CONTENTS:

2 LP
1 program notes (8 p.)
Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry

Descriptive Notes Are Inside Pocket

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

Cover Design by Ronald Clyde

ATF BRACKET: Something Has to Burn
ALFRED DORFMAN: Snowflake
LEWIS TURCO: An Immigrant Ballad
WAYNE KINNEL: To Child Our Land
MR. LOGAN: The Prophecy
THE RHYTHM: The Whirl
HOWARD NEMEROV: Life of Common Man
SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SIDE II

KATE BRACKET: Something Has to Burn
ALFRED DORFMAN: Snowflake
LEWIS TURCO: An Immigrant Ballad
WAYNE KINNEL: To Child Our Land
MR. LOGAN: The Prophecy
THE RHYTHM: The Whirl
HOWARD NEMEROV: Life of Common Man
SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735

SCHOLASTIC SL 9735
Kenneth Patchen

A pioneer in "poetry with jazz," Patchen received a Guggenheim fellowship for a first book of verse, Before the Brave (1936). His published works include Because It Is, The Famous Boating Party and Other Poems in Prose, Red Wine and Yellow Hair, The Journal of Ablon Moonlight, and others. He has also made three LP recordings of his own works for Folkways Records; FL0717 - Selected Poems; FL0718 - Kenneth Patchen Reads with Jazz; FL0719 - Love Poems.

Karl Shapiro

Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. Member of the American academy of Arts and Letters. Has been Consultant in Poetry at Library of Congress; editor of POETRY: A MAGAZINE OF VERSE; has taught at Johns Hopkins, Iowa State, University of California, is now editor of Prairie Schooner.


Lewis Turco

His first collection, FIRST POEMS, was a selection of the Book-Club-for-Poetry. He has made recordings of his work for the Library of Congress archives, and teaches at Pen College in Cleveland.

In 1960 he won the Academy of American Poets Prize at the University of Iowa.

Galway Kinnell

Has contributed to Beloit Poetry Journal, New World Writing, etc. Was formerly Director of the Liberal Arts Program of the Downtown Center of the University of Chicago. His first collection, WHAT A KINGDOM IT WAS, published by Houghton-Mifflin. Has been reprinted in NEW POEMS, edited by Rolfe Humphries and published by Ballantine Books, Inc., and this poem in the recording, "To Christ Our Lord" appears in the Oscar-Williams-edited POCKET BOOK OF MODERN VERSE.

Mary Swenson

Comes from Utah, where she was at one time a reporter for the Salt Lake Deseret News. Author of A CANE OF HIVES; was one of three included in the Scribners' collection, POETS OF TODAY, along with Murray Ross and Harry Duncan -- her group being called ANIMAL ANIMAL (actually a book within a book). Her work has appeared in Partisan Review, Western Review, Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, and the New Directions anthologies. In 1953, she won the Poetry introduction prize awarded by the YMA Poetry Center in New York.

Richard Beyerhart


Books:

Howard Norman


John Ciardi

Poetry Editor of Saturday Review. Translator of Dante's DIVINE COMEDY. Author of AS I RAN, I MARRY YOU, HOMeward to AMERICA, LIVE ANOTHER DAY, Professor of English at Rutgers University. One of the foremost lecturers in America.

Isobel Kneeland

Winner of University of New Hampshire writers' Conference Chapbook Award in 1959.

Marcia Masters


Donald Justice

Publications:

THE SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES, Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1960. (The Lakant Poetry Selection for 1959). And in such magazines as NEW YORKER, HARPER'S, HUDSON REVIEW, CARLETON MISCELLANY, POETRY; and in such anthologies as THE NEW POETS OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA and UNDERSTANDING POETRY.

Inez Boulton prize for POETRY, 1960. Iowa-Rockefeller fellowship in poetry, 1954-

THEODORE NORTH

Publications:

Open House 1941 (Knopf)
The Lost Bon and Other Poems 1948 (Doubleday and John Lehman)
Poem to the End 1951 (Doubleday)
The Waking 1953 (Doubleday)
Words For the Wind 1957 (Becker and Warburg) 1948 (Doubleday)

Awards:

Tietgens Prize 1947; Levinson Prize, 1951; American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, 1952; Grant: Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1952; Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1954; Rockefeller Mountain Award, 1958; Edna St. Vincent Millay Award, Bollingen Prize (Yale University), Ford Foundation Grant, Longview Award, National Book Award, Northwest Writers Award, 1959.

Contributor to:

three prizes of $500, offered by the Lyric Society for the best book of poems submitted in manuscript. In 1961, he was awarded The Poetry Society of America prize for the best sonnet of the year; in 1962, he won the annual prize of the Book and Play Club of New York. The National Poetry Center awarded him, in 1959, the Golden Scroll Medal of Honor for being the outstanding poet in the country for that year. Typical of many such honors given him by various magazines and literary societies over a long period of years was Robert Nathan’s selection of his ‘Traveller’s Report’ as the prize poem in a recent issue of The Lyric. In 1955, his book, Like a Man in Love, shared the Borestone Mountain Award of $1,250 with Eric Barker’s Directions in the Sun.

He served as a Vice President of The Poetry Society of America in 1949. In 1956, the University of Kentucky bestowed upon him an honorary Doctorate of Letters, and in 1953, the University of Massachusetts conferred upon him this same degree.

BOOKS BY DAVID MORTON

SHIPS IN HARBOR

HARVEST

THE ROYAL TODAY - AND YESTERDAY

NOCTURNES AND AUTUMNALS

THE RENAISSANCE OF IRISH POETRY

A WAR OF EARTH

EARTH’S PROFESSIONAL

SPELL AGAINST TIME

ALL IN ONE BREATH

ANGLE OF EARTH AND SKY

POEMS 1920-1945

LIKE A MAN IN LOVE

JOURNEY INTO TIME

ANTHOLOGIES

AMHERST UNDERGRADUATE VERSE, 1965-1969

SIX FOR THEM

SHORTHAND MODERN POEMS

THIS IS THEIR ACRE

SIDE I

Side 1, Band 1: SNOWY HERON

John Ciardi

What lifts the heron leaning on the air
I praise without a name. A crouch, a flare,
a long stroke through the cumulus of trees,
a shaped thought at the sky -- then gone. O rare!
Saint Francis, being happiest on his knees,
would have cried Father! Cry anything you please.

But praise. By any name or none. But praise
the white original burst that lights
the heron on his two soft kissing kites.
When saints praise heaven lit by doves and rays,
I sit by pond sounds till the air recalls
its heron back. And doubt all else. But praise.

I MARRY YOU

John Ciardi

Men marry what they need. I marry you,

morning by morning, day by day, night by night,
and every marriage makes this marriage new.

In the broken name of heaven, in the light
that shatters granite, by the spitting shore,
in air that leaps and wobbles like a kite,

I marry you from time and a great door
is shut and stays shut against wind, sea, stone,
sunburst, and heavenfall. And home once more

inside our walls of skin and struts of bone,
man-woman, woman-man, and each the other,
I marry you by all dark and all dawn

and learn to let time spend. Why should I bother
the flies about me? Let them buzz and do.
Men marry their queen, their daughter, or their mother
by names they prove, but that thin buzz whines through:
when reason fails to reason, cause is true.
Men marry what they need. I marry you.

Side 1, Band 2:

WAGON TRAIN

E.L. Mayo

As pioneering children, when no rain
Made water breakish in the last canteen,
Went right to sleep, and just as seldom knew
When guns were cooked and ready all night through,
So do we ride the earth's revolving wheel.
Moving across what prairies, to what war,
Against what ambush, eye does not reveal;
Nor do we know what loyal outriders
Swing on to clear our path across the plain.
But drift to sleep where canvas hides the stars
Of the long planetary wagon train.

THE HORSE CHESTNUT TREE

Richard Eberhart

Boys in sporadic but benignant drouses
Come with sticks, as certainly as Autumn,
To assault the great horse chestnut tree.

There is a law governs their lawlessness.
Desire is in them for a shining asulet
And the best are those that are highest up.

They will not pick them easily from the ground.
With shrill arms they fling to the higher branches,
To hurry the work of nature for their pleasure.

I have seen them dropping down the street
Their pockets stuffed with chestnut shucked, unshucked.
It is only evening keeps them from their wish.

Sometimes I run out in a kind of rage
To chase the boys away: I catch an arm,
Maybe, and laugh to think of being the lawgiver.

I was once such a young sprout myself
And fingered in my pocket the prize and trophy.
But still I moralize upon the day.

And see that we, outlaws on God's property,
Fling out imagination beyond the skies,
Wishing a tangible good from the unknown.

And likewise death will drive us from the scene
With the great flowering world unbroken yet,
Which we held in idea, a little handful.

Side 1, Band 3:

THE RETURN

Theodore Roethke

The way to the boiler was dark,
Dark all the way,
Over slippery cinders
Through the long greenhouse.

The roses kept breathing in the dark.
They had many mouths to breathe with.
My knees made little winds underneath
Where the weeds slept.

There was always a single light
Swinging by the fire-pit,
Where the fireman pulled out roses,
The big roses, the big bloody clinkers.

Once I stayed all night.
The light in the morning came slowly over the Snow.
There were many kinds of cool Air.
Then came steam.

Pipe-knock.

Scurry of warm over small plants.
Ordung: ordung!
Papa is coming!

A fine haze moved off the leaves;
Frost melted on far plains;
The rose, the chrysanthemum turned toward the light.
Even the hushed forms, the bent yellowy weeds
Moved in a slow up-away.

It was beginning winter.
An in-between time.
The landscape still partly brown;
The bones of weeds kept swinging in the wind,
Above the blue snow.

It was beginning winter.
The light moved slowly over the frozen field,
Over the dry seed-crowns,
The beautiful surviving bones
Swinging in the wind.

Light traveled over the field;
Stayed.
The weeds stopped swinging.
The wind moved, not alone,
Through the clear air, in the silence.

Was it light?
Was it light within?
Was it light within light?
Stillness becoming alive,
Yet still?

A lively understandable spirit
Once entertained you.
It will come again.
Be still.
Wait.

THE WRAITH

Theodore Roethke

Incomprehensible gaitety and dread
Attended what we did. Behold, before,
May all the lonely pastures of the dead;
The spirit and the flesh cried out for more.
We two, together, on a darkening day
Took arms against our own obscurity.

Did each become the other in that play?
She laughed me out, and then she laughed me in;
In the deep middle of ourselves we lay:
When glory failed, we danced upon a pin.

The valley rooked beneath the granite hill;
Our souls looked forth, and the great day stood still.

There was a body, and it cast a spell,—
God pity those but wanton to the knees,—
The flesh can make the spirit visible;
We woke to find the moonlight on our toes.
In the rich weather of a dappled wood
We played with dark and light as children should.

What shape leaped forward at the sensual cry—
Sea-beast or bird slung toward the ravaged shore?
Did space shake off an angel with a sigh?
We rose to meet the moon, and saw no more.
It was and was not she, a shape alone,
Impaled on light, and whirling slowly down.

Side 1, Band 4:

LIFE CYCLE OF COMMON MAN

Howard Nemerov

Roughly figured, this man of moderate habits,
This average consumer of the middle class,
Consumed in the course of his average life span
Just under half a million cigarettes,
Four thousand firths of gin and a bottle
A quarter as much vermouth; he drank
Maybe a hundred thousand cups of coffee,
And counting his parents' share it cost
Something like half a million dollars
To put it through life. How many beasts
Died to provide him with meat, belts and shoes
Cannot be certainly said.

But anyhow,
It is in this way that a man travels through time,
Leaving behind him his lengthening trail
Of empty bottles and bones, of broken shoes,
Frayed collars and worn out or outgrown
Diapers and dinner jackets, silk ties and silks.

Given the energy and security thus achieved,
He did...? What? The usual things, of course,
The eating, dressing, drinking and bagetting,
And he worked for the money which was to pay
For the eating, et cetera, which were necessary
If he were to go on working for the money, et cetera,
But chiefly he talked. As the bottles and bones
Accumulated behind him, the words proceeded
Steadily from the front of his face as he
Advanced into the silence and made it verbal.
Who can tally the tale of his words? A lifetime
Would barely suffice for their repetition;
If you merely printed all his comme the result
Would be a very large volume, and the number of times
He said "thank you" or "very little sugar, please,"
Would stagger the imagination. There were also
Vitriolisms, platitudes, and statements beginning
"It seems to me" or "As I always say."

Consider the courage in all that, and behold the man
Walking into deep silence, with the ecstatic plastic
Cartoon's balloon of speech proceeding
Steadily out of the front of his face, the words
Borne along on the breath which is his spirit
Telling the numberless tale of his untold word
Which makes the world his apple, and forces him to eat

THE PREPARATION

John Logan

While the class waited
I prepared the frog:

I had to hurry the needle
Through the handy opening
Just at the back of the head;

It slipped upon the skin
As on a plastic bag
For iceboxes or as on

A rind of ripe melon,
Then under urging
Entered to tough parts
Never meant for meat --
Causing one eye slightly
To drop from its accustomed
Place, a cold nearly
Muscleless leg to draw
Too far up the belly.

An almost imperceptible
Darkening of green
Along the back, in whose

Depression a small amount
Of blood collected, like ours
Red, and causing the mouth

White and inside molat
To stretch (but it was a rabbit
In his wire cage

Who screamed)
As the hour began.

Side 1, Band 5

TRAVELLER'S REPORT

David Morton

That was a country of straight sun,
And no shadow...The men there
Had clear eyes and a hard wit,
And what the men did there was done

With such an unambiguous air
There could be no two ways of it.

Case there a traveller with a word
Like 'sorrow,' or 'color,' a new sound,
A gracious sound upon the breath:
The children were the first that heard,
But soon the tale got well around

'The stranger saith, the stranger saith'.

The traveller was put to death.

I wakened to the slanting sun
And shadow on my colored land,
And sorrow near, the one near,
Her hand familiar in my hand...

I have no further journeys planned.

TO CHRIST OUR LORD

Galway Kinnell

The legs of the elk punctured the snow's crust
And wolves floated light-footed on the land
Hunting Christmas elk living and frozen.
Inside snow melted in a basin as a woman basted

A bird fixed over coals by its wings and head.
Snow had sealed off the windows, candles lit

The Christmas meal. The special grace chilled
The cooked bird, bellowing long-winded and the room cold.
During the words a boy thought, is it fitting To eat this creature killed on the wing?
For he had shot it himself, climbing out
Along on snowshoes in the dim Christmas dawn,
Fallen snow swirling and the snowfall gone,

Hearing his throat across as his rifle shouted,
Watched it drop, and fished from the snow the dead.

But he had not wanted to shoot. The proud
Ascension of wings in the hushed morning
Had stirred his love, and the things
In his gloves froze, and he could not,
Even for hunger, shoot. But he shot.

Now the grace praised his wicked act. At its end
The chilled bird on the plate
Stared at his stricken appetite,
There had been nothing to do but surrender,
To shoot and to eat; so he ate as he shot, with wonder.

At night on snowshoes on the drifting field
He wandered again, for whom had love stirred?
The stars glittered on the snow and nothing answered.
Then the Swan spread her wings, cross of the cold north,

The pattern and mirror of the acts of earth.

Side 1, Band 6

AN IMMIGRANT BALLAD

Lewis Turco

My father came from Stolly
(O sing a roundelay with me)
With cheeses in his pockets and

A crust of black bread in his hand.
He jumped ashore without a coat,
Without a friend or enemy

Till Jesus nailed him by the throat.

My father came to Boston town
(O tongue a catch and toss one down).
By day he plied a cobbler's awl,
By night he loitered on the wall.
He swigged his wine, he struck his note,
He wound the town up good and brown,
Till Jesus caught him by the throat.

He'd heard of Hell, he knew of sin
(O pluck that wicked mandolin)
But they were for the gentle folk,
The cattle broken to the yoke.
He didn't need a cross to tie
His eyes were flame, his ears were tin,
Till Jesus nabbed him by the throat.
He met a Yankee girl one day
(O cry a merry roundelay)
Who wouldn't do as she was bid,
But only what the good folk did.
She showed him how the church bells peal
Upon the narrow straightaway,
And Jesus nipped him on the heel.

My father heard a sermon said
(O bite the bottle till it's dead). He quit his job and went to school
And memorized the Golden Rule.
He drained his crock and sold his leg,
He swept the cobwebs from his head,
And Jesus hugged him by the leg.

The girl was pleased: she'd saved a soul
(O light a stogie with a coal).
No longer need she be so wary.
Daddy went to seminary
To find how warm a Yankee grows
When she achieves her fondest goal.
And Jesus bit him on the nose.

At last he had a flock to wear
(O hum a hymn and slip a prayer).
He hoisted Bible, sailed to search
For sheep to shear and for a church.
He asked the girl to share his life,
And Jesus hauled him by the hair.
Now he had taken her to wife.

My father holds a pulpit still
(O I have had enough to swell). His eye is tame, his hair is gray,
He can't recall a roundelay.
But he can preach and he can quote
A verse or scripture as you will,
Since Jesus grabbed him by the throat.

SNOWFLAKE

Alfred Dorn

Here is a snowflake in my hand, like some
White Athena in the palm of history --
A moment's fragile parthenon of frost.

It was the world-enfolding Hand, remembered
In marble by Rodin, that felt the empires
Falling like droplets to oblivion.
Cupping the noon of Athens in its palm,
Its fingers knew the touch of Phidian's snow
And spangled the crysalis of Plato's dream.

Perhaps this flake is some minute Athens,
And if a god who holds it as it dies,
To sudden dew. This molecule of world
May be dominion of a subtler nation,
Inviolate to our eyes... If some dream,
What kingdoms claim this melting star of snow!

SOMETHING HAS TO BURN

Kate Havensett

Is softness visible, is shadow palpable in depth;
Color of dusky hiding-holes, of earth;
Memory, myth
Of deep woods next;
Cloud caught and shaped; bequest
Of a small furious beast.

Mink worn
Are inch-long simmering maggots, pink
And blind. Their snake-sleek mother
Gives them herself, her rage and milk to drink.
But if fate's turn
Outs off her hunting mate, her food for milk
Before the ravening young
Are eyed, furred, foiled, strong
To be milk --
She has one more way.

Warmth is from fire; something has to burn.

Denial first from empty dug is torn
By a baby's fang...
Here's meat with the taste of rage; and she will stay
Till the red milk is drained. And she will stay.

SIDE II

Side 2, Band 1:
HERE IN KATHMANDU

Donald Justice

We have climbed the mountain,
There's nothing more to do.
It is terrible to come down
To the valley
Where, amidst many flowers,
One thinks of snow.

As, formerly, amidst snow,
Climbing the mountain,
One thought of flowers,
Tremulous, ruddy with dew,
In the valley.
One caught their scent coming down.

It is difficult to adjust, once down,
To the absence of snow.
Glorious, from the valley,
One rises up at the mountain.
What else is there to do?
Prayer wheels, flowers!

Let the flowers
Fade, the prayer wheels run down.
What have these to do
With us who have stood atop the snow
Atop the mountain,
Flags seen from the valley?

It might be possible to live in the valley,
To bury oneself among flowers,
If one could forget the mountain,
Now, setting out before dawn,
Blinded with snow,
One knew what to do.

Meanwhile it is not easy here in Kathmandu,
Especially when to the valley
That wind which means snow
Elsewhere, but here means flowers
Comes down,
As soon it must, from the mountain.

THE STRAY DOG BY THE SUMMERHOUSE

Donald Justice

This morning, down
By the summerhouse,
I saw a stray,
A stray dog dead.
All white and brown
The dead friend lay,
All brown with a white
Mark on his head.

And the tongue hung loose
To the butterflies,
The butterflies
And the flying ants.

And because of the tongue
He seemed like one
Who has run too long,
And stopped, and pants.
And because of the sun
There came a scent,
And it was strong.
It came and went
As if somewhere near
A round, ripe pear,
So ripe, so round,
Had dropped to the ground
And with the heat
Was turning black.
And the scent came back,
And it was sweet.
DEAD SNAKE
William Jay Smith
A grey financier in a thin black auto
Drove over a snake on a country road;
Birds flew up in dust that gathered,
Oak leaves trembled throughout the wood.
Decisive indeed the defeat of Evil;
And inconclusive the triumph of Good.

LIGHT
William Jay Smith
By television day and night
The little people see the light.
The light moves vivid through the air
From Cassiopae and the Bear,
And everything’s as clear as day;
The daughter marries, moves away,
The little son goes off to fight;
A telegram arrives one night.
To say he’s unaccounted for;
They draw the blinds and bolt the door,
And everything’s as clear as day.
The wind comes up, the hemlocks sway,
The light moves vivid through the skies.
They grip the chair and blink their eyes,
And something deep within them throbs;
They set the dial, they work the knobs,
While elephantine shadows fall
And frows leap from the parlor wall.

VISION AT TWILIGHT
William Jay Smith
The lamps are lit; I gaze into the dark
While a Negro carries a lampshade through the park,
While a Negro carries a lampshade by a stream,
Illumined as by lamplight in a dream,
A dream in which daylity and darkness blend
To mark the world’s beginning or its end.
Night deepens, and slowly wanders on;
Light within me lengthens -- and is gone.

NIGHTFALL
Marcia Masters
It is not that life is stern, nor that comforts are
My pillow is soft and my gown as silken;
And my children walk in the meadows in the sweet of
Taking all that the sun gives them. In the spring,
It is that I have not given to life
What I should have given,
Yet I know not where I have failed.
What is it you ask of me, Life?
What is this look of scorn on the scarlet maple?
This sound of reproach in the elms seething with autumn?
This look of neglect over blinding blue water?
I go where you tell me,
I let the great winds stiffen my shoulders,
The earth press to my flesh in the joy of the summer,
When I claim it as my beloved.

I have rejoiced so much --
Even in the soft arrival of rain in the treetops,
Even in snow winching on dark grey pavements,
That lead to the promise of night
Burned to a lazy heap on the library fire.

THE COUNTESS OF FERSHING SQUARE
Marcia Masters
They called her the Countess of Fersching Square.
She had a thorn of quarrelsome hair;
And a white-saged grace.
A sable wreath
Stared out of her face.

With her sullen hands she clutched at her dress,
The color of alley dust,
And of loneliness;
And upon her hands the old veins sat
Like a spider blown up with a quiescent fat;
But she walked like a Countess with singing head;
And she pigeons before her rose in a gust --
Leaving an empty path.

And this she would dream of until she died:
The Italian house with its walks of pride;
And the sea below with its regal tread;
The basket of jewels in a wanton heap;
The garden faces, the moonlit guests;
The low-cut gowns that revealed her breasts
Curved like swans in a knowing sleep.

But she walked along through the curving Square,
With her white-saged grace, and her quarrelsome hair;
And the pigeons before her rose in a gust --
Leaving an empty path.

O FIERY RIVER
Kenneth Patchen
O fiery river
Flow out over the land.
Men have destroyed the roads of wonder,
And their cities squat like black toads
In the orchards of life.
Nothing is clean, or real, or as a girl,
Naked to love, or to be a man with.
The arts of this American land
Stink in the air of mountains;
What has made these men sick rats
That they find out every cheap hole?

How can these squeak of greatness?
Push your drugstore-culture into the sewer
With the rest of your creation.
The bell wasn’t meant to toll for you.
Keep your filthy little hands off it.

O fiery river
Spread over this American land.
Drown out the futility, the smug contempt
For what does not pay...
What would you pay Christ to die again?

SPARRIUS IN A HILLSIDE DRIFT
James Wright
Pitiful dupes of old illusion, lost
Sprightly as when they beheld in summer dust,
Then faded among the crystals on the hill.

Lonely for warm days when the season broke,
Alert to wing and fire, they must have flown
To rest among those toughened boughs of oak
That brood above us, now the fire is gone.

Walking around to breathe, I kick aside
The soft brown feather and the brittle beak.
All flesh is fallen snow. The days arrive
The wings of these deluded, once they break.
Somewhere the race of wittier birds survive,
Southerly slowl with the cooling days.
They pause to quiver in the wind alive
Like some secure felicity of phrase.

But these few blunderers below my hands
Assault the ear with silence on the wind.
I lose their words, though winter understands.
Man is the listener gone deaf and blind.

The oak above us shivers in the bleak
And lusty winter day; and, far below
Our gathering of the Chester and the weak,
A chimney whispers to a cloud of snow.

Your nostrils breathe the ordained air
Of chosen loneliness.
Magnificently named as the lustrous pampas
Your head heavy with heronic curls
Wears a regal crown between the brows.

The wide bundle of your chest
Your loose-skinned belly frilled with fur
You carry easily simously pacing on suede paws

Between tight thighs
Under the thick root of your tufted tail
Situated like a full-stoned fruit beneath a bough
The quiver of your never-used malehood is slung.

You pace in dung on cement
The bars flick past your eyeballs
Fixed beyond the awestruck stares of children.
Watching you they remember their fathers
The frightening hairs in their fathers ears.

Young girls remember lovers too timid and white
And I remember how I played lion with my brothers
Under the round yellow-grained table
The shadow our cave in the lamplight.

Your beauty burns the brain
Though your paws slu'e on foul cement
The fetor of captivity you do right to ignore
The bars too an illusion.

Your heroic paranoia plants you in the Indian jungle
Pacing by the cool water-hole as dawn streaks the sky
And the foretaste of the all-day hunt
Is sweet as yearling's blood
In the corners of your lips.

Fracareous ground

On the volcano hill
The small brave village clings
And the rich grapevine swings.
In wheat foredoomed to fall
Beneath the reaper's blade,
Keenly and undissayed
The fieldmouse makes her nest;
And down to the sea's false arms
The harbour alleys run.
And farmhouse windows burn
Each with its tiny sun
Against the tremendous night.
Arching this tilting dust
That is a world in flight.

On such precarious ground
Life rears its endless house
For meadowlark and mouse
And love itself must shape
Its vulnerable towers
On the uncertain sand
Of the wild human heart.
Raising its reckless port
Beside an unknown sea
Building with desperate trust,
Building because it must
Only upon the slope
Of old catastrophes.

LION

May Swenson

In the bend of your mouth soft murder
In the flints of your eyes
The sun-stained openings of caves

Pinnacle

(of pinion, fr. LL. pinneolum, fr. L. pinna, a feather)

David Ridgley Clark

I took my light love naked in the bed,
Her limbs half-folded like a preening dove.
Her lips took mine as the stretched dove nips her wing,
The white-bent dove.
Then all given over to her pliant death,
The downed head fallen back, bright eyes at conclusion
Consoled the breast's whiteness, the limbs free,
The full-struck dove.

O arch and pinnace, bonnet of the beasts!
I held her risen as the high-shivered dove
Holds her unfolded feathers in the sun,
The light-lost dove.

Brought in the end where breakers dump and slow
On the glass verge of the land
Silver they rang to the stones when the sea
Plunged them and turned.

Curious crowns and scepters they look to me
Here on the gold sand,
Warped, wry, but having the beauty of Excellence earned.

In a time of continual dry abdications
And of deep complacencies,
They are fit to be taken for signs, these emblems
Royally sene,

Which have ridden to homeless wreck, and long revolved
In the lakes of the seas,
But have saved in spite of it all their dense
Ingenerate grain.

Now winter downs the dying of the year,
And night is all a settlement of snow.
From the soft street the rooms of houses show
A gathered light, a shapen atmosphere,
Like frozen-over lakes whose ice is thin
And still allows some stirring down within.

I've known the wind by water banks to shake
The late leaves down, which frozen where they fell
And held in ice as dancers in a spell
Fluttered all winter long into a lake;
Graven on the dark in gestures of descent,
They seemed their own most perfect monument.

There was perfection in the death of ferns
Which laid their fragile cheeks against the stone
A million years. Great, mammoths overthrown
Composedly have made their long sojourns,
Like palaces of patience, in the gray
And changeless lands of ice. And at Pompei

The little dog lay curled and did not rise
But slept the deeper as the ashes rose
And found the people incomplete, and froze
The random hands, the loose unready eyes
Of men expecting yet another sun
To do the shapely thing they had not done.

These sudden ends of time must give us pause.
We fray into the future, rarely wrought
Save in the tapestries of afterthought.
More time, more time. Barrages of applause
Some suffused from a buried radio
The New-year bells are wrangling with the snow.

Much of transfiguration that we hear,
The ballet of the atoms, the second law
Of thermodynamics, Isis, and the queer

Fertilization of fish, the Catholic's awe
For the life-cycle of the Nazarene,
His wife whom sleeping Milton thought he saw;

Much of the resurrection that we've seen
And taken part in, like the Passion Play,
All of autumnal red and April green,

To those who walk in work from day to day,
To economic and responsible men,
All, all is substance. Life that lets him stay
Uses his substance kindly while she can
But drops him lifeless after his one span.

What lives? the proper creatures in their homes?
A weed? the white and giddy butterfly?
Bacteria? necklaces of chromosomes?

What lives? the breathing bell of the clear sky?
The crazed bull of the sea? Andean drugs?
Arises that plunge into themselves to die?

People? A sacred relic wrapped in rugs,
The bare-bone of a saint, the winter rose.
Do these? -- And is there not a hand that drags

The bottom of the universe for those
Who still perhaps are breathing? Listen well:
There lives a quiet like a cathedral close

At the soul's center where substance cannot dwell
And life flowers like music from a bell.

Writing, I crush an insect with my nail
And thought nothing at all. A bit of wing
Caught my eye then, a gossamer so frail

And exquisite, I saw in it a thing
That sinned the grossness of the thing I wrote.
It hung upon my finger like a stare.

A leg I noticed next, fine as a mote,
"And on this frail eyelash he walked," I said,
"And climbed and walked like any mountain-goat."

And in this mood I sought the little head,
But it was lost; then in my heart a fear
Crept out, "A life -- why beautiful, why dead!"

It was a mite that held itself most dear,
So small I could have drowned it with a tear.