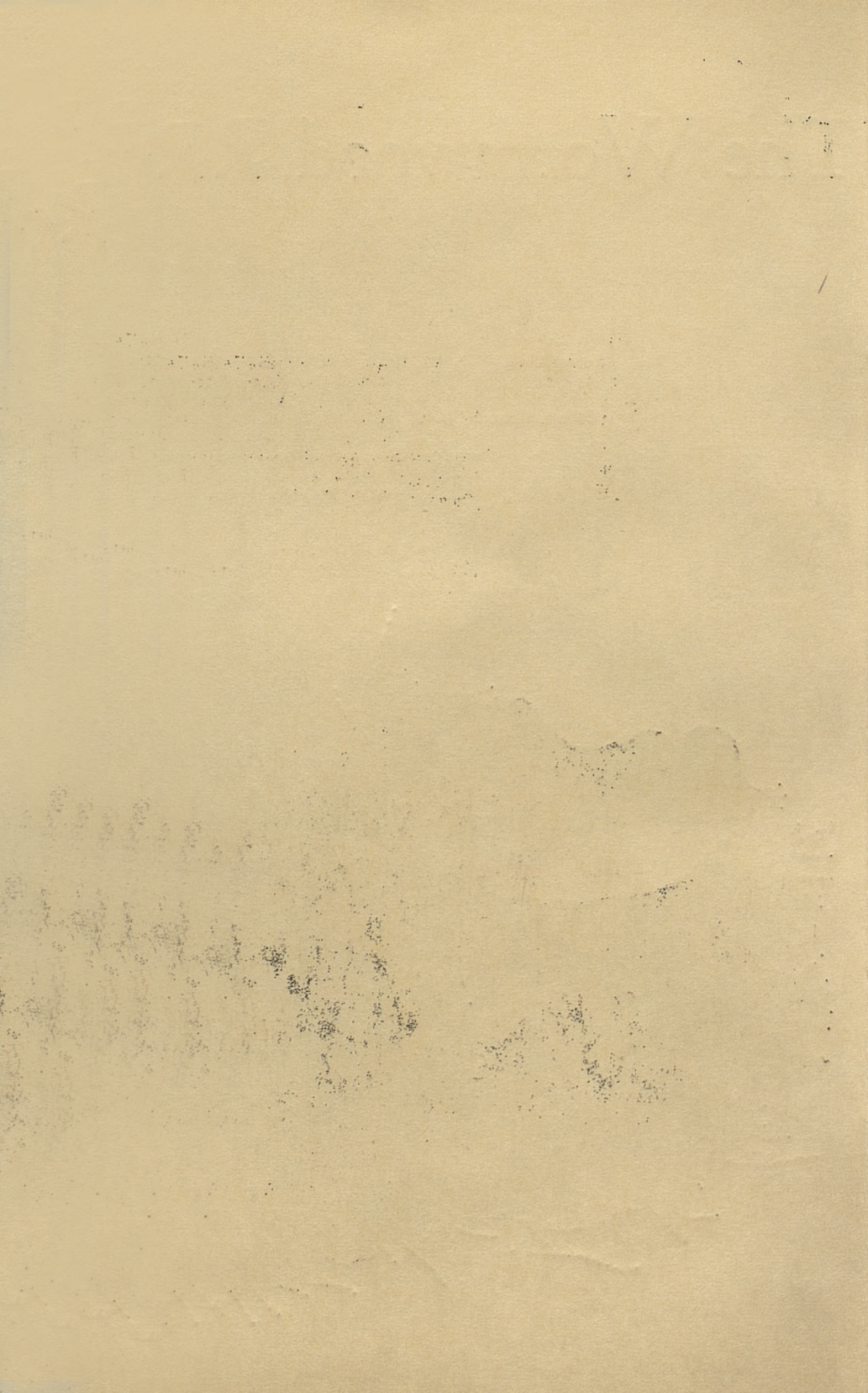


“The Wormwood Review”

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James Scully (Storrs, Conn.); Raeburn Miller (New Orleans, La.); John Haines (Fairbanks, Alaska); Carl Larsen (N. Y. C., N. Y.); James Franklin Lewis (Compton, Calif.); Grandin Conover (Storrs, Conn.); G. C. Oden (N. Y. C., N. Y.); Leon Rosenbloom (Bronx, N. Y.); Harold Fleming (Clymer, Pa.); Judson Crews (Ranches of Taos, New Mexico); Robert Sward (London, England); Wendell B. Anderson (Taos, N. M.); Charles Edward Eaton (Woodbury, Conn.); Norma McLain Stoop (Greenwich, Conn.); Mildred Cousens (Rochester, N. Y.); Harold Grutzmacher (Galesburg, Ill.); David Lyttle (Bloomsburg, Pa.); Martin Robbins (Cambridge, Mass.); Rose Roseberg (N. Y. C., N. Y.); W. Arthur Boggs (Oswego, Oregon); Lawrence Lerner (Belfast, Ireland).





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Editors: Alexander Taylor and Marvin Malone

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SONG

It was spring, with mud. We had to buy water.
We went everywhere we went, hiding.
One night we were especially frightened, and cried.
I gave my love a cherry without a stone.

It was summer. Rain was due, but the weather held.
Fog came down the low hills in long streamers.
We said we had been happy there almost a week.
I gave my love a cherry without a stone.

It is winter. We must walk single file
Down sidewalks piled with drifted snow.
The buses cannot take us where we want to go.
I gave my love a cherry without a stone.

Raeburn Miller

ORPHEUS AT THE WINDOW

So. I'm on my own,
squinting at the snow,
the tissue which has grown
on grass; and shadows cower
those footprints drawn on
the lengthening lawn.

Dry frost, delicate as
the eyelid of a pigeon,
blinks slowly on the glass;
the light of my dominion
cringes, nearly blind,
deep in the mind.

'The world is small, but long.
There flares a soft commotion,
Wings! I glimpse her going.
My strings are still in motion.'
Now is the poised, the calm
dissembling time.

A yellow sleep, a loose
dust muffles the house,
accruing on the hiss
and *cling* of pipes. A mouse
has flicked its naked tail
down a hole.

Executors are numbering
things my wife can't touch —
from where I've lately sprung
small shades are peering up,
appraising my warm bones,
and throwing stones.

James Scully

VOLVERAN LAS OSCURAS GOLONDRINAS

They will return
those dark swallows,
and once more build
their nests above
your window,

and again as
they flash in the
summer evening,
knock with their wings
against the glass;

but those that
paused in flight
above our heads, those
who came to pick
their straws beside
your feet — they

will not come back.

The wild roses of
the hillside will
be seen again, opening
their pale flowers
to the returning sun,
lovely as before;

but those that were
beaded with dew,
whose drops we saw
tremble and fall like
the morning's tears — they

will not come back.

Words of love may
sound again in your ears,
your heart once more
awaken as from
profoundest sleep;

but silent, absorbed,

on their knees,
as men have worshipped
God before his altar,
as I have loved you —

don't be fooled, my girl!

you won't be loved
like that again.

— after the Spanish of
Gustavo Adolfo Becquer

John Haines

THERE IS A LITTLE BALLOON COMING OUT OF MY HEAD

that day i was climbing on the roof
knocking antennae to left and right
peering down into bleery tabletops
through cracked black glasses
drinking from the old wineskin
hopping from roof to roof
shouting help i am evaporating

and someone said who dat up dere

i said who dat down dere

he said who dat up dere
saying who dat down here
while i saying who dat up dere

that was the point wherein
i fell off the roof
and broke my smoky shades

he was very apologetic
and explained he was overwrought
because people had been saying
god is dead which aint true
the guy said he's only been demoted

so i said times are rough all over
looks like depression war etc
and he said tellin me boy
where can you get another job like that

Carl Larsen

MY OWN HORN

From: *School for Regret*

I don't see how anybody
Has time or attention to spare
To learn anything,
If he's pressed inside with speech
Hurrying out to ears,
The way I was.
Thus I said nothing.
I said only an idiom,
My primitive personal grunt,
With a sort of grammar.

The bold yellow sunlight,
Was it not for me created,
And was I not trustee
To its enjoyment,
And was not my head,
And the features of my body,
Warmed to a certain sweetness
As I lay there strictly naked
In reverence of bold light
And the brown bold friends about me,
Who, too, were claimants to the sun
And the heresy-warmth of love?

Now if you can think of a horn-blower
Who ought to have been a violinist,
And a singer of cute little songs
Who ought to have sung a mass for you all,
There you have me.
I blew horns and sang little songs.
Smile little blow-worm,
Ta-da, ta-da.

James Franklin Lewis

CONVERSATION IN THE SMOKING CAR

Boys, it was just like me then
To search the city and hide my head,
Dreaming that women were sipping the sky
From my bed like a glass of dark water.
To be frank I was pale as dogwood—not
A menace in a public park, nor an actor
For heaven's sake; but one of the boys—acne,
Glandular, you know, and the Good Time.
Undermined by arteries the cities
Rose and fell like great black breasts
But no great heart beat beneath the ground.
Love drove toward me like a tunnel on the turnpike.
Whistling a tune I blew the horn, I knew
Love was a land of sun flowers, thunder and corn.
Darkness. Even the car radio failed, boys those
Brave songs died like colts in a storm.
“Love is as bold as a belly,” she sang
And she sang something else that I can't repeat
Incognito or even alone in the Men's Room.
On the last train out of the mouthing city
That night I was spat like an old broken tooth.

Nothing much happens on B & O,
In the dining car my buddies
Conspire to save me from my own
Best intentions—jaws that would have me now
If I were the last piece of liver.
Boys, I know we have a job to do,
I know that rage, like a washing machine,
Is a convenience we can all afford — several
Angry gurgles and a clean conclusion.
But why are the highways dual?
Why are the trains on separate tracks?
Boys, we all accelerate from different places
Into the same darkening direction.
Nothing much happens on the B & O
Boys I wish someone grand — with bright wings
Moving like scissors or shuffled cards
Would come down the aisle to collect our fares.

Commuting is cold and wild now
The days have become blue hounds above the train
And all the way home I dream that suffering
Has something to do with Long Island.
Boys, a plain stone or cinder would do it, for
I tell you something in me worships me,
Bays for me, and now the train is home, boys,
Something in me wants to die.

Grandin Conover

POEM

You make more of me than I am.
I like that. Exact of me my
most. I want it yours, you who bless
me with the best in you. I have
not tried myself. I am most shy;
unsure; and evidence slight grace.
Lack lustre, too, of speech and wit.
Still, you care! Me? I love you; and
as transfigured in your eyes want
to be. But not thumb ruled as clay
do I find form; rather as leaves,
flowers work out identity.
I open; farming furthest reach.
Love's green breath that warms the rose
is furnace at the roots of me.

G. C. Oden

THE MOTHERS

Hail, Mary, Mother of God—
did you have bunions like my mother's?
angry, bulbous: a source for puns
as bitter as the herbs and diced onions of bondage.

Were your hands laced with the stigmata of poverty?
raw, knobbed: rough as the gritty sands of exodus.

Your joints: were those equally swollen, arthritic?
could you ignore their ache even as you followed
your son to Calvary?

My mother followed hers in a black limousine
hired by the hour.

And your heart: did it come apart slowly?
or all at once—like my mother's.

Leon Rosenbloom

THE BUTCHERING

Now this is butchering: the cornered hog
Groveling in mud is coaxed up to the trough
The farmer slopped: his twenty-two is cocked.
He fires a shot between the eyes, and bone
Splinters and splashes as the lead sinks home.

Up at the farmhouse little children hear
Pigs squealing in complaint: such women tear
Flesh in more ways than one because they bear
Children in labor: so they grit their teeth
And long to tell the children it is meat.

And it is meet, of course, to stick the hog.
He straddles it the way he would a log
And rides another sacrifice to God
That gave him children who will understand
Why the knife flashes in their father's hand.

Harold Fleming

**ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD
RUGGED CHA-CHA-CHA**

O, Beat!

O, mad wild railroad-switchman Denver-digging great and low-down
Beat!

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, I am with you in Sing Sing!

Everything is evil vile and rotten!

All the Squares are misbegotten!

I play it cool, and have no need to be specific!

I play it something-something-something beatific!

O, I have spent my adolescence in a New Jersey State Institution
for the Correction of Delinquent Minors!

O, I have stolen cars and raced across the nation because I heard that
there was a party going on at 742 West 116th Street, New York
26, New York.

But I was late!

And so became the UN representative from Birdland!

Fatty Arbuckle, I am with you in Wallingford Falls, Iowa!

O, I have sat cross-legged on the 7th Avenue Subway contemplating
the endless variety of lint that gathers on my Ivy League sandals!

I have a yen for Zen!

I have seen the best-looking broads of my generation marry other
guys!

I have seen all the money being made by others!

Still I do not cry out because I am disengaged and when you are
disengaged you do not cry out!

But sometimes ya kinda snivel.

Carl Larsen

LOVE POEM

for Mildred

Oh, your thighs
are numbered:

Two

But they are
as the poles of the earth

And all
that there is

Is

Between them

Judson Crews

MIAMI BEACH

The sea is gin. The rocks, the sand
are ice;

Are white, lovely, holy frozen gin.

The moon drips tonic;

Venus drips love,

Drips lemon, drips lime . . .

olives,

vermouth.

* * * *

Sun. The sun. Coming up. Big. Bigger.

Coming up. Just coming up. Coming . . .

The women lie

down, on their backs,

Venus, Venus,

mons veneris

to it.

They swing. They swing themselves to it, O

Raise themselves raise themselves

raise themselves.

The sun is red-, yellow

orange

Christ-

Faced, suddenly saturnine;

and then

Not.

—The sun swings south.

My face opens,

I am dreams, *not* dreams,

there,

but ice, gin

(Frozen, moon-colored, moon-flesh, solid),

White-, red, Jesus-, light

olives,

vermouth.

I am Venus, and the falling stars.

* * * *

We giggle. The men, the women, God,

Me. We giggle . . .

six hundred of us!

Morning. It is day. Still. Morning.

So.

We drink. We make love. Lots. Lots. Lots.

Love.

We make love.

The men. The women.

Sun.

The sun makes it . . .

love

The whole GO

is the

Sun. Is love.

Ten o'clock.

The moon stays.

The moon stays there. Today. Today.

It will be there all day, today.

Til Noon.

And we drink.

And we make love.

Make love.

We make it with our hands,

with our mouths.

IT. It is made.

We make it again.

Again.

—The stars are there, still there.

Bright.

Very bright. Even though it is day.

Blue, bright blue sky. White-, bright red

sky. Sun.

Rising. Rising.

Great God-, Big,

God, God.

It eats into us.

It melts the ice,

A little. Eats into us.

And sips

The sea.

The sea floats up to it,

floats.

GIN. Lovely, lovely gin.

The bright moon

Drips tonic, drips bourbon, now, too,

drips scotch

(Venus, poor Venus, weeps

. . . olives.

vermouth)

... all, all floats down,
floats back to the sun;
The white-, red-
holy
gin-
Sun.
It breathes.

All of us. We can hear it ...
all of us!

We are afraid.

We sleep. And then sleep.
The rocks melt, a little ...
frozen; still

Frozen gin.

We lick them.
All of us.
We lick them. The sun breathes.
A little.

We put out our tongues,
now, Noonday-dogs,
And try to feel it breathe,
its breath. Sun.

We don't. We fail.
We fail to feel it

Breathe.

We make love. *More* love.
We make love!

It rises.

Bigger, bigger.

Noon-,
night.

This day will stop at ...
and it does. Does

Stops. Like that!

It stops. Stops.
And love. Love.

Robert S. Sward

TO JEFFERS AT LAND'S END

By his strange, shallow river far inland
where earth is only shorn, windswept wastes
 of sage and lava rim,
bleakly remniscent of a drawn sea,
I have read the poems: the "Hurt Hawks,"
and the "—Republic;" have listened
to the heart's beat of "Birth-Dues"
and have been gripped down deep
by the shock of those poems from Sur —
For on that coast I have toiled up
the long lupined headlands blue as the sea,
and felt the pulse of beauty's tragedy
mock my eyes as it broke upon the black rocks and was water again.

Here there is land—
The shock of silent hills
beating their blue upon the ear like wind.
There are waters, shallow rivers, alkaline lakes, and tuled sloughs—
where the geese call, and the Crane and Pelican are heard like voices
 of the terrain.

Here, too, is beauty's tragedy forever reminding the eye that we
 are mortal.

Yet I cannot quite understand the cry of your despair—
for it is we who weep before the tragic skies,
Who do not understand and are like children reaching for the moon.
Too late we watch the high sun ascending to Noon,
and while we wait the earth unmindful of Destiny or Fate
gives birth to grass, wears distant rock to sharper lines
 against the sky—
and the hawk unstayed by threat of death or broken wing
skims ceaselessly, a scythe above the sage
where rabbit and the rattler lurk,
its vision accurate as a gauge.
Its search beside these poems — derision.

Wendell B. Anderson

THE ART OF FICTION

My mother's favorite novel was *Lord Jim*,
Though anything by Conrad was her dish:
His dark radiance, the belief that few men
 get their wish
Was right for one whose life was subject to another's
 whim.

Or so I thought. One's parents, in their covert power,
 are so mythical.
I sometimes liked to think, despite eight children,
 she had not loved,
But she, with Conrad's lofty pride, would have reproved
This notion, and now I wonder if I knew her secret heart
 at all.

So romantic, she came down at last to prose
But of this ceremonious sort, perhaps her only challenge
 and reproof
To neighbors with their glittering things who thought
 she was aloof —
Papa, so much older, would pick a quarrel or doze.

A woman who stayed beautiful in spite of age —
She read on with him and me in evening light:
He lived to be the one to say goodnight,
And I to have misgivings each time I turn a page.

In this sense only I am Conrad's child —
Those novels were the way it started:
I cannot choose between the ways of being
 brokenhearted,
Or keeping romance undefiled.

Charles Edward Eaton

FOG OVER THE HILLS,

rain now
after six dry months.

Now there'll be
mushrooms
springing from under
last year's leaves —

creamy chanterelle
and the orange
lactarius, damp and cool
to the hand.

Blueberries
too wet to pick until
the wind
blows them dry;

monkshood hidden
in quiet places along
the trail,
hung over with raindrops.

And now I remember
the wet bark
of young tamaracks,
black against
the ochre needles —

far-off there
over the hills where
once before
we walked down
out of the summer
on a rainy path.

John Haines

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

There were twelve pear blossoms on the branch
In the shallow bowl on his table.
As he counted them, he relaxed,
Appreciating fully the careless perfection
Of a universe dealing lavishly in dozens.

Savoring breakfast, he dwelt
At considerable length on his dozens:
The towering shirts, and the socks,
The silver sleeping in twelves,
The dozens of linen and china.
Gratefully, he acknowledged
The doubtless rightness of numbers
That build to a certain sum,
And his day was an ordered, pear branch double six,
For he felt that God had validated twelve.

The eleven pear blossoms on the branch
Shouted to him at dinner,
And his food grew cold on his plate
As he questioned inviolate patterns
So long on the silk of his robe,
And he sharpened thought against eleven,
Seeing twelve fall from every branch.

Norma McLain Stoop

NEIGHBORS

I.

The stained glass window under the narrow gable
flooding the golden oak with rainbow light
cheers the frail scions of the family
who seldom venture from their sanctuary
now times are no longer right.

But often peering from the close-drawn louvers
beyond the hedge to where the lawn once was,
their sad eyes see the vanished summer house,
lacy as a candy box or valentine
and the old trellis where the wisteria vine
shed opalescent tears upon the grass,

and then they sigh, perhaps remembering
croquet and coquetry, the firefly evenings,
cream-white flannels, embroidered muslin dresses,
gay striped blazer, beribboned pompadour,
the paper lanterns, the tinkling mandolins
of a world that seemed so sure.

II.

The picture window of the brick-faced ranch-type,
lidless and bold, a wide Cyclopean eye,
stares at the sun and at each fierce barrage
of wind-swept rain as if it meant to gauge
the motives of the sky.

It gazes out across the concrete terrace
and a modern altar, the backyard barbecue,
where in the day's transparent gold and blue
lithe youthful figures, bright-clad acolytes
with tinkling glasses, king-size cigarettes
together do just as their comrades do,

leaning upon the easy formula.
the handy phrase or recent oracle,
following a fad, a ready ritual,
seeming quite certain of the way to go,
yet in the glimmering starlight well aware
of all there is to know.

Mildred Cousens

THE CANCER OF THE ROSE

Sancho, my horse shining!
There are miles to run and worlds
To win, if by cliché;
I cannot wonder wasted thoughts
of heaven's quiet places
But must accelerate forever.

My bowels burn for action.
You know it, Sancho?
Comprenez-vous the thrill of nights
Barking at the stars falling flaming
Through the moon? My horse with wheels
And coat rubbed down with simonize.

What this world needs
is a good five-cent
prophylactic
or maybe cheaper
with distribution
and guarantees
that manufacturers
would rectify
all errors
and accidents
with illustrated
instructions.

They all said, "Art —
what men live by and for."
They all resolved, in places
Where smoke had routed oxygen,
That we would stand together,
Tomorrow's avant-garde today.
And we talked long hours in gardens
Over glasses half-empty, but it rained.
(rain, rain, go away,
little poets want to play,)
"It always rains," they said
And went inside.

A few good-naturedly shook fists
At clouds and said, "We aren't
discouraged; we'll build our altar
higher than the clouds," and I
Was one of those, brick by brick.
(The clouds looked down and laughed
at tiny efforts and filled buckets.)

Sancho, my manuscripts!
Bring out the inkdream's rape
of virgin paper traversing
Sex and Christ without a preference.
(What this world needs is a good five-cent
Christ-symbol
for all of those
whose hearts bleed
boric acid
at the valves.)

We will pray for the carcass,
Offer wreaths, and burn our plague victim
Before others are contaminated.
A match, Sancho: we cannot fight our windmills,
But we can burn them,
Laughing raucously at their astonished fall.
What this world needs is good five-cent

men
outside of fiction
and dreams,
and you can ask too much —

Live your art, skeleton;
Shore up your bones against the winds,
Nailing your bones as weight against the winds.
The rain will wash it all away,
The rain will wash it all away.

Harold Grutzmacher

I WAS WITH HER

that whole piping day
by waters, scooting on,
swaning off huge rocks,
fizzing slimmer than fish,

crawling in blue currents
one bubbling braid over
the shelled shallows, out,
snapping the turkish air,

learning the barriers
and sweetness of form
(more thoroughly than I
that air was touching her)

then at the hulking rock
and damp threat of night,
providing for, like fire
fluttering on flat sand,

and later, looking down
the shore at smoking men
dangling poles in skies
the color of fish-heads.

David Lyttle

SHAREHOLDER'S REPORT, 1/61

Irrevocably as snow or the sound of voices
In it, hollow, our lives are cut off
By storms in the winter of our search. Recorded,
A taped operator's hidden voice
From zero speaks: "The party with whom
You wish to talk is no longer —"
Click-click we signal the warm computer
That remembers a call's distance. But our circuits
Are short, the dime comes back—and with it
We can get the time, our weather, or a prayer.

Martin Robbins

IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE AND WILL AGAIN

When newer stars swim into ken
And brighter comets scare the land,
Then mobs of foolish frightened men
Stand startled, ready for command.

W. Arthur Boggs

S. DALI KITCHEN

The walls are painted Primavera green
the curtains are brisk white organdy,
the oilcloth on the floor is De Hooch clean.

(A huge black beetle crawls upon the sink)

The pots are copper-bottomed hung to graze
in rows of sheep above immaculate stove,
the canisters are schooled on shelves in ordered size.

(The beetle runs, evades the frenzied blow)

The virgin lifts the snowy sink top up
to stare at hollow's gaping, unplugged mouth
to midnight's labyrinth, uncharted on her map,
(through which the beetles are threading to and fro).

Rose Roseberg

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A STORY

Year after year they warmed the friendly sheets,
Disposed of passion briefly, lay all night,
Limbs parted, uninvolved, feeling the slight
Vibrations as the other dreamed or stirred:
Meeting and turning from the trembling flesh,
All night, all marriage.

Till she siezed his arm
And tore his shoulder, suddenly, and cried,
(Leaving long weals above his frightened heart)
'Come down upon us, fumbling through our rite,
Appall us with our savagery one night,'
Then threw her naked body from his touch,
Muttering something that he could not catch.
'Eros!' she called, or was it just a moan,
'Come down,' she begged, 'if for this night alone,
And let our long-won gentleness be wrecked
Upon one accurate and frantic act.'

'Eros, come down,' she called, until her pain
Drove her to him to try love's hateful feats,
In labour with desire, with joy, with shame:
She felt it grow until it tore her frame,
Threshing among the sheets.

Lawrence Lerner

A QUESTION

If as I raised my head
The present turned aside
And turning disappeared
And with the glimpse of you
A wild conviction grew
And made the time absurd,

Would I in confidence
Lay down my commonsense
As one lays down a pen,
And rising from my desk
Confront a door through which
To slip from now to then?

And though we chose our lot
And pulled ourselves apart
And pulled the present shut,
Would I renounce my choice
Step through (now I'd the chance)
The unlocked door; go out?

Or would I ask how far
It is to where you are,
How real is what is gone,
And ask myself before
I dared to push the door,
Can one get back again?

Lawrence Lerner

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