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1919-1969 Anthology

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QUIZ & QUIZ
1966
BOYRANTHOLOGY

The Quiz and Quill

FIFTY YEAR ANTHOLOGY

Published by
THE QUIZ AND QUILL CLUB
of Otterbein College



THE STAFF

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Spring, 1969

Founded 1919

FOREWORD

In 1919 the Quiz and Quill Club of Otterbein College published its first number of the *Quiz and Quill*. The early issue features a now crumbling, light brown cover complete with a drawing of an overturned ink bottle and a quill pen. Inside, there is a yellowed photograph of Towers Hall on what appears to be an overcast day, and portraits of Quiz and Quill members standing rather stiffly before college landmarks. The literary contributions are primarily prose, with a section of humorous pieces under the general title of "And So Forth." The foreward presents the issue as "the imperfect expression of an ideal which has as its aim a true appreciation of our "Mother Tongue," and asks that readers' judgments be "tempered by the memories of college days past."

The *Fifty Year Anthology* includes a short story, "Maria Mia," from the 1919 issue of the *Quiz and Quill*, and we have attempted to represent the better examples of poetry and prose of the years from 1919 to 1969. We have included the year in which each piece of writing was published with the author's name. Many of our selections have been prize-winners in the Quiz and Quill writing contests, and we believe that most of the selections will be interesting to modern readers. In any case, we hope that you will enjoy this anthology, our celebration of Quiz and Quill's Fiftieth Anniversary.

Maggie Tabor

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EXPERIENCE

All is still on this
Most blinding oppressive plain.
Motionless it lies
In the finality of wakeless sleep.
No notion, stir.
Dry blending of form, particle, air
Monotonous except for
A rift of sand
A wave of dead wind.
No history to be found here.

Yet the rift, the wave:
A hope, a future...
No...just a small dust devil
Gathering the particles near by
And rising, higher, wider
Deepening form and air,
Whirling, gathering momentum
Until, reaching the full height
And breath of that solitary endeavor
It descends and again
Is molded into the
Smooth sands
Of traceless time.

1967
Karen Anderegg

“MARIA MIA”

It was twilight – an Italian twilight. The last rays of the setting sun still lingered on the mountain tops, sending their reflection over the motionless waters of the little lake, transforming them from a calm blue green to a vivid red. In the distance the mountains, which seemed to generate the shadow that was gradually deepening, loomed over the little town on the right of the lake, as if offering it a father's protection. As the sun sent out its last goodnight ray, the stars began to appear one by one.

A girl, dressed in the uniform of the American Red Cross, had been watching this transforming of the landscape, and when a particularly bright star suddenly shone out far to the west, she spoke to it, as to a messenger –

“Tell them I am coming home.”

For it was true! She was going home! She was going to leave this land where men parted from their families in order to carry on an uncanny sort of warfare from mountain peaks and tunnels; where women, with the calm that comes only from faith, sent them away, and undertook to preserve and replenish the hearth fires alone; where little children forgot how to play in watching queer birds that dropped fire and death from their steel claws. Now she was going home – back to America – where such conditions were unknown.

But how eager she had been to come – just a year before! “Why,” said Marie – for that was the girl's name – addressing the star with the lack of restraint that comes only from confidence given and respected, “I wanted to do my part – that was all.”

But now that it was done, as she thought, she was even more eager to return to America, to have once more the protection of love around her.

The moon had come up, silvering the lake and sending the shadows further and further into the mountains.

“Oh,” breathed Marie. “How beautiful it is!” Then a shadow touched her face lightly.

“But a night like this means an air raid. These poor people.”

She glanced toward the town lying so peacefully in the moonlight. But she knew that behind all those windows, brave, busy souls were turning their eyes anxiously toward the mountains, which sent back echoes that made the air hum and buzz, the echoes from artillery and machine guns. She knew that later, using the glorious moonlight for their deadly purposes, the great air planes would appear, when enemy met enemy. Marie unconsciously braced herself. She had become familiar with the crack of guns; she could see the flash of fire; she could hear the whirr as the great mass of human bodies, steel and twisted wires, fell through space. How sick she had become of all this blood and noise! She turned to the west.

“Out there are whole bodies and quiet. Tell them I am coming

home." The moon, which had been covered by a cloud, shone out again.

But the work of the day was not yet finished. Taking up her basket of supplies, Marie hurried down the quiet street and softly entered a small white house. A woman, whose poor clothes could not conceal her nobility and dignity of bearing, turned and smiled – smiled as only those who have suffered can smile.

"Good evening to you, Maria mia," she said in a voice that was like a lullaby. "It is indeed good of you to remember me."

"I wanted to come," Marie explained, "to tell you some good news."

All at once it had become difficult for her to speak; it was as if she was under the tension of nervous excitement; almost as if her delight were being tinged with doubt.

Somehow with the Signora's dark eyes upon her, it was impossible to make the triumphant announcement that she had planned. How was she to tell her – this woman who had translated a private fortune into hospitals and ambulances, who had sent a husband and two sons across the mountains, – that she was going to leave Italy – Italy who had borne defeat so bravely and begged help of no one?

"Good news? You have good news?" the signora was saying. "That has become a luxury."

"Yes." Marie was trying to rub off the spot of doubt. "I-my term of enlistment – well – I am going home."

"Going home? Going home?" Over her face there flitted the ghost of disappointment and surprise. "You are going home?"

Then with a smile she banished the ghost and putting her arm around the girl, said: "We shall miss you, dear. Very much."

"But, signora; I have done little, very little, anyone can take my place." To Marie this commonplace sentence suddenly became almost mysterious with meaning. She had a haunting feeling that she must justify her decision, that she must prove herself worthy of going home.

"No," answered the woman, and it seemed to Marie that the light in her eyes must have been kindled at the fire of patriotism, "No one can take the place of another, especially in the great scheme of human service. We women – we must fight along with the men out there in the mountains. If one of them should break faith with his country, all the world is given a chance to scorn him as a traitor. As for us – we women – it is harder. Only we ourselves know of the blot which stains our soul."

She took a step forward as if freeing herself from some spell. She kissed the girl on the forehead.

"Forgive me, dear. I did not mean – But Italy! Poor Italy!"

Again she interrupted herself with a gesture more expressive than any sentence she might have formed.

"Italy never forgets anyone who loves her, Maria mia," she said softly, "and I pray that in your own country you will not forget us."

Again in the street, Marie looked toward the west. The star was still there, that star that signified home, friends, native land.

"I don't want to be a 'slacker,' " she said; "yet -" At the door of the next house she was greeted by two small children and a woman whose sad face lightened at sight of the visitor.

"Good evening, Santa Maria," she said fondly; "you should not be out this evening. It is too bright."

"She called me Santa Maria," the girl thought. "Santa Maria."

The children were gravely examining the basket that she brought. Their set, unchildlike faces made her heart ache. Her own small sisters and brothers, she knew, would have been shouting, tumbling over each other, making the atmosphere tinkle with their chatter. But they had not seen their father killed on his own doorstep.

Impulsively Marie threw out her hands. "Signora," she asked, breathlessly and a little incoherently, "was it true - your husband - was it true that he died here?"

The woman lifted her head proudly. "Yes," she said simply, "defending his home and Italy."

She led the way to the porch, and picked a bud from a wonderful rosebush growing there, at the very threshold of the little home.

"This rosebush is nourished by his blood," she said softly. "You are in the service. You may wear one."

Again Marie was walking down the street. But now her thoughts were clear. The little home was a temple in which he had made the vision hers. She had entered the service of humanity. Her time would not be out until these little children had learned to be children; until the demon of broken hearts and wasted bodies had been thrown beyond the shadows.

The star was still bright, and it seemed to Marie that it smiled contentedly as she blew it a kiss.

"Tell them I'm keeping the faith," she said.

1919

Grace M. Armentrout

NIGHT WINDS

The night winds graze, a gentle flock, upon the fields
Of my loneliness.

The shepherd boy has strayed...

He lies contented, unmindful, by the hill,

Playing with a strange melody he has found.

Will nothing rouse him? Will he not return

Until his flock, persistent, nibble

To the roots of my unrest?

1951

Ruth Mugridge

ATOM BOMB

A strychnine mushroom
Blooms over the desert.
It ripens and bursts
Scattering spores of death
In the trembling air.
It's a devil-plant
That laughs thunder
In defiance at the limits
Of its maker's imagination.

1956

Ted Houston

THE GIANT

The Giant grinned –
A mirthless smile,
And stretched his hairy paw.
His stained fingers
Twitched the while
He slaved his filthy maw.

The Giant grasped
Within his nieve
These stupor laden men,
And belched his breath
With horrid heave
To strip them of their ken.

The Giant cramped,
And drooled in joy,
Then flung them with a roar,
And left them maimed,
Both man and boy –
This Giant men call War.

1936

Emerson Shuck

REMEMBERING

The cool, hesitant, impeccable
Odor of apples
That have spent the winter
In a cold barn
Deep in straw

Brought out
Into an early June day
By the rummaging hands of boys
Warm from swinging on the hay rope
From mow
To empty mow

The soft crunch
Of the tangy winter-wrinkled skin
Between their eager teeth

The swell of new summer grass
Under their backs
Their lazily titled knees –
– indolently propping arms –
– ambling and aimless words –

In their eyes,
On their faces,
Leaf-sifted sun and the gentle air –
June's gentle air
In no hurry to be
On some sure predestinate day
The breath
Of their summoning.

1954
Cleora Fuller

AN OLD ARTIST'S HANDS

White waxen candles
Tapering,
Burning lower and low
Before an ancient shrine.

THE HANDS OF AN OLD MUSICIAN

Fragile as Haviland,
Yet strong as silver strings,
The hands of an old musician
Are curved as a shell
From years of holding loveliness.

1932

Gladys E. Frees

SONNET TO A FICKLE LOVER

What can I praise in thee, O lover fine?
Thy dear, sweet eyes? (which you must now confess
Flirt less with me than with the brazen Bess!)
Thy loving, laughing lips? That smile divine?
(Young Kate finds none so gay as that of thine.)
Thy tender hands? Thy gentle, strong caress?
(Which, I suspect, is also known by Tess.)
Thy dear voice, lauding beauty? (never mine!)
Nay, lover! None of these shall win my praise,
For thou hast still one greater quality
Which supersedes thine other charming ways,
And can be praised by me quite truthfully.
And that, belov'd, is this: Through all thy days
Thou shalt be constant in inconstancy.

1949

Ruth Mugridge

SISYPHUS

The first time was the best. They had not said
(Although They should have – it was written so)
That he, so strong, for such a short time dead,
Would not soon find success. How could he know
The heavy stone would roll back down the hill?
He sweated in the red infernal light,
But, all the time, his heart longed for the thrill
Of seeing the smooth stone jounce out of sight,
And being given then a greater task
To try his strength against the evil powers.
Oh, he could do whatever They could ask.
But that was in his younger, quicker hours.
And, as he pushed, his scornful songs They heard;
He sang again the second time...the third...

Poor Sisyphus! He thought himself to blame.
He thought that he had not yet reached his goal
Through some fault of his own. He bore the shame.
And so he spurred his panting body-soul
On further, and his rippling muscles made
The lesser demons whispered stories tell
About the futile recklessness displayed
By that untiring Hercules of Hell.

But Sisyphus is older now, and wise.
He's older by a thousand thousand years,
And hope and scorn have vanished from his eyes
As well as his capacity for tears.
Now grey and bent, he toils on without wrath,
And never lifts his eyes up from the path.

1962
Janet Lacey

THE JINRIKISHA MAN

Rain poured in torrents. Driven by a knifing gale from the sea, it carried all before it, leaving victims drenched and cold.

The narrow streets threading through the city were rivers of mud, ice-cold, forbidding passage to all but the most persevering, who oozed through the mass and emerged mud-caked and shivering.

Little shops, open far into the night, lined the thoroughfares, while feeble lights shone from the windows. The streets were desolate. None but urgent business forced men to leave the uncertain warmth of charcoal braziers around which huddled entire families. Tokyo, indoors and out, was a dismal spot that night.

Winding painfully through the miry channels, called streets, Shimidzu dragged his jinrikisha. With head down in fruitless attempt to ward off the biting wind, dripping clothes clinging to his numb body, he slushed through the mud. Occasionally a sob escaped his lips.

A world of gloom confronted him, a world heartless and unsparing, for Shimidzu was dragging himself and his jinrikisha to a home where hungry children and a patient wife waited for food. But he was returning empty-handed. Nothing to nourish little bodies to keep them warm, no money to buy food. Shimidzu had tramped the streets all day looking for fares, but in vain. Just one passenger from whom to receive a few coppers to buy food would have helped, but his search had been fruitless. He had nothing, nothing to satisfy the cries of hungry children.

The rain turned to sleet, piercing his thin garments like half-liquid bayonets. The wind fairly howled through the streets. The frozen, clinging slush of the streets, half revealed by the smoky light flickering through the shop windows, weighted his feet and encumbered the wheels of his jinrikisha, until the mud itself seemed to clutch at him. The sleet formed an icy curtain. No fares, no coppers, no food — only crying children, hungry children, piercing winds, cold, bitter cold.

Shimidzu plodded along, churning the pastey street, head bent, straining muscles to make even meager progress.

Then suddenly, before the wretched man lay a silver disk, just visible as it rested on the surface of the mire. The man seized it and held in his hands a coin of value. A smile played over his blue lips. A ray of light, conquering the insufferable gloom of the moment before, seemed to clear the blackness that hung about him. Here was food for crying children, here was reward for the patience of an uncomplaining wife — warmth, comfort, all these made possible by the silver coin.

The dark curtain was brushed from his eyes. Everything seemed suddenly changed. The particles of sleet now danced in the comfortable glow of the shop lights like so many elfin forms rejoicing at the fortune of the happy man. No longer mud and only

mud, but pools of shimmering water scattered here and there, imaged the lights from the shops like so many fairy mirrors. The snow danced in honor, the wind sang in delight. Even the mud seemed changed, for Shimidzu saw the world with happy eyes.

A shop was near and Shimidzu entered. A moment and he would be home to greet hungry children and a patient wife with food, with warmth and comfort. He ordered freely. An abundance of necessities and dainties were set before him, for Shimidzu bought recklessly that night.

He was ready to go, and in payment flung the coin upon the counter, but it answered only with a hollow thud. Shimidzu sobbed aloud for the coin was a leaden counterfeit.

1922

J. Gordon Howard

PLUVIAL NIGHT

Descending from their callous clouds
And draped in shades of black,
The raindrops join the earthly crowds
Of liberated brack.

A time ago they formed a sea
Or some small sparkling stream.
But now they're on their own and free
To live their life-long dream.

Their freedom only lasts a while –
A little puddle forms.
The raindrops form a rank and file,
Their numbers swelled by storms.

1967

David Thomas

he walks
and talks with
ME
oh i see
did he say it was so
well no -
damn them to hell the lost generation
Christ is the answer to save a soul
and win a prize
but the greatest of these is me
a building is as cold as its warmth to refuel
or discharge
a revision is due all that love
simply won't do.
billy has the answer
do it on commission
a donation buys a
remission
automated marching truth
(specify color shape
and creed)
buy the book stamp out greed
love not war
trite
but
catchy
to save a soul sterilely electronically no
vulgar contacts
healer
10,000 X 2/10
equals
sequels

a vacuum is a nice place to live
but i sure wouldn't want to visit there.

1968
Mike Metzger

A POEM SHOULD COME –

A poem should come like a soft refrain
Down from the moon on a moody night,
Bringing the rhythm of stars in its wake:
Mystical stars with a melody
Echoing faint in the cadenced stream,
Fainter flowing along the leaves
To rest in song.

Who dares snatch words
That, haggard and grim from the subway pits,
Worm their way through the noisome air
With a slurring of scorn in their syllables?
Who dares to crush them, word on word,
And hurl them up to the sky?

1931

Ruth Roberts

YOU SLEEP

You lay your tongue between the lips of Death
And lie upon her breast as night grows near.
In the jungle you hear your lover's breath
Beat against the door. You revolve in fear
Of what? Death in your arms will never make
You part this place. She will bring you silence.
Night will never end for you, and that ache
You felt ends now. So begins all pretense.
You smile. Oh, how lovely it is to die.
It is so hard to live. Melt in the wind,
Sleep, and let the jungle lover defy
Doors that can't be opened against the mind.
Let Love reach out her hand to beat the door.
Death will always win. She soothes you more.

1966

Jinny Schott

DYING STAR

Our star was hope, gone seeking to a place
Near Vega, summer-sign; with restless grace
From Lyra, silent music, all apace,
By some ethereal hand was mystic-played.
Our star these gossamer visions saw, and strayed
(while here our dark and blinded voices prayed)
To call in song, thinking Cygnus a dove,
Thinking Virgo an innocent in white raiment,
While good queen Cassiopea gently reigned
Her mild domain.
But to the south was Scorpio and fear;
Leo forbade the Northern Cross, and near
The winter's cold ecliptic was their peer,
Orion, and the secret sword, which stay
The anguished red-eyed Bull who knows "half-slay"
As creed of kings who war in endless day.
Our star saw all these storied twilight things,
The idle songs our fable-makers sing
Of what, beyond the crumbling mountain's fall,
Lives on.

Yet even all

The infinite young galaxies must know
The void shall cool and swallow up their glow,
As rivers of creation all stagnate.
Our star is dead. We take our holy plate;
Our myriad voices chant, and chant again,
In frenzied hollow sounds lost in the piercing rain:
".....dona nobis pacem...pacem...pacem:..."
While galaxies die silently, like trees.

1964

David Brunton

BLUES IS BLUES

Six A.M. Monday morning, a blue, rainy Monday morning. From somewhere out of the depths of disturbing dreams I vaguely realize that a bell is ringing. But a bell is nothing at all to me. I start after a pleasant little nap which is beckoning gaily, but alas, a red kimonoed figure, representing in her attack the Assyrian who came down like a wolf on the fold, pounces on my unsuspecting self.

With an ear-splitting shout of "get up, you lazy bum," friend roommate (for it is she, heartless thing) drags me forth to another day on this earth. With an energetic dash she quits the room and leaves me to my thoughts.

I put one foot into one bedroom slipper. I put another foot into another bedroom slipper. I am impressed with the fact that I have only two feet. Grabbing a purple monstrosity, which in real life passes as a kimono, I finally stagger down the hall with towel, tooth brush, etcetera, gathering up on the way a cake of soap which the mad owner of the red kimono has inadvertently left behind in her haste.

I arrive in time to "listen in" on a very "Colgatey" description of how Tom treated her last night. Uninteresting chatter! What fools we mortals be! Morning ablutions always were the bore of my life — and when I'm sleepy I always get soap in my eye and tooth-paste on my nose. But at least this succeeds in waking me up, finally, and muttering a few polite and legitimate cuss-words under my breath, I tear back to my room, jump into some clothes and survey the wreck which is my hair.

Another bell rings. I am spurred on to greater efforts. With a final pat at my head, I put to shame any veteran sprinter in my wild dash for the dining room. Simultaneously, I reach the last stair step, button the last dress button and hear the last breakfast bell.

Breakfast is "brought forth." I should have known it would be prunes. I hate prunes. The chocolate is cold. Toast and eggs are "brought on." The toast is tough, eggs I abhor.

Then it is time to go to a seven o'clock class, and I start on my way, but not rejoicing. Who would rejoice at such a time, such a place and carrying an umbrella? I sneak into class seven minutes late — my usual hour of appearance. I receive a stony stare from Dear Teacher. So that's that.

How utterly unbearable is a rainy Monday morning on this terrestrial ball. Blues is sure blues!

1922

H. Lucile Gerber

STONEHENGE COMPLEX

The ancients called it "Wyrd" –
Those dim and shadowy ancients
Who built great altars to unknown gods
Before the Cross rose on any hill;
They called Fate "Wyrd" – and did not question.

The ancients worshipped trees
In those dim and shadowy nights
When dark red altars reeked beneath the oaks
Where the sacred mistletoe hung.
They bowed to "Wyrd" – and did not question.

"Wyrd goes where he must," they murmured;
And so I, with something of the pagan in my heart,
Bow before the inexplicable, and carry
As a fetich a burning spring of bittersweet;
Wyrd goes where he must – and I do not question.

1937
Sally Shuck

TREES AND RAIN IN FEBRUARY

Walk down into the night-cave –
A dripping catacomb,
Where black-boned skeletons
Embrace, (arched)
In the darkness.

Silently swayed puppets
pulled
By an unseen
Mephistophelean
Hand.

1950
Ann Vigor

EXCUSE

If I should tell him that I was not there
To take a test because the trees were bare,
And rain dripped softly like a gentle grace
From blackened branches on my upturned face,
He'd have no understanding. If he did,
Convention would demand that it be hid,
And I be reprimanded. I must lie;
Not tell him winter's almost here, and I,
Sensing the world's bereavement and her pain,
Forgetting, wandered lonely in the rain.

1940

Marjorie Miller

MUDPUPPIES

Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your righteousness!
Kick off your piety and wade with us in the world
(Ankledeep, waisthigh, up to your neck if you want)...
Don't be standoffish –
Splash with us in Sin's stagnant puddles.
Come on in, the quicksand's fine!
Oh, that's right; be careful of your white gloves:
We're the untouchables, remember?
Shut your eyes when you pray
And shut out the world crawling with our germs.
Mudpuppies squat in mudpuddles to keep warm
When they have no hope.

Their hope has been uprooted from the ground
And perched high on tops of steeples on roofs on churches
Like china shelved high out of the reach of eager handprints.
Someday maybe a man or even the Man will come again,
Whose robe and sandals knew the dust of the road and the grime
of ditches such as ours,
Although you paint Him in gleaming white.
He will soil His robe, bending to reach into our muck to show
us how to make bricks with our mud
With which we can learn to build temples.
He will tell us of His Father, Who made Adam out of clay.
Unclean! Unclean!
Why wash us whiter than snow:
If we are germs to you we would point out the lives saved by the
bacteria *Penicillium*.
If we are grease to you we would show you the lubrication of the
motors that beat the pulse of the nation.
If we are dirt to you, what about the dikes holding back the sea
from the Netherlands?
But if we are nothing to you, we would show you what God had to start
with when He made the world.
Unclean! Why wash me whiter than snow?
Sanitary souls are confined to sterile cellophane wrappers
Never coming in contact with air.
Unpolluted, boiled water in corked bottles,
Come join us in the current of the mudbottom river
Flowing to the inevitable sea.
Mingle sands with us at the delta, and we will together build
A fortune of minerals and lifegiving wealth from which will grow
algae, protozoa and life of all forms,
In turn giving life until it, too, is washed to the inevitable sea.
Then perhaps someday a man or even the Man
Will thirst to fill His cup with us
Turning us to wine.
We become a holy sacrament.
This is the cup of the new testament of my blood, which was shed for
you.
- Do you drink yours bitter,
Or with sugar?

1964
Marilyn Maccanon

A MEMORY

A memory haunts me closely,
A picture I fain would keep,
Of russet rind of pumpkin,
The frost on its mellow cheek;
And out through the latticed willows,
The clear, cool voice of the creek;
Of the pulse and throb of the night
And a silence vast and deep.

Of shadowed wigwam lodges,
Where the Indian corn slept fast,
The tassels tipt with silver,
Where the frost beam's fingers passed;
Of the cheery pipe of a cricket,
Perhaps the very last...
Of a peace that touched my spirit
And a soul song, vibrant, vast.

1924

Alice Saunders

LAMENT OF A LYRICIST

I've often raved of eyes of blue —
They rhyme so well with you, and true.
And underneath the moon above
When Art demanded, I've made love.

A score of maidens I've named "dear"
When poet's fancy brought them near.
And hearts I've broken in my time —
But only for the sake of rhyme.

But now you've come
My every song
A symphony of praise will be.
At least I'll try —
But, darling, why
Must you be named Penelope?

1933

Lehman Otis

TO AN INDIVIDUALIST

He's dead. I knew him too well
And he is dead.
So you're a bored realist and you say
Bury him. (Your advice, at least, is free).
I, too, am a realist,
I see the funeral expenses.

The family was stupid and large
But hidden within one boy
Was the desire to learn.
He lived to learn
More about life. And died
Before he learned too much!

Only money buys books
And tuition. He worked long young years;
Soon wanted to lift the world with his thoughts.
But an avalanche of ditch-dirt
Was too heavy for his shoulders.
And the heart of a girl who dreamed too, is empty.

The knowledge he worked to win
(College half-finished) –
Is it worth the learning?
Is it wrong to want to lift
Another's load with one's own willingness?
Why is he dead? Who killed him?

If someone could find the courage to pay
For his burial –
Yet not be fool enough to try to buy
His mother's tears. . . I'll hope
That he wasn't wrong.
That his search continues, that somewhere
He finds a gentle, kind hand, an easier place to dig. . .

Can we hope that somewhere there's a smile
Filled with enough new meaning
For her who is still so young?
Can we be foolish enough to believe
That truth does not always hurt
Or is not always so costly. . .??

1949
Carl Vorpe

OLD BALD

Granite,
Imperturbable –
Yet each time-of-spring
With the coming of the first green grass,
There is a high-pitched, heedless laughter in your waterfalls,
An earthly primal odor in your crevices,
As you watch the birches dancing at your feet,
Like naked virgins in the sun.

1932
Wendell Camp

NEWS FOR HERACLITUS

The goldfish hang clear in the pool as though in air
Like a flame that is the will of a flame
That burns with more strange sweetness
For the sheer, more than air clear, ply of the water.
All that you seem is not substance intractable,
But the idea of you. And when you move,
You move as a hand moves behind gauze film,
Not as veiling, but as the hand lends form to the fabric.
Neither water nor trembling flame
Nor any other thing that flows, flows with such care
As you moving without pressure behind time's fabric.
 Thine eye is a bird
 With blue shoulder feathers.
 Thy face, the face
 Of Botticelli's Venus.
 Thy body, body of Thetis,
 Delicate as eyelid.
And now more clearly for every line and grace,
Here roughly traced with borrowed accent and allusion,
Bright Lady! Bum through my poor heart's rags!

1960
Rolfe Korsborn

ALEURER

1

Love not I the flesh-imprisoned men
Whose dreams of a bitter-bought caress,
Or even of a woman's tenderness
That they love only so that she may love again.

For it is only yourself you love the best,
Or what you thought was glory to possess;
For you love nothing that you love the less.
Love is for the formless and external whole.

2

Blessed be the angels who see but good
Lords of the future, goddesses of the past.
Wretched is the mortal, pondering his moods,
Doomed to know his aches alone,
As time goes by and wisdom fades. . .
And breaks the chain that binds him fast. . .
What in a body's tomb but an empty wound?

3

Some are born to be glorified,
And some to be the age's pride,
To be praised by men beneath the sun. . .
And some are but to stand aside
Perplexed.and so am I one.

1949

Robert C. Litell

DEATH

The swish-shish of brooms and mops and cloths, the quiet bustle of the household prelude the final farewell to a soul. People steadily stream in and out and discreet whispers break the silence. Composed faces and dull ears are turned to the consoling words and surging and fading of the music. An endless queue slowly advances, views, and retreats from that which is no more, only to fall into the procession again and follow the final ritual. The measured tread of pall bearers, the rise and fall of a lone voice, and the slow descent into the grave mark the end. If a sob escapes, it is not heard above the creak of frozen ground and the business-like clank of spades.

1942

Esther Smoot

MAGICIANS

An anthropomorphic moon
 Raised his shining forehead soon
After Sun had sliced the world
 Just short of West;
Slowly, low, unshaven lands
 Roll beneath the ruling hands
Of this god who guards the world
 In time of rest.

As pin-point stars come into view
 The Sun shuts back-doors in the blue
And gravy-clouds
 Bespeckle heaven's vest!

In silent play, all nature's gods
 Have taken day from subject sods
And played deceptive arts
 For all their worth;
For while we sat and thrilled with rapture
 They stole the stage and made a capture
And stars are laughing now
 At night-caught earth!

1950

Carl Vorpe

THE WASP'S OVERSIGHT

Two wasps
bruise
 battered wings
 buzzing
at the window.

“The obstacle exists only
in
imagination,” chirp
busy
 buzzers,
 bravely
 bumping
that which, they insist, does not exist.

“Freedom is ours
if
we believe
the nothing which
binds us ends with sweet nirvana.

“We can master our lives;
We can do what we please.
All we want will be ours
If we only believe.”

I, playing God, my scepter a swatter,
said to the brawling brutes:

“You have flown to a fate
That you will not escape,
And cannot comprehend
That your lives shall soon end.

“Ha!
Foolish, trapped wasps!”

I, breathing a blessing, with one sweeping slap,
sent both to bliss.

1962
Loyde Hartley

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

Dingy Chinese lanterns
Cling desperately
To rafters furry with dust,
Feebly shadowing the mob below.

Slack-mouthed youths
And bleary-eyed oldsters
Eye each flick of passing skirt,
And nudge each other slyly.

Unformed girls in clinging
Gala attire, clutch themselves
To unsteady partners
As they scrape about the floor
Jerkily, shoving other dancing couples.

Florid-faced marionettes
In soiled white coats
Batter protesting instruments;
But only the hammer of a drum
And occasional brassy shrieks carry
A few feet away.

Dank cigarettes smolder between lax lips
As the smoke settles in a discouraged fog
About ash strewn puddles of beer.
Occasional throaty guffaws
Are the only indications of enjoyment.
— Christmas night in a roadhouse.

1937

Emerson Shuck

COMFORT ME WITH APPLES

A summer day floats slowly into view –
A listless, languid, loving summer day.
Love kissed my lips, as love is prone to do,
And with its kiss it dashed my mind away.
Astride a distant hill, an apple tree
Bore fruit to please the blazing summer Sun
Who watched the toil of sacrifice with glee,
departing when his pagan game was done.
This tree and I now weep in soft despair
For foolish love's untarnished, carefree grace,
For inner warmth that used to lace the air,
For that one burning, yearning secret face.
Love nibbled at the fruit but left the core.
My fleeting, fickle love – I love no more!

1962

Judy Lynn Solmes

AT THE CLEVELAND ART MUSEUM

let us go you and I
examining the human eye
wandering glancing peeking gazing
quite amusing, quite amazing
such delight at statues nude
to some they're art, to others lewd

pornography? or is it art
who can tell the two apart
unless the way the mouth is shaped
when viewing bodies quite undraped
one patron shows aesthetic joy
the other smirks like a little boy

yet little boys are often men
reliving their lost youth again
can age remove the evil thought
or those who never have been taught
to appreciate the human form
for reasons other than keeping warm

1968

Dave Partridge

Aloneness

By the clear, cool lake
Where we passed the three springs
Skipping rocks on the shimmering scales
And waiting for each to sink, to penetrate.
But none did.
Only us, we two on the surface,
Shining, distorted, then perfect
For an instant before we broke the mirror with games.
Good God, you know it's not games I want –
Keeping eyes ever on the shale so I won't miss a skipping piece.

Aloneness

In the cemetery where we sat
When summer layed spring
Pulling weeds from the grave,
But the tops broke off in my hand
Before the roots felt the tug
In the depth of darkness.
The other cemetery, beside the barren strip mine,
Where I was sick and could not conceive
On the ruined ground, bearing blackness
And adding to death.
And behind the country church
Where the seed fell on the ground and drew
Forget-me-nots that died when I wore them in my hair.

Aloneness

In the two late autumn of fermenting fruit
When the pub man cried
Hurry up, it's time!
HURRY UP, IT IS TIME!
But the black, kinky headed whore
Saw the red light flashing
And knew the last friendly round had taken too long
And tonight's closing would be forever.

1967

Lou Bistline

PRISONERS

The moon is thin. . . .
It casts its slow beams
On the relaxed waters.
My footprints become ghosts
As the water drowns them.
The ropes that bind the waves
Lie sleeping on the sand
For when the tide comes in
They must begin their task again.
I too am held prisoner. . . .
How I wish it were but
Weeds that bind me
But I am captive in the dungeon
Of my own despair.

1956
Patricia Jacobs

DIFFERENTIATION

Chairs sat in even rows,
Each chair filled with a person
Whose eyes looked straight ahead
At numbers on a board.
A voice droned steadily on and on
Talking of numbers.
For time on end I sat and
Then wearily turned to a window;
Suddenly,
I saw a black pine against a maple's flame,
And back of both a sapphire sky.
Yet the chairs still sat in even rows
Facing integrations.

1929
Mary Ruth Oldt

THE ART OF NOT BEING CALLED UPON

In addition to those in the curriculum of a liberal arts college there are many arts at which a student must become deft. Of no small significance is the art of not being called upon. There are many occasions when for the sake of a shrinking point average it is wiser for you to remain unnoticed by your professor as he surveys the cowering group before him in order to pick a victim.

There are at least three possible approaches to a solution. First of all you may wave your right hand furiously and make little bouncing motions of enthusiasm in your seat. If this does not get the professor's attention, a husky "hey" will generally do the trick. If he is the ordinary type of professor he will completely ignore you, and as soon as he calls upon a less ingenious student you can relax in your cane-bottomed chair having just had one of the success experiences that the educators are always talking about. But if your professor himself once had some education and still can remember his student days, he will pounce upon you, pronouncing your name with malicious glee. You will have to think fast to get out of this situation.

Once you have tried the previous method unsuccessfully you will be willing to try a less ostentatious means of not being called upon. If you have used foresight you will be sitting behind some husky brute who still believes that students sitting in the first rows get the high grades. If this be the case you need only to squirm at the same time and in the same direction as your bulwark.

If your professor is of the itinerant variety which lopes about the room, then it may be necessary for you to use the final method, the old concentrating act. Develop a facial expression indicative of deep mental pre-occupation. It is like an atmosphere of sanctuary through which a professor will rarely penetrate and then only very apologetically. Furthermore, any professor is flattered if a student finds his words worthy of being permanently recorded and will never thoughtlessly interrupt a student who is finishing up his notes on the last question.

These are the three best known methods of not being called upon. Undoubtedly further research will add others to the list.

1942

Florence Emert

BURNT OFFERINGS TO THE FATES

Give me one star
To follow,
One symphony to write,
And poetry half-phrased
In glimmering recessed of my mind,
And lock them deep within my very being
That I may spend the passions of my life,
Pounding on the unrelenting walls
Built round the turrets of my soul –
That I may never know,
How very much of happiness
A mocking god forbade the arrogance of genius;
For then, vanquished shall I conquer,
Surrendering shall be free.

1939

Viola Senseman

TOWN CLOCK

Six dull clangs
float through morning fog
a village stirs
and sends its pairs of feet
listlessly to work

Six articulate clangs
leapfrog pointed rooftops
a village stirs
and sees longspaced footsteps
hurrying home

1949

James Montgomery

ONE WORLD

beyond the swamps and noisy desert
where beetles rush and eagles honk their screaming laughs;
beyond confused babbling in Eastern dialects
and innocent flowers held in arid hands;
beyond the purple towers hung with strings of beads;
far past the garbled underbrush where even crickets dare not
chirp;
beyond, beyond,
run the gentle rivulets and springs that gather
quietly into the stillness
that flow together, gently, softly,
to the pool of quiet.

Grey day, cool as Appalachian spring;
All hushed but the dripping of the rain
Dropping softly, gently harsh,
Splashing soft on resting morning leaves.
All grey, gently shadowed, preparation for the coming;
Till then emerges softly
Shaker bride in white.
Gentle, austere tapestry;
Almost static world of Shaker black and white.

Tis a gift to be simple...
Dreamlike world of plainness
fresh as hot-baked wheat bread dripping butter,
sweet as
Hickory nut cookies thickly iced.

Tis a gift to be free...
Plain People living naive spring
In hearts made to be happy
Gathering sweet purple berries
In a patch where nettles grow.

Tis a gift to be down...
Against the world of greens and blues
Against compelling red.

Where you ought to be...
Among gently falling drops of Prussian blue
The gentle black and white lady
Walks among wild, sweet strawberries
To pick and taste the sweet of one,
To let it melt upon the tongue
Of the Shaker bride in white.

1968
Rachel Cring

PERCUSSION

a drummer sits alone behind his trap,
picks up his sticks, and slowing starts to tap
he finds a rhythm and begins to rap

a steady beat, a lightly tappy sound
his hand moves faster as his foot jerks down
to drum a lower hum – his thoughts are drowned
in artistry of rhythm and the sound

of syncopation – tap, ra, ta, ta, dum,
he wildly beats until his pulse has come
to throb with every move – he has become
hyonotically enslaved by but a drum.

1960
Susan Beatty

JAZZ POND

The clarinetist,
puffing small, tight cheeks,
Trills over lily pad tables,
peepfroglike.

Burping bullfrog love,
the double bass
reiterates,
“Come here, female, come here.”

With feigned disdain
the salamander drummer
beats on toadstool
tubs a calyptic rhythm.

Across the smoky pool
the piano player
saunters cool drops of notes
like the walk of rain.

1962
Roger Caldwell

SANDSTONE SONATA

High on a hill is a facing of rock,
A bare ledge of crumbled gray,
Slashed by dark cavity
That mars the weathered sandstone.

I've seen it,
And it stirs half-forgotten memories,
Romantic musings, if you wish,
Of biting, roaring wind
Cutting up the long valley to my hill,
Gouging, seeking, missing me
In my warm cave.

My man is with me and my child,
Tucked in the curve of my arm,
Wrapped in two rabbit pelts.
The fire is licking up remains
Of winter-starved branches,
And the sand around it is mellow
And warm to cold hands.

In summer the green valley
Spreads out beneath us
As gentle and smooth
As the large-eyed doe
That drinks from the fern-lined stream.

And we feel vital, then,
As springy and green
As the young sapling my man
Bends to snare long-eared gray shadows.
Then we do not worry that winter comes.

But now we are here, relaxed,
Sleepy, full of the great-eared rabbit.
The trees are bare
And their white-tipped branches
Point knowing fingers to the sky,
Where dwells our summer lord, the Sun.

The time will come
When I will be no more as I am.
The day will brighten
When my cave-home will crumble
Like the sand around the ants' home.

That day will take part of me
Never to be recaptured,
To be wrenched away
Leaving only an insatiable hunger
For warm darkness.

1964
Ruth Lackey

GRUMIO THOU ART

You are a little fellow, gay and bright
Who doesn't seem to have an earthly care;
Except to clown and win your lord's delight,
Or mock your master with a humble prayer.
Although he drags you through the mid and cold,
Uncomely dressed that he might meet his bride
And shock the city with his manner bold,
You still stand laughing gaily at his side.
I like you, little rascal that you are,
And so I will become you for a while.
I'll laugh and weep and run and fall and jar,
While trying, as you did, to make folks smile.
Your name is Grumio, I think it right.
So Shakespeare's Grumio I'll be tonight.

1960
John Soliday

A JANITOR'S PHANTASY

Sweep on, Broom,
While I build castles, fight battles,
Write books, and make speeches.

Get your dirt as you may, Broom,
While I sing Opera, sway men,
Thrill hearts, and build bridges.

Do you ever dream, Broom,
Of greater feats of sweeping –
Of cleaner streets and cities,
Of dirt-free hearts and faces?

Do you ever lift yourself, Broom
From mere menial sweeping
To higher tasks, and nobler, in your thinking?

If you don't, then sweep on, Broom
In your dull, plodding way,
While I build castles, sway men,
Sing Opera, and build bridges.

1939

Donald L. Williams

JOHN, PAUL, GEORGE, RINGO, AND KUBLA

On Brighton Beach did Dutchmen then
A sun-filled funny-dome decree:
Where Coney Island River ran
By hot dogs measureless to man
Down to the Sheepshead Bay.
So once five miles of sandy ground
With roller coasters girdled round:
And there the subways looked like sinuous rills,
Not far from where the Dodgers used to be,
And here was Brooklyn's balmy beach of thrills,
Enfolding Irving Goldberg's beanery.

But oh! that roller coaster ride which slanted
Near the boardwalk athwart an oaken cover!
A crazy place; expensive and enchanted
As e'er beneath a ferris wheel were daunted
Vendor's wailing for a popcorn lover!
And from this coaster, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if New York in August-time were breathing,
A double dip had momentarily been forced,
Amid whose tracks the riders all had burst
Their lunches vaulted like rebounding hail,
And every egg creme seltzered down the rail:
And 'mid these pulpy boards at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the Coney River.
Five kids aboard it had a mazy motion
By Gravesand Bay the reeking river ran,
They reached the hot dogs measureless to man,
And gorged themselves with beef and mustard lotion:
And 'mid this tumult Dutchmen heard from far
A mogul's money prophesying more!

The new-found form of loony leisure,
Where a Mouseketeer behaves
To suit a Russian premier's pleasure,
Is the only Western thing he craves,
It seemed a miracle of rare device,
A daffy Disney-dome with Mickey Mice!

A damsel with a transistor
In a pinball place I saw:
It was a Flatbush Avenue maid,
And on her radio was played,
The sounds of yeah, yeah, yeah.
O, would that she could see me
At home where I belong,
In modern Liverpool she'd win me,
With that music loud and long,
I would woo her with my hair,
My shaggy dome! besieged by lice!

And all who heard should change their fair,
Yet parents scream, Beware! Beware!
Their flashing eyes, their floating hair!
They ask a million as their price,
So "close your eyes" as they have said,
For they on money-new hath fed,
And rid their hair of Prairie lice.

1965-66
Stu Leichter

MAN AND MORNING

The sun arose this morning,
A great feudal lord ascending
His aerial throne.
Before him charged
A thousand orange-crested lancers,
That pierced the somber
Realm of night and
Spread the carnage
Over the eastern sky.

Color's organ heightened,
Struck across the misty earth
In one great chord
Of morning light.
In saffron raiment then,
The monarch moved forward,
Upward, blessing with his studded scepter
All – land, earth, and sky.

And down below,
All earthly creatures,
Vassals liberated from the dank
Medieval donjon of the night,
Bestirred themselves and basked
In the warmth of their genial master;
All save one – and that,
Most exalted of the vassals,
Arose fitfully
And passed through the day
With his eyes downward.

1939
Edgar Daniels

INDIAN SUMMER

The days came slowly,
Half-shrouded, like Persian maidens
In their dusky veils.
Jealously they withheld
From my sight
Their seductive features, enveloped
In the folds
Of their garments.

Yet through the film I could see
The deep rosy hues
Of their bodies.
And as they passed, the veils
Brushed against me and I
Recognized the heavy odor
Of autumn.

1935
Carol Beachler

SPRING

Frozen leaves tinkle empty shell-sounds
On the sidewalk.
A golden leaf-bird
Flies frozen under a rain puddle.

Photographed in ice,
Autumn's ragged fire recalls,
Instantaneously, memories
Of windows, open to the spring sunset,
Of sweaty words and comfortable embrace.

And now, the incongruity of this spring,
Frozen without love,
Even without yearnings.

1956
Rolfe Korsborn

DARK ENCOUNTER

Midnight rises in darkness, and soon
Not even the dim of the rocker-arm moon
 Will light the singing
Silence. Only a sprinkle of star
Pricks blue-white holes in heaven, too far
 For any winging
Dream to come. The darker slope
Of joining hills blots out all hope
 That the warm glow
Man makes, wherever he lives in the night,
Shall thrust into the darkness, with bright
 Spark-fires below
The gloom-toned sky. Standing alone,
Like one of the singer-men who intone
 Word-music to the wind,
I perceive, reflected in space,
In a dark encounter face to face,
 Myself, twinned
In a mirror of darkness. Here I see
The shimmering soul-flesh of identity.

1957
Roger Caldwell

