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Cover Design: GEORGE GARNER

ZISCA

Captain Zisca so willed
that when he die
his skin be stretched
from pate to thigh
to form a drum
to scare off his enemies
till kingdom come.

Per polter cussional geist,
tym tom panic drum:
the captain is at his kettles,
nothing nettles him now,
except the kingdom that never seems to come.

In a glass-cased museum
you can see him stretched out from nine to six.
Beside him lay his sticks
and a note of his own hand:
"Only God shall hear the music
that comes from Zisca's band."

Albert H. Norman

TWO POEMS**Jess Thorpe**

There lies Jess Thorpe, likely in rusty black,
with a garnet brooch stuck in the pillow of her breast,
her sparse gray hair arranged in curls of state.
I wasn't at her burying. Not knowing how old Jess
would take
my presence at her casket side, I stayed away,
so missed the relatives who came and viewed, then
sat and ate
of beans sent in, and bread and cake,
and went into the hills again. . . . How still, how still
lies Jess's house. Geraniums and parlor lace are
yellowing
behind her clouding panes dispirited as eyes.
No muttered threat, no irate scratching of her hoe,
no angry steel on stone, no oath
wafts where, on crutch or cane, with sighs,
she heaved her bulk, tending her beet and carrot
rows.

Proximity it was, not Christian love,
that made us neighbors to each other under trees.
Jess said I threw tin cans into her border phlox.
(I never did.) She said my husband looked a slob in
shorts,

sunning and oiling himself amid the ranting baseball scores.

In wrath at this, or other things, Jess slew my
fence-line hollyhocks.

She caned them down one night, and from reports,
spoke evil of us on our street. She had not love.

Sundays, the churches belling, I forgave, though
marveling

(in gloves and hat) that hate should hold Jess Thorpe
erect.

Bearing false witness, she did not fall on evil days.
Her vegetables grew bigger than grew mine, her
flowers lovelier.

Contrary to what Methodists expect,
hate nourished Jess. It braced her, like good corset
stays.

Jess being spirit, she had to also rise.

There hobbles, then, in upper air her robust spirit
on its crutch, offending angels by refusing aid.

Earth's phony graces having harried long, she'll not
give in,

at least not readily, to heaven's pearly magnitudes.

Arthritic, old, deserted by two men, betrayed,
Jess Thorpe is adamant, who kicked life smartly in
the shin.

I who placate, who covenant though shaky in my
trust,

stand often in the nipped buds of my hopes
where cats now dig and rabbits nibble unconcerned,
in Jess's place, sly fears of age assailing me.

Is there a tremor in the rock I built my house upon?
Will it stand firm? Your not unholy rage here burned,
Jess Thorpe. Your roses speak of courage, and they
comfort me.

A Memoir

We ought not to think, Father, in terms of goodbye.
Not goodbye to your hedges clipped and your lawns
watered

in your sagged sweater at day's end,
relaxed robins piping of summer forever.
Not goodbye to your plumb house pumiced satiny,
whose stairwell encapsules a new-wood smell.
Always nostalgia waits for me there,
for wood-shaving curls worn in my princess days
by your tool bench castle of hammer and nails.
There was your whistle, the house waxed and singing,
Schubert on the Victrola, the canary in the kitchen,
all serenading Sunday in the pot roast house.

But not goodbye, my father, to any of those.
They are long gone, as I've been gone,
your fat-bottomed child that nuzzled your neck,
your pride in shined shoes you took walking past
benches,
and bought all the gum and the pictures of Lindy.
Now you don't know me, I'm girdled and girdled with
much advice,

all for your good, but who wants his good,
not you by the table your head in your hands.
Pain is a secret that sets you apart from us.
Irritations roost in this house like birds.
We tiptoe and whisper to be undisturbing,
but constantly nervous birds scream up.
We come, and my husband is stealthily eyeing clocks.
The children are whining, how long? how long?
My mother is weeping, she's always weeping.
She who was once your Whitsun bride,
in a village of garlands and earnest bells,

now wants to go a little, see a little, buy a little,
not spend all her days with a sick old man.

Ah, my father, we are undeserving, turn from us,
creep to your couch behind ferns, spread your
newspaper tent,

dream. Be in your world of those Saturday nights
when you were regaling the pinochle boys.

Above in my bed how the house was rocked
with beery humor and belly laughs, the oilcloth
slapped,

the cards were rustling like poplar leaves
remembered along your German lanes.

In my pillow I giggled at village wags.

Mill Anna, daft, wore three hats to the fair.

Loud Bertha was rolled in a ditch of nettles
and burned in her shame on a Sunday's walk.

O my father, go there at the last.

Tubes and bottles of agony over,
slip down as though in a ferny dream,
into your province of Saxony.

Who is to tell us to disbelieve
the simplest concept is after all true?

HEAVEN, I once saw embroidered, IS HOME.

Then wake to a roistering roistering dawn,
in a startling air of dung and dew.

From your featherbed warmth over icy tiles,
onto the cobbles, into the sun,

breathe your boyhood, the apples are ripe!

And there in her clogs, her head in a cloth,
comes she, as ever displeased and scolding:

Why are you late? Where have you been?

Where are your socks, where are your shoes,

have you no sense? But wiping her hand on her skirts

to be worthy to touch your forehead, to smooth your
hair.

When I pray—I think I can sometimes be said to
pray—

I pray, my father, that you shall be there.

Ina Jones

BELOW STARS

The virgin buckaroo
wears red flannel sleepers
and pets a snake stuffed with tissue
and nylons.

Wonders how color t.v.
would accentuate
blue eyes
of the late late stars

And rises from a nest of animal crackers
for a glass of unsettle fluoridized water.

Brushes 100 strokes of goop
around strands of
rubber band braces and
into creme rinsed curls

And with . . . Amen.”
is kissed by the same wind

rushing patrons
under

painted streetlights.

WE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY

I'm an awful failure at these green stamps but finally get two books together, we bundle the kids up and spend the whole day finding the Redemption Center. My wife is frivolous, my chest unclogs, we grab a fistful of gift suggestion books for bedtime reading when I yell out THE NORTH STATES BIRD FEEDER
M 1169

please! The winter's been harsh, it's out of stock but can be got from Cincinnati in two years. Well, we can wait so when it comes I

run up a ladder, give the funny screw a twist and the damn thing sticks to the elm somehow. My wife and kids drag the seed sack up from the cellar, we follow directions carefully, to the watch! Hey, where's Peter, dear? For godsake, he's still in the yard, holding out his little hand and for chrissake there's our first bird flying over, black, exhausted magic. Get in here you little bastard! But he won't budge, we chant nicer things through the window but it's no use,

the other birds are swooping in now, surrounding Peter, he puts down the air he's breathing, takes pride in a hurried breakfast with the birds.

Above, the branches are clear but there's still a weakness in him, his mouth fills with more seeds, it is toward the end of the year and a boy's turning into a bird in our yard. We are crying now, as he rises slowly up over the hot snow, lowers the shades on his little eyes, reaches a tongue down a throat to the middle of a little body, the cold air calling.

Stuart Friebert

NORA

She moves
with a crunch
some call it
authority
on her thin legs
thumping
about the room
as if she did not
own it, as if
it did not part for her
docile as
rainwater—
never in her
life having
lost
an argument
she keeps a cool head
as she
bastes
the chicken
and beats down
the cat
with
one quick hand

John D. Niles

UNWRITTEN RITES

we were naked
only they were blocking
our total touch

with quiet ceremony
we unplaced our matching rings
and stuffed them behind the Kleenex box

our celebration is unspoken
every now and then when i dust
i see the rings
still there

at a church affair
i met a lady who asked
are you his daughter
no i said his wife
pink and laughing she exclaimed
why don't you wear a ring
i told her
all my life i'd never cared very much
for rings

Jeanne Hill

JOURNEY
FOR
CHARLES
OLSON

come on, where's a journey
but coming from someplace,

but going.

Relent;

tis a false camp
a faulty premise,
each night luring in strangers

with fanciful tongues,
each night, a mimic
the sound of trained birds,
domestic complaints.

Vivamus

the groans of a girl
for her absent lover,
of ocean for shore.

The plants that still live
will be hard to pack,
and most of the passes are closed.

Snow.

Suck in America, journey time.
Put on your chains,
a new syntax, hard
fast as speech.

I think I will leave this place,
head for Storrs
to see Olson. The furnace
knocks, the windows off their frames.
The ivy I cut dies
in an applesauce jar.

What sounds are unfound
in cold Iowa?

What syllables lurk
in the breath of Nebraska?

“the non-art but logic of HISTORY”

again, an automobile.

again, settle affairs.

Take a handful of books;
the Mencken will stay, dated,

Yeats Duncan

Blake Creeley

& Lorca G. Snyder

my Gaius Valerius, Whitman.

I would not go if I did not have
a question.

 A handful of books,
the Frazer for magic, E.P. for fuel,
C.S. Peirce because, yes, I am going
back to New England,
new english.

He himself said, we must know one thing better
than anyone else. The question.

The discourse.

Monday, the first time, I read them aloud
and it rained. There was water
beneath the front door, and a window was open.
I read them again
a day later, the shingle warm sun
where cats pass on business
where laundry claps.

Four years ago.

On that day I gave the birds holiday,
followed the poems where he led me.

there onct was a man,
foxglove, or so they called him.
twisted so, humped,
the size of a stone.
He stayed where he could
by the road, by grace,
hunched neath a bridge from the rain,
disguised as a briar or boxwood
greens in his cap.

Master weaver
caught between there and here
where the road overhangs by the wild
where mountains hang shore.

Well it happens,
brought up, journey ended
by song out of wind
out of nowhere,
by gulls on a ridge pole.

This foxglove, he listens, by ear he marks
what is real
what is easy,
where song ends in fancy, and stumbles.
He listens.

To the refrain he adds phrases,
new words, till
sounds come like sea birds
till singing,
a song he could follow.

He sings until dawn, journey wise
sea eyed. He sings
till the knot is untied.
At dawn he arises
a giant, from that day to this
he sings.

I have held too long under foreign power,
spoken in crystal.

I have laid my last victim upon the fire.

((bears will fish crab when other foods fail them

but where was this journey?
that I am returning

to Storrs

to see Olson, o drummer !

birds peck at a plate of sins.
old men are carried by slaves through the market
place.

a book is launched,
tallow candle, the length of the room.

Call the moon.

Call herons to bear off the spirit.

new rhythms have shifted us.
horses have turned from commandment.

Send birds to each window,
canidae to suckle.

Send earth-divers here to bear off
the soul of the shaman.

A neighbor's cat curled in the overhang
out of the rain. Sparrow talk.
Lemon trees caught in the frost.
The season is past, the sun, the journey.
The great birds have passed,
crossing the rhythm of wind
with wing tempos.

/De·tri·tus/

Michael calls from N.Y., we talk.
 The east coast is over, America,
 so far away; Olson dead.

& where is a journey,
 & how?

A handful of books,
 a dozen or so, out of O.

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from dreams come all but the highest art.
 from *Morpheus* all but what *methodos* gives us,
 a voice from the window
 an uneven sleep.

from wanderings all but what center supplies,
 "with a way
 with a via
 with . . . path (weg,
 that which died,
 and does not die,
 which it is any man's job"
 any journey.

“You see . . . I am more and more persuaded that the revolution I am responsible for is this one, of the identity of a person and his expression (that these are not separable) — and that this is why art is the only morality”

*Charles Olson
VI.13.52*

Berkeley
I.70

**IN THIS GREAT ERA OF READING POETRY
HERE IS A POEM TO BE READ AT A
POETRY READING**

I forgot my speech and my serape!
I haven't brought my bag of snakes
or my Bear. Or my Japanese household—
my chants and blessings and bells—I left all
highest wisdom and the nine kids home.
I won't trip off the stage on a toot
or snuffle at the beautiful sad parts
—I didn't come to just screw the girls—
I won't intone or oraculate, I promise I won't
mumble elliptically in my beard, I won't speak at all
loudly and insultingly
that you can't treat *me* like a TV set.
I apologize for coming on as ordinary as you do.
I won't be the poet.
I won't read anybody else's poetry
better than mine
and the monologues between poems I promise
will not be better than the poems.

I promise that anyone out there who doesn't like
poetry
will never have pretty girls
and anyone out there who does
will never have friends or money. I promise the sun
will turn
up in the morning in Dutchman's-britches
bloodroots toothworts bluebells and shooting stars
for May baskets ;
I promise the sun and white water, red oaks
and blue grass, people like ourselves, more trouble
than ever
with Humble and Standard and freeways and
departments:
I promise you revolution like poetry
is the only thing to get up feeling in the morning.
The faces you are about to meet are
fictitious and have no resemblance to anyone
living or dead:
the man hugging the damp paper bag of his fear
with no place to dump it but on us,
the man deeply affecting her breast and thigh bone
with his mouth has just chanted and blessed us like
grass,
the man imagining this self in your head making its
speech,
nothing but words.
Go to the bathroom if you have to,
screw the reading. Smoke
whatever you want to.
You don't like it, picket.
If none of this is turning you on
demonstrate, spectacularly (and I'll do it)
something better to be.

Robert Gillespie

SMALL FALL

High in air above even the top
of his two story house the last,
the final, the singularly lonely,
the totally only leaf left lost
its grip on its groaning
in wind food cord and
sifted by his window on a
sinking raft path toward
the rained on, spit on, walked on,
dug in, drilled in, bombed on,
(to begin its rest on) dirt.

Richard Hart

HOLDING DOWN THE EDGE OF LIGHT

for Earl Miner

Tell those who come after, if any come,
that we knew we were barbarians,
the first perhaps who knew: that we cried
with each shattered atom of our pride
and yet tried against all experience
to build a rightness into men

before some radioactive rage
could dwarf our sun, explode our age,
or turn us loose on galaxies
uncivilized, having failed to free
ourselves of blind consumption, dissembling
our gluttonous in envy as fear and trembling.

Tell them we were stupid and brutal
cannibals. We were, and knew it.
But tell them all. Some were brave
enough to face and swallow chaos
humbly, and hold down with their lives
a mutant truth that civilized
our hunger, as it blotted out
barbaric memories; knowing that our mouths
too soon, stuffed full with modernity
would praise our taste of civility
as tender of godhood, as our right to the best
of every. . . oh, you know the rest.

Tell those who come after, nevertheless,
they too must eat at their age's mess
that every age may build on them
as they have lived on humble men
who civilized their stomach's might
holding down the edge of light
long enough that men might grow
an elegance of flesh and soul
they could not see, and yet could give
them awe for every thing that lives.
Tell them, brave barbarians,
as we manned chaos, you are, and can.

R. E. Sherwin

**MY SON CONFRONTS A FORMER NAVAL
AVIATOR WITH EVIDENCE THAT
EIGHTEEN YEARS ARE NOT ENOUGH**

*kids open drawers find boxes better left taped shut
play with ribbons ask questions
my almost man son reverently fingers battlestars
decks himself in the fabrics of half truths from
a half true time dead and buried these eighteen
years*

*as the tv announces the termination of our twenty-
first
triannual oriental ceasefire and i wonder how
many
more years how old he will be whose civil war
we will be will he be*

*ribbioned color his imagination striped redwhiteblue
yellow black paleblue green redblue yingyang
of the
korean presidential unit citation
where are the wings blueeyed clearcheeked does he*

imagine four rows of ribbons on the sanfrancisco pier
saying not unkindly little taste of action make a
man

of you little oriental pussy make you

imagine being too young old too old young not
whining

we didnt whine in fact we just didnt but or
rather rather just went did he

remember toy planes slingshotted blue and white
from a

toy ship over miniature blue and white sea
sternfaced plastic pilot sternly piloting
immoveable plastic radarman behind and slightly
below

18 cylinder pratt & whitney heartbeat filling plastic
veins with life softening rigid arms and legs
expanding awakening to realize he has too soon
become

the fullsized too young old radarman
apprehensively

imagining pale green toy land creeping up under the
nose

bright sweep on pale green eyeface facing his face
paints its outline creeping nearer nearer nearer
nearer with each turn of the unseen fourbladed
black yellowtipped propellor spiralling white vapor
ribbons he

imagines toy yellow plastic soldiers stiffly manning
toy

guns riding toy trains driving toy trucks
pointing

toyrifles at

snarling spitting sunshadowing firedemons slanting
down

the paleblue sky raking
 20millimeterhighexplosiveincendiaryautomatic-
 cannonfire
 among stumbling quilted suddenly fullsized chinese
 sees almost imagines blurred faces ribboned
 tracers arcing up
 cringes at threeinchrockets thunderclapping from
 under
 the wings
 feels debris from hits hit thin aluminum skin
 soars soars soars soars with quick release of two
 four six eight 270poundproximityfused-
 fragmentationbombs
 fanning tightly springwound heavy steel casing
 fragments
 seeking meat among the holes
 lazy darkblue endoverend thinskinedaluminum
 cigars sloping
 down shallowly easily skid gush spatter
 highoctane
 sizzling sticking boiling blackorange billowing
 obscene
 convulsion of frenzied running rolling smearing
 clawing
 burning burning burning burning blackcrusted
 stiffening
 roastmeat charred eyesockets crying tears of
 melted
 plastic down obliterated anonymous faces he
 imagines fullsized soldiers spinning freeturning
 crankwheels
 following toy airplane silhouette caught in crossed
 wires sandaledfoot pressing unseen treadle
 orangeblack flakflowers blooming quick ribboning
 flakfingers reaching him pissing his flightsuit

with the sudden unreal bright hard ringing
 slam of
 someone he doesnt know killing him he
 kicks out the door breathes cold silence of a stopped
 engine cool true paleblue air small perfect
 globes of genuine pureblack highviscosity
 pratt & whitney aviationgrade engineoil
 toy coastline ships slowly growing larger slower
 slower slower slower cant
 remember the moment white nylon lifeblossom
 exploding
 wingless dunblue deathbottle smoketracking
 orangeredgraygreen flamesmoke ribbons over
 leadwater
 gray ultimate receptacle of all human waste
 crotchwrenching yank on the ribbons ribbons
 saving
 it all for another death he
becomes once again my son pushing forty stand-
ing in
my sons bedrooms nightmare litter of plastic
soldiers
ships planes toyrifles double rows of half true
ribbons timebombs wondering what they named
my
japanese sons or were they daughters
facing once again the question of hearing once
again the
rattle of miniature metal wings hit the table
patiently dying death number 999 of what might
have been
incipient case of combat fatigue they give you
two years free psychiatric treatment but eighteen
years are not enough

Cyril A. Dostal

PINDAR (ODES 1-8)**Ode #1: The Tongue on the Writing Table**

Pindar is sitting at a small writing table.
There is a jar of oil
and there is a cloth, folded. The cloth
smells of a tongue, swollen
and hung from a dark rafter, to cure.

Ode #2: Meeting Pindar's Wife and Horace

When your wife first found me, Pindar
I was living on roots and milk alone.
She put her ear to my neck
and listened to all the rooms
I have been in. It was the only time
I heard her speak—
“Come, there are the rites
and my husband, Pindar,
would have you there. . . .”
As I waited for you
Horace burst into the foyer.
He was out of breath. His smile
was as orange as the foam
around a horse's mouth
after he's gorged himself on carrots!

Ode #3: Pindar's Handkerchief

You pull a large handkerchief
from your sleeve
and lay it over my face.
It settles into me as gauze
settles into a wound.
Next: your hands on my face,
through the cloth,
moving like a pump,
a net full of lungs. . .

Ode #4: The Turkish Couple

In his youth, before he fell
to versemaking, Pindar would sit
for hours at the slave market.
Once, during the sale of a Turkish couple,
he lept up and made an extraordinary bid.
She was known as a cook
and her husband was strong, strong enough
to drag down a bull by its neck.
Of course, he didn't have the money.

Ode #5: Pindar's Slaughterhouse

Pindar, how deftly
you slit the throats of swine.
Wearing a huge black apron
you are almost invisible,
hunched there, over the block.
Your wrist is slender,
there is the sound of ice
pressing into ice.

Ode #6: Drinking with Pindar

Reeling, drunk on wine,
we pause by a pool in the garden.
A small hand is hovering
a few inches above the water.
You take hold of me and stir the water
with your foot. Before it settles
we stumble off,
a single, wet print following us all night. . . .

Ode #7: Horace's Snake Bite

We found Horace, snakebitten,
among the rocks. He looked small
and hard: as if he'd been pushed into himself!
Olive leaves, you say,
dipped in morphine and bound
over the snakebite, will at least
let our friend die easily.
Later, we must find this snake
and keep it with us forever,
never killing it, never feeding it.

Ode #8: Pindar Says Goodbye

I watch Pindar walk down to the sea alone.
He lays down on the sand
and becomes a collapsed tent
from which a congregation struggles,
their hymnals clenched in their teeth.
They are singing the last bars
of the last hymn—
*And love, as always, isn't enough,
O Lord, and love . . .*

Outside, they are greeted
by a young minister
playing a lyre, sweetly.
His long, tentative fingers
make a perfect fist
around the skull of an infant. . . .

Thomas Lux

THE SUBMARINE CHILD

Moving my hand over your belly
where it is just beginning to swell
I think of the person inside you,
how he, a seed capsuled
in a shoot of bamboo,
will float down
the blackest river in the world,
how he will be too small
and slip through the nets
at the river's mouth,
and how we will always carry hooks,
how we will always be waiting
to drag an ocean for him.

Thomas Lux

CALAMITOUS DREAMS

He dreamed the old woman he had jeered at in the street took off all his clothes and wrapped him in a squirrel skin. Then he was set among the other squirrels and guinea pigs who were very well-mannered and waited on the old woman. First he learned to clean her walnut-shell shoes. Then he learned to catch little moths and grind them into flour, from which he baked a soft white bread. When he awoke, he discovered his nose had grown down to his chin, his hands were covered with warts, and though his belly was round as a barrel, he tottered about on matchstick legs. He was even uglier than the old woman herself. The squirrels and guinea pigs ran chittering after him.

*

He was dreaming about the cat he let starve. He dreamed his cat left town and lived beside the road. If anyone passed, it devoured him. If a cow went past, the cat devoured it. If a goat went past, the cat devoured it. Whoever went along the road, the cat devoured. When he awoke, he found himself in the cat's belly. He had been devoured by the cat while he slept. Then he was digested. And that was the end of him.

*

Even since he could remember, there was a sword growing out of him. When he was a little boy, it was a little sword. As he grew older and bigger, the sword grew bigger, too. Now that he was grown up, it was very big. One night, he had a dream. He dreamed the sword was really a penis. But when he awoke, he discovered it was only a sword, after all.

*

He dreamed his country had been changed. Earth and water, trees and plants, birds and beasts, all looked the same as before, but what struck terror into his heart was the silence that reigned. Not a rustle could be heard. Birds sat on their branches with heads erect and swelling throats, but his ear caught nothing. Dogs opened their mouths as if to bark, the toiling oxen seemed about to bellow, but neither bark nor bellow reached him. When he came to the city, people were running through the streets, yet he heard no footfall, and other people stood at their windows, their mouths open as though screaming, yet there was no sound. When he awoke, the people were still at their windows and there was no sound for a long time. Then a voice in the street rang out, "This is what became of us while you slept on." And when he tried to answer, he felt his voice die in his throat.

Jack Anderson

APOCALYPSE

There'll be a man on his knees
with a camera, clicking away
at last minute shots of bodies
writhing in something like napalm
and a world of trees going up
like the week after Christmas.

A man who has faith.

Stephen Mooney

I KNOW

I know myself inside out. The tiny camera
that passes down my throat makes me gag.
But the picture comes back in true color.

I know that it is 2 a.m. and you are in bed
with someone. I know it from your voice on the phone.
I know how you will touch her, what you will say.

I can see my lungs balloon and collapse.
I can see your body rising and falling,
shadowing her face. That is your style,

why I am always in shadow, entering and leaving
you like some lamenting ghost that only rattles
the doorknob. My guts at least are clear.

I will sit here with this late movie
until you are sleeping. But your arm
still holds her like an empty bottle.

So we are drinking together then,
our heads aching. My stomach is filled
with broken bottles, ground glass in my arteries.

Tomorrow I will ask what you did last night.
You will say, and I will say, "I know,"
knowing everything, as if I understood.

My pictures of hell are of slashed organs
and your hand in her hair. Eve bites her apple
over and over and over like a slipped film reel.

Somewhere I heard or read, they took this monkey,
cut off his head, burned away flesh from bone.
Scientifically, they said, he could not know.

Kathleen Wiegner

THREE POEMS**Green Bay Bus Poem No. One**

It's not easy
To be forty-five years old
In America, and trying, still,
To write poems, especially
On a lumpy, bumpy bus
To Green Bay, Wisconsin.

(The words "green bay" occur,
It occurs to me, in Dylan Thomas's
"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"—
"danced in a green bay" it goes.)
And I will see my old friends John and Betty
In Green Bay, which is a green bay thought—
And will I dance green in Green Bay,
Or will I be at bay, a green boy bay,
A green bay boy, sailing toward Green Bay,
Which is not sailing toward Byzantium.
You old crazy man Yeats, old man
In a country of the young, I
Know how it is—and trying to write
A poem on a bus in America,
At forty-five, the brown Wisconsin
Fields running like muddy rivers
At fifty miles an hour alongside
The pitching bus. Now black fields
Patched with white snow. Isn't snow
The winter crop meant to nourish the eye?

And when I get bored, I try to remember
The names of all the women I've slept with,
And I never can, which is frightening,

Because there is death in that,
And the game proves dull.

Poetry is sanity, which I
Discovered in the war, yet
So many people and poets seem
To want to destroy poetry, one
Of man's best friends, and
Make poetry as insane, as inane,
As University Committee meetings,
Or earning a living, or
Making love because you are married.
Kunitz, the poet, said: in the
Midst of life we are dying.
That is my wisdom.
On the bus we drive one hour
Closer to death. As always.
Death ticks in me like a heart,
Like a bomb,
Like a watch—
Tick-atick-a-tick-a-tick-a-ticket
Please for Green Bay,
Which is a station of the cross,
Which is a destination.
Death is no car-wash,
Once over lightly, thank you
God for the trip.
Does Green Bay exist?
There is a poet,
Bennett the poet,
In Green Bay.
Therefore, Green Bay exists.

Welcome to Green Bay,
Home of the meat packers,
And lunatic football.

It's easier to be a success,
say an industrialist,
say a sociologist,
say a housewife,
With fourteen pots,
Three children, and
A silver service,
Than to be forty-five
And write a poem in America.

What do you say, Dylan,
Under your white cross,
And folded silent into
A green hill in the churchyard
In green bay Wales?
What do you say?

Green Bay Bus Poem No. Two

Driving through Wisconsin winter,
I see that the frozen lakes
Are like the blind eyes of the world,
And the lashes of the eyes
Are the fringes of bare trees
At the lids of the lake.
The world sleeps.

What else?
Eat at Joe's—
Eat at Mike's—
Eat at Bill's—
I never eat at places
That command me to eat
In neon voices.

And the rusty farm machines,
Caught in the stubble of the fields,

Looking like the huge skeletons
 Of insects.
 Gas tanks, steel bellied,
 COCKTAILS COCKTAILS
 There's a word,
 Fowl, sexy and liquid, all at once.
 Happy Hour, designated at five to six,
 Exceptional food, lounge, beer,
 Beer on draught—there's a draft
 In the land; you can feel it
 Just south of Oshkosh.
 Gas stations, ice and fuel,
 A paint sign—"we cover the world"—
 Corded wood, the corpses of trees.
 Be careful, America—you can be
 The Auschwitz of trees.
 Funeral home, cleaning done,
 Everything for baby.
 Furniture, FURNITURE, shoes,
 USED CARS USED CARS USED CARS
 USED CARS USED CARS.
 For rent, for sale, for let,
 Trailers—INQUIRE INQUIRE.

Stop signs.

Telephone wires, electric wires,
 Telegraph wires—man, the spider
 In his steel web. TV aerials,
 A steel praying mantis sits
 On every roof.

What do you think of the list,
 Mr. Whitman? What a talent
 We have for ugly.
 The skin of our world
 Is leprous: it peels,
 It cracks, it rots.

The frozen, blind lakes
Are the shut eyes of God.
They are worse than Dr.
Eckleberg's eyes, Scott,
Which at least had spectacles.

Open up your eyes, Oh Lord—
Oh Lord, open up your eyes—
Open up your eyes, Oh Lord—

And drown
drown
drown
In your great stare.

Rocking The Boat

"NOAH!"
"Noah," God said to me,
"It's time to build the boat.
Big enough for goats and owls,
Lions and squirrels—two of each
Old Adam named, still bleeding
From that ribbing I gave him
In the garden."

And I said, "And the wife—
I take her too—and
Those rotten kids?"

"Right on!" He said, flashing
One of his lightning smiles
Across the gray skies.
So I quit my job, and did
What he called me to do,

And built this big-ass
Houseboat—He calls it an ark.

All around me the neighbors
Are laughing, pointing to their heads
When they say my name, and while
They are out playing golf,
Or staying out late with their secretaries,
I'm sweating and heaving, building
This boat, twenty miles
From the nearest lake.

And you think it's a joke,
Running around catching
Humming birds and butterflies,
And those goddamned fleas and mosquitoes,
And finding food for the elephants,
And cutting holes in the garage roof
For the giraffes?
And keeping them all from
Eating each other?
And all the time all the mothers
Are laughing at me?

"For God's sake," I said to God,
"I need a little help.
Are You sure I have
To build this damned thing?"

"Don't screw around with me, Noah,"
He said. "It's going to rain
Forty days and forty nights,
And if you don't want to get
Your asses wet, you'd better get them,
Along with the duck'billed platypus
and the Pterodactyls into the ark.

I have my ways and reasons," He said,

Sounding like a University President,
With the whole Board of Regents
Behind him. "The burros go first;
I like the way they work,
And then all the other animals,"
He said, "and don't forget your wife,
And those rotten kids."

God, did it rain.
I mean at first it was
Only a trickle, and then
Rivers ran in the streets,
And the houses started to float, man—
And it was terrible to see
All those wild chicks
Go down for the third and last time.

"Serves them right," said my wife,
"The way they run around and carry on."
And the kids were awful,
With nothing to do on the ark,
And nothing to watch on television.

But the *worst* thing was the smell.
For forty days and nights it rained
Real cats and dogs, and everything
Else came floating by, and meanwhile
The shit piled up in the hold
Of the ark, faster than I could get
Rid of it. "So what's the big deal,"
I said to the wet heavens,
"I am still shovelling it,
Just as always, and there is no end to it.
I'm the captain neither of my soul or fate
But a shipload of pollution.

No answer.
It just rained harder—

And in the lightning flashes
That came on like strobe lights,
All I could see was the wrinkled sea,
While below the animals
Screamed and grumbled and stank.

Meanwhile my wife kept cleaning
The ark, it should not be a mess
In case we had company,
And nothing but rain, and
Rabbits and mice all over the ark,
Because they kept right at it,
Rain or no rain,
Just like people.
And all night all that screaming
And grunting downstairs
So you couldn't even sleep.

And now I know what Dr. Johnson
Meant when he said that
If people made as much noise as cats
In their lovemaking, there would be
no sleeping a-nights in London.
When rhinoceros make love,
They rock the whole boat.
"Knock it off," I'd yell down.
"You're rocking the boat!"
"Go screw yourself," they'd
Hollar back. "We didn't ask
For this bad trip." What a zoo!
"God damn it," I prayed to God,
"You should do something already.
Enough is enough."

"Send out the dove," He said.
So I did, and the next day
Comes the dove with a little branch

In its beak, so I *knew*
The water was going down.
Sure enough, one day we came aground,
And as the waters receded, I saw
We were perched on a mountain top,
Stuck up there like a cherry
On a cocktail mixer.

"Just like Him," I thought,
But He heard me, just like He always
Does, and rumbled, "Stop bitching
And unload, and get the whole creation
Going again. "Look," He said,
Sweeping back the clouds,
"There's the stars, and that old devil moon."

"You made it," I said, winking.
I know what to say, by God,
When He gets in that mood.

So, finally, we left that stinking
Ark, all the animals coming out
Two by two, and mad as hell, snarling
At each other, smelling bad,
Hungry and skinny—
And not one good word for me
Who saved them from drowning.

"So this is it," I said to God,
Up to my ass in mud.
"So we start all over."

"Right on," He said. "But remember,
Noah baby—I can do this anytime."
"Jesus," I said to the old lady,
They'll come a day. Sure as Christ,
They'll come a day!"

THIS HERE ELEPHANT'S VISIT

an elephant's ear
 is like a potato chip.
 today an elephant
 fanned me with his ear.

he stood outside my door
 and wagged his prissy little tail,
 then he danced
 right into my living room.

this here elephant was no sissy
 from the bronx or central park
 but a terrible fat creature
 who could suck a phone pole
 if he'd a mind to.

did you ever see an elephant urinate?
 this here elephant pissed
 with a johnny pump's power
 then grinned from ear to ear.

Terence Winch

TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED: A RANGE OF POETRIES FROM AFRICA, AMERICA, ASIA & OCEANIA, collected and edited by Jerome Rothenberg. Doubleday. \$6.95 cloth. \$3.95 paper.

A strong, wide-ranging collection, powerfully unified by the editor's deep respect for the complexity, toughness, and immediacy of the so-called "primitive." The printed page is an alien medium for much of this art, and Rothenberg helped bridge this gap with 160 pages of appendix and commentary, not only explaining the sources and the "media" of the originals, but relating them to contemporary music,

poetry, happenings, theatre, and art. Much of what is most vital in today's poetry derives from a sense of man's relationship to the universe that is either derivative from or cognate to that of the unalienated primitive artist. If you buy this book—and you should—the better to understand contemporary poetry and theater, you will certainly be rewarded, and with a lot more than you bargained for.

One of the fruits of the "new primitivism" is a series of splendid poems that use American Indian materials as the source of their power. Gene Fowler's "Shaman Songs" come to mind. If this is your dish, you should send off for *Carl Cary's SALISH SONGS & RITUALS*. *Goliards Press, Box 1292, Bellingham, Wash. 98225. \$1.50*. These look at first glance like translations but turn out to be fourteen good English poems.

How many people never see the beautiful books that Jonathan Williams publishes, since he does not send out review copies (at least not to us), and is, as Charles Olson has said, "a 'publisher' not a marketer." You have to make an effort. One of the most beautiful of recent books, and well worth every effort, is *Lorine Niedecker, T & G: THE COLLECTED POEMS (1936-1966)* (*The Jargon Society, Penland School, Penland, N.C. 1968. \$4.95, paper.*) The poems are tiny sharp blades, wild animals' eyes, quartz crystals—small perfect things that catch the light and blaze. Many are very very funny. All are honed. Colloquial. With nursery rhyme compression, clarity, and intensity. And if this were not more than enough, there is the beautiful typography, the rich paper, and the exquisite plant prints of A. Doyle Moore.

Another poet first introduced by Jonathan Williams is *Ronald Johnson*. His latest book, *VALLEY OF THE MANY-COLORED GRASSES* (*Norton, \$4.95 cloth. \$1.95 paper*), is full of delights. I suppose you could call Johnson a "nature poet," and surely his poetry is firmly rooted in the accurately-perceived and lusciously-sensed world of "cross-section of sequoia, scales of haddock, agate." But it is a nature that includes, at the same level of reality as the had-

dock and sequoia, the works of such as Ives, Ryder, Thoreau, Bartram, and Herschel. These elements do not obtrude; they are an organic part of the poems: words may be pulled up like onions, a humus still clinging to them, sweet to the taste—nutty & fragrant.

(By the way, most introductions to books of poems are embarrassing, but Guy Davenport's introduction to this one is exactly right.)

As Johnson reminds us, it is to *Charles Olson* as much as to any other contemporary that we owe our flowering of poets who combine a rich sense of place with all its dimensions in time peeling back behind it—each dimension reflecting the deepening consciousness of the poet. Such respect and affection for the very spot in space where Gloucester is has put Olson's home on the same map with Paterson and Concord and Sligo. We can now explore this land in more of its dimensions, since Cape Goliard/Grossman has published **MAXIMUS POEMS IV, V, VI** (\$8.95 cloth. \$3.95 paper). This press has also given us, at the same prices, Olson's **LETTERS FOR ORIGIN**, edited by *Albert Glover*. Mr. Glover has, he tells us, done his doctoral dissertation at SUNY-Buffalo on these letters, but none of the annotation or illumination from his research appears in this book, which stands, in consequence, as a sort of large poem. Glover is a little cryptic about what his role as editor has been. The reader who is not already familiar with *Cid Corman's Origin* (originating, nowadays, in Japan), or who has no knowledge about Olson's whereabouts during the period of these letters (1950-1956), or who is uninformed about the Olson circle, may be put off from entering what may appear to be a hermetic society. Too bad, since the joyous, bounding energy of the poet, the magnanimity, the penetrating insights of the man are abundantly here, so that this is a great source book.

Robert Creeley's book *Words* (1967) went beyond *For Love* in the direction of the metaphysical and

built larger structures for many of the poems. **PIECES** (*Scribner's, \$3.95 cloth, \$1.95 paper*) keeps going to a further development within Creeley's characteristic short line, careful pauses, curiously hard abstract diction held by wit, and pierced by sudden images that bloom, incredibly, like desert flowers. At first glance one finds *bits and pieces*. The fragments soon group themselves into sections of larger arrangement. So that clearly one has major sequences. And one suspects that the pieces will form, as one grows into them, a whole, a garden.

The Four Seasons Foundation has done a major service for those who would understand Creeley by publishing a pair of volumes: **THE CHARM** (*\$2.50 paper*), a collection of his earlier poetry, from several sources; and **A QUICK GRAPH: COLLECTED NOTES AND ESSAYS** (*\$4.50 paper*). The latter brings together well over a hundred prefaces, reviews, short essays over a wide range of people and problems, and reveals Creeley as a terse quirky critic who always has something interesting to say, as Creeley.

Among the anthologies that are sprouting from every furrow is one in danger of being overlooked, since it is not designed as a textbook, is not from a big publisher, is not devoted to any "school." It is **DOWN AT THE SANTA FE DEPOT: 20 FRESNO POEMS** (*Giligia Press, 4524 E. Illinois Ave., Fresno, Cal., \$6.95 cloth, \$3.95 paper*). Don't be put off by the Fresno limitation. The collection is in no way parochial. The quality is very high indeed, and uniform. And, any librarians who may read this, don't be put off by the small press publication. The book is lovingly produced, in a clean sans serif, with photographs and biographical sketches. But get it for the poems, all those fine poems!

A volume of poems by Journal editor John Bennett, **GRIEFS AND EXULTATIONS** (*\$3.50 cloth, \$2.00 paper*) is the first publication of the new St. Norbert College Press, West DePere, Wis. It has an introduction by Sy Kahn.