitting open the vein seams,  
or poisons  
stiffening the rubbery muscles;

I want sleep. Sleep to dream  
of the four child bodies  
in white winding sheets,  
my Egyptian heritage turning up and floating  
through  
my blood stream like light bulbs  
the filaments connecting with  
my brain, shiney black  
bulls walking  
heavy-hoofed over my arms  
down my back, under my  
neck. Sleep is  
the delicate tread of chickens. Sleep  
slants its way into my  
fingers. Sleet, icy and wet,  
comes out of my hands and  
slaps a dream to the ground.

The dream runs away with a little  
yowl. The cold wet  
razor we all distrust  
seduces my eyelid. Sleep

comes. I want sleep to knot  
me to the dental chair. I  
want sleep to water me  
like begonias. I want  
sleep as smooth as banana  
skins and as sweet as sugar  
on the rim of an icy glass.

Pour me into sleep. I can find  
only one  
delicate  
displacement of  
love;  
yet it has  
pulled all my muscles  
diagonal  
and now I need sleep,  
need to surrender to the strong arms,  
those arms I do not  
love.

I sleep because the love flower has rotted in my  
mouth  
and trickles its black liquid, like a poison mushroom  
down my throat.

**Diane Wakoski-Sherbell**

**POEMS: AN HANDFUL WITH QUIETNESS.** *John Stewart Carter. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.95.*

This collection holds much quiet joy. Carter's slow development brought forth some beautiful and moving poems. Most of them center about simple realities of day-to-day living. They are carefully paced and deftly constructed. Carter's premature death was a great loss.

**ALL.** *Louis Zukofsky. Norton. \$6.*

A baffling, amusing, confusing but entertaining collection of short pieces by a writer whom some tout as a great poet and others feel is merely an enigma. The pieces quickly involve the reader in a delicate but exciting exploration of the subtler uses of language. There is challenge here. You can't read Zukofsky passively.

**THE MEDIUM.** *Theodore Weiss. Macmillan. \$3.95.*

Nothing comes between these poems and the reader. Each subject is treated with a fresh individuality. The lines are hard, crisp and pared down to their verbal and visual essentials. *Precise* is perhaps the best word to describe the work. Weiss improves with each new book.

**BUCKDANCER'S CHOICE.** *James Dickey. Wesleyan. \$1.85.*

"The Firebombing" is the best part of Dickey's new book. It is a massive recital of the horror of war, its many kinds of bombings and some of their side effects on victim and bomber. There are moments when it achieves an almost apocalyptic fervor. A talented poet is at work here.

**THE PRIVILEGE.** *Maxine Kumin. Harper & Row. \$3.95.*

When Kumin turns her attention to scenes of her childhood, she produces poems that are marvelously evocative and memorable. Both the people and the places of the past spring to life. When she speaks directly, she is a fine poet; when she reaches for effect, she stumbles.

**SOLITUDES CROWDED WITH LONELINESS.** *Bob Kaufman. New Directions. \$1.60.*

A beat Negro poet is currently bound to be very "in." Here we have a cat so anxious to say all the things expected of him as Negro and beat that he has managed to squash about every bit of talent he has. It's a pity, too, because there is real ability here under all the slush.

**SIMEON.** *Donald Finkel. Atheneum. \$1.95.*

The line between prose-poetry and straight prose is hard to draw. A poet can step from the former to the latter without even knowing it. Finkel is a writer who, with matter-of-fact approaches to unlikely subjects, keeps firmly in the poetry field. The technique is fascinating.

**COLLECTED POEMS.** *Horace Gregory. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. \$5.*

More than 30 years of work are represented here. Some of the familiar old poems have been eliminated or changed. But the strange clarity of Gregory's thinking and writing comes across with their combination of dream-like mystery and precise intellectualism. The collection wholly confirms Gregory's considerable importance.

**DREAMTIGERS.** *Jorge Luis Borges. University of Texas. \$4.*

This is a very personal book, stemming directly from the poet's private life and public interests. Nostalgia for the past, pathos for the present appear in both the prose-poems and the more conventional forms. Everywhere there is working evidence of a highly original talent. The translations by Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland are excellent.

**SELECTED POEMS.** *Derek Walcott. Farrar and Straus Co. \$4.*

Two areas are inter-twined into these passionate and disturbing poems—the Caribbean and Africa. The poet was born in the former—has never even seen the latter. But as a Negro, Africa rages in his blood and he does his best to exorcise it. The results are stunning. The Caribbean scene is used with equal success. Walcott is worth watching.