

THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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**WINTER POEM FOR ALL MY REJECTIONS
AND THOSE I AM SENDING**

But for this horrible cold. We are so gluttoned,
but never think we don't love you. Couldn't settle
strongly enough. We love you no crap.
These marvelous lines are not what we need.
Hit us again. *Like thousands of tiny bombs.*
Try splitting your poems in half, to relieve
congestion.

Sorry. These poems are sorry. At last count
they haven't won out. *I have been sending you poems,
timing the nice lines to go off all year.*
They are charming but not shocking enough.
This cold is horrible. Unfortunately it is impossible
to thank you in one of our personal letters.

Richard Frost

THE RUINED CANE

Lightning jolted the sky
From the north-east:
The on-coming tide
Of thunderheads heaped itself,
Poured down from the rim
Of the High Sierra,
And darkened the afternoon sky
Above the rich green foothills.
The wind grew still, the air
Thick and heavy to the impact
Of the approaching storm.

William Moore stood among rows
Of berry vines, intent
On the coming rain. Harold,
His son, almost fully grown
At seventeen, taller than his father,
Muscular, looked up
At the swelling clouds
And then, quickly, at the older man's
Intensely quiet eyes.

It was very still: except
That one could hear the leaves.

"I knew something was wrong,"
The father said. "There is always
Some bad weather late in the spring
To take away half my crop.
This time it was patient—it waited
For the new cane to make itself."

"Maybe you should have chickens
Again, Dad, and give up the berries.
Maybe the god is trying
To tell you something."

The rain and wind both came
At once: father and son
Stood in the berry rows
And shielded their eyes
Against the stinging water.

“Son of a bitch, Dad, it’s really
Coming down! Let’s get in—
Out of this stuff.”

The father did not move.
“It was bound to come,” he said.
“It won’t be too bad unless
There’s hail. Hail will take off half
The first crop at least.”

They stood, silently, in the rain,
Watching the green shoots grow heavy
With water, wilt. Their shirts
Were soaked, and little streams
Ran down from their hair and across
Their faces. Thunder split the sky,
And sheets of bouncing hail
Drummed on the roof of the long,
Empty chicken houses, shredded bits
Of oak leaf out of the trees, ate
Hunggrily at the berry vines.

“There it is, Harold. I knew
It was coming.”

The boy was shivering:
“Come on, Dad, let’s get into
The house. Maybe Mom’s got
Some coffee ready. No sense
Standing out here.”

They went to the house
And ate fresh-baked bread

Smeared with butter. The father
No longer even looked
Out the window to watch
The pelting hail that continued
To come in frenzied bursts.
The electric lights dimmed,
Grew bright again, and then
Went out. The mother continued
Baking bread in the wood stove,
And the father lit the kerosene
Lamp and began to adjust the figures
In one of his ledgers. The boy
Went out to the woodshed
And came back into the house
With a great armload of musky oak wood.
His mother quickly brushed
The white flecks of hail
Out of his hair, "You never remember
To wipe your feet," she said,
Even without looking to see if he had.

Two hours later a warm wind
Came on: and the sky grew quiet,
And sunlight drained down through
The clouds. A small blue area
Spread out like fire, and the storm
Was over. William Moore closed
His ledger, put on a red plaid jacket,
And walked out once more to inspect
His berry vines. Through the kitchen
Window, sitting in his father's
Usual place, Harold watched the older man's
Gloved hands as they touched
And petted the ruined cane.

Bill Hotchkiss

WATERING THE GRASS

When I think of my father
I think of the grass,
how he used to water it,
furiously, stand
with the hose all day
in the same place,
never moving,
and plumb the depths
of himself, as if
he were the well the water
had come from,
which he was not ; how
the house behind him
was black, also the grass,
ubiquitous, wild,
everywhere spreading out,
growing inside him
as well as the house ;
how, watering the grass,
he used to say,
I think I'll never go
in the house again,
now my wife, your mother,
is dead. There was
no loneliness
in the world like his.

William R. Slaughter

TWO POEMS

Against the American East

In Connecticut—as I
 walk among the houses on Long Island Sound
 or rub my sailboat up against the yellow docks—
 the lonely men
 of vast Ohio park
 their tractors in the village lots
 and go for giant plates of breakfast food
 in restaurants where it must be ten a.m.
 before the jukebox lights.

The farmers eat

with such enormous dignity, you can
 forgive their views on politics and war,
 remember all those lovely names they call
 the lands they work—“God’s Acres,” “Rolling
 World”—

and treat them as
 you would the solid coal
 furnaces that warm these Yankee homes
 we have remodeled, where
 our friends eat out their hearts enjoining us
 to damn the uncommitted, ignorant,
 the middlewest
 who do their work, wash up, and serve
 themselves with no more courage than an ugly blue
 engine looping crosswise through the fields.

Picking Mayflowers

Mostly children do it. They
do it for their mothers, to
say look, we love the lovely things.

Sometimes fathers do it, but
with fearful scoopings, trying hard
to make the fragile gestures masculine.

Often mothers do it, and
think about how quickly girls
learn Spring belongs to some great other life.

Dick Allen

HAWTHORN

Hawthorn was unlucky, spilled salt
was unlucky, and to say "pig" tempted
disaster. So I plunged my nose in thick
wild sprays, and stuffed handfulls in
my pocket for bedroom regalia. A
certain stone in the burn was where
sprigs of may were tossed from, and
breath from cow-parsley tubes blew

the laurel boats with their cargo of hawthorn petals to mid-stream. Not too confidently, I spilled salt, invoking the good influence of dead James Pigg, my great-grandfather from Cumberland, and, as I said his name, stepped deliberately on all the cracks in the scullery floor. So I defied my grandmother, and when she threatened to pezzle me, I'd evade her with long legs and an incantation, touching the white in the dark of my pockets, and run through the rose-arches to my grandfather, once more in hiding and disgrace. Silent in his hut, with Dick, and pipe, leaning over the stolen coals, he'd lift a comic eyebrow and hand me my pipe. Before lighting up with a dead match, I'm empty some nails from a stone marmalade jar, and dip in Dick's trough. The battered spray slowly filled the shed with its bruised fragrance. Lighting-up, I'd inhale deeply of old twist, dung ferment, and may blossom. My grandfather and I, both noble exiles, would spit in unison through the stove door, seriously, two men and a horse under siege, braving it out.

Brian Swann

THREE POEMS**The Children**

The little children are marching.
They parade in remarkable numbers.
We stand in our doorways to watch them.

The children are marching and marching.
They have massed on the superhighway.
The traffic is helpless against them.

The children are cross; they are hungry.
They have lost or forgotten their manners.
They gobble the food that they plunder.

Take care: the children are marching.
They have soiled their hands and their faces.
They are bad. They are playing with matches.

What can we do? They are children.
We must send them to bed without supper.
Then we must plan to forgive them.

But the children are marching against us.
They are mad. They are burning our bankbooks.
Now they are storming the armory.

Nothing is safe from the children.
They have fouled our kitchens with excrement.
They are smearing our Bibles.

What swine has perverted the children?
They are lewd. They are plucking their mothers.
They swear to dismember their fathers.

The children! Their conscience is granite.
They deny us a chance to surrender.
They laugh as they stamp on our faces.

We must think. We must think of the past.
We must think of the future.
We must rise and destroy the children.

Chambermaid

In this hotel
there's one fine room
that's never entered
on the register.
I clean it

early every morning,
touching the silk,
rubbing the air
until it shines
like glass;

then lock the door.
If there's a guest
he's never there
when I am, but
each morning

there are things
and signs: sheets
a tangle of loving,
fluffs of bad breath
in corners

and God knows what
burnt weightless
in the ashtrays.
I wipe away
a message
soaped on the mirror.
I erase the bed.
I rub the air
until it shines
like glass.

J. P. in the Surf

As if the waves were dragon paws
they slap his corpulence, they pound
—better than Swedish hands—his lard
to dolphin sleekness and the most
brave body in the sea is his. Not
the boys in wanton beer games but
Sir J. P. Dragonfedder rides
the biggest wave its climax in
over the tops of everyone. And
red silk swim trunks on his rump
say J. P. Hero while the tails
of dragonkind flap back applause
big, bigger, beyond all shores as
J. P. Puddle bestrides the beach,
blankets beside his wife and strokes
—deeper than any flesh—the sand
as if the sand were money.

Barbara L. Greenberg

**WHILE POSING FOR VAN EYCK'S
MARRIAGE PORTRAIT**

“Stand so, Giovanna, in your green pelisse
all fur-edged, gold-girdled, and furbelowed
to tell my wealth. Arrange your train properly,
but hold the front fullness to your waist
to hide your billowing beneath the blue
of that woolen fur-piped petticoat I bought
for you in Ghent. Not so shy, my good wife;
hold your head proud beneath that white cap
that covers your carefully netted auburn hair,
so lovely let down every night for me.
Come, lay your trembling hand in mine.”

“You surprise me, Giovanni, usually so gay,
with your sudden mask of dignity.
You wear your velvet shirt with the flowing sleeves
beneath its fur-edged surplice well.
It becomes you as you raise one hand
in the traditional marriage oath
beneath this single candle in the chandelier
drowned in the window's wide-eyed stare.”

“It's strange, Giovanna, to stand in stocking feet,
my great wooden pattens pointing eager,—away
to my waiting business, and your coral slippers
kicked off in in the midst of keeping our house.
But these shoes, put off as for a burning bush,
must show us standing in awe of wedlock.”

“Remember, Giovanni, my little pet dog, loyal in love,
shows what you must be through the years
or never find a lasting place in my heart.”

“And see, Giovanna, Van Eyck’s gift of oranges
spilled
there on the casement sill and chest
tell of the fruit that already ripens fast
beneath your billowing blue petticoat.”

“Giovanni, I hung the mirror of purity on our wall
to reflect not only our marriage bond
admitted, beside our richly canopied bed,
a lusty crimson above our Persian rug,
but also to reflect good Van Eyck
who paints our domestic document,
who witnesses and signs our marriage portrait
many months from our spoken, altar vows,
many months from our silent, pillowed vows.”

Margaret Secrist

THE SKIN MAN

No one picks on his body more than I do.
There isn't a silly millimeter on me I haven't
scrutinized like 'olmes, old boy, with his glass
or caressed like a faggoty blind man
except for those few areas it's physiologically
impossible to reach or see
no matter what contortions I try
with one or more mirrors
until I get an eyestrain headache
the way my double images
play hell with angle, direction, and depth perception.

I'm constantly slipping myself feels during the day.
Elbows, biceps, triceps are easy.
And I can get way up my back
or do a job on my belly, tits, and armpits
if I wear a leave-out sport shirt.
My crotch I get to later.
Why have people talk?

I wonder if the clean-up lady ever sweeps together
a 5 p.m. stack from my
Lon Chaney dandruff run,
geological booger boom,
and stampede lode of curlecews from
eyebrows, nose, and ears.

You know, I've never let a scab fall off on its own
or a pimple ripen to its full autumnal bloom
without a premature, unloving, squeeze.
(God, how I strafed the bathroom mirror with
50-caliber pimple puss all through
those good old high school days.)

At bedtime I form a posse
of all my senses
for the really big hunt
and set out hot for fresh blackhead blood,
latent lumps, potential sores,
pores clogged, preferably with mysterious gray
rather than clearly black or white matter;
any unidentifiable growing object.
Nothing escapes my five man tracking team.
It's gotten so I can hear a blind pimple
start its thump five to six skin layers down.

My bed is a receptacle of flaky crusts
Betty Crocker never dreamed of.
I'll scrape anything,
once I even got good and clean
a whole small wart;
bore: 'bout eighth of an inch.

In recent years what with the cancer scare
I've shown more respect for moles
although I used to make 'em bleed.
Once I find a nodule I just can't stop.
What an addict!

However, I do think I know why I do all this.
It's because I'm so dissatisfied with my body,
terribly subconscious of its imperfections,
and this is a deep desire on my part to improve it.
Very seldom do I like what I see in the mirror.

Don't tell me I'm nervous.
Shit, I know that.
Besides that's just begging the question.
Find out why, quick,
before I pull myself apart.

Charles Stetler

TWO POEMS

The House

i pressed my nose flat against
the icy window and suddenly
i had no nose.
then it began to grow longer and longer
right through the glass
as if the window were no more than
the surface of a deep dark lake.
in the room
the tables and chairs and lamps
were laughing at me
i tried to run
my wooden knees made a curious
knocking sound
as they bumped the window
seat
suddenly i went limp as if all my
strings had been cut and i fell
over backwards
pulling the window which was
still attached to my nose
and the whole house came too
over we fell
and someone turned the page.
i was reading
a book and suddenly all the words
flew out the window
as i tried to pursue them i found
i was glued to the chair.

suddenly i was running underwater
and there i was in an upside down house
that was slowly righting itself
my nose was getting shorter and shorter
and faster and faster the house
whirled around and around me
in two directions at once
in four
in a million faster and faster.
my nose was gone now
and my head and my neck and my chest
the rug was dancing under me
the clocks were racing to see
who would be the first to reach the beginning
of time
but for me it was the end.
and everywhere the house just laughed.

The Grape Magician

it
has been said
in some circles
that that grape magician
merlin once turned
the sun into an orange
for the king's breakfast.
i heard a bird
tell a cotton cloud about a castle
he had never seen on the other side
of the hill

if the world were a basketball
 i would shoot it at a
 peach basket

and more than likely miss
 but you could never say
 that
 i never
 tried

if the basketball were an orange
 i would turn it into the sun
 and run down
 the green hill

i saw myself in the wishing well
 and knew that anything more would
 be a lie

but i shall try
 for the grape magician.

Harris Hatcher

A MUSKOX LOSES HIS HERD

there is the memory of his grandfathers
 catching bullets in the blind winters
 of canada's early lust

extinction wanders away
 from those warm fat women now

wanders with feet saying goodbye
 to each other

six layers of fur forever
 in the mute snow.

Robert Bonazzi

THE ANIMIST

to walk in on my room
to catch it in the acts of
 sensational life
 the mask off &
 laughter & lament in one mouth
to hear the drapes
 shaking their acanthus curls
 & a slow waltzing of walls
 & atoms hiving in the stone
to surprise the longing of knotholes
 & the sofa swelled with
 eternal expectancy
 & the arms of the chair wide open
 for strangers
to find my dead featherduster
 ruffling its colors
 & the skies passing
 in the mediterranean mirror
 but not my face there
to back away thru camera
 doors into doors
to yield the wild
 calm of my furnishings
 for all those futures
 impassive
without me
without me

Sonia Raiziss

**OF FUNGI, GRAVEYARDS, AND THE
TRIUMPH OF MATTER OVER INTELLECT**

Early Sunday
morning we
search the cemetery
for old friends with arcane names:

Agaricus,
Coprinus,
Collybia,
Calvatia and *Lycoperdon.*

Not on the stones, you
find them in the grass.

Mourning we
seek evidence of resurrection
erections of living flesh
from mould
mouldered
mould-dread
mold dead
molded anew
arisen
orisen of life everlasting
lasting but a day.

Agaricus campestris,
knobbed white shaft,
proud-flesh gills,
preputial ring,
kissed . . .

Back under your stone,
old Uncle Sigmund,
back to your dreams,
for it's still
early, very early Sunday morning

and the cemetery's the best place
to find *Agaricus*.

. . . kissed
by the summer Sabbath sun,
innocent
of cardboard and cellophane coffin,
the wild *Agaricus* vindicates the mycophagist's
passion
with flavor far surpassing
the pallid domestic species.

Why do they always taste better from
the graveyard?

"*I am the resurrection and the life,*"
saith He,

and I answer,
"*I am an eater of mushrooms.*"

In the cemetery or out
the Destroying Angel is ever with us:
The careless eye
I
can mistake
take
virulent *Amanita*
phalloides, verna, or virosa
for wholesome agaric,
despite white gills and volva
vulva of death
at the base of the stipe.

It can be a singular mistake.

Early Sunday
morning bells call others:
know I am no scientist
know more than Christian
I follow no bells

but seek campanulate shapes
 in dew-jewelled grass
 to the same end
 still others do their Sabbatical devotions
 in bed so
 do I but only when
 it's dry
 too dry
 to try
 for mushrooms.

No race today. Muddy track.

On a hill in Section Eight
 where the American Legion lies
 Americans lie legion
 shaftile *Coprinus comatus*
 tent the green blanket,
 tear through and stand in shaggy glory,
 erect . . .

The Legion always was a horny bunch.

. . . erectile, proud, rank,
 ranked,
 in ragged ranks
 unranked.

How lie the Americans Legion?
 Indefatigably, row on row,
 in glorious castrametation,
 each draftee in a hero's grave,
 bedecked, bewreathed, beflagged,
 betided, bereft, bemused, belied,
 certified bona fide
 veteran of six weeks' basic training
 and the battles of
 Tiajuana, Kansas City, and Miami Beach.

Coprinus.

Correct, the etymon means excrement.

Plentiful and the best,

they deliquesce in just a day:

 purest white

 flesh pink

 death gray

 slime black.

Of course you clean them before . . .

but you must be quick

or you have a basket of . . .

 Don't say excrement

 say shit

 somehow it's cleaner.

Collybia radicata.

 Who said *Oudemansiella*?

Cap: thin, convex, or nearly plane,

plainly umbonate,

more or less radially wrinkled,

viscid, grayish or smokey brown,

three to eleven centimeters in diameter.

Gills: white,

adnexed,

broad and distant.

Spores: white.

Stem: slender and tall,

hollow, stuffed,

fibrillous,

often furrowed and twisted,

cartilagenous,

tapering upward

and ending below in a rootlike prolongation

that penetrates the earth to considerable depth

one Sunday prostrate on a sodded grave
 weeping and kissing the earth.
 Ghoul that I am, I came again
 to see the date upon that stone.
Twelve years! It was twelve years!
 And above the date the symbol of the one true
 church . . .

Never mind *which* one true church!
 . . . that offered no better consolation
 than to kiss the dirt after twelve years!

Barbarian!

She didn't see the delicate ring of
Marasmius oreades
 among the plastic geraniums:
 If she had she'd have used a fungicide!

Barbarian!

When I die
 cremate me.
 No,
 throw me in a shallow trench
 with a rich loam shroud
 and plenty of mushroom spawn.
 Let the mycelium grow,
 let me return quickly,
 make a party for the widow

Feed her steak and mushrooms!
 and if you come upon her
 weeping and kissing the dirt
 warm her ass with the flat of your hand
 against the graveyard chill.

Barbarian!

Still, they are of some use,
 the only places still in the city,
 and the *Marasmius* made delicious
 gravy.

I
 will be a part
 apart
 of and from
 your cannibalistic liturgy

I
 have no rite
 to deny
 my part
 taking

I
 swill the wine
 and fork the host

I
 take my Eucharist at home
 lightly sautéed in butter.

Damn a church that saves the cross and
 eats the man!

Betimes my children join my morning quest:
 together we make it a crusade,
 invade the shade glade,
 ambushade, enfilade palisade,
 parade in grave array,
 squad among the stones,
 sap for
 saprophytic life
 with pocketknives among the fallen,
 volley shouts and laughter against the sepulchral still
 as if to wake the dead.

*"Father, what are those white things all around
us?"*

Calvatia or Lycoperdon?

The Greeks had a word for it
more apt than the Latin:
balding heads are commonplace;
it takes a poet to blame
flatulent wolves for puffballs.

Call them what you will, sliced and fried
they are delicious.

*"Father, what are these curious white things
beneath the bush?"*

"Not mushrooms. Don't touch. Come away."

Evidence is here others as well as we
use the graveyard for their pleasures.

"Father, what is that white thing at your feet?"

"Nothing, my son. A piece of styrofoam cross."

"Father, why are you crying?"

"Never mind. It is time. We must go."

But we shall return.
There will be
other mushrooms
other graveyards
other mornings.

Cyril A. Dostal

CHRISTMAS LEAVE

The next time you come home,
it will probably be snowing
and the hard little emerald lights will be gleaming
in everyone's living room but ours.

I will not feel even the snow
burning furious, tiny-footed tattoos
into my cheek.

I will run up to you very fast
and let you draw my rabbit heart out
through your lips.

Driving back to our house, we will take the same
road we always do;

I will hold your hand tight
in both of mine

and press my gold wedding band
into your palm until it hurts.

When we get home, we will forget as always
to pull down the windowshades,
and we will stand naked in the middle
of the room, wrapped around each other's waist
until you pick me up and carry me to bed.

All night I will lie awake
watching you sleep.

From time to time
you will smile and half-wake up
and pull me down
so you can kiss my small face.

That night
we will be vast and infinite
and our bed in the middle of our room
will have no walls.

Immense, invisible geometry
will map us out instead.

Other nights
continental drifts will separate
our sides of the bed.
Far away from tonight,
we are still being born, and it occurs to me
you know I have no choice
but to love you.

Joan Berns

NEANDERTHAL IN NEW HAVEN

What are you hiding from behind
that hairy thicket inhabited by
what personal mice? Do you wholeheartedly
believe that simple soap
has solved no problems?

My cousin,
who died so lovely in the flowers,
how did he know he died in one
thousand one B. C.? Now was now to him.
Only incidentally did he mean more to B. C.
than he knew. Surely he would be, personally,
astonished by your plastic sandals. Perhaps,
personally, he might hit you for them
and the gods condone him.

Now, in 1969, think, New Haven man, whether
this is news: the wheel
was not so much invented, blow by blow
on stone as, tide by tide, the witless sea
(observed by my old cousin, Ho,)
allowed discovery.

Beatrice Frackelton

AN ARTHRITIC

A man,
A broke-bone man,
A broke-bone piece of man.

Hey look out! Quit your crowding!
Dammit, don't bump a broke-bone man,
Hurt so!

Arthritis,
What, desire?
Tossed high with bright arthritis.

A who? A doctor, you?
Why, yes, it does, an ache, sir.
But you can't have it, no.

It's mine,
A hoarded flame,
A place she touched my hand.

A touch,
A trash man tossed,
In a trash man, preciousness.

Nicholas Lindsay

TWO POEMS**And Balderdash Died Too**

yes, he said, the nomad's back, unmad, unmade
and he looked and saw no horizon to see, seesaw,
he told the waves and spat, and said, i'm on the rocks
on the spit
and the waves blow, and the sea breeze blew itself
blue to be a sea wind

and a beach at night is like a day at night
and amidst the jetty and sea wall was the water
and amidst the jetisoned bodies we hauled, he said,
daughters
too i imagine, and when he tried he couldn't light his
cigarette

and willy nilly died, he said, and so did
fiddle faddle, and me i died with diddle deedee
and he wondered how the water would feel if he
should fall in
and, god forbid, he said, what if i should fall off into
the water

and flumdiddle flummadiddle he died too
and twaddy twattle twiddle twaddle fudge died too
and balderdash and blah, he said, and blatherskite
and hoey
and skimble scamble bibble babble flummadiddle too,
he said, died

The Aristocrats

Lon

done wi' 'er mon, she was, mon, she was, mon, she
was,
long done wi' 'er mon, she was,
hi thar Katie.

London

Bri' wou' lay down, too, lay down, too, lay down, too,
lovely Britt would lay dow', too,
like me Rover.

London Brid

Jes' Christ, she's made, Chris', she's made, Chris',
she's made,
under pigeons she was made,
by 'er 'ubby.

London Bridges

fallen lass, fallen lass, fallen lass,
under britches was 'er arse
spry an' lumpy.

London Bridges fall

in bed, fall in bed, fall in bed,
Bri' an' Kate wou' fall in bed
at thar leisure.

London Bridges falling

prone, falling prone, falling prone,
an' thar 'ubbies falling prone
for thar pleasure.

London Bridges falling down

My fair lady.

Paul Madonick

TWO POEMS

Confectionary Store

There were plenty of sweets
in the Confectionary Store
down off Victoria Road
like those sticky chunks
of yellow sponge toffee
and uneven rows
of hard-gloss caramel apples
each there for a kid's nickel
and all better to see
than to eat
And there were other things too
in the Confectionary Store
things that kids yanked away from

without knowing why
and grownups turned away from
because they did
Such as the smelly shard
of an old lady
who lived under the bridge
and came in to cash somebody's
Family Allowance Cheque
buy Sailor's Tobacco
and scuffle home
Or the once cocky boy
who gave away his right leg
trying to retrieve
his grimy dimestore cap
from between pondering wheels
of a Dosco diesel shuttle
Or the dirty seven and eight year-olds
from down past the company tracks
who bought one and two cigarettes
at a time
for themselves
Stirred over the years
with tinfoil bottlecaps
spilt sugar ashes butts
smoke wet and old men
the store atmosphere
with a sawdust base
became like a heavy curdling syrup
enough to trap flies
I was a small patron for years
until one March night
when the owner kicked
a fallen high-voltage power line

and the Confectionary Store
was kept right on running
by his wife and his brother
and nothing even slowed down
A new age and sensitive eyes
proved too much for me
so I found my pencils and chocolate
somewhere else
Trouble is
I've got to watch it
you can't keep switching stores
you just can't do that every time

An End to an End

*(Afterimage to all eulogies for
Robert Francis Kennedy)*

As long as we are moving in Black
As long as we become Mourning as it becomes us
Why don't we crank out an alkali tear and more
For the other dead
For the indecently stepped-upon sports fans
Of a sweaty latin soccer game
For the lead-lined confusions basting
In distant paddy water
For the never-never to-be doctors lawyers and cattle
thieves
Shot beaten and car-accident-ed the world over

For the pillstopped knots of unmatter
Never to rotisserate and come womb-sliding
For Mr. Tinker and Mrs. Tailor
Who lost out on a pre-Judgement Day claim to fame
Through the democratic law of supply and demand
Let us do homage to them by each us all becoming
Scattering pollen-like memorials in their honour
Exercising our communicative organs
As aeon-proof cornerstones of the Edifice to
 Universal III
As naked monuments from Beginning to Beginning
Savour it
Statuary We in a world park
Existence will be meaningful then
And all we need fear is the thousand year rain
And the pigeons

Joseph Sherman

SOME ANTHOLOGIES OF CONTEMPORARY POETRY

The explorers and map makers have done their work, and our gratitude to them remains. Now we greet a host of claim-stakers, for poetry since World War II has become academically respectable. We still treasure the work of the pioneers—Allen, Walsh, Hall, Leary, Pack, Simpson, Kelly, et al. Now their rivals appear, some very good indeed. This generation has no Untermeyer, and for good reason: to include so generously down to the level that Untermeyer embraced would require a five-foot shelf of anthology, our age is so rich and diverse.

Two of the most interesting of the recent collections go a long way toward justifying contemporary poetry as a separate, post-modern entity. Patrick Gleeson's **A FIRST READER OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY** (*Charles E. Merrill, 1969*) is a very personal selection, drawing heavily on San Francisco poets, many not at all well-known; but it covers the mainstream quite thoroughly. One misses mainly Berryman and Roethke. Both these poets are amply represented in the fine collection by Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey, **NAKED POETRY** (*Bobbs-Merrill, 1969*). This book concentrates on "open forms" and hence stresses poets like Bly, Creeley, Snyder, Ginsberg (plus the editors), but it also finds room among its 19 poets for generous portions of Lowell and Sylvia Plath. Each poet gets a picture, and most contribute fascinating statements about poetics. Altogether the most comprehensive of the new collections is **THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETS: AMERICAN POETRY SINCE 1940**, compiled by Mark Strand (*Meridian Books, 1969*). Here are from one to seven poems by 92 poets, with few surprises, but few if any conspicuous omissions.

The attempt to be "with it" can also hit the text for introductory college courses, sometimes unfortunately. **RECEIVING AND SENDING THE POEM**, edited by Paul C. Holmes and Anita J. Lehman (*Harper & Row, 1969*), strains toward the flashy with poems by Beatles, but ought to turn off anyone with any sense by including guide questions like "In what ways do the hippies differ from so-called 'straight' society?" (apropos of Christopher Morley's poem "Smells"). A beautiful high school text with poems and apparatus that condescend to no one but appeal equally to young people and their elders is **SOME HAYSTACKS DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY NEEDLES, AND OTHER COMPLETE MODERN POEMS**, compiled by Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders, and Hugh Smith (*Scott, Foresman, 1969*). Lots of reproductions of modern paintings interact delightfully with the poems. It would make a handsome present for anyone who reads poems.

It has been relatively easy to keep up with contemporary German poetry in translation. Not so easy with French. Hence it is refreshing to see books like **POEMS & TEXTS**, a bilingual edition by Serge Gavronsky (*October House, 1969*), with good selections from poets from Ponge to Pleynet, and an introductory essay, "From Surrealism to Structuralism." The youngest of these poets is 32, so we are beginning to get some of the younger Frenchmen in English.

VOICES. *Antonio Porchia, trans. by W. S. Merwin. Big Table. \$3.95.*

An amazing collection of aphorisms by an Argentine poet who died in 1968. One is tempted to quote all. Try three: "The summits guide, but among summits." "Mud, when it leaves the mud, stops being mud." "The cold is a good counsellor, but it is cold."

THE GLASS HOUSE: THE LIFE OF THEODORE ROETHKE. *Allan Seager. McGraw-Hill. \$7.95.*

This posthumously published book fills the first need of biography of a writer: we can understand the poems more easily and more sympathetically for our understanding of Roethke's life, in particular his relations with his father and with the greenhouse. In fact, the whole of the early part of this book is splendid. Seager's own affection for Michigan as a place warms the pages. The later sections of the work lack this aura, though they do give a comprehensible portrait of this great, difficult man.

EARTH HOUSE HOLD. *Gary Snyder. New Directions. \$5.00 (cloth), \$1.95 (paper).*

A selection from Snyder's notebooks, 1952-1967, some book reviews. Short essays are the heart of the book. Some, like "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution" and "Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique" are already deservedly quite famous. The book is essential both for enthusiasts of Snyder's poetry and for anyone who wishes to understand how contemporary poetry—particularly the new primitivism—is revolutionary. Snyder's attempts to correlate Eastern thought and American Indian shamanism are arresting, and his rejection of many Western values for Eastern and other ancient values is solid in that he recognizes the two hard facts that so many ignore: that to give up the values of Western life one must give up its products, and that one must limit the growth of the population.