

*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

The Four Mothers of Forever  
earth-brown  
quiet as stone  
sit timeless

                    in luminous night  
their smiling mouths  
                                    are red grapes

bursting with silence  
their eyes are not revealed  
I tremble at their monstrous beauty  
and dare not ask  
                            what they hold on their knees

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 Levoy

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 rattles 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 \$1.19, 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 Pomes 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 cliché 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 X: 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

the sky fell down this morning  
splashing around the swimming-pool  
I was annoyed  
having just tidied up the patio  
but my wife smiled  
shook her head in fact  
don't you realize the sky fell down?  
yes, and look at the mess it made!  
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 meltness 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

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