



GROVER JACOBY

Collected Poems

POEMS, TRANSLATIONS, AND COMPLETE PROSE

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

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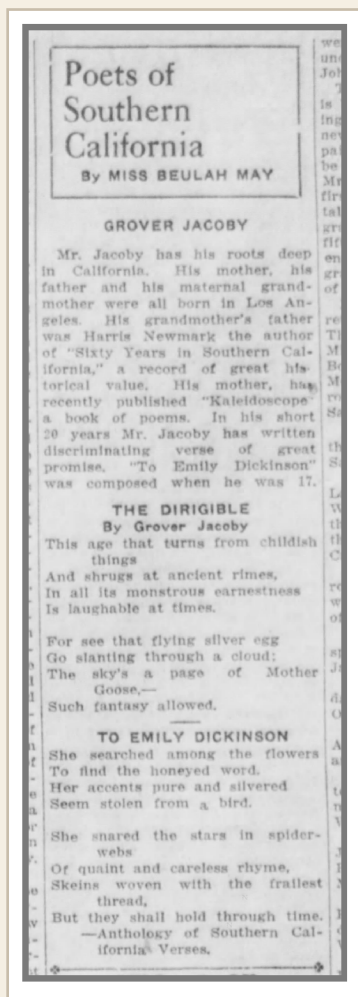
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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

Early profile, book, and magazine



"Poets of Southern California," the 1932 profile that printed "To Emily Dickinson" and "The Dirigible."

THE HUMAN PATINA
AND OTHER POEMS

by

GROVER I. JACOBY, JR.

+

THE PRESS OF
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*Title page of *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (1938).*

Leeside

BY LEE SHIPPEY

Did you ever see a yellow-spotted salamander while fishing in Angeles National Forest? If you have, but heretofore have not dared admit it for fear someone would think you had taken too much snake-bite remedy with you, you may now come out and tell all, for Prof. Robert C. Stebbins, assistant curator of the herpetological museum of vertebrate zoology at the University of California at Berkeley, says they exist there.

When he asked Ranger Lewis of the Mt. Baldy district for help in locating some, Lewis promptly replied: "I never saw one. I'm not a drinking man." But the professor showed him evidence that such creatures had been reported in the early days and said he himself had found some near old Ft. Tejon recently and thought there should be some near Crystal Lake. When convinced his private life wasn't being inquired into, Ranger Lewis sent out a lookout order. As yet no more yellow-spotted salamanders have been seen, but an equally rare spotted owl has been found.

There still are a lot of things to be discovered in the national forests of Southern California.

POSSIBLE ASSET

Extending the football season to New Year's is quite a plug for the Southern California climate, but we could do better if we wished. We have lots of perfect football weather in May.

MORE GOOD THAN BAD

Charles Carson puts in a plug for conscientious landlords. "I've been living in an inexpensive apartment since 1942," he says, "and the landlord never suggested any favors. I had my name on a list for a larger place. The landlady was offered bonuses and other bribes but her conscience was not for sale. She gave us the place as soon as it was vacated. The landlord in the place I vacated was offered a \$100 bonus by another bidder but he also gave the apartment to the applicant next in line, at the regular price. Most landlords are good citizens like the rest of us, except that they have more grief."

WHY TANTALIZE?

Another reader says on every table in a Hollywood cafe was a card asking diners not to eat more than one piece of bread or one roll to conserve food for the starving, but the waiter brought six slices of bread and four rolls for him and his wife. When the bus boy came to gather up the soiled dishes he dumped all the unused bread and rolls in with them. Maybe the bus boy couldn't read. Cafe proprietors could make sure no such waste occurred by rationing bread and rolls in the kitchen.

DARING INNOVATION

The only free verse magazine

in America is published in Los Angeles, and though it uses nothing but free verse it doesn't want any verse for free. It pays 20 cents a line for all it uses. It is Variegation, a quarterly, published at 124 W. Fourth St. Grover I. Jacoby Jr., the editor, is a great grandson of Harris Newmark, who came to Los Angeles in 1853 and whose "Sixty Years in Southern California" is a book every student of Los Angeles history has read. Grover Jacoby says the name of the magazine is intended to convey the idea that free verse is a liberalizing of poetic thoughts which might be confined by the chains of meter and rhyme. "We print nothing obscure for the sake of obscurity," he says. Most unusual!

BALM FOR GILEAN

I dig my plot when the stars are wrong.

I plant when the moon's contrary.

For I never have known a season yet

That wasn't unusual—very.

GILEAN DOUGLAS.

WRITERS' FROLIC

The California Writers Guild, which has been going 16 years with never a fight nor a scandal, today starts its annual outing at Cambria Pines with an attendance which will tax the capacity of the resort. Every spring this group goes to some beach or mountain resort for a three-day outing at which speeches and formality are barred. This year Playwright Agnes Peterson has done an exceptionally fine job of the arrangements, aided by Dorothy Banker, story writer.

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Los Angeles Times

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A THOUGHT FROM THE BIBLE

The steps of a good man are

ordered by the Lord: and he de-

lighteth in His way. Though

he fall, he shall not be utterly

cast down: for the Lord uphold-

eth him with His hand.—Psalms

xxviii, 23, 24.

The 1946 announcement of Variegation, Jacoby's first magazine.

The Lydia Rader Billings Award, given under the auspices of the Poetry Society of Southern California, was made to Grover Jacoby and Dorothy Haddox, who shared the first prize.

Undated notice of the Lydia Rader Billings Award: Grover Jacoby and Dorothy Haddox shared first prize under the auspices of the Poetry Society of Southern California.

INTRODUCTION

Poet, editor, translator, and prosodist

A Los Angeles inheritance

Grover Isador Jacoby Jr. was born in Los Angeles in 1911 into families closely tied to the city's commercial and literary life. The Jacoby Bros. department store belonged to his father's family; on his mother's side he was a great-grandson of the merchant and memoirist Harris Newmark. His mother, Rosalie Seligman Jacoby, was also a poet. Jacoby turned that inheritance into an argument with the present.

Poems and magazines

He began publishing while still young. "To Emily Dickinson" and the comic "The Dirigible" appeared when he was twenty; *The Human Patina and Other Poems* followed in 1938. Its city streets, machines, Japanese scenes, satires, and compressed landscapes bring modern pressure to inherited forms. He later made that tension editorial. *Variegation* welcomed free verse, while *Reurrence* argued for rhyme. Together they formed a lively Los Angeles forum in which established poets, unknown writers, criticism, translation, and Jacoby's own work could test competing ideas of poetic freedom.

Translation and movement

Translation became the center of Jacoby's later work. In *Comment in Motion* (1967–69), he set poems from several languages beside essays on rhythm, rhyme, and the American Alexandrine. He wanted a translation to carry movement, not merely information. That ambition joins the apparently different parts of his career: poet, editor, translator, and prosodist were all listening for how a line gathers energy and how that energy survives change. This edition brings those parts together for the first time.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Text, arrangement, and scope

The four principal sections follow the arrangement requested for this edition: poems Jacoby printed in periodicals but did not collect in his book; the original poems of *The Human Patina and Other Poems*; translations; and complete signed prose. The three translations in the 1938 book are relocated to the translation section. Every poem and translation begins on a new page. Stanza divisions, source italics, and intentional authorial indentation are retained; wraps imposed only by the original page width are not. Publication notes identify the witness after each work. The journal corpus derives from the seventy-two held issues of *Variegation*, *Recurrence*, and *Comment in Motion*. Nine known numbers of *Variegation* and the unnumbered November 23, 1966 issue of *Comment in Motion* are not present in the local archive, so completeness is claimed only for the surviving held record and the signed material otherwise located. Unsigned contributors' notes are excluded because their authorship cannot be assigned securely.

- Grover Jacoby, *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), original scan.
- The seventy-two reading editions in the BKS Extremes journal archive, transcribed from UCLA Library scans.
- "Poets of Southern California," 1932 clipping; Los Angeles County birth and death records; local biographical research files.
- Rosalie S. Jacoby, *Kaleidoscope: Poems* (Hollywood: D. G. Fischer Corporation, 1926), full-view Google Books scan.
- Jacoby and Newmark family histories, Los Angeles directories and census records, and contemporary notices of the Jacoby Bros. business.
- Undated Lydia Rader Billings Award notice, Poetry Society of Southern California; Grover Jacoby and Dorothy Haddox shared first prize.

- I. Cevallos Calderón, *The Translation of Rhythm* (1970), and contemporary notices of Jacoby's magazines and translation work.

PERIODICAL POEMS

Stage I | Poems printed outside the 1938 book, 1932–1955

The Dirigible

This age that turns from childish things
And shrugs at ancient rimes,
In all its monstrous earnestness
Is laughable at times.

For see that flying silver egg
Go slanting through a cloud:
The sky's a page of Mother Goose,—
Such fantasy allowed.

Publication. *Santa Ana Register*, August 6, 1932, p. 10.

City Seen from an Airplane

1. Amid the riot of austerities,
2. The jungle of straight lines,
3. The profuse luxuriant intersection,
4. The white smoke wells upward
5. With a faint suggestion of nuance:
6. A hint of breasts
7. And the necks of swans.

Note. Analysis of the verse trends: 1. Dissyllable line; 2. Wavering line; 3. Loosening line; 4. Trisyllable line; 5. Trisyllable line; 6. Dissyllable line; 7. Tightening line

Publication. *Variegation* (January 1946), p. 20.

The Pause

Until you speak,
What is this moment?
It is the braided glass
Within the lifetime of a wave,
Till with moving lip
You make it smash and foam.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. I, No. 3 (July 1946), p. 16.

Iwo Jima, 1945

Now, only now!
Not since Iwo emerged,
And the sea broke
Like a cracked mirror,
Split clean with a flaw of land.
Not since then!
Not even then—
Was Suribachi more than a crust,
Iwo more than a name.
Not in one century,
In none of those centuries.
Now, only now!

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. I, No. 3 (July 1946), p. 17.

Dilemma in California

You are looking
Into a confusion of seasons and cultures;
Stains of orange and yellow dryness linger
Here and there among twigs almost winter-clean;
Now the date palm's jungle-splash of frond
Utters quite a summer accent.
Then a bird's voice,
One of spring's love trinkets,
Is picked up by the ear
And tossed among the scene's eclectic pleasures.

Now you leave the natural world by car
And, after having parked,
Wander among neoclassic banks and office buildings,
Wondering whether to learn Nahuatl,
Or with these stale pilasters
Recognize the humanistic premise
Of Greek and Latin above everything,—
Or take up Japanese.
(Far from this shelf of land
The islands stare,
And behind the islands, China,
A world of worlds and ages.)

Or go on with French and German,
And sip the filtered good of Europe
In Rilke, Verlaine, and the rest,—
Or Spanish,
Since Charles the Fifth once ruled the naked
aborigines.

One foolish friend thinks it best to talk with London
By transcontinental, transatlantic telephone,—
With Mr. Eliot of the gestured cadence
To be advised of the most elegant futility.

Oh, well, forget it!
Shake off philosophies of heritage.
Snatch what you like from culture's great buffet.
Decisions are not made within the head
But through the lungs.

The air so winter-winterless,
This diamond-atmosphere
Though flawed by intromission of phenomena,
Inhale it well.
Renovate perception,
Breathe, enjoy.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. I, No. 3 (July 1946), p. 18.

To Fair Perplexity

This tree is full of contradictions,
Little attempts at wind.
Its tentative leaf
Is indecision's portrait.
Come, stand before it,
Match bewilderments.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1947), p. 18.

Lake Elsewhere

Not quite a wind,
The continuous shift of air
Athwart the lake,
Evokes
The multiple smile of water.

You too, my dear,
Pluck gaiety out of the air,
A carefree loveliness.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1947), p. 18.

To the New Telephone Building

(Chorus to be intoned by employees and stockholders)

Large block of concrete!
Sunset obstruction!
Magnificent boor!

Of telephonic communications
You are the center, huge structure,
The heart.

Go on squatting at sunset
In the midst of the various flame,
Interrupt boldly
With your rectangular mass and your bells,
Fill the air with good-bye and hello,
Crash the sacred horizon at dawn and twilight.
Deliver your impact.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1947), p. 19.

Distant Noises at Night

Vague fountain of lost precisions,
Composing and decomposing
In descents of auditory spray!

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1947), p. 19.

The Nihilist's Complaint

Attention!

All you affirmers!

Here where leaves cut the sky,
Converting the vastness to flecks,
I catch my breath.

I am suffused with delight
By the blue tatters,
The green lacerations.

There must be some need for negation.
There must be!
There must be!

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1947), p. 20.

Geometric Survival

The derangement of horizon

Preceded architecture.

Mountains engaged in it,

And storms at sea

Made loud rumpling attempts.

Now man with his granite scribble

Alters the figure of vacancy.

But somewhere reposes the lurking magnitude—

Surviving earth's convulsions,

The nervous skyline of cities.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. III, No. 2 (Spring 1948), p. 19.

The Intermittent Forests

Space enjoys
An occasional irruption of twigs,
Breaking out gleefully
In turns and twists.

It would tire of being
Only smooth
Unadulterated
Distance.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. III, No. 4 (Autumn 1948), p. 18.

The City's Vibrations

Listen to the broken air.
Let the unsteady shadow fall
On your eardrums.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. III, No. 4 (Autumn 1948), p. 18.

Salient Ephemera

The slim curve of pier projects darkly,
Intrusion of shadowy solid,
Where the sun has torn up the waters
Into mercurial scrap heaps,
Into tossing light!

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. III, No. 4 (Autumn 1948), p. 19.

The Refining Hour

(Old-fashioned Suburb)

The air now holds enough twilight
To blur the fuss on old buildings;
In lieu of architectural details—
A dim whirl of erasure.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Spring 1949), p. 19.

To a Collectivist

Trees blot out mazes of roof line,
Sharp eaves,
And obtrusive gables,
Where the green wave of leaf
Breaks over architecture;
You, too, awkward creature,
Would be lost
In some great flood,
In the human overflow.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (Autumn 1949), p. 17.

Not Yet, At Any Rate

They are not yet two-by-fours,
Nor joists,
Nor shingles.
Pouring from vital stalks
The ray of foliage,
They are the living wood.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. V, No. 2 (Spring 1950), p. 17.

The Champions of Apartheid

Letters and ciphers of blood!
They have foolishly chosen blood!
To have written in unstable water,
Indistinctly and humbly in mud,
Or with a stick in the air
Initials of wind and laughter,
But not with the red ink of blood—
Writing off claim to possession.
The ink itself is confession.

Publication. *Recurrence*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Summer 1950), p. 19.

Note. Apartheid is the Afrikaans term covering the discriminatory policy of the South African government toward its subjects of native blood.

Prelude to Divorce

Hit leaf and hit leaf:
Throughout the hedge
The light rain plucks selectively.

Drops of time
And instants of water.

But what is your voice doing here—
With its misplaced sunlight
Wandering in and out
Among the grey intervals,
My excessive darling?

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Winter 1951), p. 16.

The Great Rider

Circling leisurely
The gulls pull in the sky,
Curbing its vastness.

The steed loves the graceful restrictions,
The reins of plumed aviation
Held by Life,
The invisible Rider.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Summer 1951), p. 10.

One Aspect of Poseidon

Out of the winter dimness
And vast fume,
The waves well upwards
With reiterated obscurities
And a complete lack of precision.
To him the damp element
Is a rocking chair of the mind.
He will go on like that:
One generalization after another,
Each one more mountainous
And mobile
Than the last.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Summer 1951), p. 11.

Airplane Overhead

The air is drilled with utterance.
The iron word is said,
Shattering the core of being
To leave life dead.

A moment passes. It is gone.
Silence floods the room
With pregnant vacancy in waves,
Submerging doom.

Publication. *Recurrence*, Vol. II, No. 7 (Winter 1952), p. 6.

Gull and Planet

Summoning gravity,
This skillful wing
Contrives a nearly vertical descent,
Making of flight and fall viewed counterpoint
All intricate and instant.

Fate and will
Can interweave their strands,
And you and I
Temper our directions,
Each with the other's natural drift;
But why should the great earth
Compromise with a few feathers,
Mingle forces
With one bold crumb of life?

Publication. *Variegation* (Autumn 1952), p. 77.

The Nascent Deluge

Through the split universe
Will run the grain of water.
There will be only liquid vistas,
But now
The first moments of rain
Touch one leaf at a time
With sparse infrequent tremolo.

Often a few aimless glances
Go skipping through crowds
Before the inundation of lives.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VIII, No. 30 (Spring 1953), p. 36.

Refrigerium

The whole world eats from one dish,
The sky's dish of blue glass.
All men with light or dark skins
When their eyes are hungry
Relish scoops of white cloud.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. IX, No. 36 (Autumn 1954), unnumbered leaf.

Adventure in Fall Sunlight

Let us lose ourselves
In the processions of shadow,
Where the alley of trees
Rises into the sun—
A lace of darkness
Thrust upon the dazzle,
A tangle of mystery
Breathing at the heart of light.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. IX, No. 36 (Autumn 1954), p. 71.

Survival of the Snail

This proud ship sailing through the grass
On waves of horridness and grace
Is a grey, strange and liquid life
Emergent from a brittle case,

Pursued by poisons and man's ire,
Brutal defenders of the flower,
Or crushed by anything of weight.
Eternal still his cruising hour!

Publication. *Recurrence*, Vol. V, No. 20 (Spring 1955), p. 66.

Juxta

A well of freshness
Overflows among the skyscrapers.
The trees in billowy interruptions
Of all this precise geometry
Are carrying on—
Their verdant vague remarks
Announcing Nature's presence,
While somewhere
In a roomful of busy typewriters
She moves about—
A spring gale
Eddying amidst the scrap iron.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. X, No. 38 (Spring 1955), p. 30.

THE HUMAN PATINA AND OTHER POEMS

Stage II | The complete original-poem sequence of the 1938 book

Black Parallel

Blackbirds sweep through the air,
Flecked is its transparency—
Till that swift clarifying instant,
When flight is lost amid the furrows.

So do the flight of black-winged thoughts—
Agitate at times—
The soul's clear spaces of tranquillity.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 11.

The Humming Bird

A humming bird is balancing
Upon his rope of air,
And peering round the petals
For the opening where

His beak like some sharp needle
With one spinning dart
Can prick balloons of honey
At the flower's heart.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 12.

Triumph of the Golden Fly

The clouds were one great silver web
Threaded across the sky.
The demons of the upper air
Were trapping the golden fly.

But he trampled the watery tangles,
Splitting the frail moist thread,
And touched the earth with his feelers
Raising it from the dead.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 13.

The Target

Far under great trees,
Sunk in their shade,
Deep in their stillness
This thought will invade

Me, and hurt me, take harsh
Hold of my breath:
These trees live so long,
For their lives are like death.

All things live longer
If they stand still.
Death aims his arrows
At the bright will.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 14.

Note. Also reprinted in *Look to This Day* (Poetry Society of Southern California, 1944).

The Hopeless Quest

Poor and frail white butterfly,
O'erflickering the weeds,
Seeking some familiar face
Among the dry cracked reeds,

You'll find no flower or straight stem,
O pale erratic wing,
Only stalks bled white by summer,
The brittle corpse of spring.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 15.

Kirei na Kuni

“The telephone upon the tokonoma
Does not ring. And yet as you are—a symbol
Of all this paradox within, without.

The slender vase of tiger lilies and you,
Dear contradiction upon the tatemi,
Sinking down amid folds of blue kimono,
Serving the tea and colored sugared cakes,
A cigarette between your smiling lips.
This afternoon was your free afternoon.
How did you spend it? I should like to know.”

“With endless strolling down Asak’sa’s streets
Through the high laquered gate athwart the sky,
To where the geta clack past the old temples,
Shops, cheap restaurants, and picture palaces,
In search of Greta Garbo in *Camille*?”

“How did you enjoy the sultry iceberg
Drifting across the gleaming celluloid?”

“I do not understand. What do you mean?”

“Nor do I understand. That is the joy of this.
Let us go on henceforth, not understanding,
Dear contradiction upon the tatemi.
The telephone upon the tokonoma
Does not ring. And yet as you are—a symbol
Of all this paradox within, without.”

Natsungasaya, tsuwamono domo ga,
The summer grasses full of the slow stirring
Carry a saddening burden like the nearby sea.
What in the columns of the *New York Times*
Or on the fields of China may be seen,
Here might be felt all through this sighing land,
Here where the neisan droops with bent head, sorrowing.
I too might tremble if I understood,
No longer sigh relieved when those great legions fail.
Let us go on henceforth not understanding,
Dear contradiction upon the tatemi.
Tsuwamono domo ga, yume no ato.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 16–17.

Thoughts of an American on the Beach at Kamakura

A grandson of the Samurai
Sits stiffly in a bathing-suit.
Out a distant window slip
The thin notes of a flute.

A woman in a blue kimono
Sinks down upon the sand;
The sea bites with his white curved teeth
The granulated land.

Dark children tumble playfully
Within the foaming jaws.
O oriental loveliness
With occidental flaws,

It matters not you startle
My bald Caucasian eye:
The pines shoot from chalk palisades
Across blue depths of sky.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 18.

Celestial Reverses

The moon seemed a morsel
Of cloud that day,
A scooping of shadow,
A circlet of gray.

But the clouds are sinking
In lakes of light
Fed by gold streams
From the moon tonight.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 19.

The Empty Lot

The field thus strewn with sunflowers,
A firmament of golden wheels,
A constellation raised on stems,
Is a torn universe that reels

In a tangled wild display
About an ashy refuse heap,
Which looms like some great mystery,
A chaos lying fast asleep.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 20.

The Wind's Poetry

His poems are the instant's breath
Not labor of long hours:
The scrape of leaves across cement,
A trembling of the flowers.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 21.

The Human Patina

I

Jabbed by sunlight,
With mankind stuffed,
This hill of houses
Trees intertuft.

At its feet swirl
The boulevards.
At its heart shriek
The child-raced yards.

II

Why do the insects and the autos hum?
Their infinitesimal wings and rubber tires
Wash the air of silence.

You
At the window,
With your staring out,
Put this vacant question to the world.

You are altogether delicate,
But your spiritual jaws
Are grossly occupied,
Everlastingly revolving,
Extracting whatever sweetness there may be
From the chewing-gum of ennui.

III

One hundred and forty square windows
Grace the facade of the square office building.

Like a stroke of lightening petrified,
One slender courageous fire-escape
Zigzags down the face of this gaping manifold monotony.

IV

Wind and sun pour no life into this air
Void of sound and movement.

But suddenly,
A dog cuts it with his bark;
A car rips through it;
A bird's twitter ripples it
For one live moment....

Limp and motionless again,
It is a swamp,
A standing-pool of silver death,
Where thoughts curve upwards
Like ailing reeds
Drawing white poison from its filmy depths.

V

The hammer pounds,
And lumber falls on lumber.
The air is littered with such trash of sound.
Here where the barnyard yet holds forth
With scattered cock-crows, horses' whinnies,
The sunlight spreads its golden lake
Over the bright floor of planted fields.

But soon the vast tomato-plots shall melt away.
The final harvestings shall come.

The subdivisions,
Harbingers of suburbs,
Here and there
Split the bright landscape into city lots.

It will not be long,
Till the whole earth is coated with this progress,
Ribbed with asphalt,
Stuck through with skyscrapers.

The hammer pounds,
And lumber falls on lumber.

VI

“The city at night,
The city spread over the hill.
That is all there is to show.”

“But it is only a black pincushion.
The steel pin-heads gleam, perhaps,
But what of it?

Some other night I may have eyes,
Not tonight.

Tonight I hunger for ancient lands,
For tall Gothic churches,
Crusted Byzantine domes,
Delicate minarets,
And all the world’s temples made with hands.”

VII

The streets are twanging
Like rubber bands
In all the auto-
Ridden lands.

You would find
A street someday
Where life is lived,
Not sped away.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 23–31.

Epistle to a Pepper-Tree

Great vertical sea of foliage
And writhing pepper tree,
Why do you let the wind scribble
Athwart your seething foliage
Life's patternless design?

Will-less,
Directionless,
You stand.
Rooted!

Who can escape the history-making wind?
Not you,
The rooted tree;
Not this,
The rooted world,
Nor even the dissolving skies.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 33.

Diamond-Cutters

The diamond-cutters of Amsterdam
Grind hard roughness
To minute blazing symmetry
With steel tools
And steel fingers.
Watching them
I should soon tire
Of the cleverness of their fingers.

But you,
Bold rock at the sea's edge,
I could watch all the nights of eternity,
O diamond-cutter,
Cutting your yellow diamonds
Beneath the moon.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 34.

The Citrus Belt

How the flower of the orange-tree
Places its sweet stamp upon the winds.

Through the dusty streets of the small village
Past the houses of dead wood,
Log cabins with Victorian furbelows,
Comes the twisted sweetness,
The steeped flowing air.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 35.

Topographical Mood

Though steely clouds clamp down
Upon you,
Freshest of the valleys,
You are not the only captive
That once knew the sun.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 36.

The Pomegranate

Man cuts away the swollen rind
To the fine web that holds
The rosy frozen lucent drops
Within its yellow folds.

He eats the dainty treasure!
Ah, I believe he would
Eat all of art and nature
If he thought he could.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 37.

Mestizo-Tenement

The soiled wooden frames have vanished with the day.
The windows are slabs of yellow light
Against the darkness.
I cannot see; I merely know,
Within that mystic yellow stone,
Children are moving
And the future forming.

These are the half-dark peoples
Who shall flood us with their offspring,
Engulf us,
Making one river,
That shall flow
Into the black and yellow oceans of humanity.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 38.

The Medievalist

A motor car rasps by!
She exclaims that she will die!

If she heard a carriage creak,
Would she survive another week?

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 42.

The Equalitarian

Death is a communist!
He proclaims,
“I am out to get
All things instinct with life:
Animal and man,
The flea and the giraffe,
The insect and the weed.”

Winds and seas are his bright instruments;
He heaves them to his purposes.

Amid the confusion of the boulevards,
Dart his swords and arrows;
In the shadow of the mountains,
Moves his own dark shadow.
He is the desert’s silence.

He needs no propaganda;
His revolution is perpetual.

Death is a communist!

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 43.

Geological Meditation

Lifting into the sky
A long low fine-cut ridge
Frustrates the horizon,
Annihilates its steel extent,
Carries the eye along
Above flat sweeping plains
Like some sharp ringing thread of melody.

How strange,
O earth,
That you should suffer violence,
A slow convulsion through some million years,
So these poor eyes might feel
Such delicate tempered happiness.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 44.

Experience

There is sorrow in her eyes
And gold in her teeth.
Both glitter
When she speaks.

She used to think
Sorrow becoming
And gold a fine ornament,
Till they were both beaten into her
By dentists and circumstances.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 45.

Death Valley

At Stovepipe Wells

Among the desert dunes
The green mesquite
Stains the white-hot sands
With cool verdure
That shocks like sight of blood.
The green splashings of mesquite
In deep gashes
Strike across the desert's breasts.

Here life with fury and persistence
Tears at the heart of desolation.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 46.

Song

Dead Heart! Dead Heart!
The hills roll in a wealth of trees
Swept through by the summer breeze.
It is time to live as these.

Dead heart! Dead heart!
Although the years take flight, take flight,
The moon pours from her jug of light.
The air is not opaque tonight.

Dead heart! Dead heart!
Through tall weeds the water flowing;
Tall stems who think you are so knowing,
Drink the water past you flowing.

Dead heart! Dead heart!
Quick! Flowers fleck the wind-ripped grasses
For but that moment till wind passes.
Unpetalled flowers! Prostrate grasses!

Dead heart! Dead heart!

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 47.

The Pleasure Finder

He relished solemn similes
Or a fantastic joke,
Admired cold grey Gothic,
Hot spiralling Baroque,

Trees gold-green with sunlight,
Trees grey-green with mist,
Tales told by romancers
Or by some realist.

They who scorned his smiling face
And they who often tell
Of his praise as cheap as sunlight,
They know very well
That he is still enjoying life
In heaven or in hell.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 48.

Joy's Prisoner

This wind has flung a veil about you,
Has caught you in the net of its transparency,
Like some bright-scaled and leaping fish,
Dragged from the sea.

And breathless there amid the wind-lashed light,
You would sink back into the sea-green night,
But cannot surge from out the gleaming mesh,
You are joy's prisoner in mind and flesh.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 49.

Reluctant Eardrums

You would rather hear
The audible vine of sound,
The cluster from bird-throats.

But the air shakes, for progress walks it.

You would rather hear
Your footsteps grate
The gravel walk of your garden.

But the sky is an asphalt road
For the loud travel of cars,
Steel-winged and importunate.

You cannot resist.
You are overcome.
You are less than the eddying wind in their mechanic wake.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 50.

From the Lips of Nefertiti

Well do I know these voices and these wills!

I, Nefertiti,
No longer empress,
But a waxed countenance.

I, who was Pharaoh's mother,
With the speechless speaking of my lips,
Say to you,
File by in the north sun's glare,
You haters of the south.

I must endure it,
As I once endured my life,
The loud feasts,
And the drunkenness.

Pierce with cold eyes
Deep
Within the red smiling of my lips.
There—
Scorn for your talk of building towards eternity,
There—
Scorn for your cruelties
Aimed at the most frail.

Well do I know these voices and these wills!

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 51.

Reduced in Circumstances

Washed-out winds with sluggish blowing
Balloon wet clothes upon the line,
And let them sag with dampish rhythm:
Winds that once tore through a pine.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 52.

The Acacia Trees

The acacias are full of brittle wind-life.
Sunlight and shadow slant and merge
 through the rain-clean foliage.
How sunlight and shadow and wind love the clean
 things of nature.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 53.

To a Canary

To pulling at the lettuce
With all your dainty greed,
To hopping on your paper floor,
And snapping at the seed,

Would you prefer an hour's leave
Of talons or the gun,
In which to dive into the wheat
And drift beneath the sun.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 54.

Hilda

When very young she walked the streets
With laughter in her eye,
A chilly searching laughter
That told each passerby

That he was fat or foolish,
Awkward, or vain, or thin.
Her eye would scorn some little fault
As if it were a sin.

A weary spinster still she walks
With laughter in her eye;—
The eye is glazed with laughter
And powerless to cry.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 55.

Dawn-Carnival

The winds were stamping on the floor of night,
Impatient for the coming of the light;
Now she has stepped forth! Away they whirl
In breathless dances with the pale gold girl.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 56.

In Defense of the Ages of Reason

As silver-lace and morning-glory
Ascend a useful wire fence,
The vines of imagery may cling
To structures of significance.

The ages of reason are not so dead
As we in our purple think they are.
There is as much life in the wise old phrases
As in stolen light of a sun or star.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 57.

Breathless

In terraced flight the dragon-fly
Goes flashing up the air
And then down to the lilies.
Here and there,
His narrow body pauses:
He never seems to care
Whether he is standing
On some flower or on air.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 58.

The Golden Fleece

No need of Jason's bravery
Nor must we be so wise
And crafty as Medea,
If we but turn our eyes

Towards the broad horizon
Where skies and mountains frame
The burning cloud at sunset,
The golden fleece of flame.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 59.

To Emily Dickinson

She searched among the flowers
To find the honeyed word.
Her accents pure and silvered
Were stolen from a bird.

She snared the stars in spider-webs
Of quaint and careless rime,
Skeins woven with the frailest thread,
But they shall hold through time.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 60.

Note. An earlier state appeared in the *Santa Ana Register*, August 6, 1932, p. 10; the 1938 book reading is used here.

Tenement Hills at Dawn

In these down-pouring blazing streams
Of white gold morning mist
Lie hills of trees and buildings,
Of buildings which must twist

Our heartstrings with their weak soiled frames
When later in the day,
The sun, bold violent realist,
Has cut the mist away.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 61.

Forecast

Over the silence of the air
Come down dark curtains of dim thunder.

The black-grained mist
Spatters the wide sky,
And the necks of sun-flowers
Suffer slow strangulation from the wind.

We too shall strangle
As economic winds shall twist our necks
To slow irregular rhythms
Set by the thunder of events.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 62.

Garden Scissors

To one indoors,
With each stem-cutting
Your scissors clink
Of the sunlight in the garden
And of the flowers for the table tonight.

As Japanese poems do,
They say so much in one sharp syllable.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 63.

Sea-Sound

Shattering!
The ocean hurls its liquid weight
Upon the sandy fringes of a continent,
Crashing down a rumbling stair of sound.
Shattering!

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 64.

The Golden Prisoner Freed

Light is struck free
From her grey manacles
By the quick flashing rains.
Now trees have sharper bluer shadows
And are ashriek with shrill rejoicing winds.

The clouds dislodged from heaven
Roll down the drains
In dirty bubbling streams.
Light is struck free
From her grey manacles.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 65.

Winter Day

The dead blue asphalt sky
Is as devoid of glitter as the asphalt street
Where withered leaves,
Dry spray of the wind's waves,
Splash scratchingly across hard surfaces.

Dead street,
Dead leaves,
Dead sky,
Three poisons for the soul touched by nostalgic moods.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 66.

April's Message

"There is an end of all things,"
That is the windy hiss of early spring.

The crisp energetic waves of wind
Rasp across the glassy newness of the leaves.

"All things glitter;
All things are brittle;
The end of all things threatens at their birth,"
That is the windy hiss of early spring.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 67.

Ode to France

The trees submerged in wind's drawn blowing
Like seaweeds in the deep's sucked flowing,
Caught in a turmoil, innocent
They must be twisted, strained, and bent.
Submerged are the bright trees of France,
Submerged the hearts and souls of France,
Chère lumière in Europas Finsternis.

Now airplanes steep the air in sound,
Sawing the dark-grained thought in two
With this:
The very sky must be a battleground
For you,
Chère lumière in Europas Finsternis.

Now for a moment the planes veer away,
Their beats diminishing while two birds sing,
The end is coming of the long bright day;
The earth turns cold, while one bird on the wing
In needled flight attaches earth and air,
Then sews two trees together,
Careless of wind and weather.
Tonight some hawk may find the wing, the throat,
Yet for a little while they sing and float.

Now airplanes steep the air in sound,
Sawing the dark-grained thought in two
With this:
The very sky must be a battleground
For you,
Chère lumière in Europas Finsternis.

If only darkness be dissolved in dawn,
Perhaps the birds may repossess the air,
And only the hard darkness will be gone,
In answer to some God-directed prayer.
False may prove the portents and the signs;
The world still feel that healthful acid light;
False may prove the portents and the signs,
If dawn dissolve the black rock of the night.

Chère lumière in Europas Finsternis.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 68–69.

Lunar Books

Here the moon writes off
Her portion of the darkness:
Each wave, each ripple
From the horizon,
The sea across
To this, our ship.

She strikes us too—
Off the dark ledgers
With her golden ink.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 70.

TRANSLATIONS

Stage III | Book and magazine translations, 1938–1969

Paraphrase of Hokku by Basho

I.

Slow wind through summer grass.
Here once the brave warriors—
Now but a dream's trace.

2.

Into the old pond
I know a frog has leapt:
All from one water word.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 39.

Note. The first hokku is also quoted in “Kirei na Kuni” on printed p. 17.

To Her Portrait

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

This that you see, this colorful deceit,
exhibiting the graces of the art,
with its false choice of colors, takes the part
of feeling's cautious and most wary cheat;
herein where flattery is pretending,
excusing the horrors of the years,
conquering the rigor of time's spears
to triumph over age and all forgetting;
it is a stupid studied artifice,
useless precaution confronted by fate's power;
a quaint mistaken carefulness is this,
in the wind naught but a delicate flower,
obvious solicitude with everyone aware,
a corpse, some dust, a shadow, nothing there.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 40.

From “Rimas”

Gustavo Bécquer

About me the unseen atoms of the air
Palpitate and splash their fiery sparks;
The sky is shattered into golden rays;
The earth is trembling gaily;
I hear in floating waves of harmony
The sound of kisses and of beating wings.
My eyelids close! What happened?
Love passed by.

Publication. *The Human Patina and Other Poems* (Hollywood: Press of Hollycrofters, 1938), p. 41.

From “Evening Twilight” in “Die Nordsee”

From “Evening Twilight” in “Die Nordsee” by
Heinrich Heine (1797—1856)

On the wan shore I sat
Idea-plagued and alone.
The sun lowered; it flung
A streaked red glow on the waters;
And the white full waves,
Impelled by high tide,
Foamed, speeding nearer and nearer—
A weird rush, a whisper, a flute-note,
A laugh and a murmur, a sighing and whistling.
Through it all ran an intimate cradlesong.
It was like hearing forgotten legends,
Old lovely fairy tales...

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. I, No. 4 (Autumn 1946), p. 19.

Translation from Friedrich Holderlin

(Written in free verse circa 1802)

All with yellow pears,
And brimming with wild roses,
The land hangs lakeward.
You swans well-favored,
And drunken with kisses,
Dip with your heads
In the water's pure calm.

My own sorrow, not to know flowers
In wintertime. Where are they,
And the sunlight
And shade of the earth?
The high walls stand
Silent and cold; in the wind
Clap the weather vanes.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. II, No. 4 (Autumn 1947), p. 20.

From the “Vita Nuova”

by Dante Alighieri

So very gently there, and modestly appearing
Is my lady then, when coming toward you,
That every tongue trembles, is in all things mute,
And the eye, for looking, has not sufficient daring,
And as she goes there, her praise within her hearing,
Clothed with humility, she gives to all their due,
And it appears, indeed, she is something come to
Show us a miracle, while on earth here faring.

So pleasing shows herself, to those who look nigh,
That through the eyes she gives the heart a sweetness
That none may understand who have not known it,
And it appears as though there moves a spirit
Full of love and smooth and that has left her lips,
That to the soul goes, saying, “Breathe in sighs!”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 47.

From “the Antiquities of Rome”

by Joachim du Bellay

Newcomer searching for Rome in Rome
And nothing of Rome in Rome perceiving,
The ancient arches, palaces worth seeing
And the ancient walls, all that bears Rome’s name.

Look at this pride and ruin: the same
As that under its law the world was leading,
Who to conquer all, turned conquered being,
The prey of the ages which all things consume.

Rome that of Rome is now the monument,
Rome, Rome’s one conquest—in any event.
Yet only the Tiber toward the sea escaping

Remains now of Rome, O world inconstant!
All that stands firm is of time’s unshaping,
And all that which flies is to time resistant.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 48.

Sonnet II

by Louise Labé

O precious brown eyes, O wandering look,
O warmest sighing and scattering of tears,
O nights of darkness that one vainly attends,
O days which show forth and vainly come back,

O saddest of complaints, O desires that stick,
O times all now lost and resulting sorrows,
O thousands of deaths, each extending its ruse,
O worst of all evils threatening to strike.

O laugh, O brow, hair, arm, finger, hand,
O plaintive lute, viol, the bow or sung word:
O wealth of torches to consume any woman!

Weighed down with such fires, I am complaining
That in so many places, with my heart's groping,
No single spark over you has yet flown.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 49.

Sonnet V

by Louise Labé

O clearest Venus who wander the skies,
Hear now my voice as it plaintively sings
Of my long labors and the grief in things,
All the time your face at the zenith shines.

My sleepless eye grows tenderer still
And in more weeping, with you present, lets go;
How my bed with tears must so overflow
For seeing what slavery you witness at will!

Mankind's weary spirit is always drawn
To a soft repose and to sleep till dawn.
While the daylight lasts I can scarce last too,

Until then finally, when almost shattered
I have gone therewith to my bed all tired,
I must weep misfortune the whole night through.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 50.

Sonnet VII

by Louise Labé

One sees the dying of each animated thing
When from the body goes the subtle soul.
You are that better part and I the mortal whole.
Oh, where are you then, o soul to whom I cling?

Do not leave me faint through long tracks of time,
Nor let salvation be lost by your delay,
And give back that part, that prized half, this day.
Risk not for your body a chance loss of its prime.

Shelter well your body, lest it be ended
In this so amorous meeting and review.
Leave out severity; leave all unattended

By any harshness, but by graces from you
Who with great sweetness render me beauty,
Before so cruelly, now most favorably.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 51.

Sonnet IX

by Louise Labé

The very same moment of starting to capture
In my bed's softness a longed-for repose
My pitiful spirit from my own self retires,
Incontinent going toward you in surrender.

For then it must seem in my breast so tender
I have all that good for which it aspires,
For which it so deeply releases these sighs
That with all this sobbing I thought it would tear.

O sleep that is sweet, night of mine and of joy,
A grateful repose, tranquillity-filled,
Extends through my nights the trace of this dream:

If my amorous soul find never a way
To enjoy in truth the possession of good,
Then in shape of a lie let it have the same.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 52.

Sonnet XII

by Louise Labé

Lute, companion of all my distress,
Irreproachable witness of all my sighing,
With firm control of what is so wearing,
How often with me you sound our laments.

And bothered by tears as with some great nuisance,
With some pleasant fate, now only commencing,
You turn it all to sudden lamenting,
Feigning the note that of sorrow sings.

And should you desire to have things different,
You loosen your strings and leave me silent:
But having been seen with my grief exhaled,

Giving all favor to my sad complaint:
To enjoy my own grief I find constraint,
Hope for sweet sickness as sweet an end,

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 53.

Sonnet XIII

by Louise Labé

Ah, only to be in that breast ravished
That of him, indeed, for whom I live dying,
If only with him I might be spending
The rest of my days by envy untouched,

If holding me tight, he would say: Dear Friend,
Let us be content with the shared assuring
That no tempest nor strait nor waters running
Can put us apart till our lives end.

If held in my arms with all that closeness
Even as ivy the tree encircles,
Death should come there by envy driven,

While in all sweetness his kiss should alight
And should my spirit on his lips take flight,
I, more than living, would die happy then.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 54.

Sonnet XVIII

by Louise Labé

Only kiss me once more, once more, yet again.
Give me another, replete with your savour.
Give me another, replete with your langour.
Then I shall render four kisses that burn.

Alas! You complain? when this sickness I lighten
With the sweet to the taste and giving ten more.
Thus with our kisses at ease mixed together
Let us have pleasure in sharing them then.

Thereby double life to each of us follows.
At last each in himself and the other now lives.
Allow then my love to think of some folly.

I always am ill when my life is discreet
And able to feel in no way content,
If away from myself I make no sally.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 55.

Sonnet XIX

by Louise Labé

Diana lingered in the wood's thickness
With many a beast by her violence borne down,
All in the freshness, by her nymphs crowned.
While I went dreaming as my custom is,

Without ever thinking, I heard a voice
Therewith in calling: "O nymph all astounded—
Are you not so with Diana around?"
And seeing me there without bow or case:

"Whom do you find now, my friend, as you go,
Who thus takes away your arrow and bow?"
"I take notice," I said, "of a passer too

Only to cast at him all of my arrows
And the bow after, but he then gathers,
Selects from among them and riddles me through."

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 56.

Sonnet XXI

by Louise Labé

What height is the man most worthy of love?
Of what stoutness? What hair? And indeed what color?
Who the most honeyed of his eyes by far?
Who wounds so surely where no cure may save?

What song to what man, if one had it to give?
Who pierces in singing with all of his dolor?
Whose very sweet lute can do even more?
What kind of nature is one ready to love?

No desire is in me to say with assurance,
For in all of my judgment the God Love used force.
But I know quite well; my feelings are sure

That of all beauty one could ever dispose,
That all of the art which might aid nature
Can never obtain that my great love grows.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 57.

Sonnet XXIII

by Louise Labé

Alas! What good is it, the whole of your praise
That spent all itself on my golden hair
And on my eyes which it sought to compare
To two darting Suns where the God Love draws

The cause of your torment and finds his arrows?
Where are you, tears, which refuse to endure?
And where is your Death which at last would honor
Your immovable love, your repeated vows?

Thus, it is plain that end of your malice
Was but to enslave me, pretending service,
Forgive me, my Friend, forgive me this time

That I being outraged, in anger and spite:
In knowing you martyr as much as I am,
Wherever you are, I take some comfort.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 58.

From “Delie”

by Maurice Scève

To all gods together your love is preferred.
That is the God Love’s own urgent command.
But proud death, turned sad, would have the last word,
At me aimed the arrow by his cruel hand,
And when I from need have made my demand,
Has denied it to me as being pernicious.

But why over me, you far too officious,
Are you wasting both power and fury,
Since in my deaths, Delia ingenious,
Has from the first with glances killed me?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 60.

June Nights

by Victor Hugo

When the day, in summer, has left heaped with flowers,
Through reeling drenched space the plain pours its scent;
Ears holding half murmurs, eyes drowned in sleep's powers
You are part giving way, in sleep that's transparent.

The stars now look purer; restored is the shade.
A half light from day tints the unending dome.
The sweet and pale dawn waits for darkness to fade,
Seems to stray all the night down its aerial home.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 61.

The Albatross

by Charles Baudelaire

Often for pleasure, the crew, gathered on board,
Capture the albatross, vast birds of the sea
Who with indolent flight direct themselves toward
The great acrid chasms ships sweep over free.

These lords of the azure, confined to deck floors,
When suddenly dragged there, must let great white wings
Sadly trail at their sides like some pair of oars.
Their walk is embarrassed—the piteous things.

The great wingéd traveller looks awkward and weak.
The wonder of loveliness turns homely and droll.
One sailor annoys him, a pipe at his beak.
His limping is mimicked by a merciless soul.

The poet compares to this prince from the clouds.
The dweller in tempests laughs at risk in all things,
But exiled on earth among hooting crowds
His movements are fettered by giant-like wings.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 62.

To a Passerby

by Charles Baudelaire

With the street's prolonged cry my deafened ears rung.
Majestic and slender, sorrowing and grand,
She swept by me there with a sumptuous hand,
Hem and embroidery finely poised where they hung,

Agile and noble as with a carved limb.
I breathed in intensely with a prodigal will
The sweetness that draws, the pleasures that kill,
From her eye, livid sky with storms nascent and dim.

A flash, then night closes! O fugitive grace,
Whose one rapid look has left me reborn.
Am I only to find you outside time and space?

Elsewhere, far from here, too late, nevermore;
Not to know where you went, nor you where I go!
I could have loved you, I feel that you know.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 63.

Pastel

by Théophile Gautier

I love to see you in your oval frames,
The yellowing portraits of the old-time belles,
Holding in your hands roses that have paled,
As one might expect with last centuries' flowers.

The wind of winter, in touching your cheek,
Has killed your carnations and your lilies there.
The patches you wore are stains or not seen;
In the shops near the Seine, you lie worse for wear.

It is gone at last, the charmer's sweet reign,
The Parabére with the Pompadour
Will find only subjects that rebel in our day.
With them in their tombs, their love is no more.

But you, however, portraits unrecalled,
You are breathing bouquets of departed scent
And smiling now with that melancholy
At the faded memory of your dead gallants.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 64.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Bécquer

—I am consuming, belong to the twilight;
I write a symbol with passionate glow.
My soul is now filled with longing for pleasure.
Now are you seeking me?—No, hardly, no.

forehead is pale, 'neath braided soft light;
I offer all happiness, endless yet new;
I guard all tenderness as a great treasure.
Now are you calling me?—No, no, not you.

—TI am a dream, an impossible one,
Vain phantom of fog, vain phantom of light,
Indeed incorporeal, an intangible being.
I cannot love you.—Come, come tonight.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 65.

Encore Un Livre

by Jules Laforgue

My book appears; I long to be
Away from all these common fellows,
Away from money, hails, and hellos,
From all our phraseology.

Another Pierrot, I guess,
Is dead from chronic orphanhood,
A heart so full of dandydom
And lunar, queer, a mortal mess.

The gods have left; the snouts endure.
Ah! Things are getting worse each day.
I've had enough; I slip away
To the Inclusive Sinecure.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 67.

The Violet

by J. W. von Goethe

A violet in the meadow grew,
Retiring soul that no one knew,
It was a charming violet.
There came a youthful shepherdess,
So light of step, of mind no less,
Thereto, whereto
The meadow was in flower.

Ah! Might I be, the violet thought,
The perfect flower nature wrought,
And for a little while yet,
Till fainting I am plucked by her
And on her bosom might endure
No more, no more
Than lasts the quarter hour.

Alas! Alas! She came that way;
The violet, disregarded, lay—
A trampled little violet!
It sank and died and still was glad:
Since I must die, I'll die
Through her, through her
As she goes stepping by.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 68.

Heidenröslein

by J. W. von Goethe

Rose-let of the boy perceived,
Rose-let in the heather,
Fresh as morning and young-leaved,
Therefore he is far from grieved,
Races up to greet her.
Roselet, roselet, roselet red
Roselet in the heather.
Lover's words: I'll tear your stalk,
Roselet in the heather.

Roselet then: My thorn will talk!
No one can forget the shock!
No one says: I get her.
Roselet, roselet, roselet red,
Roselet in the heather.
Wildly now he, taking, breaks
Roselet in the heather.

Roselet rears and pricks and sticks.
Helpless, though, she wails her luck,
Endures the things that fret her.
Roselet, roselet, roselet red,
Roselet in the heather.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 69.

The Song of the Spirits Over the Waters

by J. W. von Goethe

Water-likened
Man's soul must be:
From heaven down,
Then up to heaven.
Earth receives it
Again below
In eternal drift.

It flows from the high
Steep precipice—
Clear jet,
Then shatters gaily
In waves of cloud
Upon smooth rock,
And lightly received
It moves in veils,
Rushing with lightness
Down to the depths.

Cliffs interrupting
Athwart the plunge,
It foams in anger
Straight down the stair
That leads below
Where the chasm is.

It coils through field, vale
In a level bed.
It opens as lake
Wherein the star-faces
Refresh themselves.

Wind is the wave's
Dear paramour.
Wind stirs to the surface
The billow's foam.

Water-likened
Man's soul must be!
Like to the wind
Man's destiny!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 70.

The Human Boundary Line

by J. W. von Goethe

When the age-old
Holiest father
With easy hand flings
Out of intervolved cloud
His blessing of lightning
Over the earth,
Then do I kiss
The lower hem of his cloak,
And my faithful breast
Fills with innocent awe.

With the gods
May not any man
Measure himself.
Reared upward
And touching the stars
With his scalp,
He has no
Certain foothold
And is the plaything
Of wind and cloud.

Standing firm
With linkéd skeleton
On the certain
And lasting earth,
He hardly vies
With the oak
Or the vine,
In no way compares.

What separates
Men from gods?
Before us there sweeps
The succession of waves,
An eternal stream:
The waves that lift us
Swallow us,
And we sink.

A little ring
Delimits our life,
And the chain of existence
Is forever strung
With generations.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 71.

Das Göttliche

by J. W. von Goethe

May his given aid, goodness,
Man's luster be.
Naught else retrieves him
From all other creatures
That we know.

All hail to the unknown
Higher beings
Apprehended of us.
May man be their like;
May his ways lead
Toward faith in them.

For without feeling
Great Nature is:
Light glows alike
For good and bad,
And to the offender
Come starlight and moonlight
As over the innocent.

Winds and currents,
Thunder and hail,
Plunge ever onward,
Fastening ever
In their hurry
On this man or that.

Even so, fortune,
Tossed through the crowd,
Seizes some youth
Curly and faultless,
Then on some hairless,
Some guilt-weighted head,

After harsh and eternal
Tremendous laws,
Must we all fully
Describe, as we go,
The circle of life.

Only man
Performs the impossible:
He can determine,
Select and bring judgment.
He can endow
The instant with permanence.

He alone gives
To good its due,
Punishes evil,
Heals and saves,
Drawing together
The stray and the wanderer.

And we honor
All the immortals
As though like mortals,
They did with greatness
What best we do—
In all of our littleness.

May man's luster be
In his given aid, goodness.
Let him tireless
Fill all needs rightly.
Make him our archetype
Of scarce-perceived beings.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 72.

Mignon's Song from "Wilhelm Meister"

by J. W. von Goethe

Do you know the land where the lemon-tree blooms,
The orange hangs golden in leafy glooms,
A soft wind glides down from the blue of space,
And high bay and myrtle lift in still grace?
Are your thoughts on it?

Thereto! Whereto

I might, my loved one, soon go with you.

You know the house? Roofed columns set aright.

The hall glows rich, a room in glancing light,

The statues standing with a marble stare:

Have you suffered, my child, in someone's care?

Are your thoughts on it?

Thereto! Whereto

I might, my salvation, go with you.

You know the peak, its trail among the clouds?

The mule must find its way with mists in crowds.

In caverns lives the dragon's ancient brood,

Rock plunges down, and over it the flood;

You know it well.

Thereto! Whereto

We go our path! O father, I and you.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 74.

Note. This translation contains marked transitions in rhythm not to be found in the original. Since these transitions serve a function that seems of some interest, the translation has been retained. Novelty may not be priceless, but it is not always to be disparaged.

From “Die Heimkehr”

by Heinrich Heine

Heart, my heart, withstand depression,
Lift the weight of destiny.
Spring’s bright newness gives us free
What was lost in winter’s session.

Still alive we own creation!
All the world wears loveliness!
And, my heart, why hope for less?
All, yes, all remains love’s ration.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 75.

From “Verschiedene”

by Heinrich Heine

The fraulein stands on the seashore
And sobs with never a pause.
It is the dramatic sunset
Which is the pathetic cause.

My fraulein, be more cheerful,
It's only another showing.
Dismiss the thought of departure.
Own it a coming and going.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 76.

From “Die Heimkehr”

by Heinrich Heine

As dark as any dreams
The houses extend away;
Well-wrapped in an overcoat
I hurriedly go my way.

The cathedral’s talkative bell
Announces twelve o’clock.
With all of her kisses and charms
My darling attends my knock.

For companion I have the moon
Who lights my way from on high.
At last I arrive at her door
And lift my voice to the sky:

“I thank you for listening well,
For making my pathway bright.
The moment has come to part.
The rest of the world needs light.

If you find some enamoured creature
With a plaintive lonely song,
Give him the comfort then
You gave me ever so long.”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 77.

Buonaparte

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Here are the holy vessels, the poets,
Wherein life's wine, the spirit
Of heroes, keeps eternal,

But that of this youth here,
The quick one, would it not split any
Vessel that presumes to contain it?

May the poet leave him untouched, this spirit like nature's,
For such stuff shames masters into apprentices,
He is not for poems, to live and remain in them.
He lives and remains in the world.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 78.

To the Fates

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Grant but one summer, you powers!
One autumn for me of ripe song
That my heart with willingness, of sweet
Playing sated, then may die.

The soul, unpossessed of its godly right
In this life, rests not below in Orcus;
Yet, if the holy thing lying
Close to my heart, the poem, show forth,

Then welcome, O silence of shadows!
Content am I, though my lyre
Descend not with me. For once
As the gods I lived, and what more is there?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 79.

Half Through Life

by Friedrich Hölderlin

All with yellow pears
And brimming with wild roses,
The land hangs lakeward.
You swans well-favored,
And drunken with kisses,
Dip with your heads
In the water's pure calm.

Alas! Where shall I find, in
Wintertime, flowers; where are they
And the sunlight
And shade of the earth?
The high walls stand
Silent and cold; in the wind
Clap the weather vanes.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 7.

Never More

by Jean Moréas

A gaslight weeping in the mist,
A gaslight weeping like an eye.
Good reason now to mourn and sigh,
For as we are, we must persist.

The asphalt beaten by the shower
Is like the rock against the wave.
—What rides on shoulders to the grave
Describes the limits of our power.

Let us not go, my sister dear,
Like any other stubborn child
To where the storm pours down so wild,
To dream of unreal sweetness here,
Of sweetness here, of some bright wreath.
The winter scythes away the heath.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 8.

Wisdom

by Paul Verlaine

The sky is high above the roof
So blue, so calm.
A tree is up above the roof—
A shifting palm.

The bell is seen within the sky,
Gently ringing.
A bird is seen within the tree,
Singing, singing.

My God, my God, all life is there
This quiet day.
Village hums come flowing there
From faraway.

What have you done, you who there—
Weep unceasing?
Say what has happened, you there,
With youth's passing?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 9.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Bécquer

About me the unseen atoms of the air
Palpitate and splash their fiery sparks;
The sky is shattered into golden rays;
The earth is trembling gaily;
I hear in floating waves of harmony
The sound of kisses and of beating wings.
My eyelids close! What happened?
Love passed by.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 10.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Bécquer

I could not sleep for wandering in that limbo
Where earthly form and shape must slip away
In those mysterious spaces felt between
Asleep, and then awake.

Ideas that make their rounds in silence
Gave turn on turn about the waking brain.
Little by little the movements of their measured
Dance had fall'n away.

My eyelids closed with veiling of that mirror
Where human souls reflect the light of day,
But other light illumined far within
A world of visionary shape.

Just then there was a sounding in my ears
Like that which drifts about a church's aisles,
As prayers confused are ending in the hum
Of amens when the faithful rise.

Thereupon I heard a sad thin voice
Calling me by name from quite afar
And breathed a whiff then of extinguished candles,
Of incense and of humid air.

.....

At last night came; from the arms of memory's loss
I fell, like any stone, on that deep breast;
I slept, only to exclaim on waking, "Someone
That I loved is dead!"

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. II.

From “Neuer Fruhling”

by Heinrich Heine

The slender waterlily
Looks dreamily up from the glass.
The moon sends greetings downwards
Lit through with love’s alas.

Ashamed her head is sinking
Again down into the lake,
For there at her feet she sees him,
So gaunt and pale for her sake.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 12.

Der Asra

by Heinrich Heine

Every day the very lovely
Sultan's daughter came, departed,
There at evening near the fountain
Of the whitely plashing waters.

Young, enslaved, each day he stood there
Every evening by the fountain
Near the whitely plashing waters;
Daily he turned pale and paler.

Then one evening rushed the princess
On him there with angry words,
“Let me know your name this moment,
Then your home, your real descent.”

And the slave spoke, “I am called,
Called Mohamet, him from Yemen,
And my race reveals that Asra
Who must, always, dying love.”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 13.

From “Neuer Fruhling”

by Heinrich Heine

Moving faintly through the mind,
Peals that are endearing,
Ring, O little springtime song,
Ring through all the clearing.

Ring until you find the house
Set among the flowers.
Greetings to the first-found rose;
Tell her they are ours.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 14.

With Your Blue Eyes

by Heinrich Heine

With all of the blueness of your eyes
You dearly look my way.
They come so dreamily to mind
There's nothing more to say.

And now in a vision of blue eyes
All things will take a part.
A blue and liquid sheet of thoughts
Comes pouring over my heart.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 15.

Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai

by Heinrich Heine

When, in immaculate May, once more
The season's buds unfold,
The leap of love within my heart
Is high and making bold.

When, in immaculate May, once more
The birds awake with song,
Therewith I must confess to her
How eagerly I long...

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 15.

Childe Harold

by Heinrich Heine

Masked and silent guardians sit there
In the solemn funeral bark
Which is sailing ever onward,
Mournful, powerful and dark.

Fallen poet, he lies quiet
With a pale uncovered face;
Blue the eyes that keep on looking
Heavenwards toward light and space.

From the water's depths an ailing
Voice of faëry seeks its way.
On the boat the waves do shatter
With a sounding of dismay.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 16.

From “the North Sea”

by Heinrich Heine

On the wan shore I sat
Idea-plagued and alone.
The sun lowered; it flung
A streaked red glow on the waters;
And the white full waves,
Impelled by high tide,
Foamed, speeding nearer and nearer—
A weird rush, a whisper, a flute-note,
A laugh and a murmur, a sighing and whistling.
Through it all ran an intimate cradlesong.
It was like hearing forgotten legends,
Old lovely fairy tales
Heard once years ago
From a neighbor's son,
When, of a summer evening,
On the doorsteps we cowered
At some quiet tale
With small intent hearts
And inquisitive eyes;
While the girls full-grown
Were set in the window opposite
Among the incense of flowerpots,
Rose-faces
Smiling and moonlit.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 17.

Where?

by Heinrich Heine

Where within this wandered vastness
Is that final rest of mine?
Under palm trees, southern palm trees?
Under lindens by the Rhine?

Shelved away within some desert,
Labor of indifferent hand?
Or, as likely, on the seacoast
Underneath a stretch of sand?

Doubtless there will be about me
God's own heavens, here or there,
Over me death's lanterns floating,
Stars around me everywhere.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 18.

Luck Is Just a Common Slattern

by Heinrich Heine

Well, luck is just a common slattern
And wastes no time on another stay;
She shoves your hair right off your brow
And kisses quick and flies away.

But Frau Ill-luck on the other hand
Will hold you tight against her breast,
And says she's not in a hurry now:
She sits down first; she's knitting next.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 19.

Complaint Concerned With Certain Annoyances

by Jules Laforgue

A sunset of cosmogonies!
How life, each day, is everyday...
Whatever you may think or say,
How never great, how mean one is...

With frankness we might even tell
Of those surprises met en route,
Across our poses, then, bear fruit
To know each other very well.

Silence has something that might bleed
And shake the exile of small chat.
But no! These ladies barter that
For who shall follow, who shall lead.

They look efficient, discontented,
And under heaven, we confess
To the esthetic super-mess
By which they are adored, defended.

Right now I think that one is playing
For help in searching out a ring
(Where in all vagueness is the thing?),
A souvenir of love, she's saying!

And they are all adored, defended.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 20.

To Her Portrait

by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

This that you see, this colorful deceit,
exhibiting the graces of the art,
with its false choice of colors, takes the part
of feeling's cautious and most wary cheat;
herein where flattery is pretending,
excusing the horrors of the years,
conquering the rigor of time's spears
to triumph over age and all forgetting;
it is a stupid studied artifice,
useless precaution confronted by fate's power;
a quaint mistaken carefulness is this,
in the wind naught but a delicate flower,
obvious solicitude with everyone aware,
a corpse, some dust, a shadow, nothing there.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 21.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Through perennial foliage
That suffers a new flowing murmur,
Through the green undulant ocean,
Amorous mansion meant for the warbler,
I can see from my window
The church I deeply cared for.

The church I cared for deeply...
I never know what I love any more,
For my thoughts in a rudeness of traffic
Are stirring against each other.
There is real doubt if my love
Can form in my breast with harsh rancor.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 22.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

I hear the slow ringing; it comes as then
It came to my bed with its call
As its echoes spread notice of dawn,
And with a caress meanwhile
A gilt ray of the sun would enter
And leave my room tranquil.

Pure the air, the light made of roses,
How happy I was to awaken!
I saw among clouds of incense
Winged visions, all of them golden.
I saw faith's bandage over their eyes,
Celestial strip, by one and all worn.

That sun is the same, but they
Do not come when I call them,
And across all the space and clouds,
And the water's dizzy oblivion,
And the air's blue transparency,
Alas! I am calling, searching in vain.

White and deserted the way
Among the luxuriant hedges,
And the forests and streams that accompany
Its borders with pleasant mysteries
Seem to draw me on, to entice me
To follow its line ever endless.

Let us go anyhow, since the ancient road
Shows itself at our passage,
Though sad, rough and deserted
And changed like ourselves with age,
Full still of white phantoms
We adored in that age.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 23.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

That of all hope for a life such as mine—
This sad and discolored arriving sunset.
Into the house of gloom, dismantled and cold
Let us return step by step,
Lest before all of light’s joy my bitterness swell
In the white air of day.

The bird of omens seeks happiness in its black nest;
The wild beast stretches out in its far-away cave,
Death’s prey in the sepulcher, the somber one in neglect
My soul in some waste.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 24.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

In the linked falling sounds of the wave
 And the moaning of wind,
In reflection light shifts through
 The forest and cloud,
In some bird’s chirp in passage,
In the simple perfume ignored,
 That the west wind robs
 From valley and peak;
Worlds exist where those find themselves sheltered—
 The souls who succumb with
 The weight of the world.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 25.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Every time she recalls that opprobrium,
Each time, I say; she is forced to remember!

 In humiliation her soul
Aspires to canceled being in air
 As whitest cloud
Space-diffused through blue atmosphere.

Memory? The thing charming to madness
Or ever bringing death-bringing grief?

 No, it is not only memory
 But the gathering in of
What is past, present, and infinite,
What was, is, forever, below, and above.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 26.

The Homeland

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Noiseless currents bear home the boatman
Content from far islands, lands of his harvest.
Now I too would return to the homeland;
But what grief was harvested?

Pleasing shores, you that reared me,
Can you still love's hurt? Oh, give me
My childhood's forests; at my coming,
A return of tranquillity.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 27.

Hyperion's Song of Fate

by Friedrich Hölderlin

You move about within light
On soft floors, favored natures;
 Quick airs and god-like
 Lightly pluck you,
 As a girl's able fingers
 The sacred strings.

Fate-free, as the sleeping
Infant, breathe the spirits;
 Ever chaste
 And shy flowers
 Their essence
 Opens eternally,
 And the blessed glances
 Fall among calming
 Eternal clarities.

To us it is given
Nowhere to rest,
 Suffering mortals,
 Who, vanishing, fall
 From hour to hour;
 Unseeing as
 Water is, cliff
 To cliff flung,
 Yearlong, downward, into uncertainty.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 28.

Ode

by Friedrich Hölderlin

With my boyhood hours
A God came to the rescue,
As free from harsh voices and whips
I played in sure innocence
With the blooms in the thicket,
And the airs of heaven
Played round me.

And as you rejoice
The heart of plants,
When toward you
Their frail arms are reaching,
You have lifted my heart,
Father Helios! And as Endymion
Was I one favored
Of the unsullied moon.

All of you intimate
True divinities,
You knew all
Of my soul's affection.
Certainly then I called you
Not by name, you too
Never named me, as mortals each other
Assuming acquaintance.

Informed of airs blown
From the rustling grove
I grew, and learned love
Under the blossoms.

In the arms of the Gods was my increase!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 29.

Her Healing

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Your friend, O Nature, suffers and sleeps, and you,
The all-quickenings, hold back—ah—and heal her not,
You powerful airs ethereal,
You sources of sunlight?

All earth's flowers, all the joyous
Fair fruit of the grove, do not cheer
This one life, O you gods,
One reared in your love.

Already sacred pleasure in life breathes and sounds
Once more, in pleasing words, and now
The eye of your favored one
Opens and kindly glows for you.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 30.

Sunset

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Where are you? Elated, my soul faints
With all your light rapture, so it is,
That I listened, as with gold echoes
Full, the exquisite sun youth

Played an evensong on the heavenly lyre,
Through hills and thickets prolonging it.
Now he has left for the pious nations
Far away, where they honor him.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 31.

Socrates and Alcibiades

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Why regard him so, holy Socrates,
Always this youth? Is worth unknown to you?
Why do your eyes as on gods
Look there with such fondness?

Who has thought deepest, loves the quick.
Who knows creation best, can measure youth's tallness.
Not too rarely, at last, the wise
Give way to the beautiful.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 32.

The Run of Life

by Friedrich Hölderlin

My spirit leapt high, but love drew
It thoroughly downward; suffering pressed down on it.
So I proceed with life's curve
And return to the starting-place.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 33.

To Himself

by Giacomo Leopardi

Forever now you will rest,
heart of grief. Annulled is the extreme imposture
I thought eternal. It has perished. I feel
in the dear illusions
desire's eclipse and hope's too.
Rest forever. Enough from you
so far, of pulsations! Nothing is worth
one beat of you, nor is the earth
worthy of sighs. The bitter and dull:
these are life and naught else; and the earth is slime.
Be still now! Despond
the last time. To our kind it is given
only to die. Disdain yourself,
nature, henceforth, the ugly
power, which, slyly, to the common hurt governs,
and the whole's infinite vanity.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 34.

L'Infinito

by *Giacomo Leopardi*

Ever dear to me the abandoned slope
and this hedge which from the view
excludes in great part the utmost horizon.
But with reclining and looking therefrom,
the everspreading of space and the unattainable
silences and the quiet in greatest depth
are imaged forth in the mind, when not for long
the heart is alarmless. And as I hear
wind's pressure through the planting, I find myself
weighing that *infinito silenzio*
with this voice: I remember the eternal,
and the dead seasons, and this one, the present
alive with the sound of itself. I find
in immensity the immersion of thought,
and a sweet capsizing in this sea.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 35.

Note. Pronunciation of the words in italics is as follows: *infínito silénzio*.

Found

by J. W. von Goethe

I went in the wood
With nothing to find,
All by myself
With a mindless mind.

In the shade I saw
A flower rise,
A star that shone,
A flower eye.

I wanted to break it.
It lisped in thread:
Break me and make me
Withered and dead.

I dug so that earth
Would deeply give,
Took flower and root
With me to live

And planted it then
In a quiet place.
It spreads and blooms
At a ready pace.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 36.

The Lorelei

by Heinrich Heine

Far-gone is my joyless mood today—
Nor easy to comprehend;
There comes to mind a fairy-tale
Whose hold will never end.

The air is cool and darkening now,
And quiet the flowing Rhine.
The mountain summit lifts in sparks
With moments more to shine.

High-throned is the beauty young and bold,
A wonder of wonders there.
In a blaze of gold and precious stones,
She combs her golden hair.

She combs it through with a golden comb,
And who hearkens, then, will see
Her singing and charm as one and the same:
A powerful melody.

Forgetting his boat and its doubtful lot
The sailor is gripped by woe.
He hardly sees the reef's great rock,
But only the height aglow.

I suppose the waves with a rushing sound
Fall to on sailor and sail.
The Lorelei's song has never been found
A likely one to fail.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 37.

Clytie

by André Chénier

My Manes to Clytie: "Clytie, farewell.
Are your steps traveling once more where I dwell?
Speak, is it you, Clytie, or must I wait more?
Ah! When you arrive not, alone in the dawn,
To dream of my few days lived only for you,
See this shadow in love, and speak with it too,
The harsh peace of Elysium embitters my heart;
Never light on my bones, the earth when we part.
In those regions each time, morning with a fresh air
Runs caressing against your lips, breast and hair,
Weep, weep, adored girl; I am truly bereft.
The soul's sacred home by my soul has been left
Which rests on your mouth from its recent alarms.
Weep, set free a kiss, and open your arms."

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), p. 38.

In the Woods

by Gérard de Nerval

At last alive, he sings in spring.
Ah, have you never heard that sound?
Yet it is pure and simple, touching,
Where in the woods his voice is found.

In summertime, his mate is sought.
He loves, but not to love again.
How faithful, peaceful and how sweet—
Deep in the woods—the bird's nest then.

And then when autumn comes so dimly
A silence falls... before the cold.
Alas! How happy it must be,
The bird's death there—within the wood.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 39.

Before and Now

by Friedrich Hölderlin

In my youth I started off morning-gay,
Weeping at nightfall. Now I am older;
Doubt comes at dawning, but holy
And cheerful is the day's end.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 1 (1967), p. 40.

Dedication of His Work to Délie

by *Maurice Scève*

Not of Venus the ardent sparkling,
Still less the arrows of Cupid well aimed:
But indeed my deaths you keep renewing,
I desire herein, should well be described.

And I am aware you are reading here
Many an error. And no harsher epigrams!
But love—anyway—on seeing the writer
Ordains for your sake they pass through his flames.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), p. 59.

From “the Second Book of Sonnets for Helene”

by Pierre de Ronsard

When aged, still living, near the evening candle
You sit by the fire, winding and spinning,
While singing my verses you will be marvelling:
“Ronsard did me honor when I was beautiful.”

No servant of yours at the news which you tell,
Who after day’s work may be sometimes sleeping,
At my name’s whisper will keep from awaking,
Blessing your name whose praise is immortal.

I shall lie in the earth a boneless phantom;
In the shadow of myrtles I shall find calm.
You will bend at the hearth with end of your days

Regretting my love and your proud disdain.
Live now, believe me, nor wait for a “then”.
Gather the moment all of life’s roses.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 87.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Bécquer

T

Once more with their return the dark-winged swallows
about your balcony have hung their nests
and again their wings alert us with their dallying
beside the window-glass,

but those who lingered, from further flight abstaining,
to view my glory and your loveliness
who took it on themselves to learn our names,
their return has long since passed.

The clustered honeysuckles will once again return
over garden walls to clamber at all costs,
and again toward evening, still more lovely,
they will blossom forth at last,

but not the ones, those weighted with thick dew,
those we once saw under trembling drops,
all falling there like late tears of the day,
they are forever past.

Once again the sound of all love's ardent phrases
will be returning as indeed they must;
your heart again no longer deep in dreams
will awaken then perhaps,

but silently and always kneeling
as at God's altar, even as one worships,
as I once loved you... believe it never,
no one will love you thus!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 88.

Wanderer's Night Song

by J. W. von Goethe

First Translation (Morpheus)

Over all ridges
Is peace.
Over all branches
Release
From breath's smallest shift.
The birds are resting from song.
Wait, and hardly for long,
Till: day's worries seers lift.

Second Translation (Dis)

Over all ridges
Is peace.
Over all branches
Release
From all signs of breath.
The birds are resting from song.
Wait! Your rest is the long
Vacation of death.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 90.

Note. Since these divergent concepts can be drawn from the same beautiful poem by Goethe, it might be possible to say that we have here an example of “comment in scission” as well as “in motion.” The final two lines of the original German are as follows: Warte nur, balde Ruhest du auch.

From “Die Heimkehr”

by Heinrich Heine

Novice lover, whosoever.
Luckless, yet results a god.
But whoever loves again,
Luckless loving, is a fool.

I, the greatest fool, am loving
Once again without return;
Sun and moon and stars are laughing.
Laugh along I shall—and die.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 91.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

—Wait but a moment, restless fancy,
For the victory is waiting;
Love and glory are there smiling.
Do they not flatter or enchain you?
—Leave me alone, forgotten, free.
In darkness I would wander vaguely
To receive illusion’s kiss,
There only, sweetly, without shame.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 92.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

The sun is expiring, and from the oaks
Withered leaves, at the impulse of the air,
In the silence of their twists and turns,

Descend into the mire,
They who in all purity and beauty
Came alive once with the April weather.

Now it is autumn, lovely and capricious—
How lovely and capricious is pleasure—
Since in the tomb of the dead leaves
Hopes and smiles are their only care.

The light extinguished, night finally arrives
Like pain and death, equally as somber;
The thunder bursts, the river overflows
Dragging with it victims in its waters;
And they are dying contented and happy.
How lovely and capricious is pleasure!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 93.

From “En Las Orillas Del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Hour after hour, day after day,
Between sky and earth with their long vigils
Ever remaining,
Dashed down in a torrent, life
Passes away.

Return the perfume once more to the flower
That is withering for lateness;
From the waves as they kiss the shore
One then the other, kissing, meeting its fate,
Gather the lament-filled sounding air,
Leave its harmony on bronze engraved.

Times now disappeared, smiles, tears,
Black rage and sweet prevarications.
Ah! Where, my soul, indeed, where
Have you left your traces?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), p. 94.

After the Festivities or The Evening of the Day of the Fiesta

by Giacomo Leopardi

Windless and clear the night and with a sweetness;
Quiet it is through gardens, over roofs,
And the moon rests: each end of distance is
A mountain's stillness. Athwart the balconies
Few of the nocturnal lamps come lighted through;
You are now sleeping, for no made-difficult slumber
Rules in your quiet rooms, no gnawing at you
Of whatever care; nor do you know or think
What wound you opened at center of my breast.
You now are sleeping; I go to see the guiltless-
Appearing heavens and that antique nature
Who presents herself omnipotent
And wrought me for my sorrow. I deny all hope,
She says, all hope to you—and with nothing
Will they sparkle—your eyes—but only tears.
The day has overwhelmed, but far from its allure
You take repose; you may recall in dream
The many pleased by you, and then the many
All so pleasing to you: not I, not that I could hope
To come to mind, your mind. Meanwhile I ask: of time
How much is mine to live; against the ground

I throw myself, shudder and cry out. O horrid days
In this green season! Ah, along the ways
I hear the momentary, solitary song,
The day-worker singing, the late-returning
After some distraction at the meager inn;
And wildly then my heart oppresses
For thinking all is but in passage,
And leaves so little trace. See! It is gone,
The festive day, and to it succeeds the vulgar
One where time then—time carries off
All human happening. Where now is the sound
Of ancient peoples? And where the cry
Of all the famed, preceding us, and that great empire

Possessed of Rome, the armies and the din
Now striding over earth, now over ocean?
All is peace and silence, and here the world
Comes to a stop, and spoken recollections too.
In my life's earlier hour, when I awaited
The festivities' enticement, I, thereupon,
When all was over, saddened, lay awake
Within the feathered softness; and late at night
A song, then heard among ways taken,
Was distancing, was dying more and more,
In similar manner, oppressive to the heart.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 104.

The Lake

by Alphonse de Lamartine

Thus ever compelled past succession of shores,
In eternal night irrevocably drawn,
Shall we never, not once, on the ocean of ages
Cast anchor at dawn?

O lake! Scarce touched is the end of the year,
And near beloved waves for her eyes rightly meant,
See! I come alone to sit by your shore
On the stone where we sat.

You always moaned through the deep-set rock
And shattered yourself on its uneven sides,
While wind flung the foam of your waves, O lake,
Where she went her ways.

One nightfall, remember, we sailed in silence.
We heard from afar, under sky, over wave,
The beat of the rowers sounding in cadence
As the waters laved.

Yet unknown to the earth, words of a sudden
Struck through the echoes athwart their charm;
The wave was attentive; in the voice of my dear one
The slow accents came:

‘O time, stop your flight! and you smiling hours,
Let your passage cease;
Let us savor together all the swift pleasures
Of this moment’s peace.

‘Many unfortunates beg you, implore;
Flow on for them, flow;
And end with their days all devouring care,
But joy’s end forgo.

‘I ask of you vainly a few moments more,
Time escapes me, is gone.
I say to this night, “Only be slower”;
Night scatters in dawn.

‘Continue, our love, in this fugitive hour,
Enjoy and make haste,
For man has no harbour and time has no shore;
It shifts and we pass.’

Do inebriate moments of joy, jealous time,
When love pours out happiness in a great flood,
Take flight with a speed in fashion the same
As days dull and sad?

Indeed! Is there nothing that we may preserve?
Is it all forever—ah! entirely—tost?
This time that can give, this time that removes,
Does it leave us with aught?

Blank naught, eternity, past time, somber chasms,
Where are the days your greed has consumed?
Tell us at last, where are those blisses
You should never have seized?

O lake! mute rocks! grottoes! forest obscure!
You whom time spares or can always revive,
Preserve of this night, preserve, lovely nature,
One mem’ry alive.

Possess it in quiet, have it in storms,
In the slope, dear lake, of your joyous shore,
Or in the black pines, in the savage rocks
Hung over your water!

Or there in the zephyr that shivers and passes,
In sounds from your shores that your shores repeat,
In the silver star’s brow that whitens your surface
With its soft light.

Let the reed sigh it and the wind mourn,
Let lightly the drift of your scented air,
And let everything say in sound, breath, vision,
“They have known love here.”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 106.

Sonnet III

by Louise Labé

O long-held desires! O hopes held in vain,
Saddest of sighs and destined tears
To engender in me all of these rivers
Of which my two eyes are spring and fountain;
O hard and inhuman, O cruel ways,
Compassionate gaze of all of the stars,
Of the pierced heart you initial passions,
Are you designing to heighten my pain?

May love upon me try all with his bow,
May he hurl new fires, let fly new darts,
Do all of his worst and fill with spite:

For I am so hurt—all over, I know
That on me new wounds can find no place—
Anywhere on me—to worsen my fate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 109.

The Bells

by Rosalía Castro

In the wind's low rumor
I love and hear them
Like the flow of a fountain,
The bleating of a lamb.

Suddenly, like birds,
Whenas in the skies
Appears the dawn's first ray,
They greet it with echoes.

In the notes' repetition,
Over plain and hill
There is something ingenuous,
Quieting, merciful.

If they turned silent,
What sadness in air and sky!
What silence in the churches,
Estrangement of all who die!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. iii.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”—70

by Rosalía Castro

It recalls the bird's trilling,
A kiss's quick whisper,
Sound running through forests
When through them the winds stir,
And the tempests at sea
And the rough voice of thunder—
In the harpstrings of genius
All find an echo there.

But that beat of heaviness
From the heart, grown sicker
With death—dying for love—
In the breast sounding here,
Like thud of a string's split
Within a sepulcher,
It returns in no echoes
Of a genius. Never!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. III.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”—60

by Rosalía Castro

Through the air's incandescence
The fox roams the abandoned ways!

The clear brook waters
Assume a brackish and unhealthful taste,
And inconstant lips of the breeze
Leave the pine motionless and waiting.

An impotent silence
Is draining the strength of space;
Only humming insects are heard
Among the humid reaches of the shade,
Monstrous and constant
As from death's throat and with like weight.

Indeed mid-day in such a summer
Well deserves the name
Of night in which man wearies of his struggle
Where more than ever irritate
Matter's imposition of its power
And the soul's infinity of pains.

Return, O nights of cold winter,
All our old loves of other days!
Come back with your frost and roughness
To refresh the blood enflamed
By summer sad and insupportable...
Sad! with thorns and branches trailing!
Cold and heat, Autumn or Spring,
Where! Where is all that is gay?
Lovely are all the seasons
For him who in himself has kept joy's ways,
But for the soul orphaned and desolate
There is no season smiling or fortunate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 112.

Diotima

by Friedrich Hölderlin

You endure and suffer, none comprehend you,
The holiest life, withering away and speaking not;
For, alas, infeasible among ruffians,
Though in sunlight, to seek out your own,

The souls great and tender, those not existing now!
But time hastens. Still not unperceived is the day
By my mortal song that, Diotima, alongside
The Gods with heroes places you, equals you.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 113.

Man's Praise

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Is my heart not holier, full of more lovely life
Now that I love? Why was I valued
When found more rebellious and proud,
Freer with words, and emptier?

Alas! Crowds enjoy the way of the market-place,
And the slave's awe waits on the powerful.
To the divine those only are drawn
Who themselves are so.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 113.

Empedocles

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Life is sought by you, truly sought, wavering up—sparkling,
Divine fire from the depths of the earth—
And you then shudder with longing,
Fling yourself downward in the fires of Etna.

So the exuberant queen fused the wine
With her pearls. A commendable deed! For did not you
All of your richness, O poet,
Offer up in the smoking chalice.

But you are all holiness, as the force of earth
That took you away from us, bravest of dying ones!
And I would follow you downward,
Were I free of love's hold, you the hero.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 114.

Des Morgens

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Aglitter the grass with dew; with greater stir
The limp brook hastens along; the beech bends
Her swaying head; in all her leaves
Goes a rustle and shimmer; through grey clouds

Weave streaks of red flame
Welling upward in still announcement;
As waves on shore, these inconstant ones
Heave ever higher and higher.

Come now, O come, and hasten not over-quickly,
You golden day, off to the peak of heaven!
For more open and trusting my gaze flies toward you,
You happy one, to you, so long as you

Look down in young beauty and not yet
Become overly splendid, too proud toward me;
Ever hasten, as you will, and could I,
Godly wanderer, but go with you! You smile

At my gay excesses, that would
Set me beside you; rather bless me then
And my mortal striving and once more glow
Kindly! on this quiet path of mine.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 115.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

I was not born for hatred, doubtless:
Nor was I born for the sake of love
Though hatred and love have come to injure
My heart in a way quite equally grave.

As the hidden rock in a mossy growth
Silent, alone at any stream's foot
Still and forgotten I would remain—
Alive without love, alive without hate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 125.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

A walk that is narrow, a pliant river,
The abandoned country and pinewood forest,
And, then, the old bridge so rustic and simple
Adding its grace to the desert quiet.

What leaves you lonesome? For the world's saturation,
Sufficient at times a single thought.
You take at this moment, overflowing with beauty,
Bridge, river, and forest as an arid lot.

No flower or cloud can ever enamour.
Heart, it is you, whether sad or contented,
Present arbiter of sorrow and pleasure
Who make a sea dry or a pole inhabited.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 126.

To the Moon

by Giacomo Leopardi

O moon of grace, there comes to me
Here at year's ending how on this hill
I came in anguish to look toward you again.
Over the forest, you hung there at the time
As you are doing now, clarifying all.
But shaken and nebulous in my eye's weeping
Your face appeared; such was my perception,
For troubled was my life, and still it is
Nor is there change, delectable moon,
And yet how comforting it is to me
To be recalling, running through the hours
Of all my pain again. Oh, how welcome
In the time of youth, when there is length
To hope, and briefness is memory's course itself,
The reviewing of whatever's past
Although so sad and with enduring grief.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 127.

Initium

by *Paul Verlaine*

Through singing of flutes, violins weaving laughter—
As the ball whirled on, I saw her pass,
Her blonde hair brightening the volutes of her ear
Whereto hope embarked, indeed, like a kiss
And wanted to speak, but hardly dared this.

She passed by, however, and the mazurka slowed,
With her swept in rhythm, no verse more indolent,
No rhyme more melodious, nor no image thus sparkled,
And her soul's candor shone through and at
The sensuous fullness of her eyes' green-gray light.

My mind, ever since, is fixing, grown still,
Evocation of splendour—in adoration;
Within memory of her as in some temple
My love has entered, in all superstition.
I recognize here the coming of passion.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 128.

From “The Regrets”

by Joachim du Bellay

France, mother of arts, of arms, and of laws,
The milk of your breast has flowed for my sake.
Now like the lost lamb which pathetically calls
I fill woods and caves with the sound of your name.

Shall I, O cruel one, hear you no more
Call me your own child? How long must I wait?
No-one but echo replies when I call.
France, France, reply to my sad complaint.

Among the cruel wolves I wander the heath.
I feel winter coming, whose cold river of breath
Runs over my skin; in horror I shake.

Ah, the rest of your lambs are not lacking food;
They fear not the wolf, the wind, or the cold.
Am I therefore the least and last of the flock?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 129.

Sonnet I

by Louise Labé

It was hardly Ulysses or a cleverer still
Who ever foresaw from that godlike air
Full of grace, of respect, and also of honor
The torments and woe that at present I feel.

However, my love, you have fashioned so well
The peculiar wound in my innocent heart,
Already your prey and your ardor's safe port,
That any relief is but grant of your will.

O hardening fate that is forcing me
At a Scorpion's point, that for venom's relief
Insists that to it I address my plea.

I ask only annoyance may be destroyed,
Not the longings extinguished dear to my life
For better without them, myself were dead.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 130.

Note. This poem appears in Italian in the slender volume of Louise Labé's collected works. Her other sonnets were written in French. All of her sonnets can be found now in translation in Numbers II, IV, and V of *Comment in Motion*.

Sonnet IV

by Louise Labé

To poison my heart from the very first,
Not a day may pass that I ever find rest
From the fury that burns in his sacred name.

Whatever my labors and great they seem,
Whatever menace and ruin next,
What thought of death, of all things the last—
Now nothing, my heart, may overwhelm.

The more that he, Love, comes forth to assail,
To hold our force back it does seem well,
And always refreshed we then shall be.

But he shows no favor in anything here,
Before gods and men has one paltry care:
To prevail against strength that all may see.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 131.

Sonnet VI

by Louise Labé

Twice-over fortunate—thrice, the return
Of clarity's star, and happier still
This object whereon his eye deigns to dwell:
To her a good day in complete possession;

May she proudly know that celestial turn
Which would kiss the gift that is Flora's all,
The exhaling sweet visions Aurora knows well,
And would ever itself on her lips maintain.

To me alone is this good over-due
For many tears lost and much time too;
But seeing him here, I would fête him no less

And using my eyes, indeed their power,
Would exert attraction on him still more,
In little time would make great conquest.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 132.

Sonnet VIII

by Louise Labé

I live, I die; I burn and I drown.
In extreme of warmth, I endure the coldness.
Life's soft, then hard, and each to excess.
All annoyances, joys weave about in confusion.

Of a sudden I laugh and am weeping again
And I find in pleasure tormenting duress.
My happiness leaves and it stays no less.
Of a sudden I wither and then I green.

Love holds me wavering in its tether,
And when thinking myself in sorrow finished
Without ever thinking am freed of dolor.

When at last convinced that joy is in store,
While I'm reaching at last the height of contentment
Love fully restores my unfortunate lot.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 133.

Sonnet X

by Louise Labé

When your laureled blond presence has made me aware
In the plaintive sound of the lute that you pluck
With ease constraining each tree and rock
To follow behind you; when arrayed you come here

With thousands of virtues in encircling air,
Secure in honor from approach or attack,
Extinguishing praise—its high flare spark by spark,
Then my heart will speak from its passionate core:

So many virtues that make you beloved,
That leave you by everyone always esteemed,
Are none of these able to leave you in love,

And add to the virtues so praised by all
The epithet also of being merciful,
That inflamed of my love you may sweetly live?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 134.

Sonnet XI

by Louise Labé

O sweetest of looks, O eyes full of beauty,
You little gardens of flowers amorous
Where are love's arrows all so dangerous,
O felonious heart, O brutal cruelty,

You arrest my eyes with longing to
Your conduct with me is so very rigorous,
Making my tears run in streams so languorous
Conveying the heat of my heart's own agony.

Thus, my eyes, you possess such very deep pleasure,
From his eyes receiving such good things whatever;
But you, my heart, the more they are pleased

The more you languish and feel annoyance:
You may wonder, indeed, if my unease be less,
While knowing my eye of my heart contraried.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 135.

Sonnet XIV

by Louise Labé

As long as my eyes are scattering tears
Regretting the loss of our time together,
Though my voice enough can manage to spare
Itself sobs and sighs so one comprehends,

As long as my hand produces tensions
In strings of my lute to sing your allure,
As long as my soul seeks its only cheer
In awareness of you and nothing else knows,

My wishes to die are yet unreal.
But whenever my eyes are a drying well,
My voice quite broken, my hand without strength

And my spirit here in its mortal stay
Without sign of love shows itself at length,
Implore Death blacken my clearest day.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 136.

Sonnet XV

by Louise Labé

With aim to honor return of the sun
The Zephyr apparels the once calm air
And wakens from sleep both earth and water,
That sleep which halted the murmur of one

In its sweetest flow and the other then
From wearing its flowers of unequaled color.
Already the birds make gladly aware,
Reducing all boredom to moderation.

In a thousand frolics now nymphs disport;
By their moonlit dance the lawns are attacked.
Give me, O Zephyr, of your treasured gladness

That therefore of you I may have renewal;
Make return of my Sun an act of his will,
And see him invest me with lovelier grace.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 137.

Sonnet XVI

by Louise Labé

When after a time of hail and thunder
Has beaten in strength a Caucasian summit,
The lovely day comes, invested with light.
After circling earth through his path of air,

Phoebus regains the realms of water,
And his sister appears at her pointing height.
If fighting Parthian enough time has passed,
He turns to fleeing with bowstring looser.

When plaintive, defying my temperate flame,
You were seen and consoled of me all the same:
But now as your presence leaves me consumed,

Arrived at the point of your once desiring,
Your flame in water has known a dampening—
With you become colder than I ever seemed.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 138.

Sonnet XVII

by Louise Labé

I'm fleeing the town, the churches, all places
Wherein in pleasure I'm hearing your plaint,
For you without effort might bring the constraint
Upon me of giving what most one esteems.

All tourneys and masks seem tiresome revels.
Without you what beauty is there to paint?
Endeavoring to leave desire extinct,
To form a new object in sight of my eyes

And lead me apart from the thought of love
I follow lonesomeness through thick of the grove.
But well I perceive, having strayed much about,

How if ever of you I at last am delivered,
From my very self [must live removed
Or ensure that my sojourn is elsewhere set.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 139.

Sonnet XX

by Louise Labé

Already foretold was my love's direction
Toward him whose person was all described,
With love's firmness too, and only thus painted
He was known to myself as quickly as seen.

When seeing him love in a fatal vein
I pitied him, who had sadly ventured.
Then to such an extent my nature was led:
As deeply he loved, I too loved then.

Who never would think that increase of favour
Follow Heaven and fate, what they will together?
When myself can observe the dim preparation

As resides in storms and the cruel winds,
The infernal judgments, to me it is known,
Were weaving me shipwreck from earliest times.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 140.

Sonnet XXII

by Louise Labé

O lighting sun, you are happy indeed
In seeing before you a friend's face forever,
And you, his sister, Endymion's lover,
On the honey of love intently have grazed.

Mars gazes on Venus; see Hermes reflected
In all skies and places where he may adventure;
A place comes often to notice of Jupiter
Where gay heated years were long since passed.

Therein is lying the mighty harmony
That is binding together their world of divinity,
But if everything loved were quite beyond one,

Their order and harmony now irreversible
Would turn to error as truly variable,
And even as I, they would labor in vain.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 141.

Sonnet XXIV

by Louise Labé

Reprove me not, ladies, if ever I loved,
Felt thousands of torches, their ardent flame,
Thousands of labors, of sorrows, like sum,
If, in my weeping, time is consumed

Alas! let my name be not always accused.
If I failed in aught, enough troubles have come.
Leave all their points no harsher from blame
But esteem that Love, in a trice revealed,

Without a Vulcan as excuse for your ardour,
Without such beauty as Adonis discover,
Might render yourselves indeed infatuate

In the having less than I a real occasion,
And with a stronger, a stranger passion.
And be preserved from things more unfortunate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 142.

Sonnet XXV

by Louise Labé

Alas for the day! I distrust its appearance
Since his eyes prepared to enflame my soul!
Love, why must it be our good fortune's goal
Is changing ever to hopelessness?

If one could perceive what comes perchance
In the way of complaints, pricks, and spoken ill,
If fresh flower's issue be no fragrance at all,
And always such days open out to such nights;

If known in advance his fatal power,
How quick my escape would have happened there!
Without further waiting, how quick myself gone!

Alas! Vacant talk! If the very sweet day
Could find its rebirth, when he came my way—
That bird of all lightness 'd go after then.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 143.

Apology

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Sacred one! with frequent troubling have I touched
Your golden god-given rest, and of the depths
Of life's deeper more secret pains,
You have learned from me.

Oh, forget this, forgive! Like the clouds there
Before the moon's stillness, I depart, and you
Rest and are gleaming
Once more in your loveliness.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 146.

Curtailment

by Friedrich Hölderlin

“Why so sudden an end, and not as formerly
Your fondness for singing? You found in youth
In the days of eagerness
Never an end for your song.”

Like my fortunes—my song. You would bathe content
In evening’s red glow? It departs. Earth is cold,
And before your eyes, night’s bird
Spins by uneasily.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 147.

The Unpardonable

by Friedrich Hölderlin

And the mind's depth belittled, meanly viewed,
God is forgiving; only leave untouched
Always the peace of the lovers.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 148.

Evening Phantasy

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Quiet in the shadows sits the plowman
At his dwelling door; for his frugal self the hearth smokes.
The evening bell's welcome greets
Through the friendly village the wanderer.

Ships enter harbours too, with good reason;
The active rush of the marketplace ends
In faraway cities; amid still leafage glows
The blessed repast of the friendly.

What of me? By effort and recompense
Thrives mortality; rest's succession to work
Is joy's source; why does the sleepless thorn
Find always a place in my breast?

All of spring is the blooming late sky:
Unavailing a count of roses, and the golden world
Shines in peace; there would I be carried off—
With you, purpling clouds! Might my sorrow and suffering

Escape into light and air ever upward;
But the charm flees disturbed by my asking
And folly; it is dark now, and alone
Under heaven am I, as ever I am.

Come now, sleep's softness! The heart
Is too eager; but finally, youth, your glow ends,
You, without rest but with dreams.
Now age is good humor and peace.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 149.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Always pale, the moon keeps silence,
Meanwhile covering the blue sphere,
Well followed by her retinue
Of every cloud and star,
Though wakening in my memory
The phantoms of my rancor.

From her such poison scatters deep
With slanting mystery and sweetness
That gladly I think how she, the “eternal,”
Too of necessity will pass.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 150.

From “Die Heimkehr”

by Heinrich Heine

You have many a pearl and diamond,
All things whereon men set store,
And your eyes are so very lovely.
Why, dear, are you wanting more?

For them, your loveliest eyes, dear,
How easy it was to pour
Love’s host of eternal poems.
Why, dear, are you wanting more?

Before your loveliest eyes, dear,
Tormented I adore
And you are leaving me prostrate.
Why, dear, are you wanting more?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 151.

From “Verschiedene”

by Heinrich Heine

How firmly my ear is pressing
Against your lips, my love,
While curious seagulls are glancing
From around us and above.

They are anxious to be knowing
Therefrom whatever springs:
Is my ear all filled with kisses
Or merely verbal things?

If myself were only knowing
Within my soul what swirls!
The word-and-kiss confusion
Amazes while it whirls.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 152.

The Lotus Flower

by Heinrich Heine

The lotus bloom's commotion
In presence of the sun
Leaves her head-lowered and dreaming,
Until his blaze is gone.

It is the moon, her lover,
Whose light can gently wake
Her countenance of chasteness,
Unveiling for his sake.

Alight, aglow, and trembling,
Struck dumb she stares above
Releasing her tears and fragrance
For love and the sorrow of love.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 153.

Psyche

by Heinrich Heine

Small, indeed, the lamp she carries,
Great the flame within her breast.
Psyche glides beside the sleeper,
Gracious on his couch of rest.

Color and vibration wring her
As she all his beauty sees.
Love uncovered, all revealing,
Waking, rises up and flees.

Eighteen-hundred-yearlong penance!
She, poor creature, almost dies.
Psyche fasts and suffers lashing:
Naked Eros met her eyes.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 154.

From “Lyrisches Intermezzo”

by Heinrich Heine

A star is falling downward
From a once enkindled height!
The star of love is falling
And I endure the sight.

There fall the leaves and blossoms
So many, from apple-trees,
Where winds drive with gay mischief
Whatever they may please.

The swan sings over waters
And draws itself along;
Soft voice and feathers are finding
A grave that is a song.

How still throughout the darkness
Is death of bloom and leaf.
The trace of star-flame scatters.
The swan song is as brief.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 155.

From “Lyrisches Intermezzo”

by Heinrich Heine

Through tears of mine come springing
Such flowers in ample bloom.
There's turning to choirs of nightingales
My heart in its surge of gloom.

If only you loved me, dearest,
All yours the blooming throng,
And outside your window ringing
The nightingale in song.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 156.

Moon Night

by Joseph von Eichendorff

It seemed as though the heavens
Had kissed the sleeping earth.
Within lit tides of blossoms
Her dreams had heavenly birth.

In fields the air was streaming
And swelling through the corn.
Soft movement filled the forests
All star-clear till the morn.

My soul's own wings were spreading
Themselves athwart the night
To fly through earth's high stillness,
Secure in homeward flight.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 157.

The First Poem Appearing in the “Vita Nuova”

by Dante Alighieri

To all captive souls, all hearts of gentleness,
Within whose sight these words will once have come,
May all now write to me how this appear to them,
Salute be to their lord, who's namely Love, no less.
Of stars' own time in heaven, one third had come to pass
Before their light would once again be dim,
When it had struck—that thing, the horrifying same—
When Love appeared in all its suddenness.

And Love seemed gay to me as he was holding
In his hand my heart; in his arms he had,
In cloak enfolded here, my lady sleeping;
He then awakened her, and at this heart all burning
She ate thereof, then shrinking back, was sad:
Thereon he left and with apparent weeping.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 167.

From the Last Pages of the “Vita Nuova”

(After the death of Beatrice) · by Dante Alighieri

Ah! Pilgrims forward moving bound to thought
Perhaps of things that are not present here,
From distant beings parting are you come therefor
To show us with your look: all this to demonstrate
As you unweeping through the city dolent—
Are in the act of passing—through the midst of her—
Like all those persons seeming to appear
As not to comprehend the gravity of it.

If you to hear it are a moment staying,
My heart in sighing is now telling this:
That, from hence tearful, you shall issue forth.
For she, the city, loses Beatrice,
And any word of her that one is saying,
To make all others weep will own the worth.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 168.

Madrigal

by Francesco Petrarca

The newest of angels on a prudent wing
Descended from heaven to this bank all freshness
Whereon I was passing alone through my fate.
She saw me unaccompanied, unguided going,
So in midst of that green way of covering grass
She spread the silk snare of a fastening knot.
Then prisoner I was, and scarcely displeased,
For in light from her eyes a sweetness issued.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 169.

Sonnet

by Francesco Petrarca

Solo e pensoso i piu desrti campi

Thoughtful and lonesome through the abandoned fields
I measuring go with slow withholding pace.
Wherever the sands are printed with man's trace,
My gaze is bent on fleeing such designs—
No other way to screen me from the eyes
Of people plainly staring in whatever place;
Outside myself, my burnt-out happiness
Reveals in acts all my internal fires.

Thus from henceforth, I think that shore and mountain,
Rivers, and forests will know well the nature
My life assumes, from others now concealed.
Yet for harsh savage paths I look in vain
Where love refrains from always coming there
For reasoning with me, and me with him indeed.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 170.

Sonnet

by Michelangelo Buonarroti

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto

No thought or thought's excess, no artist's excellence
Is not there circumscribed within the marble's self,
And only one there is, which ever may arrive:
The hand that singly serves intelligence.
Lady all pride, divinity, and lightness,
The good self-promised me, and equally my grief,
In you are hid; since I am outside life,
No sought-for end thereof in art may I possess.

The fault is hardly love's, nor of your beauty's share
Nor of your coldness, station, any great disdain;
Fault is my destiny, misfortune, or my fate
If in your heart both death and pity are
Now carried at one time, and my low skills have known
But to draw death therefrom, though I being passionate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 171.

Note. The opening lines of this version take their present form from the supposition that the pronoun of *col suo soverchio* refers to *concetto* and not to *marmo in sé*. The world owes much to the fact that Michelangelo regarded both syntax and anatomy as quarries serving his wonderful creative violence.

In Me la Morte

by Michelangelo Buonarroti

In me death only, in you my very life.
You can perceive, concede, apportion time;
In your control how long or briefly I shall live.

Your courtesy to me is happiness enough.
Blest is the soul unvisited by time.
Through you it contemplates the deity above.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 172.

Night

by Michelangelo Buonarroti

I place value on sleep, on turning to stone
While wrongdoing endures and also shame:
To be sightless, insensate is fortune and welcome.
Ah, but never to wake! Please keep voices down.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 172.

Sonnet

by Gaspara Stampa

Chi vuol conoscer, donne, il mio signore

Who wish a knowledge of my very own lord,
See, ladies, his aspect, gentle and sweet,
Youthful in years and aged in intellect,
Image of glory and also of valor,
With blondness of hair and animate color,
Of commanding figure and spacious breast,
And finally in action the actor perfect
But for being somewhat the inhuman lover.

Who wish a knowledge of me may come
To see one in semblance and all her ends
The image of death and martyrdom,
The lodge of whole faith and constancies,
Whose burnings, tears, sighings all end the same
Without her cruel lover less merciless.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 173.

Sonnet

by Gaspara Stampa

O gran valor d'un cavalier cortese

O great the valor of a courtly cavalier
Who into France is engaged conveying
The heart of a girl whom love was taking
With his eyes' fine splendor therewith a prisoner!
What of your promise? The two lines to temper
Sorrow of mine while, sir, you were making
Ways clear to the honor you were obtaining,
Whereto, unveering, you confined your desire.

Nonetheless, I read in the ancient tales
That illustrious heroes felt little disdain
For following equally both Venus and Mars.
Of the king you follow, it is also certain
In highest degree he assumes the two cares;
From lands east to west it is everywhere known.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 174.

From “Sur la Morte de Marie”

by Pierre de Ronsard

As aware of the May branch I notice the rose
In its lovely freshness, in the instant aflower,
By the heavens envied for her lovely color
That dawn with her tears at daybreak waters:

What a grace in her petal and a love repose
Enclosing trees, garden, in exquisite odor,
Yet rapped of the rain or overmuch ardor
She languishing dies as each petal uncloses.

Therefore in opening and springtime freshness
When both heaven and earth would honor your charm,
As a victim of fate, as ash you repose.

For graveyard farewells, here are tears and sadness,
One vessel of milk, one whose contents are bloom
So that breathing or not, yourself are all roses.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 175.

From “The First Book of Sonnets for Hélène”

by Pierre de Ronsard

With eyes fixed on Montmartre and surrounding fields
You spoke to me, dear, at the window standing:
“The solitary life in a desert passing
Surpasses the court and would certainly please.

In no time my spirit would govern my senses;
The day would go by in prayer and fasting;
Love’s flames and arrows would find me defying;
The blood-seeking god would graze other pastures.”

So I replied, “You mistake when you claim
That fire’s not fire when its cover is ashen.
Through sacred cloisters one sees passing flame;

In both cities and deserts love emerges, is born.
Since any god’s stronghold this god can storm,
Both fastings and prayers must prove useless then.”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 176.

Molière's Epitaph

by Jean de La Fontaine

Under this monument lie Plautus and Terence;
Molière, however, lies there alone.
He made them to live through his perception,
Together their art delighted all France.
The three have departed! I hardly have hopes
To see them again despite our endeavor.
For a very long time, it looks, perhaps,
Like the death of Plautus, Terence, Molière.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 177.

Epitaph for an Idle Person

by Jean de La Fontaine

Jean left the world about as he came,
His substance and interest gulped down at one time,
Since fortune itself he could well do without,
Nor was use of his time worth bothering about:
Just divided in two and kept busily going—
One part in sleeping, the other in resting.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 177.

El Desdichado

by *Gérard de Nerval*

I am the widower, night-filled, inconsolate,
Am Acquitaine's prince of the cancelled tower.
My one star is dead and my constellate lute
Wears the black sun of despondent care.

You who consoled me in the tomb's night,
Render me Posilipo and Italy's shore,
The flower pleasing my desolate heart,
The trellis where vine and the rose adhere.

Am I Phoebus or Love? Lusignan or Biron?
My forehead is scarlet of a kiss from the queen.
I have dreamed in the grotto where swims the siren,

A time and again won and crossed Acheron:
Shaping in turns on Orpheus' lyre
The sighs of the saint and screams of the fairy.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 178.

Note. Biron and Posilipo are both accented on the second syllable.

Vers Dorés

by Gérard de Nerval

Man, you free thinker! You assume that alone
You think among things where life's luster pervades?
Of your forces assembled, you in freedom dispose,
But from all your reflection the cosmos is gone.

Know the motion of spirit throughout brute creation.
For nature's dear sake the flower's soul opens.
A mystery of love in metal reposes.
'Everything feels!' You react to each one.

Now fear in blind walls an observing regard.
Since matter has words among its effects
Never thereof make irreverent use.

In the most obscure being may live a high God,
As eyes come to life beneath eyelid's cover,
Under rock's surface, spirit breathes pure.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 179.

Evening Harmony

by Charles Baudelaire

The hour arrives when each stem is vibrant,
The flower diffuses as does a censer;
Perfumes and sounds plait the evening air,
—Waltz of dejection and circling indolent!

The flower diffuses as does a censer,
A violin quivers like a heart men afflict;
Waltz of dejection and circling indolent!
Skies lovely and sad are a make-shift altar.

A violin quivers like a heart men afflict,
Heart tender but hating the vast nevermore!
Skies lovely and sad are a make-shift altar,
The sun is drowning whose blood will collect.

Heart tender but hating the vast nevermore,
From the luminous past gather all that is left!
The sun is drowning whose blood will collect...
I'm a monstrance agleam with your souvenir!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 180.

Correspondences

by Charles Baudelaire

From living shafts of the temple of nature
There escape confused words a time and again.
These forests of symbols traveled of man
Observe his movements with familiar stare.

Like the mingling of echoes ever prolonged
Through depth and darkness of some abstruse whole,
Vast as the daylight or spreading nightfall,
There pours the converse of scent, color, sound.

Some perfumes are fresh as small children's bodies,
As sweet as a flute's note or green life of a field;
Rich, prevailing, corrupt remain many others

Owning expansion of what has no end.
Like amber and musk, like benzoin, incense
Which sing the raptures of thought and the senses.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 181.

Contemplation

by Charles Baudelaire

Have patience, my sorrow, and stay ever calm.
You ordered the evening; = it descends and is here!
As the city envelops in air turning dim,
Some lives obtain peace and others but care.

Among all these mortals in nauseous swarm
Cold pleasure with whip goes after his prey,
Collecting guilt pangs at the fête of shame.
Take my hand, sorrow, and come away,

allt pact yea deca

Upon rails of the sky in robes once in fashion;
Where a Smiling Regret whirls up from deep waters;

Where a moribund sun through an arch falls asleep,
Where goes a great shroud, trailing Orient-wards,
Listen, my dear, for the night's soothing step.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 182.

The Albatross

by *Charles Baudelaire*

Often for pleasure, the crew, gathered on board,
Capture the albatross, vast birds of the sea
Who with indolent flight direct themselves toward
The far acrid chasms ships sweep over free.

These lords of the azure, confined to deck floors,
When suddenly dragged there, must let great white wings
Sadly trail at their sides like some pair of oars.
Their walk is embarrassed—the piteous: things.

The great wingéd traveller looks awkward and weak.
The wonder of loveliness turns homely and droll.
One sailor annoys him, a pipe at his beak.
His limping Sgr is mimicked by a merciless: soul.

The poet compares to this prince from the clouds.
The dweller in tempests laughs at risk in all things,
But exiled on earth among hooting crowds
His movements are fettered by giant-like wings.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 183.

Lola de Valence

(Inscription for a picture by Edouard Manet) · by Charles Baudelaire

When so many beauties are seen everywhere,
Desire, my friends, is moveless among them;
But in Lola de Valence a spark leaves one aware
Of the sudden charm of a rose and black gem.

Note: Valence is accented on the last syllable.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 183.

To Cordoba

by Luis de Góngora

O wall lifted up, O towers well-crowned
With majesty, honor, and brave display!
With sands ungilded you are noble always,
O river of grandeur, Andalusia's lord!
O great fertile plain, O sierras high raised
To touch the sky privileged, be gilded of day.
Here the sword and the pen have had equal say,
O country of mine for their glories praised!

If all with the ruins and ancient remains
By Genil enriched and Dauro gushed clean,
No memory of you was sustaining me here,
They would merit nothing, my absent eyes,
—Not your wall, your towers or even your river,
Your plain, your sierra, O flower of Spain!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 184.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Quicker than lightning now,
More winged ever than wind,
Restless wanderers unable to curb
Their flights always shifting,
The sky’s roof and sea’s depth
They scale and descend at will.

If they are impalpable, bodiless,
Varied and multiplied,
Why call them black thoughts
Or again call them white,
If they are the colorless soul-lords,
Eternal, beyond human sight?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 186.

From “*En las Orillas del Sar*”

by Rosalía Castro

Through the air's incandescence
The fox roams the abandoned ways!
 The clear brook waters
Assume a brackish and unhealthful taste,
 And inconstant lips of the breeze
Leave the pine motionless and waiting.

 An impotent silence
Is draining the strength of space;
 Only humming insects are heard
Among the humid reaches of the shade,
 Monotonous and constant
As from death's throat and with like weight.

Indeed mid-day in such a summer
 Well deserves the name
Of night in which man wearies of his struggle
 Where more than ever irritate
Matter's imposition of its power
And the soul's infinity of pains.

Return, O nights of cold winter,
All our old loves of other days!
Come back with your frost and roughness
To refresh the blood enflamed
By summer sad and insupportable...
Sad! with branching vines and grains!
Cold and heat, Autumn or Spring,
Where! Where is all that is gay?
Lovely are all the seasons
For him who in himself has kept joy's ways,
But for the soul orphaned and desolate
There is no season smiling or fortunate.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 187.

Wisdom

by Paul Verlaine

The sky is high above the roof
So blue, so calm.
A tree is up above the roof—
A shifting palm.

The bell is lost within the sky,
Gently ringing.
A bird is lost within the tree,
Singing, singing.

My God, my God, all life is there
This quiet day.
Urban hums come flowing there
From faraway.

What have you done, you who there—
Weep unceasing?
Say what has happened, you there,
With youth's passing?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 188.

Parsifal

by *Paul Verlaine*

Parsifal vanquishes feminine youth, its gentle
Babble, and amusement with vice, the fleshly love
A virginal male is likely to have,
The fondness for lightness of breasts and babble.

He vanquishes Woman, her beauty, her subtle
Heart, her arm's freshness, and breast's thrilling wave.
He vanquishes Hell, and his camp will receive
His coming, the trophy held by his puerile

Arm, the lance once piercing the sacred Side!
He restores the king's health, is himself royal lord
And priest of the holy essential Treasure,

In cloth of gold worships the glory and symbol,
True luminous Blood of the chalice, the pure,
—Oh, children's voices that sing in the cupola!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 189.

Note. This poem is not included with the other fluctuant syllabic verse because of the frequency of the enjambments and the peculiar cadence of the first line.

Prometheus

by J. W. von Goethe

Hang over heaven, Zeus,
Your curtain of cloud-haze.
Like the youth
Unheading thistles,
See what can be done
Against great oaks and heights;
But avoid striking down
This earth of mine
And my hut not of your making
And my hearth
And its glow
Envied by you.

I know naught more deprived
Under the sun than you Gods!
You find piteous nourishment
In imposing sacrifice
And prayer-breath
For your majesty
And are starving,
But for children and beggars,
Each realizing the idiot to the full
With his hope.

As a child then
I knew naught of direction,
My eyes in error turned
Sunward as though a farther side there
Held an ear alive to complaints,
A heart like my own
That showed pity toward anguish.

Who helped me
Against the presumption of Titans?
Who saved me from death,
From slavery?
Have you not brought all to its wholeness,
Heart's glowing holiness,
Were you not with your thanks for rescue
In youth and goodness glowing,
Defrauded through the sleeper on high?

On me hangs your honor? Wherefore?
Have you yet allayed the pains
Of the weary?
Have you smoothed away
The tears of the anguished?
Did not the forge of almighty time
And eternal Fate,
Masters of us both,
Make me a man?

Among your conjectures for me
Were perhaps a hatred of life,
An escape to some desolation,
Because little ripening came
To my dreams?

Here I sit and shape man
In my image,
A generation that resembles me
In its pain and weeping,
In its likings and joys,
And as heedless of you,
As I.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 190.

To our Great Poets

by Friedrich Hölderlin

The banks of Ganges waked to his triumph
As the all-conquering god of joy from
Indus proceeded with holy
Wine, from sleep waking the nations.

Poets, awaken! awaken also from slumber,
Who still now are sleeping, give laws, give
Us life, conquer, you heroes! for yours only—
The right to prevail, that of Bacchus.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 192.

The Gods

by Friedrich Hölderlin

You ethereal stillness! you are always
Fending for my soul among sorrows, and you Helios,
Are lifting toward new valor
My hurt breast with your rays.

Worthy gods! Poor are those not your familiars,
With crude conscience never resting from quarrel,
With their world become night, no joy
Prevailing there, nor traces of song.

Only you with enduring youth
Feed in hearts who love you the child-mind,
Never letting deviation and sorrow
Engulf genius in mourning.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 193.

Persuasion

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Exquisite life! you lie sick; and tired from weeping
Is my heart, and fear streaks dawning within me.
Still, still, I can never believe
In your death alongside your love.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 193.

To the Germans

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Never laugh down the child on his wooden horse
Making himself out a great one with spurs and whip,
For, you Germans, are you not also
Running over with thought, poor in deeds?

Or does it come—the deed, like lightning through cloud,
Emerging from thought? Is life drawn from books?
You whom I love, may you take me
As repenting this blasphemy.

The child is still in her mighty care.
The sun is this nursing dame
Who is giving him no quiet milk,
But only the wildest flame.
(From “Deutschland” by Heinrich Heine)

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 194.

Note. This poem was written in 1798 and is informed with a spirit like that of *De l'Allemagne* of Madame de Staël, which appeared some years later. It is appropriate to compare this poem with the lines Heine wrote some time before 1850 about this same child and his nursemaid, the sun. Heine reveals as in a fiery chrysalis the fearful German dynamism that was to make its imperial debut in 1870–71.

Ode

by Friedrich Hölderlin

With my boyhood hours
A God came to the rescue,
As free from harsh voices and whips
I played in sure innocence
With the blooms in the thicket,
And the airs of heaven
Played round me.

And as you rejoice
The heart of plants,
When toward you
Their frail arms are reaching,
You have lifted my heart,
Father Helios! And as Endymion
Was I one favored
Of the unsullied moon.

All of you intimate
True divinities,
You knew all
Of my soul's affection.
Certainly then I called you
Not by name, you too
Never named me, as mortals each other
Assuming acquaintance.
I knew you more fully
Always than man.
I saw into etherial stillness
But never into men's words.
Informed of airs blown
From the rustling grove
I grew, and learned love
Under the blossoms.
In the arms of the Gods was my increase!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 195.

Those Poets Affecting Faith

by Friedrich Hölderlin

You frigid dissemblers, leave out the Gods!
Reason is with you! You have no faith in Helios
And none in the Thunderer nor yet in the Sea-god:
Earth is dead and finds everyone thankless.

Be consoled, you Gods. Still their song's ornament,
Your names are there, though the soul gone out of it,
And when need comes for the word's full expansion,
Nature, our mother! then they think of you.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 196.

Return to the Homeland

by Friedrich Hölderlin

You mild-flowing airs! Proclaimers of Italy!
And you with your poplars, great endeared stream!
All you mountains in unbroken waves! You sunning
Manifold peaks, all of you here again!

Stillest refuge! How distant in dreams you shone
To the longing one at day's hopeless end,
And you, my house with lively companions,
Those hillside trees, my own best familiars.

How long is it, how very long! Gone is stillness
Of childhood. Youth, love, and delight are all gone;
Yet you, land who fathered me! you rest
In your visible patience and holiness.

Too endure as you, to be glad, dear one,
With your gladness, this you instill,
Reproving in dreams when, no longer
Loyal, one wanders astray.

When at last in youth's impetuous heart
The obstinate wishes are stilled,
Before destiny quieted, then only
It, no more resisting, surrenders.

Goodby then! youth, love's rose-path of days,
And all of the paths of the wanderer,
Goodby! and take then and bless
My life, skies over my home again.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 197.

From “Verschiedene” Seraphine

by Heinrich Heine

Wand’ring through the wood of evening
Under branches vague with dreams,
There I meet you, other wanderer,
Form that either is or seems.

Somewhere near a veil moves whitely,
Could it well conceal your face?
Or perhaps it is the moonlight
Breaking through a fir-dark space?

Tears of mine heard lightly running,
Really is it nothing more?
Not your present own dear weeping,
You yourself beside me there?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 198.

From “Lyrisches Intermezzo”

by Heinrich Heine

Through trees run the Autumn’s vibrations,
A chilling pervading crowd.
I ride alone through the woodland
Grey-cloaked as in wraps of cloud.

Ahead of me ride thought’s phantoms
Adopting my horse’s pace.
They are bearing me lightly and gayly
To my heart’s dearest fireplace.

The hounds are snapping, the servants
Appear in their candles’ glow.
With spurs making sounds of metal,
Up spiraling stairs I go.

Now gained is the light and fragrance,
The tapestried warmth-filled room.
‘Then into the arms of my dearest
For a lovely awaiting doom.

The wind is a rustle of leafage
Wherein declares the oak:
“Your witless ride, mad horseman,
Is a blend of dream and joke”.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 199.

From “Lyrisches Intermezzo”

by Heinrich Heine

My dream was filled with weeping.
I dreamed of you in the grave.
I wakened; my tears were over
My cheeks in a running wave.

My dream was filled with weeping.
I dreamed you were leaving me quite.
I wakened; my weeping was bitter
And reaching into the night.

My dream was filled with weeping.
We loved each other this dream.
I wakened; the tearful flooding
Continued a wearing stream.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 200.

From “Verschiedene” Seraphine

by Heinrich Heine

Sails parting the ocean’s wilderness
Their blackness sails straight through.
You know the sadness deep in me,
A sickness coming from you.

Your anywhere fluttering with the wind
Is showing your heart untrue.
Sails parting the ocean’s wilderness
Their blackness sails straight through.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 201.

Cassandra's Song

by Gil Vicente

Ah! "Marry," they tell me surely.
I have never a wish to marry.

Far better to live secure
On the mountain happier, freer
Than anyhow fortune unsure
As to marrying well or badly.
Ah! "Marry," they tell me surely.
I have never a wish to marry.

Mother, I won't be married
Or seeing the years turn tired
And even with falseness used
The grace God-given me.
Ah! "Marry," they tell me surely.
I have never a wish to marry.

Not coming or come to be born
For me is some marrying one;
I hold it indeed well-known
A flow'ring lives in me.
Ah! "Marry," they tell me surely.
I have never a wish to marry.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 211.

There's a Rose's New Life in the Garden

by Gil Vicente

There's a rose's new life in the garden.
How greatly I find to my liking
The sight of the nightingale
And its readiness to sing.

And now, down banks of the river,
The girl plucks the lemons there.
How greatly I find to my liking
The sight of the nightingale
And its readiness to sing.

The girl plucks the lemons there
To give to a friend of hers.
How greatly I find to my liking
A sight of the nightingale
And its readiness to sing.

To give to a friend of hers
The fruit in her silken hat goes.
How greatly I find to my liking
A sight of the nightingale
And its readiness to sing.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 212.

Cantiga

by Gil Vicente

Well-favored, truly, the damsel is,
How lovely, beautiful!

Mariner, tell me
From life board ship
If sail or ship or star ever was
Like beauty of hers.

Noble knight, tell me,
Armed, foot in stirrup,
If horse or arms or war was ever
Like beauty of hers.

Cowherd, tell me
While cattle crop
If cattle or valley or range appears
Like beauty of hers.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 213.

The Girl Is Really in Anger

by Gil Vicente

The girl is really in anger!
Ah, God! Could one address her?

To take the herd to pasture
The girl goes into the hills.
Lovely as every blossom,
In anger much like the sea's,
In anger much like the sea's
That girl there.
Ah, God! Could one address her?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 214.

Note. Gil Vicente was born in 1465 or near that date, Lope de Vega Carpio almost a century later. Both either preserved or adapted some of the most beautiful popular lyrics in order that they might be sung at certain points in many dramatic works. However, the “Cantiga” is said to be a completely original poem. The songs by unknown Spanish writers following those of Lope de Vega are taken from the famous collections, the “Cancioneros.” It is often not known whether a particular poem in them belongs to the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Gil Vicente was Portuguese, though these songs of his were written in Spanish.

From the Tree of Roses I Come

by Gil Vicente

From the tree of roses, Mother,
'The tree of roses I come.

There, where the stream is forded
I think the roses look red:
From the tree of roses J come.

There, where the stream is forded
I think the roses look red:
From the tree of roses I come.

I think the roses look red.
I plucked the roses and sighed:
From the tree of roses I come.

From the tree of roses, Mother,
The tree of roses I come.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 215.

Villancete

by Gil Vicente

On into the fight,
Brave cavaliers!
Since holy angels
Come here to help with it,
On into the fight!

Here with such dazzling arms
From sky hither flown,
In God's name, in man's name,
They call, "Help for the nation!"

On into the fight,
Fine cavaliers!
Since holy angels
Come here to help with it,
On into the fight!

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 216.

Song

by Garcilaso de la Vega

I keep from talking more
Now finding you offended.
Through dying in silence is said
Much more by far.

A great offense is given
To you with any words,
Whom talking really angers
Without a gain.

My tears herewith will scatter
Without a word from me.
This dying silently
I'll have for lawyer.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 217.

Song

by Lope de Vega Carpio

Naranjitas me tira la niña

The girl is tossing the orange fruits
There in Valencia's Christmastide.
Tossed her from me they'll only go
Again to orange blossoms turned.

From the maskers' wandering crowd
Her window drew me back.
Through her eyes the morning broke,
Their sun leaving me aware.
The little oranges from there
She tosses in an exultation;
All to her is all in fun,
Love farthest ever from her mind.
Tossed her from me they'll only go
Again to orange blossoms turned.

The girl is tossing the orange fruits
There in Valencia's Christmastide.
Tossed her from me they'll only go
Again to orange blossoms turned.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 218.

Song from “The Rustic in His Corner”

by Lope de Vega Carpio

Well enough! Fortune!
Let this olive be mine.

No olive more pleasant,
Green skin, delicate,
But inside wooden fruit,
All boldness to importune.
Well enough! Fortune!
Let this olive be mine.

Though ripe fruitfulness
Of fullest bitterness
Comes by the load, no less,
I need only one.
Well enough! Fortune!
Let this olive be mine.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 219.

Song from “The Silver Girl”

by Lope de Vega Carpio

Go along, sighings,
Where you always fare.
If my darling is sleeping,
Neglect to apprise her.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 219.

Song from “The Grand Duke of Muscovy”

by Lope de Vega Carpio

With what a whiteness
I entered the harvesting;
Now sun-ravished, I’m looking dark.

I used to be fair
Before the reaping;
The sun disliked seeing
White flame of my power.
My lily’s luster
Was youth, daybreak.
Now sun-ravished, I’m looking dark.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 220.

The Dead Lover

by Unknown Spanish Writer

Shrilly the Moorish damsel cries
Under the olive trees;
Tremors run through the branches.

Charming form of a girl,
Form of a Moorish girl
Weeping her lover's fall
Under the olive trees.
Tremors run through the branches.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 221.

Luna que Reluces

by Unknown Spanish Writer

Moon with your lighting
That sets night glowing!

Ay, moon with lighting
Pure and silvered,
All of night glowing
On my precious enamoured.
Moon with your lighting
That sets night glowing.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 221.

Song

by Unknown Spanish Writer

Mientras duerme la niña

While she sleeps in youth's freshness
The flowers, the roses,
The lilies, white lilies,
Come lending their shades.

On grassy verdure
The girl reposes
Where Manzanares
Comes rushing its streams.
The wind is not moving
The branches and leaves
Where the lilies, white lilies,
Come lending their shades.

The sun has obeyed her
And no further goes
As a lovely ray falls
From her mouth and eyes.
The birds are not singing
For seeing such glories
Where the lilies, white lilies,
Come lending their shades.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 222.

I Would Never Become a Nun

by Unknown Spanish Writer

I would never become a nun.
I'm a youthful enamoured one.

Forget me and all my pleasure,
My pleasure, my being glad,
And leave me alone, unsubdued.
[I'm a youthful enamoured one.]

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 223.

The Heron Goes

by Unknown Spanish Writer

The heron goes with depth in her wound,
The heron enamoured;
She lonely goes and she lately cried.

Where the nests of the meu eo
On intimate banks of the river,
She lonely goes and she lately cried.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 223.

Song

by Unknown Spanish Writer

Aquel caballero, madre

That cavalier, Mother,
Who sees himself my lover;
I'm dying and he must suffer.

Mother, that cavalier,
Who goes covered with love's wounds,
I also share his pains;
With them I'm dying here.
His love none any truer
Merits my saying here:
I'm dying and he must suffer.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 224.

Song

by Unknown Spanish Writer

Vie tonne

I saw the vessels' sails, Mother.
I saw nothing worth my care.

Mother, there are three damsels
Who come from another town
And in the flowing waters
Are washing blouses, their own,
All washing blouses, Mother.
I saw nothing worth my care.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 224.

All Is Night's Darkness

by Unknown Spanish Writer

If all is night's darkness
And the way no distance,
Do venture, my friend.

Now after midnight
Grief's cause will not come.
My luck keeps him home
And I born unfortunate!
He shows me his hate
In my living on troubled.
Do venture, my friend.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 225.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

As over your breast is leaning
Your melancholy brow,
I see how you resemble
A broken lily now.
To give to you the purity
That it and the heavens know,
You were made by God like the lily
Of gold and snow.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 226.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

XX

XX

Be always aware, if your lips once burn
From an atmosphere consuming unseen,
That any soul which can speak with the eyes
May easily kiss with a look alone.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 226.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

“What is a poem?” you say driving
Your eye in mine. How blue!
“What is a poem?” you are asking.
The poem..... it is you.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 227.

From “Rimas”

by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer

XXXV

No surprise your neglect! But your endearments
Surprised me greatly in an earlier day;
For whatever myself contained of worth,
That was beyond you an ample way.

Note: Numbers XX and XXXV really belong in the section for
fluctuant syllabic verse, but it seems preferable to keep all the
selections from ““Rimas” together.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 227.

Rondeau

by Charles d'Orléans

The summer's couriers run
To ready his quarters here,
And are laying a new floor-cover
Of flowers and verdure woven.

In spreading thick carpets of green
Through the country everywhere,
The summer's couriers run.

The hearts chilled by inertia
Are healthy, well-favored once more.
Winter, remove yourself, stir.
Thank God! You are quickly gone:
The summer's couriers run.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 228.

Song

by Charles d'Orléans

I scarcely take such kisses,
Those for appearance given
Nor those for friendship's gain.
Too many mere partakers!

Supplies run into thousands
With prices always down.
I scarcely take such kisses,
Those for appearance given.

You know of any precious?
The glad, the private one.
All others surely then
Are mere diversion of strangers.
I scarcely take such kisses.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 229.

Rondeau

by Christine de Pisan

If churchward I shall take my way,
I only go therein to see
A one as roses fresh and lovely.
There is no reason much to say,
Not anything to make a story
If churchward I shall take my way.

No path of mine can lead away
Where she remains unseen by me;
They call me fool (but fools they be)
If churchward I shall take my way.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 230.

From “Verschiedene”, Emma - 4

by Heinrich Heine

Emma, end the false confusion.
Am I crazy now from loving?
Or perhaps itself, this loving,
Only follows being crazy?

Ay, I'm tortured, darling Emma,
Now along with madly loving
And along with love's own madness,
Overall by this dilemma.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 231.

From “Lyrisches Intermezzo” - 51

by Heinrich Heine

I walk everywhere in the garden
Through the summer and early day.
The flowers are talking and whispering,
I aimless with nothing to say.

The flowers are talking and whispering
And staring in pity too:
“Do not mistreat our sister,
Pale melancholy you.”

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 231.

From “The North Sea”—7—(Third Lyric)

by Heinrich Heine

Golden shaking sparks from heaven’s
Eyes above through space are falling.
Night throughout and ever deeper,
Love inhaling, breathes my soul.

Very eyes of highest heaven,
Fill my soul and vent your sorrow;
Overflow my soul in pouring
Down the lucent tears of stars.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 232.

Helen

by Heinrich Heine

Enlivening me with carnal glow
You enforce your enchanter's will;
But once that glow is conjured up,
It is never, never still.

Indent your mouth against my own!
Man's breath is breath divine!
The dead are never satisfied
Imbibing souls like wine.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 232.

The Runenstein

by Heinrich Heine

Rock reaches into the sea ahead,
I seated thereby and dreaming,
The cry of gulls in the wind's shrill breath,
The waves awander and foaming.

Once many a love was surely mine,
And many an eager friend.
Around me the waves now wander and foam
At the whistling of any wind.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 233.

Descend, Sun of Beauty

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Descend, sun of beauty, for little
They heeded you; sacred one, they never knew you
Since never wearied and still
You were risen over the weary.

For me both your lowering and emergence are friendly, O light!
And well, splendour, are you known to my vision!
For a godlike revering stillness was learned by me
As Diotima ordered my senses with healing.

O you herald of heaven! How I listened
To you, Diotima! My love! How from you
To the day's gold with lit thanks
I looked upward. The lively

Rush of the streams was there, flowers from earth's darkness
Breathed with their love for me,
And over clouds' silver smile
The aether inclined in blessing.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 234.

The Zeitgeist

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Too long over my head in dark cloud,
God of Now, you are governing!
Every side is too wild and fearful, and things
Shatter and sway with my turning look.

Alas! Boy-like, I drop my gaze downward,
Seek salvation in caves away from you, and attempt
To find in my timidity,
O vibration of all things, the place of your absence.

Allow at last, Father, to my opening eyes
Your contact! Were you not first after all
With your spirit-awakening ray? Splendidly
You brought me lifewards, O Father!

Germination of holy power well comes from vine-shoots.
By a mildness of air in the wandered grove,
A heartening god meets with them,
The quieter mortals; yet with greater power you wake

The chaste soul of the young, instructing
The old in the knowing arts; only the base
Becomes baser, the sooner to end
When you, the shatterer, seize him.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 235.

Man

by Friedrich Hölderlin

Scarcely shooting up through the waters, O Earth,
Came mountain-peaks and with fragrance,
Breathing pleasure; and full of the lasting verdure
Of groves amid ocean's gray desolation rose

The first untouched islands; and joyfully
The eye of the Sun-God saw the newcomers,
Laughing flowers, children all of his own
Youth eternal and out of you born.

From the more favored of islands where unpausing
The air tenderly poured round the tree-trunks,
There lay under clusters of grapes, at mild night's end
In the dim break of morning's earliest hours

Born therewith, Mother Earth, your child of all loveliness;
And toward Father Helios in his first look upward
Goes the boy's recognition and wakes and chooses,
After trying sweet berries, the sacred vine

To nurse him; his maturity hastens; beasts avoid
Him, for quite other than they
Is man; he is likened neither to you
Nor the father, for in singular boldness,

Your joys and his father's high soul,
O Earth, are joined in him with your sorrows alongside;
Like Nature, like all the Gods' mother
With her grasp universal, would he form himself!

Ay! Therefore his arrogance drives him,
Earth, away from your heart, and your gifts
Are useless and also your tender hold on him;
He follows a thing in his rudeness preferred to you.

From fragrance of his shores' meadows must man
Venture forth over blossomless water,
And though his groves be shining in
Golden fruit, nonetheless he must dig

Caves into mountains, exploring the shaft
Far away from the cheerful light of his father,
Thus untrue to the Sun-God
Who disdainful of slaves laughs at care.

Therefore freer breathe birds of the forest
Though man's breast lifts with a prouder beat
And he in sight of obscuring future
Must also see death and fear it in loneliness.

And weapons against everything breathing, man carries
In fearful eternal pride; he in discord
Consumes himself and his flower of peace
Blooms not overlong in its frailty.

Is he not among all alive with him
The one most blest? But more deeply tearing
Is not destiny's hold in all-reaching requital
On the ignited breast of the strong one?

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 236.

Vanini

by Friedrich Hölderlin

God's scorner they called you? They left
Your heart heavy with curses and bound you,
Gave you over to flames,
Holy man! Oh, why no flaming return

Here from heaven for you, no blow
To the head for those slanderers, no summon of storm
That may toss their barbarian ash
Out of earth, out of homeland!

But she, whom you living loved, who took you
In death, sacred nature, overlooks
Mortal acts, leaving you and your haters
Absorbed into antique peace.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 238.

Rondeau

by Christine de Pisan

The river of sadness and spring of tears,
Here wid'ning to grief, to a bitter sea,
My poorest heart that feels so sharply,
All leave me submerged and drowned in troubles.

I'm plunged and driven in every harshness,
For round me wider than Seine run strongly
The river of sadness and spring of tears.

Their greater waves fall with greater largesse
As though fortune's wind were all about me
And leading them on with intent to carry
Me down unrelieved. How hard oppress
The river of sadness and spring of tears.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 240.

Rondeau

by Charles d'Orléans

Now weather is leaving her cloak aside,
Her mantle of wind, of coldness and rain,
And assumes at last an embroidered one
Lovely with sun, a gleam and cleared.

Not a single bird and beast abide,
But sing or call in their proper jargon,
“Now weather is leaving her cloak aside.”

The river, fountain, and stream are clad
In a livery pretty as ever worn,
Of jewelled droplets wrought and silvern;
New dress is the law for everyone:
Now weather is leaving her cloak aside.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 241.

Ballade

by Charles d'Orléans

In thick of the forest of Tiresome Sadness
It happened withal in making my way
I came to encounter the Amorous Goddess
Who enquired whereat I was wont to stay.
I answered, "By fortune I'm being made
In exile's wood to live time's passing,
That ever rightly I must be named
The man astray who is choosing wrong."

In her manner of smiles and humbleness
Came answer to me: "If I only could say
Why yourself, my friend, endure distress,
My every power would tender aid.
It is long ago since I sought to place
Your heart all in pleasures. Who forced its undoing?
In you how displeasing to find of late
The man astray who is choosing wrong!"

"Alas! Let me say, my sovereign Princess,
You know my condition. What's left to relate?
By effort of death comes widespread rudeness
That has carried my dearest so far away
Who every hope that I owned contained,
Who guided me; while she went along
Through her living years I never became
The man astray who is choosing wrong.

One walking blind has no help from day.
In finding my path I must use a cane
To grope about wherever I'm going.
Great is the pity that keeps me the same:
The man astray who is choosing wrong."

Note: It is advisable that the reader of fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the poems in the first section of this volume. This poem would seem to have some relation to the life of its

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 242.

Rondeau

by Charles d'Orléans

Strike no longer on door of my thought;
Care and attention, be annoyed no more,
For thought is asleep and would stay unwaked
Having wasted her night as a sorrower.

Herself endangered, since no-one has thought:
Leave her asleep while yourself withhold there.
Strike no longer on door of my thought;
Care and attention, be annoyed no more.

For sake of her healing, Good Hope has thought
Of readying now this cure for her:
Unlifted her head from the pillow's feather
While here with repose it is recompensed.
Strike no longer on door of my thought.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 243.

The Enemy

by Charles Baudelaire

My youth was only a darkening storm,
Crossed here and there by emerging bright sun.
The thunder and rain with such havoc are come
That few reddening fruits remain in my garden.

I finally arrive at the Autumn of values
With the need of using the rake and the spade
To heap up again the overflowed sods
Where holes have been hollowed like graves for the dead.

Who knows if my dream of flowers again
Will find in this soil over-swept like a shore
The mystical food that gives force for existence?

O sorrow! O sorrow! Time eats away then!
A vague foe in gnawing the heart to its core
Strengthens and grows on the blood of our loss.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 244.

Man and the Sea

by Charles Baudelaire

Love of ocean, free man, is deep in your heart.
The sea is your mirror; you are viewing your soul
In the infinite lengths which the waves unroll,
A gulf no less bitter resides in your spirit.

You joyously plunge in the breast of your image.
Your eyes and your arms embrace it; waves come
Alluring your heart from its shadowy hum
In a noise of complaint unconquered and savage.

You are both set apart for darkness and care.
Man, no-one has sounded your deeper abyss.
Sea, no-one discerns your intimate richness.
Of whatever you hold, you want none aware.

And yet during centuries endless in numbers
You wrestle together sans pity or stay.
By courage and death you are carried away,
Eternal contenders, implacable brothers.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 245.

A Taste for the Void

by *Charles Baudelaire*

How lovingly, spirit, you greeted a fight;
But hope, whose spur once ignited your ardor,
No longer straddles you! Wherever you are,
Old horse, your foot stumbles; sleep without let.

My heart, be resigned as a sleeping brute.

Fatigued spirit, vanquished! For you, old marauder,
Now love is flavorless as much as dispute.
Farewell, music's brasses and sighs of the flute;
No longer tempt, pleasures, a heart pouting and somber.

The Spring is losing her adorable odour!

Time swallows me down more and more every minute
Like some immense snowfall a body grown stiffer;
I am after no cabin serving as shelter
As I view the round globe from a mental height.

Embrace me, some avalanche, in quick descent.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 246.

Octave

by Michelangelo Buonarroti

I now have bought for you, though very dear,
A little pase something & with a pleasing scent,
For odor-told, I often know the street whatever.
Wherever you may go or I am at,
Without a doubt, I shall be clear aware.
If you conceal yourself from me, I pardon it.
Though turning blind, I'd find jyou thes
You carrying this wherever gone.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 247.

Madrigal

by Francesco Petrarca

Or vedi, Amor, che giovanetta donna

You gather now, Love, how merely a damsel
Owns neglect of your reign, of my sickness' care;
With two enemies now, she still is secure.

You are taking up arms, while she, robed, hair acurl,
Shows, seated, feet slipperless in grass and flowers,
Against you a pride and me pitiless ways.

I'm taken prisoner. If your bow now holds
Withal any mercy, an arrow whatever,
Seek your vengeance and mine; O seek it, signore.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 248.

Madrigal

by Francesco Petrarca

Non al suo amante piu Diana piacque
Hardly more pleased was Diana's lover
By an equal chance when seeing her stand
All naked amid the chilling water
Than the shepherdess leaves me when rustic, rude
She readies herself to wash a veil fit
For hair of L'AURA lovely and blonde.
I find myself made, though skies glow ardent,
To shiver therewith from an amorous frost.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 249.

Sonnet

by Francesco Petrarca

Movesi il vechierel canuto e bianco

With whitening hair the old man moves far
From the place of sweetness with years procured,
Away from the family, leaving them troubled
When seeing the father dear to them weaker,
His ancient frame being hauled therefor
Through the final days that remain to be lived,
His goodly intentions his one possible aid,
Of all roads weary and broken with years:

He comes to Rome in accord with his will
To behold the likeness, indeed, of him
Whom again in heaven he hopes to see.
Alas! At times, I am seeking as well
With all effort, my lady, through crowds of them
The form really yours, desired by me.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 250.

Sonnet

by Francesco Petrarca

In qual parte del ciel, in qual idea
Wherein what sky or idea, where
Was image ever by nature found,
The fine lightsome face with which she could
Unveil here below high workings of air?
Afloat on the breeze was such golden hair
From nymph among springs or goddess through wood?
Were ever such virtues by a heart collected,
Though of guilt in my death when added together?

In vain he is looking for beauty divine
Who never has seen those eyes of hers
As ever so smoothly toward him they turn,
Has never studied love's slayings, cures,
Who has never heard her sweet sighs drawn,
How sweetly she speaks, and sweetly smiles.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 251.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

No va solo el que llora

Scarcely alone is the one who weeps.
Tears, never desert me, for mercy's sake.
One sorrow only suffices the soul
And never a joy may do the same.

Destiny's plaything, husk of humility,
I rolled in sadness lost and away
But carried everything needed along—
For company carried my pain.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 252.

From “En las Orillas del Sar”

by Rosalía Castro

Alma que vas huyendo de ti misma

Soul running ever away from self,

Th rough others Ww. whereto h has this hi wi d n ess led?

If consoling fountains are dry within you,

Dry are all fountains you’ll ever find.

How evident still that stars are in heaven

And over the earth perfumed flowers again,

Though not any thereof in the shape of those

Whom, loving you then, you loved, mournful one.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 253.

Sonnet

by *Pedro Calderón de la Barca*

Estas que fueron pompa y alegría

All these that are pleasure and rich display,
Whose first moments awake come in dawn's first whiteness
Late in the day will be pitiful transience
In night's arms forever sleeping away.

These gradations of splendour surpassing the sky.
A rainbow striped scarlet and gold, snow, ice
Will serve as a lesson to the life of the race:
Excessive the effort enclosed in a day.

To flower, the roses awoke in the dawn
Only to age with their rapid flowering:
Cradle and tomb in one bud are seen.

iraе men have been always faring;
Their lives in a day are come and gone
nd centuries consumed as hours pouring.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 254.

Varied Stirrings of His Heart Afloat on the Waves of Lisi's Hair

by Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas

In ringlet tempest, in waves of gold
My heart is swimming through gulfs of light
Ardent and pure, and knows beauty's thirst
When your headdress is freed in shower downward.

This Leander's sea is a storm impassioned
When love is revealed where life is lost.
Icarus' glory with wings now burnt
Discovers death as a path through gold.

With a phoenix' pretensions and weeping where
It watches the last of its charring hopes,
From its very death it would life engender.

Its hunger and punishment imitate Midas
Rich, avaricious, yet poor in treasure.
In coy golden fountain, the heart is Tantalus.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 255.

On the Briefness and Fugitive Nature of Life

by Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas

All in its wake the year's briefness carries
Of mortal existence, mocking the vigor
In marble's coldness and steel's bright valor,
Confronter of time that compactly dares.

Before foot learns how it comes and goes,
Life moves toward death and appears obscure
For it is a poor and turbulent river
Absorbed by black sea in lofty waves.

Every short moment is one step's length
Unwillingly taken through travelled day;
Whether standing or sleeping, I'm quick enough gone.

Briefest of sighs, the last and most loath,
Death is inheritance, forces its way,
But legal, not penal—no cause for affliction.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 256.

Tidings of Death

by Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas

Once they were strong, though later to crumble,
The walls of my land where I fixed my gaze.
They were tiring now with the passing times
By reason of which their valor turned frail.

To the fields I hastened, where sun drinks all
It desires of streams, the loosed ice of waters,
And there by the forest knew herd's complainings
Of the loss of light that the shadows steal.

I entered my house; I saw how the plunder
By years of usage had left it stained;
My staff was bent and no longer sturdy.

I knew that my sword was time's to conquer;
I found no object where my eyes now rested
That was without death as a present memory.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 257.

COMPLETE PROSE

Stage IV | Essays, editorials, reviews, and the 1947 feature

Prosody for Free Verse

1. In free verse the ictus distribution or occurrence of accent is not used to establish patterns exacting conformity and repetition, but to provide textural contrasts. A free verse poem contains a variety of prosodical feet in unanticipated juxtaposition even as a variegated petal or leaf is characterized by irregular areas of more than one tint.

2. In free verse there are three distinct types of lines: dissyllable lines, trisyllable lines, and wavering lines.

A dissyllable line, (the terms, dissyllabic line and trisyllabic line, can not be used in this connection, since they imply a line composed of only two syllables and a line of three syllables respectively), is a verse composed of dissyllabic feet such as iamb, trochee, pyrrhic, and spondee in any order, number, or arrangement as long as the trend towards dissyllabism is quite definite.

A trisyllable line is a verse composed of trisyllabic feet such as anapest, dactyl, amphihrach, etc., in any arrangement that leaves the trend towards trisyllabism clear.

A wavering line is a line wherein the arses are so distributed that the trend of the line “wavers” between trisyllabism and dissyllabism.

3. A free verse poem may be composed entirely of any one, two, or all three of these types of lines with only one thing necessarily uppermost in mind, that the

chosen movement or movements, and shifts of movement, suit the subject of the poem and the emotion it arouses, although for purposes of attaining a contrast in texture, juxtapositions of a dissyllable line and a trisyllable line are often effectively employed.

4. There are lines not composed entirely of trisyllables or dissyllables, and yet not “wavering” between dissyllabism and trisyllabism, since a majority of the feet definitely go one way or another. If the majority of the feet are dissyllabic, then the line may be called a tightening line. If a majority of the feet are trisyllabic, such a line may be termed loosening. If the line has an equal number of trisyllables and dissyllables, the character of the line is then determined by the final foot.

5. Feminine and masculine endings are not a factor. A final iamb followed by a thesis should be considered an amphibrach in scanning free verse.

6. From the foregoing it is plain that anyone employing free verse as a medium of expression should have had some experience in the writing of conventional verse and have studied it with great care.

Publication. *Variegation* (January 1946), p. 21.

Prosody for Free Verse

(Continued from January issue)

7. Accent, the very core of prosody, is important in free verse and determines the character of a line by regulating the length of its component feet. By this it is not meant to convey the impression that an accent must occur within each foot. An accent standing outside of a pyrrhic (two weak syllables) makes possible the determination of such a foot, although it does not form a part of it.

8. Wherever there are alternative trends within one line, which are unrelated, (such as dissyllable along with loosening, trisyllable along with tightening, etc.), they are attributed to the wavering category.

9. If there are related alternative trends in a line, the line is more properly attributed to that one which happens to belong to one of the distinct types rather than to its variant.

It is assumed, therefore that when a line hesitates between the two forms of dissyllabism (the dissyllable line itself and its variant, the tightening line), such a verse is more properly considered a dissyllable line.

Example: "Amid the riot of austerities"

Above line as a dissyllable alternative: iamb, iamb, pyrrhic, iamb, pyrrhic (or iamb if the natural impulse to dwell on the last syllable is considered as the equivalent of accent).

Above line as a tightening alternative: iamb, amphibrach, anapest, pyrrhic (or iamb).

Final analysis: The line can be called either dissyllable or tightening, but is more properly ascribed to the distinct type (the dissyllable line) than to its variant. Therefore, it is analyzed as a dissyllable line in this instance.

10. The same factors hold true in the case involving alternatives within one line of the distinct type or archetype, the trisyllable line, along with its variant, the loosening line. Such verses are more properly labeled trisyllable lines.

11. Lines composed wholly of monosyllabic feet and irreducible quadrisyllabic feet are regarded as intensifications respectively of the natural

tight and loose textures of dissyllable and trisyllable lines.

12. A quadrisyllabic foot occurring in lines along with dissyllables and trisyllables is either classed as one expanded trisyllabic foot or two dissyllabic feet. Choriambes and some paeons are frequently irreducible and therefore counted as trisyllables. With the aid of the pyrrhic, such feet as anapestic paeons and dactylic paeons break down naturally into pairs of dissyllables.

13. A verse or line ceases to be a verse or line and approximates the paragraph of prose to a great degree, when it exceeds six feet. A long line ordinarily has diluted stichic qualities. Such verse should be rearranged or poured into the mold of prose. A prose poem is not free verse; it is intensified paragraph. All prose has good or bad potential stichic qualities. Idiomatic speech often possesses excellent stichic qualities.

14. There is quite a body of free verse that employs wavering lines and the variants, tightening and loosening lines, to the exclusion of the archetypes, dissyllable and trisyllable lines. Such *vers libre*, as a class, can be called variant verse or variant free verse. Its disadvantage seems to be that it is hemmed in by negative restrictions, as if it did not dare employ and must carefully avoid certain rhythmic pulses. All other free verse is truly free, in that it does not seem dominated

by the need of consciously excluding rhythms, but rather distributes them, so that interesting contrasts in texture are obtained which conform to the shifts in mood of a poem. Variant free verse, in spite of this limitation, is a splendid medium for the dynamic poet who is bent on producing powerful somber effects.

15. In explaining these terms, I have employed the rigidities of definition, because that is the only way the exposition of a concept can be made. However, all of these terms are to be employed freely in the way that will best reveal the variegated textures of free verse in much the same unhampered way that a critic of painting searches for horizontals and verticals, areas of light and dark, and other contrasting elements that go to make good composition.

Publication. *Variegation* (April 1946), p. 20.

Poem Review: “Train Journey” by Judith Wright. Reprinted from “Meanjin” in “Poetry Awards 1949” (University of Pennsylvania Press).

Judith Wright does not describe the endless Australian landscape with its small heroic trees; she experiences it as it moves past her train window “purposeful under the great dry flight of air.” She can assume this attitude of familiarity or identification, because, in her case, it is the “country that built my heart.” The poem draws its emotional momentum from the earth’s very core; this centric tension tends to displace even the speed of the train. The trees, delegated by the poet to be the symbol of all living things, are implored to fill themselves with a sense of obligation toward the vast inorganic portion of the universe:

“Be over the blind rock a skin of sense;
under the barren height a slender dance.”

In Judith Wright Australia has a voice that speaks not only for the people of a young nation, but for the very soil of a mysterious continent.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. V, No. 1 (Winter 1950), p. 18.

*Poem Review: "Warming the Hands" by
K.A.W. Poetry: The Magazine of The
British Poetry Association, Autumn, 1949.*

The question is asked whether the coming of Spring is experienced by the plant world as a painful wiry sensation comparable to that of the revival of frost-bitten hands. The sinewy rhythm of these pentameters and hexameters conveys this "agony of spring" which is "making brittle twigs/Supple again in suffering." The implication of the poet's query extends to all growth and flowering. Must all beauty be won at such painful cost: "And petals bloom like blood, and gathered pain Cries out in consummated ecstasy?" No one will accuse K.A.W. of approaching Primavera with the usual zephyrs nor any of the other familiar blandishments. Even "ecstasy," usually so overworked, serves here to carry an intense and very modern connotation.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. V, No. 2 (Spring 1950), p. 18.

Poem Review: “Radio” by Irene Bruce, from the book, “Night Cry” (Poetry West).

This poem forces upon us one gratifying conclusion. Irene Bruce is an original poet. She may at times display a lack of erudition, but if she were a *bas bleu*, would she still be able to approach her subject in verse that contains these welcome surprises:

"Octopus of air,
you siphon sound
threshing shores of silence..."
"Conceived of space
you grow enormous of nothing..."

Mrs. Bruce knows how to take this invention apart better than any mechanic, and she does not bother to put it together again. There is a certain very real air about all her dissections which will become apparent to readers of her remarkable new book, "Night Cry." It would be doing Mrs. Bruce an injustice not to add that she is a versatile poet whose other poems display a number of rare qualities.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. V, No. 3 (Summer 1950), p. 18.

"The Fish" by Marjorie Boulton. Poetry London, February 1951.

Twenty of this poem's twenty-four lines are consumed by an apostrophe to a remarkable fish, in which it is implored to take a ring on its fin to a lover four thousand miles away. Although the choice of go-between is the sort of thing literary critics often find objectionable, it is impossible to deny that every line of this lyric is penetrated by a passionate energy and a feeling for the sea. The emotional reality succeeds in sweeping aside any unreality of situation.

Once we hear that the fish is "Silver and free to move/Like mercury and laughter," we know that its embassy will be effective and that the woman "on the wet pleated sand" has reason to listen thankfully to.

"Winds and oracular voices
And music under my feet
Where the lost heart rejoices
And earth and water meet."

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Spring 1951), p. 18.

The Disciplines of Freedom

In free verse, the nature of metrical effects due to contrasting rather than corresponding textures can be determined. However, the control of these contrasting textures is possible, because despite the infinite varieties of movement within different lines, each verse is a unit which can be ascribed to one of a limited number of categories. Free verse moves from one to the other of these categories in response to the demands made upon it either consciously or intuitively. These points were covered in greater detail in the first two issues of *Variegation*.

The writing of free verse relates to the control of spontaneous forces. Conscious control of these forces is important not only for its own sake, but, in addition, it may demonstrate possibilities which can be extended in some other guise to the social system. Society, too, is searching for formulas which will permit it both discipline and freedom. An understanding of the nature of freedom in verse may presage a similar grasp of what constitutes freedom in society.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VII, No. 25 (Winter 1952), p. 17.

The Resurrection of a Term

Two decades ago Mr. T. S. Eliot declared that his vers libre like that of Jules Laforgue was free verse “in much the way that the later verse of Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur, is free verse,” and that “no vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job.”

It is evident that while Mr. Eliot was holding free verse at arm’s length, he was very definitely holding on to it. This gesture of repugnance in combination with a claim of possession intimidated writers by its very complex nature, and it left Mr. Eliot in a position to continue writing his own very interesting vers libre.

However, in more recent years, Mr. Eliot does not seem to be holding to this attitude with its constricting tendencies. It is, indeed, admirable of him to have made public these shifts in position. In his study of Milton in *The Sewanee Review* (Spring, 1948), he shears away the tendrils attaching his disdain to free verse in these words (after quoting a critical statement by Samuel Johnson relating to Miltonic blank verse):

Some of my audience may recall that this last remark, in almost the same words, was often made, a literary generation ago, about the “free verse” of the period: and even without this encouragement from Johnson it would have occurred to my mind to declare Milton to be the greatest master of free verse in our language.

Mr. Eliot’s use of quotation marks in his allusion to the free verse of a previous generation might imply that he doubts the validity of his own work of that period as well as that of Pound, Sandburg and H. D.; but, here, at last, the gesture of odium is gone, and the harm is more than half undone. In the second mention of free verse, even the quotation marks drop away, leaving the term as the central blazing facet in Mr. Eliot’s elaborate compliment to the author of *Paradise Lost*.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VII, No. 26 (Spring 1952), p. 38.

Counting Stresses in Free Verse

Reckoned accentuality characterizes a considerable body of free verse wherein it signifies a chosen count of stresses to the line with much less regard for the number and position of the unaccented syllables. T. S. Eliot made use of this principle in the free verse of *The Cocktail Party*. It is, perhaps, outside the scope of these two paragraphs to consider Gerard Manley Hopkins' sprung rhythm in this connection.

Some free verse with these tendencies does appear in *Variegation*, although a preference has been shown for poems without a set number of stresses to the line. *Vers libre* of this latter type is to be found in such poems as Pound's "The Return" and "Andenken" by Friedrich Hölderlin. Such free verse ordinarily evinces a more subtle disposition of accented and unaccented syllables than that holding to a reckoned accentuality; it promotes more feeling for the contrast in texture of dissyllabic with trisyllabic feet from line to line.

Publication. *Variegation*, Vol. VII, No. 27 (Summer 1952), p. 57.

Correction Relating to the Summer Editorial

The misprint in the first sentence of the second paragraph of the editorial on page 57 of the previous issue (Summer 1952) is a rather serious one, since it might convey a false impression of this magazine's policy. The sentence should read as follows:

“Some free verse with these tendencies does appear in *Variegation*, although a preference has been shown for poems without a set number of stresses to the line.”

Publication. *Variegation* (Autumn 1952), p. 78.

Fluctuant Syllabic Verse

In the seventeenth century, attempts were made to interest readers of English poetry in adaptations of the French Alexandrine. At that time it was not realized that a large percentage of French classic Alexandrines were susceptible of being counted in two ways; in other words, there existed a *de jure* Alexandrine and a *de facto* one. The *de jure* Alexandrine was a twelve-syllable line, but the beauty of this classic measure issued from the gently swaying fountain of a fact that twelve was not always twelve in the spoken, *de facto* Alexandrine whose variations reappear in the fluctuant syllabic verse in the first section of this volume.

Firstly, the fission of some French diphthongs adds to the syllabic count. Secondly, within the line, the letter “e” in cases where it is usually not pronounced in French, was considered pronounceable theoretically and then counted as an extra syllable. In actual practice this extra syllable was in a large number of cases not uttered, and thus the Alexandrine became flexible, and a certain rhythm entered the citadel of classic French prosody. To this day the camouflage persists with such success that most people pay no attention to a presence that governs the cadence of the French verse of several centuries, but accept this flexibility without giving it conscious recognition.

The French Alexandrine is very often recited as a nine, ten, eleven or thirteen syllable line. Counts have been taken of the number of syllables in classic Alexandrines spoken by experts at the Collège de France, and these variations have been substantiated.

In my translation of Alexandrines and of decasyllabic verse in this volume, I have employed these variations, though I did not find it possible or necessary to pay attention to the occurrence of the letter “e” since English is governed by different laws of pronunciation from French. One might say that an invisible letter “e” as a kind of guardian angel has accompanied me in this experiment.

The translations in fluctuant syllabic verse contain all these variations of the twelve syllable line (lines where twelve is not twelve but nine, or ten, or eleven, or thirteen) and also the varying hemistichs and placements of the internal caesura. Here is a list of these lines accompanied by indications of the variations in the hemistichs (in parentheses):

Nine (four and five, five and four)
Ten (five and five, six and four, four and six)
Eleven (six and five, five and six, four and seven, seven
and four)
Twelve (six and six, seven and five, five and seven)
Thirteen (six and seven, seven and six).

For example, one should be able to find in a decasyllable one of the three pairs of hemistichs in the syllabic arrangements listed within the parentheses following the word “Ten”.

In these pages the French rule of ending the first hemistich in a line on the accented syllable has not been followed closely since the pronunciation of English does not call for the exclusive fall of the accent on the last syllable of words. The caesura under consideration is the one near the center of the line, and the natural ending of a phrase usually determines it. Where the phrasal structure fails to indicate the attribution of a monosyllabic verb to one or the other of the hemistichs of a verse, the verb in question should be assigned to the line’s second hemistich.

Note: It is advisable that the reader of fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the translations from the poetry of Goethe, Heine, Hölderlin, and Laforgue in this volume.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 2 (April 1967), unnumbered leaf.

Comment in Motion

Translation should be “comment in motion”; in other words it should set forth or present without becoming static. If the disposition of the host language is properly respected, there is no danger of such congealment. We should not demand from translation that which we do not ask of criticism or the essay in general: a mirror that turns all things to stone.

As a reinforcement of this concept of movement in language, I have used a multiprosodic approach in translating these masterpieces. More than one kind of prosody has been utilized in most of these translations as a tool selected for the purpose of capturing ideas and cadences. In other words when a satisfying movement slant has not been forthcoming in one prosody, prosodies other than the one used up to that point in translating the particular poem have been drawn on, always with attention to the attainment of a harmonious synthesis. This procedure has been followed even in those cases where the finished translation, rhymed or unrhymed, appears to relate to only one of the used prosodies.

This new edition differs in a number of respects from the first. It retains the poem “Clytie”, an illustration of the type of translation that attempts to carry over a certain emphasis on the caesura into English.

This collection includes additional poems from the works of Hölderlin and Heine. Some changes have been made in several of the reprinted translations.

William Butler Yeats waited a generation or two for the revision of his early poems. The time interval for translators is evidently shorter by decades.

Note: These observations are not intended as strictures regarding those works of scholarship that are employed as aids in the perusal of texts in foreign languages.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. I (1967), unnumbered leaf.

Rhyme Rhythm

The term, *rhyme rhythm*, may sound “rich and strange” to some ears, but it should be admitted that such an expression fills a need in making clear a certain concept. This notion is that of the crucial role that rhythm plays in the creation of the accords of rhyme.

In nearly all poetry, rhyming with a weak syllable following immediately on a stressed unrhymed syllable has been avoided in those forms where the verse has a marked accentual tendency. Of course, there have been some important exceptions, but in those cases the unbalanced rhymes make themselves disagreeably felt.

Evidence of preoccupation with this problem can be found in Laurence Binyon’s preface to his translation of Dante, where he makes a skillful apology for rhyming with the concluding syllable of such a word as “forest.” He requests the reader not to distort the pronunciation of any word to fit the occasion, but to tolerate the irregularity as a source of rhythmic variety. He is certainly right not to advocate an unnatural shift in accent.

If rhythmic variety of this kind can be obtained without an overemphatic distortion, there is no doubt that rhyme will be in a position to give the world new auditory experiences. Mr. Binyon’s preface contributes to this end.

In the works of several great English poets of past centuries, a leaning toward this freedom is to be found. For instance, Keats in “The Eve of St. Agnes” does not hesitate to use such rhymes as “caress—comfortless” and “phantasies—eyes”, and we do not experience therefore anything that disturbs the harmonious fabric of the poem. However, the words, “phantasies” and “comfortless”, are not accented on the penult, but on the antepenultimate syllable. At any rate, such rhymes are forerunners of experimentation with the rhyming of the final unstressed syllables of penultimately-accented words. Rhyme of this latter type is an irritant unless it is somehow resolved as in the case of most discords in music.

Ezra Pound and Marianne Moore confront this problem with great boldness and succeed in mitigating the irritant to a remarkable extent. By the introduction of angularities in a certain way within the line, Mr. Pound with his translations of Cavalcanti moves in this direction of making palatable such weak rhyme where it occurs. Miss Moore does something rather similar with

her syllabic verse in the lovely and familiar lines of her poem, “The Mind is an Enchanting Thing”:

subdivided by sun
till the nettings are legion.

In this particular instance, one rhyming word is an accented monosyllable, and the other receives the accent on the penultimate. That does not prevent the rhyme from belonging to this category.

In the fluctuant syllabic verse of *Comment in Motion*, Number II, fluctuating cadences attempt to arrive at a balance that makes pleasing to the ear weak rhyme following an accented penult. The following sestet is from the translation of Louise Labé’s “Sonnet XXIII”:

Thus, it is plain that end of your malice
Was but to enslave me pretending service.
Forgive me, my Friend, forgive me this time
That I being outraged, in anger and spite:
In knowing you martyr as much as I am,
Wherever you are, I take some comfort.

The opportunity that fluctuant syllabic verse offers in the free use of slant rhymes of all kinds supplies a great area of maneuver not only for translators but also for all poets.

The interchangeability in common parlance of the words, “rhyme” and “verse”, reinforces the argument that the rhythm, or cadence, of the entire line is an ingredient of rhyme. Let us find the rhythms that will reconcile us to the greatest company of rhymes.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 3 (July 1967), unnumbered leaf.

Foreword

Anyone interested in translation will perceive much about its nature in the great passages of paraphrase in Ronsard, Du Bellay, Quevedo, Heine, and other major poets. The derivation of the word “translation” from the Latin *translatus*, which is used as a past participle of *transfere*, leads to the question: “What is it that is being transferred from one language to another?” In the case of the renowned examples of inset paraphrase, it was not a cargo of vocabulary equivalence that was being carried over, but rather the wind of life, the creative pressures in the air itself that are experience, movement, emotion, vision, music, and a myriad other transcendent and mere things.

Note Concerning Fluctuant Syllabic Verse

It is advisable that the reader of the fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the translations from the poetry of Hölderlin and Rosalía Castro in this volume.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 101.

The Avalanche of Sinification

When Anne Morrow Lindbergh spoke in a refined and plaintive whisper some decades ago of the wave of the future, she made the decisive verbal contribution to the start of World War II. Whether she knew it or not, she was herself enacting the same role in relation to that conflict as did Mrs. Stowe in respect to the American Civil War with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The thick book and the thin phrase both did their work on a rather explosive scale.

An increase in the world opposition to the present danger, the avalanche of Sinification, would reinforce the efforts of South Vietnam, the United States of America, and its allies in preventing World War III, even as such resistance to the wave in the year that Mrs. Lindbergh formally introduced it by name, would have avoided the catastrophe of 1939-45. Mrs. Lindbergh made the mistake of allowing the wave to appear irresistible, but at least she did present its terrible iridescences and transparencies in such a way that the awakening came at last. No historical wave or avalanche can push for any length of time against the counterforce of an aroused free world at any stage where at least ninety percent of that world (as at present constituted) still exists. All international resistance that precedes the moment of crisis results in the saving of countless lives.

Because of the courage and sacrifices of South Vietnamese, American, Korean, and Australian troops, one can speak of an avalanche of Sinification in connection with China without danger of the risk taken by Mrs. Lindbergh. Unending horror could have resulted after sinified forces first invaded South Korea and, again, when sinified armies crossed the borders of South Vietnam. Success of both these campaigns would have sinified Japan (industry) and Southeast Asia with India (resources and population). Then, automatically, Russia would have become thoroughly sinified too. Now, though Russia still makes gestures of cooperation toward China for diplomatic reasons, they are yet inadequate, fortunately indeed; and the whole length of the common boundary of the two countries ignites like some wire in arpeggios and grace notes of incandescence that glow off and on in border incidents with a pattern similar to that of the dispersed action of the keyboard of a player piano.

These figures of speech, the wave of the future and the avalanche of Sinification, are like dramatic performances in which years, and even decades,

assume the role of moments, and thereby satisfy the modern mind's appetite for the perspectives that come from compression whether enjoyed from airplane windows or in books.

Sinification is a danger that threatens all mankind. The first victims outside of China itself have been the important yellow peoples of Korea and Vietnam. The Chinese people of Taiwan themselves are attempting to destroy the Chinese imperialism of those on the mainland who are their adversaries and the world destroyers.

Because of the exemplary boldness of President Lyndon Johnson and some of his predecessors in office in providing the resistance to the Chinese advance when they knew such a course would be confronted with a sizable popular disapproval, we know that the horrors of the Sinification (according to Mao's formulas) of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain will not at any rate occur within the next few decades.

Since those countries are the homelands of Ronsard, Baudelaire, and Louise Labé, of Goethe, Hölderlin, and Heine, of Dante and Leopardi, and of Bécquer and Rosalía Castro, *Comment in Motion* departs from its usual province of prosody and translation to make an incursion into that desert of continental proportions, geopolitics.

Note: There exist two sets of terms: sinify and Sinification on the one hand, and Sinicization, Sinicism and sinicize on the other. It is necessary to take for granted that there is a distinction between them. Sinify and Sinification must carry with them the connotation of the spread and promotion of current Chinese influence through war, propaganda, and political initiatives. Sinicism and its derivatives can be reserved as terms for the diffusion in past centuries of the great ancient Chinese cultural values.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 4 (November 1967), unnumbered leaf.

Foreword

In fluctuant syllabic, all varieties of imperfect rhyme can assert themselves without disharmony because this end-rhyme is not usually involved in the struggle to stand out against as great a proliferation of terminations of metrical units in line after line as that to be found in accentual verse. This result naturally follows the shift of focus from the metrical foot to the hemistich.

For the benefit of those who did not read *Comment in Motion*, Number 2, I reprint the explanation presented in that issue:

In the seventeenth century, attempts were made to interest readers of poetry in English adaptations of the French Alexandrine. At that time it was not realized that a large percentage of French classic Alexandrines were susceptible of being counted in two ways; in other words, there existed a *de jure* Alexandrine and a *de facto* one. ‘The *de jure* Alexandrine was a twelve-syllable line, but the beauty of this classic measure issued from the gently swaying fountain of a fact that twelve was not always twelve in the spoken, *de facto* Alexandrine whose variations reappear in the fluctuant syllabic verse in the first section of this volume.

Firstly, the fission of some French diphthongs adds to the syllabic count. Secondly, within the line, the letter “e” in cases where it is usually not pronounced in French, was considered pronounceable theoretically (except at the end of a hemistich) and then was counted as one syllable. In actual practice this extra syllable was in a large number of cases not uttered, and thus the Alexandrine became flexible, and a certain “free rhythm” entered the citadel of classic French prosody. To this day the camouflage persists with such success that most people pay no attention to a presence that governs the cadence of the French verse of several centuries, but accept this flexibility without giving it conscious recognition.

The French Alexandrine is very often recited as a nine, ten, eleven or thirteen syllable line. Counts have been taken of the number of syllables in classic Alexandrines spoken by experts at the Collège de France, and these variations have been substantiated.

In my translation of Alexandrines and of decasyllabic verse in this volume, I have employed these variations, though I did not find it possible or necessary to pay attention to the occurrence of the letter “e” since English is governed by

different laws of pronunciation from French. One might say that an invisible letter “e” as a kind of guardian angel has accompanied me in this experiment.

The translations in fluctuant syllabic verse contain all these variations of the twelve syllable line (lines where twelve is not twelve but nine or ten or eleven or thirteen) and also the varying hemistichs and placements of the internal caesura. Here is a list of these lines accompanied by indications of the variations in the hemistichs (in parentheses):

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Thirteen (six and seven, seven and six).

For example, it should be possible to find in a decasyllable one of the three pairs of hemistichs in the syllabic arrangements listed within the parentheses after the word “Ten”.

In these pages the French rule of ending the first hemistich in a line on the accented syllable has not been followed closely since the pronunciation of English does not call for the exclusive fall of the accent on the last syllable of words. The caesura under consideration is the one near the center of the line, and the natural ending of a phrase usually determines it. Where the phrasal structure fails to indicate the attribution of a monosyllabic verb to one or the other of the hemistichs of a verse, the verb in question should be assigned to the line’s second hemistich.

Note: It is advisable that the reader of fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the translations from the poetry of Von Eichendorff, Heine, and Hölderlin in this volume.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 5 (May 1968), p. 122.

Foreword

When I first read Hölderlin, it seemed to me that there was a certain similarity of cadence between the eighteenth century poet's verse and the best work of Ezra Pound. Though Mr. Pound in his prose writing talks principally about Heine, Villon, Cavalcanti, Chaucer, and others and never mentions Hölderlin, it seems to me that his use of the line, hiatus, and accent in poetry shows an affinity with what is to be found in Hölderlin's *Alcaics* and "free rhythm." This curious rhythmic coincidence apparently exists despite the fact that obviously neither poet had a great familiarity with the other's creations.

If such accidental translation of cadence can occur, then it may be assumed that rhythm as well as message and vision can certainly be transferred in some degree from one language to another.

It is my purpose in the first section of this issue to reflect in fluctuant syllabic verse the cadences of French Alexandrines and decasyllables as well as those of Italian and Spanish hendecasyllables.

The Italian hendecasyllable is the lawny avenue of prosodic reconciliation in world literature. Such syllabic verse whenever accented on the fourth and eighth syllables in conformity with the rule may result in a movement not very different from iambic. Therefore, it succeeds time and again in being "all things to all men" and faces North and South for our pleasure. There is an attempt in some of the translations from Italian to reflect this cosmopolitan rhythm. English blank verse and the Spanish hendecasyllable are at times influenced by this aspect of Italian prosody.

Note: It is advisable that the reader of fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the translations from the poetry of Goethe, Hölderlin, Heine, and Rosalía Castro in this volume.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. VI (October 1968), p. 165.

Foreword

Every poem in addition to its place in the general categories of many prosodists has a subtilized prosody of its own. It is the task of the maker of versions of poems from foreign tongues to translate this unique prosody by adapting it to the host language in the greatest degree possible. It is my hope that fluctuant syllabic verse will serve as a helpful instrument in this delicate transfer.

Note: It is advisable that the reader of fluctuant syllabic verse be somewhat caesura-conscious; however, this special awareness is not necessary for reading the poems in the first section of this volume.

Publication. *Comment in Motion*, No. 7 (April 1969), p. 209.

Walls That Find Life

Art finds a home in many places, on altars, the walls of public buildings and in museums. But if pictures could express themselves in words, as they do in color and line, they would all exclaim that the setting they prefer is the home. When that home is the artist's own, their contentment must be complete for in such a background pictures merge with their surroundings. They are not on exhibit. They belong.

Artist Sally Glenn, during short respites snatched from raising a family, has created this type of home for her works of art.

She believes it is important to paint the picture for the place and, when necessary, to find the place for the picture. A pastel drawing of flowering eucalyptus hangs over the radio and record player in the living room. By capturing the coral bursts of bloom and the long, slender leaves tremulous amid blue space, Mrs. Glenn has accented the subtle tints in the beige rug. The picture also highlights the bleached woods of the modernistic furniture and the rose-tinted walls.

On either side of the front entrance two of her most fascinating caricatures in oil, "The Card Player" and "The Knitting Fiend," gleam with a wicked charm.

On a glass-topped table stands one of Mrs. Glenn's terra cotta statuettes of a dancer. By viewing this work from various angles alternations of shadow and lighted surface give additional pleasure.

Nearby a pastel drawing of the slender stalks and blossoms of the ironwort, against an atmospheric blue background hovering around their lilac pink forms, is a revelation of the charm and beauty of the humbler grasses.

One wall of the dining room is entirely draped. The others display two typical Glenn studies of plants against a background of grass paper.

Artists have the opportunity of altering the decorative emphasis of their surroundings at will by resorting to the exercise of their talent. We who have to depend upon the resources of our pocketbooks can learn from them, however.

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COLOPHON

Production record

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