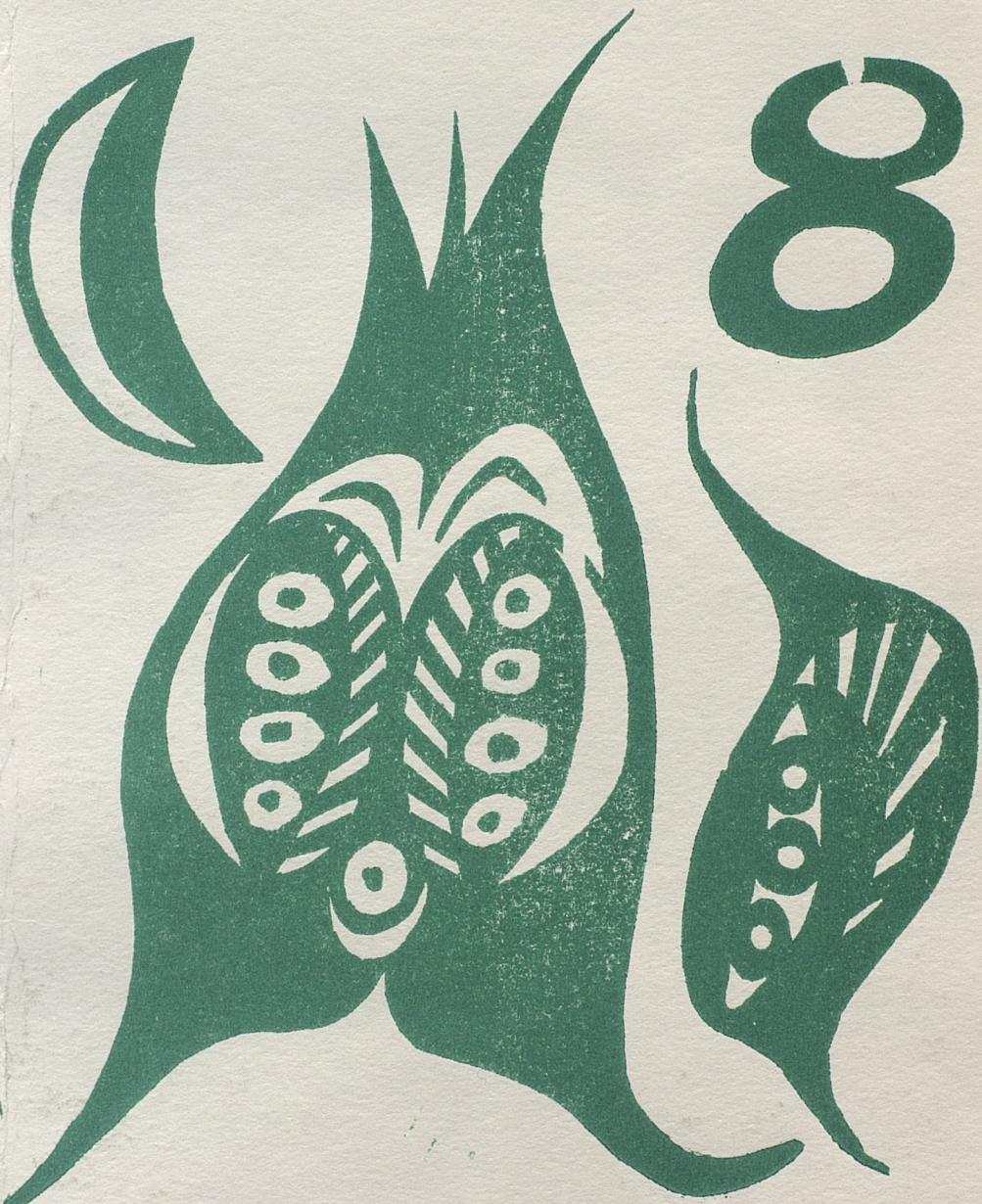


*The Wormwood
Review*

Number

8



THE WORMWOOD REVIEW

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The Windowpane

we see only a piece of outside from this couch:

fragments of things we know are whole
a patched roof from which we build a
house

a branch from which we leaf a tree
just two roses from which we create love

-- Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Mass.

The Four Mothers Of Forever

I cover my eyes
against the Four Mothers of Forever
with their red smiling mouths
that never speak
although I wanted them to smile
heart-stricken
I cover my eyes
because they do not weep

--Hester G. Storm

San Francisco, Calif.

Four Pictures Of The Spanish Civil War

(From photographs in Hugh Thomas' *The Spanish Civil War*)

I

*Franco's cheeks
are smooth and full
he's smiling like a politician.
General Mola walks dimly
one step behind,
putting on white gloves.
Mola will die soon
in an airplane crash.
Franco
wears no gloves.*

II

*La Pasionaria
stands all in black,
followed by grey reporters
reaching to see
over the heads in front of them.
She is Spain's greatest Communist,
so she waits
with tight lips
and impatient
eyes
while all the reporters are talking
at once.*

III

*The floor of a sacked church
is scattered like a stoney beach
with holy fragments,
all the way
up to where the altar was.
Along the lower edge
of the picture
is a pile of broken Christs and saints:
like victims of a shipwreck
laid in a line
until their relatives come
and claim them.
All the Christs are armless,
one has no face.*

IV

You have seen this picture:

*he falls away
from his gun, suspended
sitting
in mid air
arms out spread.*

*Beneath him
in the grass of a hillside
is his last shadow,
toward which he is falling.*

-- James Hazard
Whiting, Indiana

THE SHIELD

Far in the distance like a star some very little thing begins to dance. It is a crazy little thing. It makes legs for itself. It dances in the fire on a cold and windy night. There is a very short fat man coming up through the snow. He has a smile on his face. He is laughing because he is so happy. His arms bulge with muscles because above his head he carries a great load of treebranches. And then he disappears. He becomes nothing but a shield painted red white and blue.

-- Robert Lowry
Cincinnati, Ohio

*Robert Lowry's new book, *Party of Dreamers*, has been released by Fleet Publishing Corp. on Nov. 22, 1962. A book of short stories: \$4.50.*

A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man of Twenty-One

*My life is like the pennies
in a child's piggy bank
saved for a year that comes
too late
& is too old*

*My days stretch before me
& behind me
like a string of old priests
with softly folded hands
& soiled robes*

*Tomorrow looks in through my window.
one old man
with the snout of Durante
& Walter Winchell's eyes.
I am too bored to
draw the shade.*

-- Robert Lowry

A Bit Of Blue

*Pardon the conductor
excuse the engineer
this train's bound for heaven
(hell's a bit too dear).
Pardon these two sisters
pardon Anne and Tony too
And to a nut named Bobbie
please, bring back a bit of blue.*

-- Robert Lowry

The Re-Run House

Caesar Romero

screen's greatest heel

draws fast & a balcony crashes.

Celluloid reels into the getaway, plus murder ketchup,
plus the tremble of Marlene's breast
as she scrambles around tables, through a door...

Somebody coughs

2 little schoolgirls up front
compare Robert Donat
with Gable & a boy they both know,
slip chocolates from a mutual bag
into wee mouths, licking
limp fingers,
giggling

An old woman rumples
a shopping bag
wheezes & worries
& wonders about the Villain
& the goldfish in her room
where's her old man drinking now?
She folds 2 hands comfortably
over her 1 comfortable lap, sighing but worried

2 of the homeless sleep in that dark world
they snore softly in the rear, in tune
with the candybag rattling & the packages,
slipped now deep in their damp selves, far
from the hunger that pants at the outer door

After donald duck you find
the street outside still
pattering rain: Mr.
World the same for you --
the same for you
but later.

-- Robert Lowry

The Angel

*I found the angel who
Had died in my back yard.
Not knowing what to do
Nor what I should not do,
I stood a long while staring
At his fragmented wings,
Like sea-foam lying ruined
On the stiff, still ground.*

*I saw his torn hair
And the crown of blood he wore
Sealing with its fire
The silence of his death,
Then knelt to kiss his robe
Whiter than a bone
I found once in the sand;
So white, I had to turn
In fear of what was not,
And dared not try again
Or even think of white.*

*I looked another way . . .
Toward familiar things:
The bush and trees, the house
Patiently guarding
All that I held as mine . . .*

*It was of little use;
I had to look again
Before his wings might fold
Into the earth like rain
Or rise up with the mist
Into the hovering air;
I turned back half-resisting . . .
Nothing was there
Save one thin bone
Shaped like a wing in flight,
Holding my back yard
In the terror of its white.*

-- Myron Levey
Rockaway, New Jersey

Ossifications

After several weeks you may observe
That insects trapped upon the window ledge
Become brittle, petrify to shells,
And may be blown like dust.
The remains of holiday rockets
Also retire to anonymity
As quickly as the retina forgets.
Then, there are clams and mussels
Lodged in the wet sand's skeleton
With every shrug of the sea.
Observe, too, by rocks where feathers lie,
The gull so quickly turned to stone
That over itself its cry calls on.

-- Myron Levoy

A Human Interest Story

One day the Devil rode through
town on a train.
No one knew it, but all the
dogs in town
Howled at once. An eerie sound
it was.
The editor of The News wrote
an amusing
Never surmising squib about it
in the paper
That evening -- in the final
edition.

-- M. K. Book

Lincoln, Nebr.

When The Ceiling Cries

A mother tosses her infant so that it hits the ceiling.

Father says, why are you doing that to the ceiling?

Do you want my baby to fly away to heaven; the ceiling is there so that the baby will come back to me, says mother.

Father says, you are hurting the ceiling, can't you hear it crying?

So mother and father climb a ladder and kiss the ceiling.

A Lovely Man

A man is such a lovely man; he really is if you'll only look past him into the flower garden.

Wait, shall he move so that you can look more fully into the garden?

Shall he die and be put under the flower garden to nourish beauty and never to be in the way of it again?

The Artifact

Someplace is hidden because there is no one there --Where a leaf and a stone as eyes, with a twig as nose, and a squirrel's skeleton a mouth of teeth: look for a time up through the trees at the changing sky.

The wind blows a leaf away, one eye closes.

Someplace hidden because no one is there looks out of itself at the universe.

-- Russell Edson

Stamford, Conn.

Appearances and A Stone Is Nobody's by Russell Edson can be obtained for \$1.10 and \$1.35 from Thing Press, 149 Weed Ave., Stamford, Conn.

Sweet And Sour

To feed a stale macaroon
To a male raccoon,
Munch a crunchy jilipi
In a jalopy,
Invent a sly sobriquet
For a martinet,
Pry out a pesky fishbone
From near the wishbone --
Would make even a rheumatic
Wax half ecstatic.

To marry a contrary
Prothonotary,
Dive down a roller-coaster
Perched on a bolster,
Map the itinerary
Of a canary,
Spruce up a fat trust-buster
With a bust-duster --
Would blow up a mere spinster
Into a raving monster.

-- John Moffitt

New York, New York

(Note: A jilipi is a Bengali sweetmeat that looks like a pretzel; it is soaked in sugar syrup.)

John Moffitt's second book, *The Living Seed*, has recently been released by Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. of New York : \$3.95.

Just The Thing

*To get it back clean and simple,
Get it back clean
(Cats or giraffes or the man
Polishing eight-inch windowpanes):*

*To get it back cool and neat,
Get it back cool
(Snow or persimmons or the girl
Polishing the brass knob of a door):*

*To get it back and have it once for all,
Get it back and be just the way you were
(Cats or snow or almost anything
You can think of clean and cool) --*

*Why, so you are already, so you are
And so am I.*

-- John Moffitt

• • • • •

*Writing a poem is propping your cheek on your
palm on your elbow on your knee, and thinking
thinking intensely an egg*

-- Susan Solomont

Bangor, Maine

Introduction To Reproduction

*I like it! I like it!
Cry another Adam,
On his introduction
To the art of reproduction
Victim of the spells
Of a cunning serpent
Lying in her garden.*

*A modern garden far removed
From the ancient Eden,
Yet it bears the same old fruit
As the gardens of Eden:
Tempting and compelling,
But not forbidden.*

*Here lock this young lad
Betwixt the serpent's jaw
And as it riggles and twiggles
The young Adam cry no more
But the old serpent
Was giving the fruit,
Forbidden to eat in
The Garden of Eden.*

*Ate this young Adam did,
Like his forefather
From the dish of Eve,
For sweet are the apples
Of their seductive dishes,
That no Adam having tasted
Never, never refuses.*

-- Arnold J. Boyce

New York, New York

The Marriage of Ragnar Lodbrog
(after Saxo)

*His destiny will come to him
Neither clothed nor unclothed
Neither afoot or ahorse
Neither on water or land
Neither with or without a gift.*

*Riding a goat while one foot
Trails in the green of a ditch,
Wearing her hair and a net,
A hare before, a hound beside,
Over her head a raven*

*His bride is welcomed by Ragnar;
He takes the fruit of her lips
Laughing, as later he marries
The pit dark with adders --
A ready groom for night.*

-- John Taylor
Houston, Texas

.....

The Wormwood Award for the most overlooked and unnoticed book of worth and wit for the year 1962 goes to: Mother Night by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. -- a Gold Medal paperback \$1191, published February, 1962 by Fawcett Publications, Inc., Greenwich, Conn. Price: 35 cents. Still available at newsstands.

The Big Romance Is On Again

*The hands of trees discovering once more
the fresh
familiar flesh of hills,
the reaching tickle of the roots
fingering
the private place of summer.*

*The dreaming in the loins is repeated
everywhere.
Even in the stiffened angles of the cliffs
fuzz is showing;
bony girls, growing up.*

-- Adassa Frank

Needham Heights, Mass.

My Love
has placed
the vase
of lilacs
in the window
through which
I see
a lilac bush
and
beyond
the sunset.

-- Ralph J. Salisbury

Eugene, Oregon

August Sets Its Stone

*August sets its dry meal before me.
Downing the hard ends of days that
make of your absence a mean diet,
I think upon our world that was
and burn.*

*God damn
what keeps you from me!
Had I the sweet alfalfa of your face
for pasture, I could absolve hunger;
and pardon thirst by sucking back
the slow ascension in my throat
of that breast-rich milk
stoppered now in my heart.*

*I'd satisfy much if you were here.
Spirit feeding with flesh,
I'd cavort among your clover as,
charged with daisy pollen,
bees turn to somersaulting
under sun.*

*Unfortunately,
this summer, turning, only goes.
Leaves droop, petals drop,
less and less do I prevail.
Earth is drying out and,
in my mouth, upon my tongue,
these dusty days settle down
like stone.*

-- G. C. Oden

New York, New York

Love Weighs Me

*Love weights me
like July
whose elephant haunch
upon the roof
heightens the thick discomfort
of my room.*

*Summer adds mileage
to your absence.
Its slow freight grinds me
towards that point of desperation
in themselves
plums observe when
from green
bright skins fall
to burgundy-blue.*

*Heat conquers me.
And want.
By arc of outstretched arm and leg
I overspread the bed
a brown butterfly
whose wings of love
cannot lever air
for flight
nor lift the heart
out from its depth
of monotone.*

-- G. C. Oden

Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright

*'I put your naked body
between myself alone and death.'*

Kenneth Rexroth

'I will never have enough of you,'
I said.

*Though more was meant
that what we did,
our doing was enough
for praise.*

*The well of my remembering
spills over. I recall you
all my length,
and that idiot willow-weep
of hair that teased.*

*What splendour flesh!
No better man,
no sweeter taste of love
than such as was in
forward flood between
your mouth and my own.
Had we been damned to death,
no darkness
could have overwhelmed us
lit, as we were, by love.*

*Nor even now
with memory spreading its fire
through our bone.*

-- G. C. Oden

for Jane

225 days under grass
and you know more than I.

they have long taken your blood,
you are a dry stick in a basket.

is this how it works?

in this room
the hours of love
still make shadows.

when you left
you took almost
everything.

I kneel in the nights
before tigers
that will not let me be.

what you were
will not happen again.

the tigers have found me
and I do not care.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, California

the sharks

the sharks knock on my door
and enter and ask favors;
how they puff in my chairs
looking about the room,
and they ask for deeds:
light, air, money,
anything they can get --
beer, cigarettes, half-dollars, dollars,
fives, dimes,
all this as if my survival were assured,
as if my time were nothing
and their presence valuable.

well, we all have our sharks, I'm sure,
and there's only one way to get them off
before they hack and nibble you to death --
stop feeding them; they will find
other bait; you fattened them
the last dozen times around --
now, set them out
to sea.

-- Charles Bukowski

Charles Bukowski's latest, **Run With The Hunted**,
is available from: Midwest, 2207 West Lunt Ave.,
Chicago 45, Ill., and his **Longshot Poems For
Broke Players** can still be obtained from The
Seven Poets Press, 620 East Sixth St. (no. 3),
New York 9, New York. Both are \$1.00 each!

Memo For A Hip Pocket Poet

Study the lesson of Li Po.

*Put a seagull in a summer sky,
it helps the gullible.*

It's easy to be a giant in the realm of IF.

*Watch your meter when you park your moon
too close to soon.*

Define the ache of spring in less than ten syllables.

*The king is dead. Do not try
to beat e.e. cummings through the wry.*

The best poem is the one that wasn't written.

*Form is the mind, content the heart,
style the dress, art the miracle.*

Snow is a cliche for christmas.

*It is not enough to know everything,
it is enough to be alert.*

Indifference is the mask of cowards.

*Life put the squeeze
on Weldon Kees.*

Life is a verb.

*There is a core in all complexity
where the senses do not lie.*

Ruins are incentives.

*Crane found Atlantis in the "diced bones,"
Auden thought he found it in the Nones.*

History is a metaphor, man repeats.

*Hopkins scaled the highest ridges
but Hopkins never burned his Bridges.*

Desire is stronger than denial.

*Rimbaud's head was full of beauty,
Allen Tate is dull as duty.*

Marianne Moore is a mirage.

*Rimbaud's hair was full of lice,
Villon played with dames and dice.*

Enemies make our reputations, not friends.

*This is the age of the HOWL and the swish,
half the girls are fowl, half the boys are fish.*

Never scan a broad with narrow hips.

*In the archives of the square,
a poet's word is a bomb, not a bond.*

Revolution is the reaction against reaction.

*Pray that you survive the freeze
of windy anthologies.*

Necessity is a rival of wisdom.

*Remember when you write to please,
the bigger the ulcers, the bigger the fees.*

An optimist is a man who laughs at a funeral.

*Never use a villanelle
to tell an editor to go to hell.*

Heaven and hell are ambiguities.

*Beware of spring, it has inspired
more bad poetry than love.*

Echoes are boomerangs.

*Advice is just dishwater;
critics are pearl divers.*

Intuition is the reality of the artist.

*The skill of the knife thrower is less
than the thought of the act made art.*

There's no approach to reason without love.

-- Harold Briggs

New York, New York

It's Nothing

to you,

you never saw tenderness in garbage cans

you never tripped on a skyscraper,

you never played leapfrog with a dolphin.

Did defeat ever spit in your eye?

Choke on your silver spoon

you --

maybe I'm talking to a tomb.

I waited all day,

the postman brought me blackmail

from the finance Co.

When I phoned

the secretary

screened me for a clown.

A breast in the hand is worth two in the bra

I said.

I'll call the manager

she said.

Do that I said.

A dream boat is no collateral

he said.

Tomorrow is a mirror I can't face.

-- Harold Briggs

This Side Of The Moon

is hell

for people like me

who don't believe

in heaven

or war

as a substitute

for civilization.

-- Harold Briggs

X-MAS

*leaves me each year with
a case of Santa-
claustrophobia. Look up
and get a load of Y: HE's
risen (all lit up) to
the roof of the First
National Bank where
(says the neon sign)
HE saves.*

-- Felix Anselm

Madison, Wisconsin

Musings Of Late

*She's so punctual, she's angry if she is late
being early. Not me. I'm always either late
plain and simple, or late being late
-- as when I get to work a few minutes later
than ten minutes late on the dot. Not that I'm late
on purpose, I just don't believe in wasting time
on not being late
but on time. I was born late, I think, and came late
(wouldn't you know?) to my wedding, after marrying
late.
Preferring to be in time to being on time, I do hope
I'll be late
also for my funeral. So they can call me the late late.*

-- Felix Anselm

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A Sort Of Love Poem

*Maybe, I thought,
if it weren't for thinking,
love might stand
a chance*

*and the afternoon
turned yellow and green
and grew a stainless air
and everywhere there was
laughter and sun
and the whisper of sudden shells.*

*All days, I thought,
end in darkness and sleep
and only the heart
knows the love-beat.*

-- Charles Shaw

New York, New York

These Things I Do With You

*These things I do with you
have never been the same
as those with him or her,
will never be the same
as those with them, the things
I do are not the same with you
I'll do again.*

*And I am not myself
who tires myself who dies
each time that with some one
of you I try myself to do
what then I am, and only then
I have been true.*

*And what am I to you
who have not been the same
to me as they, as he or she
has been, and not the same
as even me to me? -- the self
that separates from each
the other and is named*

*the same by chance, by change
becomes far off, unclear,
a lonely bell that rings
and then another rings
as far away but differently,
and as another thing.*

-- Joan White

Pasadena, Calif.

Person As The God Of Cats

*It was the Prince of Cats
looked through the slats
at me in my sun bath.
The ferns were tall
red flowers fell
on the hot, hot heaven ground.*

*He stared and scratched around
and could have come
where I lay lapping sun
but sat in dirt
and shade, and pawed
the flimsy wide-set slats.*

*Squeeze over, Cat!
and talk to me.
I'll stroke you in the sun,
then you can run
home to your female cat
deep back behind those slats.*

-- Joan White

A serviceman's letter to a girl

*you know the funniest thing
just happened
i just went to the bathroom and there were hundreds of
naked men right there in my bathroom
i certainly hope you don't have that kind of trouble with
the plumbing.*

-- Thomas W. Kell

El Toro (Santa Ana), Calif.

New Wine

*It takes a crazy sunshine like today
and a dry Cinzano to make me laugh.
Running smiles, decorous whispers,
eyes saying "Yes," what waiting lies in between!
The half-stolen earring, a link between two hands,
a bridge from banter to warmer music,
what softness my hands find beneath that blouse!
Your cautious sips are counterpointed
with my deliberate longer swallowings.
This new richness needs time to age,
to acquire the bouquet that comes
with the spilling of inhibitions.
Secrets taste sharp as cheddar;
you are the wine to smooth my tongue.*

After My Death

*take my bones
high into the moist greenness of New Hampshire
put them in a canvas bag
and place the bag on a birchwood platform
raised in the sweet-smelling meadow*

*light four fires
one at each corner of the primitive bier
then sit through the night
to the left facing north mumbling
prayers we created in love*

*when morning comes
don't be frightened by the noise from the platform
the bones will rattle
as my soul my spirit my body
reunite*

-- Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Mass.

Fourth of July -- 1962

I'm a patient man
so I spread the canvas chairs and awnings to dry
only trouble was the sun had fallen on the roof of our house
and was caught behind the chimney
nothing would dry in that vacuous greyness
I grumbled
the damn luck I have would make a saint swear
sh! she said it could have been worse call the firemen
before the roof starts burning
I'm burning! I guess I was sharp
I was planning on a swim how can I swim?
with all those pieces of sky filling the pool
I'll probably cut myself into an American Flag

Something Clean About A Bullet

in the casual weekend war
a technician will push a button
and return to his science-fiction paperback
or perhaps a blond-haired bomber-pilot
will drop a pot of meltiness or nerve-gas or bacteria
and return to his suburban home to play with his young daughter

I want the one who's destined to stop my breathing
to do it neatly and with passion
looking into my eyes as he squeezes the trigger

-- Ottone M. Riccio

The Formicary

I discovered it by accident and knew
there would be an invasion in the morning I would take steps

that night's dream was crowded with soldiers explaining
they were only doing their duty without reward
and with workers begging to be spared since they could only
slave their grinding lives away without hope
the queens were proud and scorned the chance to pray
their lovers beat transparent wings in arrogance
I determined to save the humble and the faultless

but in the morning I saw the task beyond me impatience
pressed me to abandon justice I poured the gasoline
over the entire population and dropped the match

-- Ottone M. Riccio

There Are Gamelaws

For as long as I can say the old redhead moon will die
from laughter. Why? Because tonight and every night I have
crept like something little and stupid and afraid under the
bough of a linden tree -- do not uncover me, do not move the
chip for I am a baby quail and there are gamelaws.

-- Robert Lowry

Sermon on the day of the circus

Over the city
the bulb went off, flashing
the old men who slicked
their heads with oil.
They were happy when their skulls
possessed their mirrors.

Women who were bedded with clowns
rejoiced
when the sheets took fire,
and those who were able
disappeared in their triangles.

Churchbells rang
all the way down
the melting steeples

The young girls danced
through curbs of flame,
their eyes were kindled pennies

And the fire made tongues
caressing
the courthouse columns.

Young men leaped
like salmon on the highways,
at last unashamed
their shamefast tears
were steaming their faces.

Sirens froze in the heat
when smoke wrapped up the children.
From the pall of stillness
came a tremble of voices.
They sang the blue blessed day,
the rain that was golden.

Now let us all go out
and let us get drunk together.
We have waited so long, lord.
Lord, we have waited so long.

-- John Knoepfle
University City, Missouri

Patrons

*Mr. Davis Lapham
Miss Barbara Snow*

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