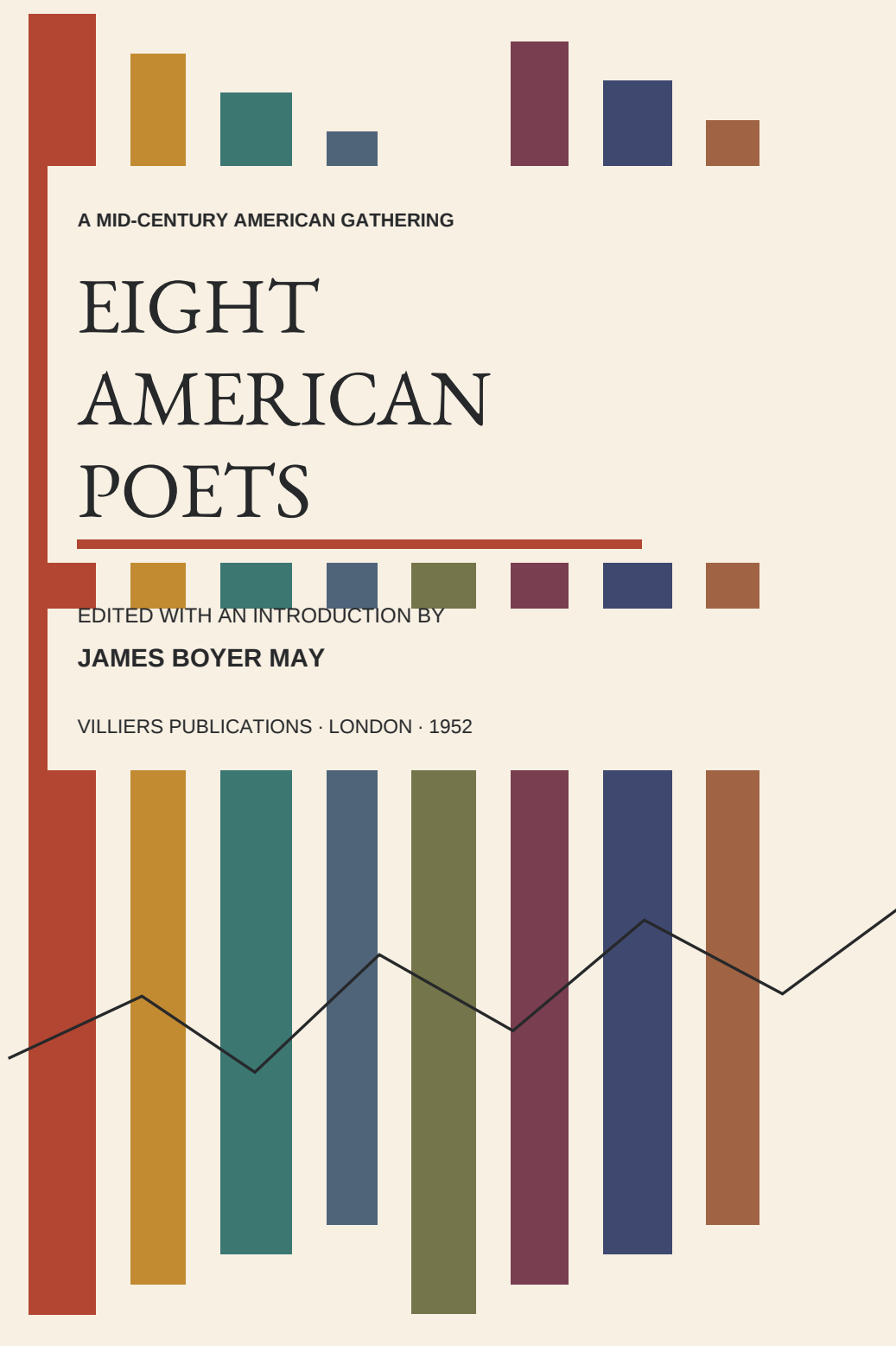


A decorative graphic on the left side of the cover features a vertical red line. To its right are two rows of vertical bars in various colors (red, gold, teal, blue, olive, purple, dark blue, brown). A black line graph is overlaid on the bottom row of bars, showing a fluctuating trend.

A MID-CENTURY AMERICAN GATHERING

EIGHT AMERICAN POETS

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JAMES BOYER MAY

VILLIERS PUBLICATIONS · LONDON · 1952

EIGHT AMERICAN POETS

Edited with an introduction by James Boyer May

Villiers Publications · London · 1952

DIGITAL READING EDITION

Prepared by Brian Kim Stefans · 2026

EDITION NOTE

This complete reading edition presents the original introduction, acknowledgments, and poems by Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin, Thomas H. Carter, George P. Elliott, Scott Greer, William Pillin, James Schevill, Felix N. Stefanile, and Harold Witt. The original sequence and printed page divisions are retained in a 6 × 9 inch format.

The source scan is unusually tight at the gutter. On several verso pages, initial letters are partly hidden by the binding. Those passages were repaired conservatively from the surviving shapes, repeated OCR passes, syntax, and context. The most uncertain historical wording is described in the Textual Note rather than silently modernized.

The cover's eight offset bands give each poet a separate visual presence, joined by a single line that crosses the group. Its colors and geometry take cues from mid-century small-press printing without copying the original wrapper.

The archival scan remains a private editorial source and is not part of the public upload package.

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A NOTE ON THIS EDITION

This small book arrived in 1952 without pretending to settle anything. James Boyer May gathered eight writers whose work had circulated through little magazines, regional reviews, classrooms, and small presses, but who did not yet add up to an obvious school. That is part of the pleasure. The anthology catches American poetry at street level: restless, argumentative, funny, frightened, and willing to change shape from one page to the next. Its title is almost defiantly plain. What matters is not a label but the eight distinct ways of making a poem.

The poets move through several Americas at once. Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin writes rain-soaked lawns, New York streets, Memphis, advertising slogans, bathhouses, pigeons, and neighborhood change into loose, quick-cut sequences. Thomas H. Carter turns hospitals, accidents, prisons, and ordinary domestic routines into moral pressure points. George P. Elliott brings ranch country, engineering, war work, mathematics, and metaphysics into formally alert poems that keep testing what knowledge can and cannot do. The book can sound intimate in one moment and public in the next.

Its western geography is especially vivid. Scott Greer's deserts, mountains, aspens, dry summers, and Ozark elegy make landscape feel both physical and historical. William Pillin's winter sequences and domestic cycles join weather to fear, marriage, work, and the strange comforts of home. James Schevill writes a louder, more theatrical city: hotels, drug stores, zoos, civil-service offices, and American fantasy crowd together in long cinematic lines. Felix N. Stefanile brings biblical figures, puppets, zodiac signs, nursery-rhyme music, and urban surrealism into poems that are playful without being light. Harold Witt closes the volume with atomic anxiety, California hills, offices, winter light, grief, and an ascent above the city that never quite escapes it.

The anthology also preserves an ecosystem. Its acknowledgments name magazines such as Poetry, Furioso, Shenandoah, Accent, The Humanist, and The Southwest Review, alongside smaller and now harder-to-find publications. Those credits show how poems traveled before they reached books: one issue, one editor, one local circle at a time. May's introduction is opinionated and sometimes compressed, but it gives a useful snapshot of how these writers appeared to a contemporary advocate in Hollywood. The result is less a canon than a relay station.

This reading edition keeps the original sequence, May's introduction and acknowledgments, and the printed page divisions. The source copy has severe gutter distortion on a number of alternating pages, with first letters partly hidden by the binding. Those passages were reconstructed from visible letterforms, parallel OCR

witnesses made from the same scan, grammar, and poetic context. Obvious recognition errors, false line breaks, and running headers were removed; spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and unusual period usages were retained whenever the scan supported them. The private scan remains the page-level evidence and is not included in the upload package.

CONCERNING ANOMALIES

That this collection has been assembled without fanfare - simply by suggestion to better-printed writers, though none of international reputation - indicates discrepancies between achievements and recognition accorded other types of creativity in the U.S.A. Most these poets remain little-published abroad; and even at home have limited audiences. Yet, the older have established influences and gained followings among young writers; and every one has evolved his own technique and idiom. All utilize major themes, and not impossibly may eventually be appraised as major, not minor, voices.

Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin is of the ninth generation on the American continent (Franco-American ancestry), reared in Memphis, Tenn., and resided seven years in New Orleans and five in New York. He edited *Iconograph*, 1940-47, and operated the *galerie neuf*, 1944-47. Indication of his publications is found among acknowledgments. This spring, he read at the Museum of Modern Art (N.Y.) and gained critical attention of William Carlos Williams. A long work, *Dauphin Island Fantasy*, was featured in *Points* (Paris) last summer.

Much younger, yet old enough to report he watched the Old South become the New South, is Thomas H. Carter, who edits *Shenandoah* at Washington and Lee University. After his writing, he's interested in what he terms "creative editing, and with an ethical basis, which means no fake art." He admits "strong emotional, if not rational, attachment to policies propounded by Tennessee Agrarians." His influence on modern trends dates from youthful part in editing *Spearhead*.

George P. Elliott grew up on a Western ranch and commenced writing when 15. To date, he's won best praise for short stories (several anthologised); and he's now essaying verse tragedy. A prose tragedy was produced at St. Mary's College (Berkeley) where he teaches literature. He acknowledges influences of Yeats and Wallace Stevens; and while he agrees with T. S. Eliot that Shakespeare made blank verse a dangerous drama medium, he feels Eliot hasn't provided an answer either.

Voice from the Texas plains, Scott Greer has found approval of a majority of the significant periodicals in the U.S.A. for over a decade - not a few abroad. Protege and friend of John Gould Fletcher, he edited *Crescendo*, 1941-43. His occupations have varied from restaurant dish-washer to university professor; having obtained his doctor's degree in philosophy at U.C.L.A., he's now on the Occidental College faculty. Besides anthology appearances, he authored *The Landscape Has Voices* (1946). Regards himself "a romantic" as vs. "second-rate ironists, pseudo-classicists, or

whatever."

William Pillin emigrated from Russia at 12, and makes a livelihood at the pottery craft, with his artist-wife, Polia, whose hand-decorated earthenware has earned international notice. This partnership has provided him both a secondary creative outlet and leisure to distill more of the poetry which long has appeared in periodicals. His first book was *Poems*, 1949, followed by *Theory of Silence* (1949). A third, *A Winter Sheaf*, is for 1953 publication.

Best-known for a life of Sherwood Anderson, first extensive study, James Schevill remains primarily a poet. *Prerogations* and *The American Fantasies* are his; and most work recorded here is from *The Starry Floor* and *The Wat'ry Shore: The Complete American Fantasies*. He's composing a long verse play, with music; and some of his drama already has been successfully produced. Member of the English Department at California College of Arts and Crafts, he's editor of *Arts and Crafts Review*.

Another younger contributor, Felix N. Stefanile, a first-generation New Yorker of Italian antecedents, attended City College and North Carolina U. One of most-published poets of recent years, he calls art "a life-saving device." In civil service, he finds it difficult to maintain "sense of soul" than in a profession. "Our artists are the only decent people in any of the parley societies, except ... the ideal poetry should call for six in the back of a pub."

Youngest, Harold Witt recently won the Hopwood Award in Poetry at the University of Michigan, where he completed an M.A. In many periodicals, he's previously been represented, appearing also under the pseudonym, Christopher Logan. A telling clue to his character may lie in the fact he had courage to spend three years in a camp for conscientious objectors during War II. Besides writing, he plans to become a librarian, already having served at the University of California.

Hollywood, Sept., 1952.

J. B. M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments are due to the editors and publishers of the following periodicals in which certain of the poems first appeared:

To Montevallo Review for excerpts from Clear Pool, to Pegasus & Raven Anthology for "Pastoral Poem," to Experiment and to New Dimensions for "Jackson, Tennessee," to Arena for "Observation From The Last Hill" and to Crescendo for Two Suites for Manhattan, by Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin.

To Searchlight for "Poem For A Prisoner," to Suck Egg Mule for "Prophecy," to Midland Poetry Review for "Escape Mechanism," to Matrix for "Hospital Scene (1)," to Suck Egg Mule for "Hospital Scene (2)," and to Shenandoah for "Sunday Morning" and "Poem," by Thomas H. Carter.

To Furioso for "Poem About Myself" and "At Midnight," to Accent for "Pasture with a Barn and Trees Seen from a Shipyard," to Poetry (Chicago) for "The Cyclone" and "To a Bird Outside the Window," to Factotum for "My Flame-Colored Bird," to Furioso for "Credo in $\sqrt{-1}$," to Quarterly Review of Literature for "Math Problem" and "As I Was Coming Home," and to Perspective for "The Diver," by George P. Elliott.

To The Arizona Quarterly for "The Deserted Garden," and to The Southwest Review for "The Aspens in Hidden Valley" and "July Fourth," by Scott Greer.

To Inferno for sections of A Winter Sheaf by William Pillin.

To American Fantasies for "Hermanski, the Hobo, and the Hotel of Death" and "The Clowns are Dancing in the Drug Stores" by James Schevill.

To Poetry (Chicago) for "The Marionettes" and "That Underground Sun," to The Beloit Poetry Journal for "Fall of Adam," and to Poetry Chap Book for "The Leave-taking," by Felix N. Stefanile.

To Furioso for "On First Looking into 'Survival Under Atomic Attack'," "Delay of Green" and "At Winter Solstice," to The Humanist for "Revision," to The Hopkins Review for "Out of Season Elegy," and to Experiment for "Ascent," by Harold Witt.

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

FROM RAINY SUNDAY (PARTS I & III)

all over America lawns drenched
with May rain evoke
nostalgias
only Americans can know
precisely the way they are
in this is,
this is,
this is,

the May drenched lawn.
all up and down the tree-lined streets
the family patterns
are written on the housefronts,
like clues on the masks
of lovers at some Mardi-Gras ball.

the going from the insideness
to the outsideness
in America...
this going from insideness

to outsideness
which is so much in our lives,
which is so much in us,
and America,
we and America,
and the May-drenched lawns,
inside and out.

*

there is the waiting
for the rain to stop
in all of our lives.

there is the waiting
for rain in all of our lives.

Original page 8

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

We are here
like puppets in a temporary shed
between the waitings for
"this is our day," or "tomorrow
is our day"--
until we tire
and all waiting is done
with, waiting is gone,
and we have gone....
beyond waiting.

FROM CLEAR POOL (POEMS JUNE 10, 1950)

Bathhouses
there is
uniformity
about bathhouses
whether by the sea,
or anywhere
the fifteen-year-olds go
to learn
to swim
and be aware of
bodies.

along the benches
where observers sit
the plymouth rock hen
will peck
red
and green
grey and scarlet
in the evening sun.
the railroad's passengers
observe

Original page 9

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

only the calculated
 appearance
 of gayety.
 the minor
 unadmitted motives
 are as subtle
 and unnoticed
 as the preening
 of the hen.

PASTORAL POEM

upon a beach towel
 (dyes by DuPont)
 beneath a parasol
 (Sears and Roebuck 2.98)
 upon a Coca-Cola bottle
 picnic napkin paper cup
 cigarette butt strewn beach
 the mother nurses child
 pulling the primordial sacrament
 into the present
 from the earth ancient past
 as easily
 as buttons switch on lights,
 motors move wheels.

JACKSON, TENNESSEE

September, 1950
 the bulbous late Victorian ghost
 of Casey Jones
 diffuses through the atmosphere
 dripping over courthouse square,
 dripping from the I.C. yards
 to college hill--
 no neo-classic restraint

Original page 10

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

distrains the Murphy Hotel,
nor the Walton House--
only Edwardian perversions
are obvious from the depot
to the warehouse plain....

father--grandfather--who was a volunteer fireman,
the pervading myth--
and Casey Jones--
neither Chickamauga nor Shiloh
can compete with the immediate past,
the florid eighties,
whose brownstone fronts
are still in the large intact
however much interior innovation
having been by them digested--

grandfather was a fireman
and Casey Jones,
a railroad engineer whose widow still lives
and whose grandson carries
the Jackson Sun,
and learns indelicate habits around
the depot....

and Chattanooga can be reached by
train, the tunnel having been cut
through the mountain,
no-one, no-one within miles
knows this is 1950
not even the local murders
establish the spring board
for continuing legendry--
Casey Jones now long dead
still drags his damp ghost
through the streets
which the far past has left
which send the present away
to other towns.

Original page 11

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

OBSERVATION FROM THE LAST HILL

The history of America,
 is a history of cities;
 it is the history of giving up
 old neighborhoods,
 and the going into new neighborhoods :
 and everywhere there is an
 incompleteness . . .
 the lots in the old neighborhoods
 which were not sold,
 where weeds grow--
 the lots in the new neighborhoods
 not yet sold,
 where weeds grow.
 everywhere in America
 there is an incompleteness.
 The history of America
 is a history of giving up old neighborhoods,
 of the going into new neighborhoods.

FROM TWO SUITES FOR MANHATTAN

I.

Between Manhattan and the Promised Land
 lies Memphis, New Brighton,
 Newark, Orange, Cranford, Richmond, and the south,
 lies Denver and Father Divine's
 intentions,
 lies the great mid-western habit
 like a burning plain,

Original page 12

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

lies history's pretty page
which was not pretty
'til it got to be in the past;
lies Betty Grable, pepsodent
toothpaste, King Edward's cigars,
Burma Shave, Listerine, Kotex,
and other popular delusions of
grandeur since Napoleon left
Elba.

4.

but January
is not all slush and wind,
dead pigeons in Forty-fourth Street
and by the Public Library
protesting the warmth of knowledge
and the implacable footmen
guarding the steam heated caves.

I am sure the Russians
in the 10th Street baths
will survive--
for years of oak leaf flagellation
and other mild degeneracies
known among the democratic nations:
the slate grey pigeons
in January
leaves on the autumn trees
lending a little of their grey to
all
Manhattan....

Original page 13

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

and pigeons live in January,
 live on New York life,
 live aggressive mendicants
 like the fluffy sparrows and
 starlings;
 they live :
 the pigeons live through January . . .
 Saint Patrick's spires will need
 another \$30,000.00 worth of steam
 to clean
 their gothic pickling
 again, before long.
 the pigeons live
 and this is proof
 and hope.

. . .

neither America nor the world
 are wholly lost
 though all the newscasts disavow
 this possibility . . .
 the cunning curators of caste
 cannot quell
 the individual germ,
 the unit man,
 who like cancer continues
 to harass yet another day.
 let Manhattan remember America
 and be comforted,
 neighborly nosey America
 across the Hudson
 stretching like an endless carpet
 on some farmer's living room floor.

Original page 14

THOMAS H. CARTER

let Manhattan forget
the glacier
that left it stone.

let Manhattan remember the warm stream,
American rivers, her broad fields,
the treasure of laughter garnered
from a thousand harvests
from Bangor, Maine, to San Antone.

POEM FOR A PRISONER

He was black enough to dim the sun,
and large of bone. His sly tiny head
trembled with unfamiliar fear; his mouth
was tensed by sharp unuttered protest;
but his eyes were wild and sad and lost--
because he did not understand.

His crime, they said, was rape.

And I remembered lust and pain,
and fear like an undone heart in the night,
when your world shivers down. Be kind, I said.
He is one of us.--And they laughed.

What they did not understand,
I am as weak as any man:
I have felt the hunger of the flesh,
the hurt and painful longing of the soul;
and when they put the rope around
his sweating neck, I'll know it.

I do not shudder for his mistake;
my errors are not fatal;

Original page 15

THOMAS H. CARTER

but what one night, when I awake,
 a harsh hemp constricting my breath,
 and my soul skyrockets off to meet
 the blue lightning that plays
 behind my eyes; what if
 I am not dreaming?

PROPHECY

Mister, consider (though you are
 wonderfully almost alive)
 that some day--you'll not mind it--
 living's uncertain happy jive
 will not din into your careless ear:
 it may be an hour or maybe a year,
 but earth will take its casual dead:
 now properly emptied of all
 you held--they will open your head
 (just checking) and your mouth must smile--
 So! Into your bluest veins
 they will pump death, forgetting that
 these were the friendly lovely lanes
 wherein the heart's rapture had run.
 At last beneath the torn scalp your eyes--
 delighted--will drink April's kindest skies!

ESCAPE MECHANISM

Say, you hidlers, you turners-away--
 what can you do when the bubble bursts?
 Can you build a new one quick enough?
 Or does life seep in and soil the shine
 with colors like soggy oil?

Original page 16

THOMAS H. CARTER

Say, do you have to cry a little
when the dream breaks down?
What can you do when the dream is murdered--
when your heart turns cold and dies?

HOSPITAL SCENE: I

In the antiseptic rooms
these people sit,
who wait with dim lost eyes--
as internes pass
with undertaker's tread.

These people cannot speak--
the mind too shocked for grief
can only wait
as the pulse beats time.

They wonder if this nurse
(who lost in dream thinks
wholly of tonight) might give
them news
of one of theirs
who undergoes the blood bright miracle
of surgery--to carve his suppliant
flesh into a functional design.

Time pauses for a door to open.
They look up,
as the primeval heart pounds
to see the bright vision
of smiling God with a scalpel.

HOSPITAL SCENE: II

He lay on his bed
and listened to the
white march of minutes
in his frail blood.

Three dim flies
crossed the ceiling.

Original page 17

THOMAS H. CARTER

I} forever would pause
I'd interrupt those flies.

He saw the white walls
flow like processional seas
across his mind.
The light bulb moved
perpetually forward to
nowhere.

He laughed
and the world
closed on him like a flower.

SUNDAY MORNING

The sound
of the arrogant church bells
scrapes sleep
from minds absorbed
with rest and death
in careful beds.
Behind the house
a cat walks
with the white feet of a king
among overturned garbage pails.
And in the drugged streets
the people
oh the ponderous people!
move
in silence
deeper than a dream.

Original page 18

THOMAS H. CARTER

THE ACCIDENT

Attention compelled by the clamorous noise
is held
by the stillness--

When the moment is transfixed
for a forever beyond any now.

A terrific pole
(established for communication solely)
has neatly split the car,
whose antique shattered hull
quaintly quivers in
the hush. It alone
does offer motion.

Behind the webbed glass
a face white with life
would look--
except that he might see
why the others do not speak.

He cannot comprehend
his doom by speed impelled--
or why he does not die.

Not for him
will the moment pass.

I know this scene
of life clot into ruin;
and horror unify
(his blood must burn
his flesh cry out)
the hollow crowd which waits--

Original page 19

THOMAS H. CARTER

as even time awaits
its dreaded signal to resume. . .

THE PIONEERS FOR RAY BRADBURY

The earthmen have come on careless feet,
frantic for the stars. This world was old
a thousand years, but now is lost

to time. The agile clumsy hands

of earth will carve the living soil

to shape some passing hope. The men
of earth have clean cold eyes; they search
for a truth they never knew, a song
unheard, or dream they almost had...

The men of earth have clear fine eyes--
and behind them loneliness lies like a stone
to chill the tensely beating heart.

POEM

Green night has misinformed

this cat who thinks himself

such a savage sabre-tooth.

Silently he goes--

a shadow deeper than simpering trees.

Reflections of the stars

pass a white word to

the shallow waiting pond.

Here things live.

Disdaining the clutch

of weeds, the cat leans

far over to consider

the imaged sky implanted

beneath the grave water.

Original page 20

THOMAS H. CARTER

One deadly paw jabs
at a shining slim fish,
which slides away. No matter.
The predator has wiser plans.

Craftily he waits,
as fireflies ponder on his scheme--
for this mad cat
would siphon up the moon.

SOME WORDS FOR JANE

Gardenias in a white bowl in clear water--
floating!

Not caring their corrupt beauty
embraces the air with essence so purple
it might well be inevitable sin.

In the room delight lies thick, for
there is something perfect, something
real!

And perfection makes its plain appeal
requiring the perfected response of eyes,
mind, hands, and all.

No blindness anywhere!

And so, my dear, could you call forth
(that by demanding, not asking, but being)
my rusty equipment of appreciation.

Each day things must be done
and the patterns (if one likes them) are the same:
morning with coffee (no time for the birds),
work, going & coming, people to be seen
or not seen; strings to be pulled
or let alone; food to eat and letters to write--
yes, a dozen men but never one:

Original page 21

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

Of the thousand faces, several to each friend
 I sense a lack of focus.
 But you, entering the room, make
 ungessed demands on that I have hidden away :
 perceiving you perfectly, as a flower
 should be known, requires totality,
 that nothing my heart!
 I put away my false faces and am what I am,
 nothing more!
 Gardenias are cyclic, their purple circle done,
 and you are gone; but you gave me this;
 And it is enough,

POEM ABOUT MYSELF

Usury drove my parents from the house
 Where I was born
 (Abandoned, it grew rotten, windows broke,
 Finally, on a calm day, it collapsed
 From its usurious load);
 So they removed me to a useless desert
 Where plants were homilies on being poor,
 And beasts on being low.
 This happened three changed lives ago, when I
 Thought childhood best ignored.
 Engineers came and drove us from our desert,
 Expensive, haughty men;
 They tore up trees, dug valleys, moved a hill
 With their new truck- and tripod-faith, and built
 Dams in the arid land.
 Two hundred miles and through a very mountain
 They brought a river, and poured a lake upon
 Our moral, desert home.
 Under the engineers' lake the countryside
 Of all my youth has gone.

Original page 22

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

PASTURE WITH A BARN AND TREES SEEN FROM A SHIPYARD

Mud-flats, the homeward rhythms of a buoy,
girls turning cartwheels on the hills, remind me
that now my oldest friends make me uneasy;
and seven horses which I couldn't harness,
what what I do is turned to deathly uses.

If I could modulate this steady beauty
to my inconstant purpose, it would make
geometry of tilting, hostile orbits,
prophesy comets, find the polar stars--
if not improve, legitimate my cosmos.

My seeming, my cover for the hard to touch--
freedom to love, the way I judge, hopes, passions--
betrays without spies the agonies that rule
a planet: exile, war, imprisonment,
certainty of nothing but long, forced migrations.

The things I make are done of iron, will rust,
be out of date or sink in fifty years.
The things I write are scarcely read, green pauses,
are by-way like those pastures, not to be found
in blueprints for what men schedule to survive.

Still, like the aimless movers in this scene,
I will be sorry to have ceased to live,
for maybe some who turn from iron noise
will find my verse a welcome bell. My hopes
must be deciduous like that apple tree.

Original page 23

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

THE BORDERLAND

Between our country and the utter ice
dark forests lie where no one wants to go;
at crossroads there, both signs say This Way Out,
and every lonely hurrier suspects
that trees are giants hung about with whips.

A friend of mine was there, there a long while
learning the roads, and learning what is there
to populate the night, and learning what
no one should learn, how cold a man can live.

Walking along the sunny road, I saw him,
a stranger stepping with unlikely hurry,
but when I knew him, cried out "Welcome home,
dear wanderer, welcome home!" He looked at me
doubting, but said the old remembered words:
"I'm glad to see you. How is everyone?"

I hugged him; he was weak and thin. He smiled.
Then I saw, frozen tiny in his eyes,
images from another countryside.

TO A BIRD OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

Little bird, I do not know
what you are called or why you sing;
I do not know, when winter comes,
what you will fear or where you'll go.

I rarely see the world you're in
and ill at ease I see you now;
for you like money call to mind
a world where I have never been.

Original page 24

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

OLD WOMEN SHELLING PEAS

Disposed to the bare sun's delight
for an hour in front of the staring wall
four chattering women work, and spread
their limbs forgetful of cold age;
they bask their health in the brown light.

Their voices twitter among the branches
of the flowering quince, making not words
but brown forgotten songs, and shake
on the old women spread on benches
scattering petals of white light.

QUATRAIN

What Michelangelo will find
that David in this block stands locked?
What feeling steel, what thrust of mind,
will dare assume this stone's great trust?

CREDO IN SQRT(-1)

They say that I'll see the back of my head
in the light of infinity's four-way bend
if I'll wait long enough but I shall not wait.
Eternity, though is the same old thing.
And whether this matters
and why it is so
are some of the questions
I'm told not to ask.

Original page 25

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

And if I'll believe in my reason and senses
and the might of a number that doesn't exist
(O imaginary root of the actual, hail!),
they say I shall hear the music of spheres.
Finally they know,
or so I am told,
they never will know
what finally occurs.

So they make Probability heart of that rose,
multifoliate atom, and crown him king
from whom the statistics flow like laws,
and round him geometries quiring wheel.
And whether it's good
whatever we know
is one of those questions
that finally occur.

When God was in heaven he knew what's what--
I was told not to ask, but I would not wait.
Imaginary roots are the same old thing;
in their power (or so I am told) is our peace.
And why what is so
is the four-way king
but all I can see
is the back of my head.

MATH PROBLEM

All the things that have already happened--
things you can't recall, you wouldn't recognize--
are stationed somewhere in the castle.

You can't remember where you entered here,
smiling guards with pikes stand at the exits,
false paths waylay you over and over, like girls.

Original page 26

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

The pikes restrict you to these ancient halls;
to the modern corridors that reach beyond
there are mortared gates, or revolving doors that trick you.

The problem grows; x has become x one,
x two, x ten; sober unknowns appear
and crowd around like cousins in a dream.

In the highest tower zero lives, and sucks;
whom she can get is lost. All paths slope down,
and at the bottom the black unmirroring well
Infinity insatiably waits.
And that is all: accusing, legal unknowns;
three numbers--eight on its side, and sucking zero,
thirdly, impotent, unmalleable one.
And all the time you may have turned wrong once.
Or maybe the answer is imaginary.

THE DIVER

Where to go, no-why, not down, not there:
this we have guessed; but all you send us are
the facts you love. Black, black, the lack, the cold:
of course; nor did the slow strong Things surprise us.
Indeed, all you observe and will observe
alarms us less than we alarm ourselves.

How well I can recall the time you left,
after the months of hint and work and fevers,
checked all your gadgets, shook our hands; then down:
half a mile under in a thick glass ball,
nowhere to go, in something like a sea....
How could we dare assist you to return?

Original page 27

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

AT MIDNIGHT

My hemisphere puts on
The pointed hat again.
And what was it to me
What the world wore
So long as I had a girl
With a bed to her naked back?
So long: not long enough.
For suddenly myself
Have put on duncely dark,
Such doubt of the monstrous works
Which twirl towards day, that I,
Who fell last mortal night
Ignorantly into sleep,
This mortal night cannot.

THE WALL

The lust between us, madam, rises like a wall
Between two neighbors that were lately friends--
Taller than we
And made of stone.
It proves so gatelessly that each is not the other,
So makes polite and secret neighbors of us,
Defines so well
Just where we are
That we must vow, like lovers but like lawyers too,
Never to know, or--knowing if we must--
Never to say,
What the wall hides.

Original page 28

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

THE GIFT

I dreamed I held you in my arms
showered in greenest secrecy.
Wisdom fell off like clothes among the hours,
and owl sang love all night
in his mildest key.

My arms know who it was they held
but not whose wild and special stir.
How could they know, for all the lapping light,
you were not only who
you seemed to be?

Naked in the green night I lay
and owl sang from his highest bough.
Some goddess in your flesh gave gift of power,
who, I shall never know,
nor who you are.

THE CYCLONE

Day after day after work
like putting children to bed
the barren clerk and his wife
read in the paper what
the meters of climate were thought
to mean by their sinister change;
for miles about, as far
as their highest fear could see,
the strange air hung in clots:
their safety merged like a cloud
with a blue anxiety.

The cyclone came by night
like love, expected, but strange,
and all they could do was watch
while their whole house fell in.

Original page 29

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

AS I WAS COMING HOME

As I was coming home from work
I heard a man with seven choices:
"Open the door and let me out."

I knocked; the house was old; I called.
Within I opened seven doors
and seven doors unlocked upon
silence until I leaving heard:
"I speak or not, move or not,
relish or not the zoo I keep,
or die. There, evening is green, and there
the girls are spread: here, unclutched,
my perishable length of flesh."

Why does he call from that tumult of doors--
so sevenly safe, after I leave?
Why does he plague my homewardness?

RECITATIVE: THE MOUNTAIN SUMMER

Velvet cloud shadow moves across the meadow reaches,
horns of the hills are scarred against the sky,
cloudbursting canyons are whispering with rattlers,
down the narrow valley the arrowy river flies.

Somnolent midday: the clover swarms with lives,
among deep greenery mosquitoes drip and hive,
devouring their days within the open wound of summer;
turgid slough waters climb the green veins into light.

Original page 30

SCOTT GREER

Wading in midday, roan cattle tread the mire
their glistening red brows set with black suns in the noon,
great orbs aflame with moisture: the river world seeps upwards
waving in the grass blades, grazing on the bloom
soon will be gone. Hoar fills the scars of mountains.
The long ochre freight trains are trimmed in glittering snow;
the blooming buzzing cancer burns itself out in the meadows.
Dark hardens the earth crust; the river creaks with cold.

THE DESERTED GARDEN

Harsh hedges of sage among the stone
claw out at the dead air of noon
but sapphire the waters of sky flow on
and under them, honey, the meadows.

Dark rimrock, pale with the flame
heaping upward towards the hard sun, the pure noon
curves gently where sun bleached meadows roll
from a beach of stone,
roll quiet as snow to the wheeling eyes
of the heavy redbill and his hunger.

And he knows them dimly, the lost worlds
wheeling through storm banks of winter, reeling
dizzily into the blast of July;
already long withered he sees them
long without water
burned bare of all hunting.

But windspun the gold arabesque, and I
hunting the springs that are not yet dry
stand crazed before white waves of sequins lapping
the velvet shade of the scabrock.

Original page 31

SCOTT GREER

Then within the sun's blind embossure of stone
I hear a sear garden
Somnolent, glittering
Dry as the unknown abandoned sagas
Of starved gods and their desert lost peoples.
 Grinding in sand the soft senses, dissolving
 The heart in hurled hail of the heat--
Is this your dream
 Through murmuring fugues of the water--Where even
Is shadow, one handful of shadow?
Hard the hawk, hover ended, wheels over the timbre grey
Rim, far away from this searing white snow;
The stones have no sound. There is silence.
But around me the charred rock glows autumnal gold,
With all the rich noise that our eyes have told
One tapestry stiff with the flowers of light--
Is death's stone sky, and the garden is blindness.

THE ASPENS IN HIDDEN VALLEY

Softly the shedding winds
Polish the stones of this hidden valley
Their white scales ripple the sinking fire of Autumn noon,
And I out of houses, a forest
Of houses concealing cold darkness
Come here with the last clear sun hours veining
The whispering arches and falling walls of the sun's great room.

Original page 32

SCOTT GREER

Around me I hear but the quiet sound
of shedding, as slightly in undulant archings
they harvest the heat-heavy aspens, tearing their summer down
in darkening drifting galaxies
crushed under the late sun of Autumn
to soft wine-yellow drifts on the snow scarred ground.

Around me the seasons at shifting,
tiny veins snapping, the yellow sky rhythmmed
with showers of pale bright meteors, minutely and gently falling;
even as I watch, the thin limbs drift
darkening skeins through the shadow of winter
knowing already the slowing air and the rhythms of frost.

And I turn, as I leave the bare valley
(it was yesterday, but the aspens are gone;
yes, it was long ago...)
I turn back as I reach the black granite
to look down the darkening canyon
seeking a place in a fallen Autumn, a yellow fountain of flame
through the blinding forest of rain and the ranges of snow.

And far, the dark hands of the distance yet hold, and yet gently unfold
in a last dim light, then as now, as forever--
a golden flush between baring limbs and the drift of the aspen glow;
great light sweeps up from the frozen ground
with the heart of their flame on this planet,
and their delicate shapes flake the wintering mind
like yellow stars come, through the cold.

Original page 33

SCOTT GREER

TWO POEMS ON AN INDIAN BALLET

I. SHANKAR

Liquid the spatter of the golden drums
And wave on wave of sinuous hands
Intertwined with bells in the orchid flare--
Delicate and dapper the copper gong
Sighs and sleeps with a hand on its mouth
But wrenched by the bird hands gaped askew
 Soughs, and weeps, in the scarlet air.
The birds sink back into serpentine coils
 Rolling from onyx arboreal waters
 Whereon his face like a lotus in a wave
 Smiles blind ecstasy, mask without voice,
There are no voices. The drums sweep on
Over Khyber landscapes of the rolling night
And the leonine thighs are bows of the force
That Krishna drove like an arrow in flight.
Now etched in the carmine lines of the wound
The ancient delicate Word expires
In a rush of blood from the animal heart;
Deep in the convolutions of sound
His limbs embrace the body of the world
And her dark vagina knows his art
But classical purity of thin bells sounds--
And O his feet were heavy on the soil
Of the barren stage -- _ and golden in the dark.

Original page 34

SCOTT GREER

2. HARVEST DANCE

Two and two the couples stamp
holding hands they wheel like teams
under the Autumn of an ancient foliage
stallion and mare, satyr and nymph
man and woman
golden the means
and golden the rush and sway of the seed
golden the pendulous hills and the furrows
gaping to stamping feet;
golden the buttocks curve and the thighs
flung and returned to the furious dust
sweep at a gallop through the gates of the mind
like the golden herds the horses of lust.

JULY FOURTH

After the picnic
I stood by the brook and in its dwindling waters
I heard the dry cough, the summer sound
as down through the brown air the dead leaves tumbled
and murderous harvest covered the ground;
summer, summer, the short spring over
hills show their gleaming teeth;
obsidian helmets cap the white shoulders
of dead meadows rattling with seed
and across the hill face
through greyest evening
the tired sheep follow
their blind blank grieving
"The lambs are dead O
the new lambs are eaten.

Original page 35

SCOTT GREER

Asking no question believing no answer
 But crying and crying across all the greying
 Stone and cold of the steep hill evening
 Patiently following grief.

The lambs are dead O
 Hung high and eaten--
 (Their old woman's faces
 Blank as their grieving
 Blank as the hill face
 Blank as the evening)

Why are the lambs dead
 What have you eaten?

Summer, summer, the short spring over
 The new skulls show their gleaming teeth
 And in dusty meadows, among the hot boulders
 The killers are washing the blood from their fleece.

THE OZARK ELEGY

for John Gould Fletcher

i.

Caught in the glare of consciousness
 Tree and hill and descending sky
 Uprushing clouds and racing winds
 Scatter the seed through the spectrum shower
 Of rainbow, over the woods towards night.
 Light over woods and the sharp sweet curve
 Of the roan soil's seeded and scent-heavy slopes
 Loping on to the quiet golden plateau
 Along the horizon, where time is not,
 Where light like a rain falls, fine and slow.

Original page 36

SCOTT GREER

Out of the dark of the South
 out of the lynx mottled woods and the dark
 out of the scraping strings and the chorus
 what strange voice speaks quietly forth:

"I stand on this present
 among the past, and loss within loss
 I hear the years go down;
 overriding, the ancient Future
 bearing its prey to the ancient ground,
 and who shall hear the cry of the heart from
 these trembling shadows?"

ii.

Pawpaws ripen in the dense wet thickets,
 sweet pods burst, and the bee heavy air
 hurries the honey of immaculate fruition,
 decay and death, the musky perspiration
 of the smoke filled Autumn, the animal Autumn.

And the voice in the blood murmurs "This will remain"
 while the armies drive to the flotsam coast,
 while the mother continent, brilliant with flame,
 tells of death and the harvested past:
 the voice in the blood sinks low,
 dark figures move through Autumnal smoke
 over the swamps of the South;
 the rains sweep through the gaping door
 severing plank from swollen plank
 as the cotton rows sink into frothing torrents.

Against the changing unchanging sky
 I stand on this present,
 among the forms and colors of a time now fading
 as the long night takes my people.

Original page 37

SCOTT GREER

I had prepared for the trouble and the pain,
I had prepared for honourable battle;
I had forgotten the treachery of the brain,
I had forgotten the immensity of night."

iii.

Across the leagues of ocean drive the unseen keels,
dead weight, holding the living on their course;
across the desolation and the living eternal
this structure of thought, this animal force.

Across the darkness surrounding heaven,
the long dark that knows no shore,
the man drives through the eternal present
carrying his death like a ritual sword.

Across the agony of all our dyings
cold and severe the form of it grows,
but where that edge enters into our combat
the Word takes fire and we recognize the soul.

Who lives his deaths in purity,
forging his blade for the immaculate foe,
knows that blade will last long enough
if it last till the animal goes,
when out of the dying of the ten thousand deaths
the body washed clean and cold
breaks into light, and the wide spectrum takes
that which was single and lost and whole.

Original page 38

WILLIAM PILLIN

FROM A WINTER SHEAF

I.

A cold bubble
pavilions the world. We pick
slim geometries of winter flora.

Lovelier are fields
of burning blossoms, trees heavy
with fruit, the loam hairy.

But the season is wrong. Stars
hinting in luminous curve
pale and grow dim. There are cycles;
the high leap
and slow fall to oblivion.

Stars will swing and return.
The grin on the skull will melt
as I swing toward light
and life will ripen again
in ravines, in rivers.

Meanwhile we have work
pushing aside frost crystals
for ice-fine
ideal of the winter flora.

Over the ravaged towns
and raven covered fields
came the frost.
At the dying sun
huge birds scattered
each to a tree or a hollow

Original page 39

WILLIAM PILLIN

and sat with folded wings
inert and staring.
There was a soft snowfall,
the flakes no longer gleaming
but huge and cold in the gloom
and on the windswept field
the statues of grieving lovers
hand in hand, strictly frozen.

2.

The blue and silken harvest
is gathered.
Now what will winter bring?
Eyes, upward turned
for a blessing like a white bird
what will the snows bring?

Daily
this riddle flowers into knives.
Stormy whisper of nations across frontiers
is our nervous lullaby.
People, O people,
what will winter bring?

Frost flowers of hunger and fear.
Roused by skillful tirades
the people rear their altar--
the barricade.
Over the frozen spaces misfortune settles
like a heavy silence.

3.

May smoke rise from every chimney
in the early frost of dawn
and no man stray far without brandy

Original page 40

WILLIAM PILLIN

and all infants be cradled
 and all furred and winged beings
 be caved and nested;
 for winter is love's season.

I know kinship with the horse
 whose nostrils steam
 in frozen ground
 and our common front
 against the constellation of white Ox,
 the birdless silence,
 the infinite Zero.

4.

The shrieking pavements close
 a chaste extent of plain.
 Slowly the edging blight
 erases velvet moss.
 The hills no longer
 flex their stone muscles
 into the same shape.
 The moon, one snow and silver,
 is a radar weapon.
 By black encroaching walls
 the terror is unchained.
 From bright hysteric lights
 the soul cries out in vain.
 Montana and Wyoming
 are still the golden lands
 of vast blue silences
 but when the night descends
 the far horizons bring
 the bright hysteric lights.

Original page 41

WILLIAM PILLIN

FOUR LANDSCAPES

I.

If I could fathom the meaning
of a single word; an impact
of gentle hurricane
on mind and heart,
I would hear

He angelic tremolos of improbable flutes
and see flocks of shining swallows
at rest on blue eyelids of dawn,
or ravaged by a dream of moonlight
toss in my sleep
as deep in my heart
it reverberates,
depth upon depth
to the limits of pure piano.

The swan, real as breath, rises
over pavilions of poplars.
This ghostly bird is perceived
by the magical part of the eye;
like structure of a sonata
is an actual existent
in related dimension,
subject to logical diagram
of a whispered poem,
evasive as the Hidden One;
is beyond, behind and within
white clouds and autumn winds.

3.

If I could hide on a plain
like a wolf tormented by violins;
nee

Original page 42

WILLIAM PILLIN

but white and naked they move,
 their mouths tense as a wound,
 each bearing a rose that flames.

And my eyes emit lamplight.
 I touch hot roses
 and each time die
 among petals that stiffen in moonlight.
 O, beautiful they move
 in the cold lunar night;
 and I am a wild bird on a cliff.
 I clack, clack
 into the veins of all creation.

4.

That which is sea in me is continuous
 with swell upon swell of calm power.
 That which is waves in me knows itself
 in soft womb of creation
 whose gleaming slime took wing
 in tenuous nerve and salty plasm.
 That which is sea in me rolls
 from the green and infinite direction.

. . .

That which is sea in me
 is pastoral now
 with a dip of white wings
 and silver gambol
 of leaping dolphins.
 The white arm of the beach
 throws fistfulls of gulls
 into the air. Sunlight
 lays a shivering highway
 over the waters. Shells intone
 wild air of Aeolus.

Original page 43

WILLIAM PILLIN

DOMESTIC CYCLE

1.

Piano of memory,
delicate coffin of lost melodies;
all the faces and smiles and words
remotely apprehended.
In faded chronicles some jottings;
contraband of love and laughter
and two dark eyes shining
clear and sad. A scanty coin
for all the scampering years.

2.

With short gasps of thunder
the rain ensemble beats
an indolent tempo.
Softly it opens
a book of soul's melancholy.
Some paling dawn it will spell
a hushed finale, with thunder
breaking the last minor chords
of our lives. A prisoner
of tearful windows,
I open the mind's book, knowing
that published on soul's pages
is a long lament
for love or for God
and neither is proper
at this time of morning
with the child waking
and coffee pot steaming.

I look at aerial rivulets;
a flicker of lightning
snaps my solitude.

Original page 44

WILLIAM PILLIN

3.

Slowly I drink the wine
like smoke with a snow foam.
In shining mist
my infant smiles, my wife
by lamplight moves her hands,
gentle as a flock of nocturnes.
A nightingale flutters on each eyebrow.
Butterflies weep in our skulls, moss
crawls into our sunfilled mouths.

4.

The frantic human dance
never ceases. Even after midnight
there prowls on the street
a strange dancing beast
but in this house, thank God,
not even an echo.
The kettle bubbles and steams.
The child smiles in his sleep.
I look out the window;
moonlight is white on bare twigs.
The irrational dog in my flesh
wags a tail, jumps to be petted
for no reason or mad reason.
Ill, in debt, writing autumn poems;
I have a right to growl in the gutter
but in the interval of evening
just before uprising of lights,
my mind is a gleaming street
busy with people and traffic.
A continual astonishment
in my little blue corner of life!

Original page 45

JAMES SCHEVILL

THE NIGHT SENSES OF AMERICA

Evening the time of unreason
The city tied with smoking packages
A ram of sunset battering
The rainy pods of rainbow oil on streets
A red real estate office crowing with coxcomb roof
Over roads with cars stuck together like raisins
The home of an old lady burning candles against modernism
A blazing dump heap red as raw steak
The glare of stores armored in awnings like horned toad
Many walking couples tuned and untuned--
leopards or doves for the legislators
Old windows faded brown like cracked snail shells
Grass jags, whistles yowl, and the sky splits with
Colors that make the beasts shrink home to earth
The humming bird's breast clicks vermilion--orange
Vermilion--orange like a neon sign
Then dark sinks into the staggering light
Darkness the accordion of sounds
Folds slowly on the white flowers the
Roses and pinks pale in their night clothes'
beneath the stars the splintered beard of sky
Pricking lamps flash through the city like a
Pincushion's points the trains flow to the
Diesel's dandy fever and squeal high the
Dead reckoning of departure
Loud bells bang like the eyes of Oedipus
The poet follows into the blind sky of night

Original page 46

JAMES SCHEVILL

THE CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHER AT THE ZOO SEES THE MIND IN A
CAGE

The way smoke humps through the rain
the mind betrays its curving course.
Rising in devil's points and stiff with ice
it yet conceals the affirming word,
the spastic syllables of reason
stunned within their skeptic season.

Mind, I look at you as into a cage.
Reason paces at the bars of many languages,
bachelor and monk in the dead wind
who like a Dalai Lama in Tibet
occasionally sweeps an eye of divorce
to study the running vanity of force.

Mind, it is not enough to be gentle green
and plead for seasonal mercies.
The viperish queens of vision wait
beyond the cage for a lustful marriage
and still you contract into small charm
of intellect instead of pure alarm.

When will it come, the marriage of reason
to the violence of imagination?
When the hills bake brown as bread
and the high flown houses are hijacked down
and the wish to live and the need to die
are two angles of the Argus eye.

Original page 47

JAMES SCHEVILL

HERMANSKI, THE HOBO, AND THE HOTEL OF DEATH

By the sea's eye stands the hotel of death
Where lamps glow like bandaged heads
The pointing piers are bones in fog
ii

In the morning's scattered hours,
And the soul pokes like a dirty spoon
Among the litters of sick liberty,
I stare where two towers prick
Against a husk of drifting moon.
I watch the curses of the lonely hours coil
In rooms of virgins with their ice-pick nerves
Where square signs speak "' Do Not Disturb,"
Chipped basins wash the unknown hands
And sagging beds slump from figures
Hunting sleep on conscience nails;
Rooms stained with loveless copulations
Where defeated eyes are sunken
Jackknives in a desert of the mind;
The lost cell where a teacher's suicide
Feels the snail of silence through his brain.
I am become the'dry hotel of death
And days of fire are blindfold goals,
I rise in tightened skin above my skeleton
And hire this room where mirror is a lighthouse
The glass can grow my face as wild as weeds
And I become the salesman who travels, the teacher
Who kills himself, the tideless whore,
The virgin cast beyond the hope of sex,
All those who bleed their time like ticks.

Original page 48

JAMES SCHEVILL

CONFIDENTIAL DATA ON THE LOYALTY INVESTIGATION OF HERBERT
ASHENFOOT

Until the birth of my thirtieth birthday
I walked in the wide harbor of illusion,
wind and war of parents over my silent head
while the curse of identity tinkled
at my window like the Good Humor salesman.
Around me the black armies like bats
lay darkly in their caves of caution
and for security I joined the Civil Service.
Rating P-3, almost a pristine pursuit plane,
I roared from basket in to basket out
amid all my days were clocked and carefree.
At the dawn of thirty my reform began.
My loyalty was cleaned and prodded
and my dreams divorced from all emergencies.
Propped at a desk of quinine I typed
in the tears of my time like the frozen sea.

THE CLOWNS ARE DANCING IN THE DRUG STORES

Their first appearance sticks like paste,
so formal are the steps with ritual.
They dance in patterns coiled with color,
these clowns anonymous as little towns.
They glide and jump and disappear,
a charming drug-store dance.
At first the ceremonial steps,
the patent stains, the oily-sweet shampoo,
and then the grinning nature of the rite.

Original page 49

JAMES SCHEVILL

They reappear with costumes bright as beer
They drop the nickel-poor cigars and
Grab Havanas rich with hissing smoke.
The dance revives with gummed Vitalis glow
And energetic stance of vitamins.
The clowns cry out and shout their martyr tunes
In burning gas and shrieks of broken glass.
The boxes marked with skull and bones awake
And chant the fervent measure of their cures.
In ecstasy the clowns drink down
The medicines and eat the candy bars.
Beneath the costume dyes their real eyes
Shine crude with greed like warts upon
A child's hand. Against the wall they rest,
The store reveals the menace of an empty cage.
And then they disappear in naked agony,
The store becomes what once it was
Drugs for the tricks and queers of fate,
Drugs for the bores of fancy and the sores
Of mind, drugs for demonic doubts and
Drugs for severed aims and appetites.

**RALPH WALDO EMERSON RECEIVES A VISIT FROM THE SANE MAN AND
REJECTS HIM**

By way of authority he knocks
On my door as if there were no locks.
Perhaps he is a joker of my brain
This sane man unwet in the rain.
Anonymous as an apple and decreed
To conformity in word and deed,
His mind is straight and never Jeanning

Original page 50

JAMES SCHEVILL

Measured only in the single meaning.
He knocks at me as the punctual image
who drives the Industrial Age.
How shallow is our doctrine of beauty!
We have fled the perceptive eye and
trained the dependence of form on soul.
The sane man has become our goal.
It is hard to reject him. He comes
of clothes and language of common homes
but I do reject him. I cast
him to the gaffing privateer that is the past,
for I believe in one soul related to the world.
We see this world piece by piece, not hurled
from cautious suns to shine in goods
which cage our spirit's claws with hawking hoods.
Only the fixing of the pieces together
shall discover the white-bait weather.
As sea and earth are one with sky
so mind and heart must unite in the eye
and the lost voice be freed from the terror
of isolation and the sane man's error,
soar into the jagged soul under
the nailed cross and sing in wonder.

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM OF EDWARD HICKS

When the heart was a world of wonder
through which lion and deer wandered together,
the legend of hope was a star of clarity and
simple peace sang from the wizardly weather.

No time could be killed or wasted for
hands of love held the minutes and days;
the lost animals roved home to find an
election of richness housed the strays.

Original page 51

JAMES SCHEVILL

Laughter from the eternal world
Grew in the pleasant eye
And the ascending act of kindness
Dazzled the descending lie.
Such kingdoms do exist in clear reality.
They rise in the mind stunned by desire
And drive towards the sun the ideas of light
Where meet the atoms and the words of fire.

PLEA FOR A RAIN OF SILVERSIDES BY THE GOSPEL FOR SUNDAY WIVES

A rain of silversides would not be shapeless,
The graceful lines that grease the greying air
Slip down to gentleness and the green-lighted bay;
But no, the sizzling trolleys raged for sparks
And the sharpset roads slopped in muddy mash.
A building withdrew from its wild windows and
Introverted steadfast in dark dumbwaiters,
Trees slashed in their age were slapped with
Cemented guts for their careless, sultry songs,
The hyena newsboy cried to the hulking truck
And was rewarded with wet-ditched papers.
Transparent raincoats simmered in a World of Rabelais--
No! cried the Gospel for Sunday Wives
If this is an improper, black-quilted storm
We will not offer our bodies to the Alice mirror
Where Fancy ramps in its sensuous beds and the
Sea-gull hunched on the hamburger stand
Floats in his soggy grey like a devil's sponge.
We will wait for the rain of silversides when
Good Will climbs from the blackberry patch
And Hope is proper in the white wedding eye.

Original page 52

JAMES SCHEVILL

RIMBAUD RAPED BY SOLDIERS

Rimbaud raped by soldiers
at the age of sixteen,
poetry is only a place
the Gods have seen.

Jupiter a memorable fat man
laughing by a tranquil lake,
his Gods in coffins
gaudy as a wedding cake.

Buddha and Christ gone too,
liquid in the old books,
page by yellow page a
subdued shining in quaint nooks.

Poetry dissolves in the final room
where only the armies enter
under the blood-licking sun.
The door shuts quietly like fur.

Rimbaud raped by soldiers
at the age of sixteen,
poetry is only a place
the Gods have seen.

VILLAGE ON MY BACK

Beneath the curve of hurried suns
in their hot rain's track,
I settled with my pain at once
like a village on my back.

Original page 53

FELIX N. STEFANILE

My words, I strung them out like tents
with banners full of my news,
and my skin went around me like a fence,
and I walked with a squeak in my shoes.

Now as I grew the land I saw
I named my charming south.

My breath came merry and full of oh!

but the winter pressed on my mouth :

and like a fish I dove from sight
beneath the eyes' lakes. Cleft

I was, by a bump in the night.
Ah the blood's a river full of craft.

AS I WENT OUT ONE MORNING

As I went out one morning
to take the pleasant air,
lolly too dum too dum lolly too dum day,
alephs and beths and
ghimels of lamentation
showered from the trees
and chirped on the iron fences,
and the Philip of me went strolling by
in search of his own lameness.

Up the avenue

and down the town, pink children
played at baseball and jacks and murder.

I laughed at an ugly woman:

from the rhetoric of her scorn

I limped to my repentance.

And as I went out one morning
to take the pleasant air,

Original page 54

FELIX N. STEFANILE

just as I was strolling by
the shopwindows displayed John's head,
lolly too dum day,
and a boy with the lungs of conscience
offered me false headlines
screaming Armistice toward Love,
and then, in the pleasant air,
all the mailmen hurried from me,
shielding their bags that never hold
news of emerald raffles in heaven:
only the same old bony town,
Christ on His twigs, the devil
to his Marguerite, and lolly
too.

THE ZODIAC MAN

Who walks with twelve wounds
in his vertical season,
in the stars' winds
will find his jury.
Those peers, like prisms
of all his humours,
have charted his body
and the hair's map,
vanquishing
his dozen red counties,
to divvy like hydra
the blood's monies.

Original page 55

FELIX N. STEFANILE

Who walks in garlic
a six-foot month,
in all his steppes
will sow the vain valley :
mechanic calendars
posting his wine,
but the sun like a wain
will tumble him--
goaty uncles
drink him down,
maybe a scorpion
kiss his ankle.
With ten trick fingers
he spells his loaves,
but the new moon always
counts to twelve.
Whose sleep is broken
oh on crutches of morning
goes loving his living,
and the honey cripple
who like himself
is propped with signs :
her forehead fat
with the flesh of time,
till they lie together,
and hear, like birds,
Ptolemy's
horizontal words.

Original page 56

FELIX N. STEFANILE

THE MARIONETTES

See how they dream their wooden dreams:
black legends are in their painted eyes.
Their ardor is of crepe and chalk.
The fire is their only surprise.

Watch how they mouth their gargoyle talk;
they even love with a scratching sound.
The fire is their only surprise,
Pinocchio burning himself to the ground.

Watch how they dance their clacking dance;
their kiss is like the breaking of a box.
They would sprout leaves like fingers of sense--
Master Gepetto, how they dance,
cantering past with chirping knees
through the proscenium's feast of eyes,
wanting, perhaps, not to be made of wood.
The fire is their only surprise.

Poetry of iron metaphors,
the children applaud their angular pranks
as their freak noses bump in fiction.
Do they hope that mothers will offer thanks?
See how they turn their necks of bark,
round and wired for noise and friction.
They are not muddy children lost in the dark.
The fire is their only surprise.

Friend Cricket, your ardent piccolo
weeps from the wall like a prophecy.
They are so lonely racked upon the shelves.
They can weep splinters if only they try.

Original page 57

FELIX N. STEFANILE

They're not content to be their wooden selves,
plotting a vegetable jacquerie
with their sinister sonorous Italian names
dreaming some varnished mythology.
Friend Cricket, you bug-christ on the wall,
Pinocchio, brother to the Cross,
murdered you twice, with hammer and stick.
They are all cousins to Joan's stake.
The fire is their only surprise.
They love a green and yellow courtesan
with a silver dress and amber eyes.
The moon is their favorite citizen.
And all unsteadied by their pilgrimage
to this lost season, like a sleeping town
visited by their pushcart prompt parades,
I spy a hundred wooden strangers in the lemon dawn
shouting I love you in their fey dialects,
their chatterbox tarantellas waking the glades,
Columbina, the barking of Melampo,
the toy apples of Giuseppina's breasts,
coming back from the ultimate thules of illusion,
and Pulcinello, staring with eyes of pearl,
singing I love the child with the blue hair,
I love the green and yellow girl.

IN THE HORSE LATITUDES

Beyond the weathers of damage--
that bomb the sun
to the dice-towns plummets
with its lucky danger,

Original page 58

FELIX N. STEFANILE

and in conspiracies
the frogs sing drunken in the lake,
fishes quicken
like toys,
the shining boys they leap ashore
giving a mackerel dollar,
and the girls teehee throw flowers.
This is war.

THAT UNDERGROUND SUN

That underground sun that warms my feet
shines where Jacob's Ladder slants to the sea
and the cobblestones reveal me turtles brave.
I have come to a goodly meeting
among the rosemary the phlox and the peony.

That underground sun shoots forth a river of claws
in the meadow, with a whirlpool at my ears,
but slow the wind flows, and there are no flaws
in the big blue air where I am a swimmer
peacefully floating from year to year.

But I feel the claw and crab and funny cancer
pulling with tide-pull long from Venus to Maine,
and the sun burns at my flesh with the nip of a pincer.
Retrieve me, seas, where under the ground, sun reigns
and my bones' coral morrows will glow like a stain.

That underground sun gives me the lowtide blues
of a squirrel drowned in the spring, or white in the winter.
The sharks are flopping in the chimney-flues.
And the lake upstairs floats one long cloud
serene and still like a submarine hunter.

Original page 59

FELIX N. STEFANILE

Oh Davey Jones is chirping in the arbor
and I shall have passage after his last swallows.
That underground sun is drowning in the tall waters,
and the tides are rip, and ripe the snails in the shallows,
and the King and Queen are wet, and their sons and daughters.

FALL OF ADAM

From heaven my rainy father reigned
more Gabriel than the dawn,
walking how heavy in his top-dollar town
to wear the sun like a derby.

And what first knuckles were those alps
on such a calendar:
the oceans sang with forty throats
as he whistled in his splendor.

the animals elected him
their tipsy citizen
for his slow saunter and noise of grapes,
and a honey tammany.

To relish once, oh that sudden rib's
omen singular,
he woke to all those monied hills
touching the round of her.

And from heaven my rainy father ran
with such a frightened girl,
inventing autumn as he went
than the night more Ismael.

Original page 60

HAROLD WITT

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO 'SURVIVAL UNDER ATOMIC ATTACK'

Behind his radiant counter, brief as a martyr,
Einstein goes out like a flare. Near the immediate
area nothing lives. Thieves and parsons
perish in that unnecessary glare.

After the inane explosion, when the senseless
smoke has cleared, the sick and sound survivors
can open their cans of tuna without fear:
a solace of sameness like the continued air.

Think of it as Pompeii, or compare with Troy--
whose worlds, like ours, ended in ash and fire,
for Dido deranged over an idealized boy,
piling up furniture for her own funeral pyre.

REVISION

Through the innocent account
an undercurrent runs, the lives
lascivious that seemed
harmless, the dull town's
very bricks voluptuous,
black widows spinning at every cellar window
and all the churchbells clanged by bones.

Apparent to the protuberant eye returned
are nests of scorpions under sunwarmed stones.
The cars like sleek enormous beetles glide
white-enamelled, into the allnight station--
between this and the stoplights' eternal Christmas,
anachronistic midtown like a toad or lion
the public library squats.

Original page 61

HAROLD WITT

Hills are still here; at normal noon
viewed down trolleytracks seem scenic cups
a spinster painted; blue Saddleback
(too sentimental for a serious poem)
rises riverworn.

moves,

Time ticks on these swinging wrists
freckled and haired; the animal whitecuffed and enclosed
lifts buttocks graceful as any gazelle
onto the imitation leather lunchstool (that also
sentimental, ballet of mere movement;
but exists--not only
strata of shale on sandstone, and those
cataclysmic years, but the businessman under
his ironglazed suit, whose body is vestigial).

The tableau itself--an acute roofed red courthouse,
on its highcurbed lawn, a cannon--bores me,
and the trim cerebral sycamore trees.
They are the old Vermeer-exact
paintings of ennui.

I am not concerned with photography,
but with unseen meanings, the argument
of physiology and its cyclic changes
without which no thought lives--drama
of an inner lying: the spinster
painting teacups, the matron
(whose dream was once to dance), swaying
elephantine toward home on heavy ankles.

What c

Light thickens through barred clouds
beyond the orange groves. Gravestones here
are yearly scrubbed, and one
marble unimportant angel anchored to stone
spreads wings toward the sinking sun.

Original page 62

HAROLD WITT

STILL LIFE

No star stays fixed or star
and light as I write these lines
from fork handle to fork tines
moves, marring the picture
I had meant to capture here
as if it were less Brazilian,
zigzagging brief air.

I might have softened the tumblers--
rubied the raw red glass--
glossy half-eaten apple
and gauzed the light on the glare
of the knifeblade plunged in the pear;
I might have Degased the dish.
As it is, it would only smear.

DICTAPHONES PLAYED BACH

If dictaphones played Bach
and no stirrup stirred on bone
Miss Mary Clamp might rise
revised, unbusinesslike--
see her seashell-riding
on Botticellian blue.

What clerks of winds are these
blowing back her modest hair
as reluctantly advancing
her white toe tries the shore.
What officious Flora hastes
with cloak to cover her?

Original page 63

HAROLD WITT

Over, the wafting weekend;
now quite clothed she goes
past the fat-ringed bosses
behind golfward doors that close,
past the Monday faces
in all the ennui offices.

CHRISTMAS DINNER, WITH WINE AND MOZART

There must be more than Mozartian
mellifluousness; the paper litter and shredded
ribbon ends like trivial words obscure
a deep meaning, for the overmusicked ear
cannot hear this stark simplicity
nor can the eye, engorged on gaud, observe
all in the scenic that is there--
four friends and a child at Christmas dinner,

Mary, having prosaic pains
in a stable. No one, no not prophets
knew the import of that hour; angels
wise men and star were dreamed of later;
shepherds watched
that chilly night their usual flocks
and the flowering tree they would nail him on
poked barren branches against a winter moon.

So with this scene. Unsymbolic wine
suggests a symbol the blond child implies
and mirth at slightest thought turns somber.
We seem like people in a Chekhov play,
nothing in any gesture everyday;
even that old mohair chair stamped
with dahlias and leaves looks tragic
in this light of crying candles.

Original page 64

HAROLD WITT

BIRD IN THE BUSH

Bird sang and with orange underwing
rose to rapture; I saw him rise
wet mist dewy from where he had lain
singing delirious up the blown clean skies
imbecilic song,
fountain of pure sound, wind-borne
out of grey, dank root hung ground, home
of worm and mole (blind introvert) morning's sudden sunlit herald has sprung
after the too long
night, bubbling through thrilled throat
beetle-mindless, that small cheer
thaw the cynic's thinning bones no coat
can warm, though this may briefly cure
grief, or else prolong.

BLURRING YEARS

In blurring years most clearly I remember
gay comic afternoons and tragic trees--
the one with butterflies for leaves,
the bare dendrons of December;
city squares that fading as we loved
transformed the carpet leaves and wove our lives
in bells and hounds in famous tapestries
nothing but bright burning can remove.

There may be yet in our departed garden
an amazing woman and gold threaded man
living while about them like a boredom
usual unicorns trot and scarlet wine
ever spilling cannot reach the ground--
from those trees, the stiff birds ever sound.

Original page 65

HAROLD WITT

DELAY OF GREEN

The illusory frost whitens, not old age's
white tottering by on sticks, but frost
unlike feeling, frangible; a wealth of webs
will be paupered that the autumn dew jewelled,
many remarkable colors fade like quilts.
Already half under (but not an old man dying
or some days clear as his intellect between
dark comas) the bay, vivid all November,
will succumb to grey. And it isn't, I must remember,
a death, only a delay, of green.
Quail won't stay south, but return
to timid bushes, jays come back as blue,
as electric in the leaves, and there will be
quick summer nights again, days slow as these
nights endless, though it seems winter now.

AT WINTER SOLSTICE

Southward the sun seemed polished and in place
at winter solstice when laughing ladies toyed
with codpieces in taverns on dull days.
Mary the barmaid's legs
gaudily gartered had a modern grace.
A decadence of wheel-soiled snow
led thoughtful ones to guilty alleyways
pondering "Ahah, this trash is truth,
festoons of entrails from a sailor's wound
decorate our dying era."

Original page 66

HAROLD WITT

Then the sun turned back, Elizabeth
pacing her palace like an absolute
knee deep in stone, saw perhaps,
the sky's immortal arch before she went down
humanly, like an ignorant armada.

OUT OF SEASON ELEGY

The trout flicker now the storm blew over
and the last freak flake has melted;
the unbelievable bodies are brought home,
the boy and his father who will fish no more
in those freshets, or see the trout turning,
or turn campward, who are wind now;
through a nostalgic wind, to light the gas lantern.

Their world went white, sudden as shock
and the boy must have cried, "It's snowing"
on the hoar mountainside before the blizzard
blurred and blew him out and his father
stiff in a snowdrift, knees bleeding, lay frozen.
The griever wears black in the May light,
blind to the bee's noise in the unheard bud.

ASCENT

Hills, eucalyptus-girdled, rise
in opalescent haze;
we ride up roads above
highways diminishing to web,
ascend, like a sonnet's effortless octave
toward an abstracter view--
mountains, bare as geometry,
absolutely blue.

That old
explorer of the beautiful:

Original page 67

HAROLD WITT

Balboa, snuffing the saltwind
(as Keats at the first few cadences
of Homer) heard the whole sea toll and knew
something exceptional was about to happen.

O erroneous readers of progress into
marvelous enough stone
what, but catalogues of colors can be said
of clouds, sun-edged on autumn evenings
now or then?

Below us the city

is a jeweled map of pain; a searchlight
cannot altogether, like a surgeon's knife,
cure us of the romantic, as,
wounded, we descend.

Original page 68

TEXTUAL NOTE

The local 72-page scan is the sole page-image witness used for this edition. Printed pages 8-68 contain the poetry sequence. The scan's gutter clips or distorts the opening characters of many lines on alternating pages. Three OCR passes, direct inspection of 300-dpi page images, grammar, rhyme, and parallel phrasing were used to restore those losses. The source-page labels in this edition make every intervention traceable.

Corrections include restored titles, running-header removal, rejoined words split by typographical wraps, and hundreds of damaged initial letters. Period forms such as 'gayety,' 'legendry,' 'sevenly,' 'tammanny,' 'dendrons,' and 'Degased' were retained where the page image supports them. The mathematical title 'Credo in sqrt(-1)' expresses the square-root symbol in searchable text. May's biographical paragraph on Felix N. Stefanile is the least legible passage in the scan; its damaged clauses have been transcribed conservatively.

The edition does not include the original scan. It is a newly typeset reading copy with modern navigation, editorial front matter, and a new cover.

End of the digital reading edition