

et al.: Calliope 4.1



# Calliope

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# Calliope

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CALLIOPE (kə-lī'ə-pē) the Muse of eloquence and epic  
poetry.

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read without prejudice.

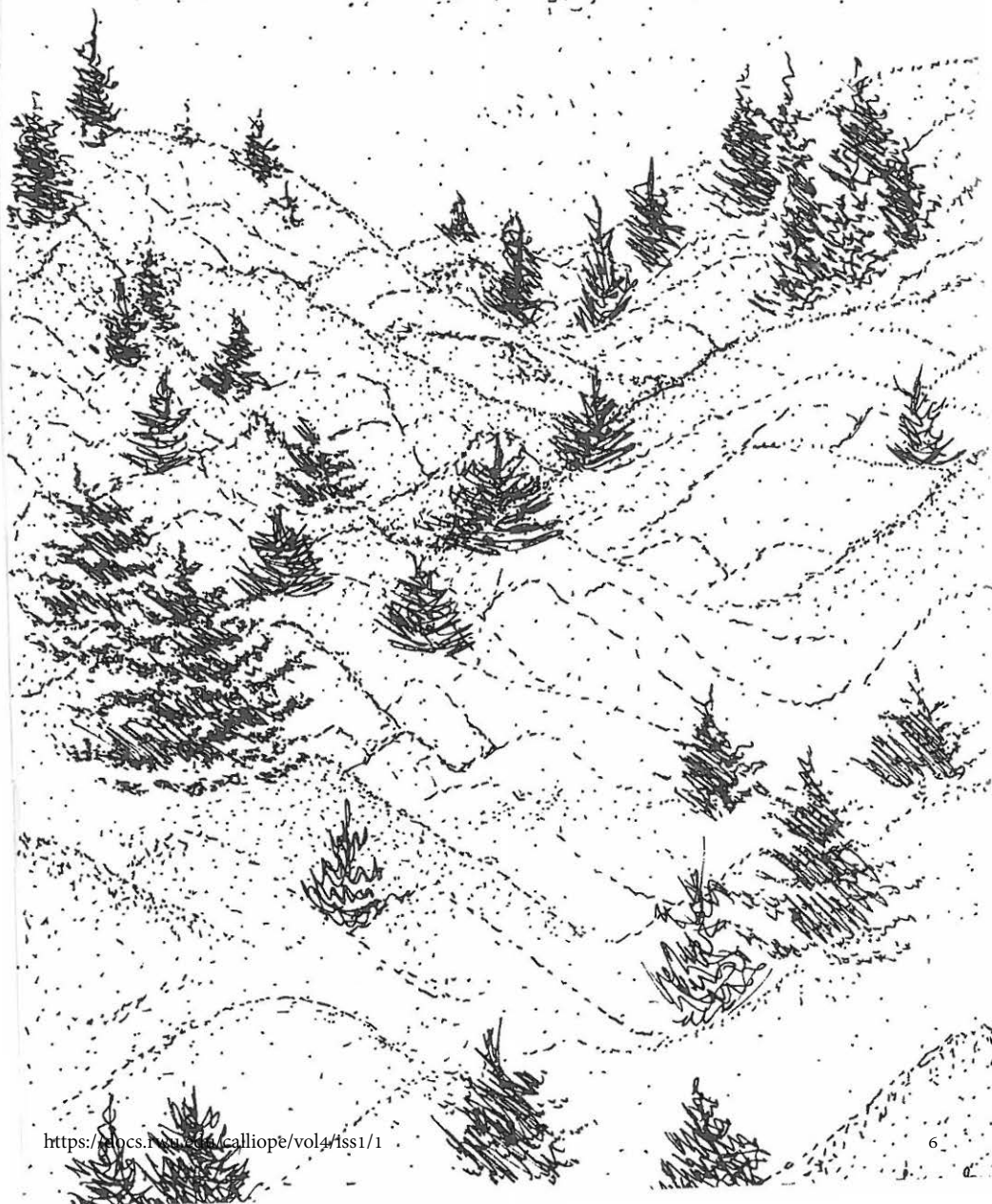
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*Angela Peckenpaugh*

WINTER SUNLIGHT

The sun and I  
are like new lovers  
going about our business  
pretending the other isn't present  
though the presence is  
sending fingers  
drunkenly over dishes,  
forming woozy letters.

The colors in the kitchen  
are as astonishing  
as wide black pupils,  
the shock of brown  
around the penis.

Quietly, light winds the life clocks  
in the apartment,  
blooding the design  
on bedspreads,  
the beads of baked rain  
on windows.

Even the darkened room  
of my memory  
receives the transfusion,  
gleaming like Chinese ceramics.

AFTERWARDS

You curl around the pillow into sleep.

Downstairs, the record still spins  
muffled sound of needle bumping cardboard.

I rinse away the wine left in your thin-stemmed glass,

turn off lights behind me.

Up the stairwell, watch the blown-up picture  
of myself, age three,

at mother's grand piano.

My legs in small white anklets  
dangle underneath the nylon dress.

There is a quota for how often  
and how deeply I can reach you.

Somewhere in our house the crickets hide.  
I hear them now above your breathing.



*Sheila E. Murphy*

EUCALYPTUS

At sunrise we walk among the Eucalyptus trees,  
the younger bearing coinlike stemless leaves in pairs.

The slender leaves of older trees grow single  
on low drooping stems,  
tips pointed slightly toward new sunlight.

Each of us picks a few young leaves  
already browning at the edges,  
slimming.

Sun filters through them.  
Eucalyptus leaves cast little shade.

We crush them in our hands  
and smell the medicine,  
want to heal our own soft aging together,  
walking daily in the early light.

Janet Krauss

BEFORE STILLNESS SNOWS

The clocks in their places  
assert "Life is, life is!"  
and the old on their porches  
shape the air  
to assure a control  
a hand in the passage  
as they wait for the dealers

who come with the chatter of silver  
who come with the flap of tailcoats  
loosing the bales of warmth,  
late summer's provision,  
leaving drafts for winter,  
plans for cold storage.

Little time left.  
Trees birth colors:  
silent larks  
holding their breaths  
until the letting go  
when branches black nest the sky  
and blue ships  
shadow white stone seas.

*Janet Krauss*

GIRL AT A WINDOW READING A LETTER

by Vermeer

She must have dropped the bowl of fruit on the bed,  
The peaches spill on the red and black print.  
Two halves lie open, their stone exposed.  
She holds the letter tight between her hands,  
the part she reads, the part she is.

A red curtain catches the day  
on the window pressed back to the shadow on the wall,  
pressed back to assure the light  
its generous place. A drape thrust against the dark  
answers the sun, the breeze.

It is good not to know what the letter says.  
It is good not to know whether she is sad  
or quiet with glad news.

*Nancy Sherman Lewis*

PHENOMENA

Winter. Words. I don't feel  
like earthly reason  
any longer, watching the sky break open  
mornings; and a smear of light  
above these white, exhausted fields--  
When we stroll to the river  
rocks sheathed in green ice  
glare at us like giant vegetation  
sprung from another world!  
They bloom. They bear us silent ill.

*Nancy Sherman Lewis*

SISTERS

We lie in the sun between  
the pyracantha and the boxwoods,

our bodies blurring  
in the glass walls of your house.

The baby's asleep; my daughter  
whines in my lap

as the afternoon advances  
like the thief it is

and we consider the roses,  
the chilling merits of age.

## THE SURGEON

Tonight in the dark I run my finger  
down the scar that divides you in half.  
You go on sleeping as you did at twelve or thirteen  
when the surgeon, who talked to your father  
but never to you, opened your chest  
and admitted your heart to the room full of ordinary things:  
the green haze of fluorescent lights, polished floors,  
coffee break gossip behind the nurse's mask.  
I wish I could have been there that day  
to see that ordinary thing, your heart  
with its malfunctioning valve,  
fixed methodically like a carburetor.  
I wish I could have seen the secret room inside your chest  
cracked open and searched for treacheries.  
I would have stood above you  
and sewn your right side back to your left  
with strong black thread, your heart in place  
beneath my hand. I would not have faltered.  
But for twenty years I waited to touch the long scar  
that divides you like a highway.  
For twenty years I waited for this night  
when I, having taught myself the boldness of surgery,  
could open you and fill you with the things I know:  
my stories, my lies, the precision of my touch.

*Shirley Buettner*

STILLBORN

He was as big  
as an eight-year-old boy,  
with long legs and  
white eyelashes, thick  
and creamy with sleep.

The farmer blew in his mouth,  
and I pounded one side  
of the chest where I thought  
the heart was, jarring  
the gelatin body.

With knees in the snow  
we both leaned close  
to the just-born brown whorls,  
looking for a quiver,  
and behind us  
the black heifer mother  
poured out a rainbowed placenta,  
steaming, melting  
the wind-hardened crust.

*Shirley Buettner*

HANDS

they are always moving  
in and out of my past

a grandfather's hand  
circled with serge, holding out  
a blue glass elephant,  
the other fist cupped over  
a burled wood cane, both hands  
moons of blue craters

a mother's chapped hands  
draping wet sheets over a wire line,  
the wooden pins like small ducks  
swimming from her mouth,  
the wind snapping the sheets,  
the red fingers stretching  
and smoothing

and the daddy's hands  
just in from carrying  
a chorus of milk bottles,  
untangling tickets from a wood box,  
his head nodding at noon,  
my short digits sorting the blue,  
the pink, the white piles  
to wrap in red rubber bands

the hands of the kitchen sister  
at Sunset Home, prayerful hands,  
soft cookie warm

but never, never the old hands  
in the sun room, hands resting  
on wicker, reaching out to reel in  
a four-year-old frame, drawing it  
close to dim eyes to breathe  
something young



*Shirley Buettner*

THE FAMILY

Once each year  
they are released  
from the soft white darkness,

from the blizzard of tissue  
which covers all their tracks.  
The angel clambers once again

to the barn's bare peak,  
listens for the clashing  
of stars, looks for wise men.

Beneath all wings  
the mother rubs the baby's  
colorless cheeks, warms him  
with a porcelain robe.

The father, with hands pale  
from being too long from the saw,  
tethers the ass, feeds him  
inches of straw.

At last they all kneel quietly  
without murmurs, without coughs,  
do not even ask for the sheep

whose wooly ribs heave  
with muffled bleats as they crouch,  
shivering, in their corner,  
waiting for the shepherd.

*Shirley Buettner*

WINTER ON THE PLATTE

Even without leaves  
the trees near the river haze.  
They lean toward one another  
and plan in whispers  
to walk out to the highway,  
to bend a multitude of thumbs  
and leave the light at work  
drying the wet holes  
their toes now stand in.

Sometimes the wind blows,  
and then the old ones  
lie down heavily, side by side,  
pioneers pulling pine lids  
over their eyes.

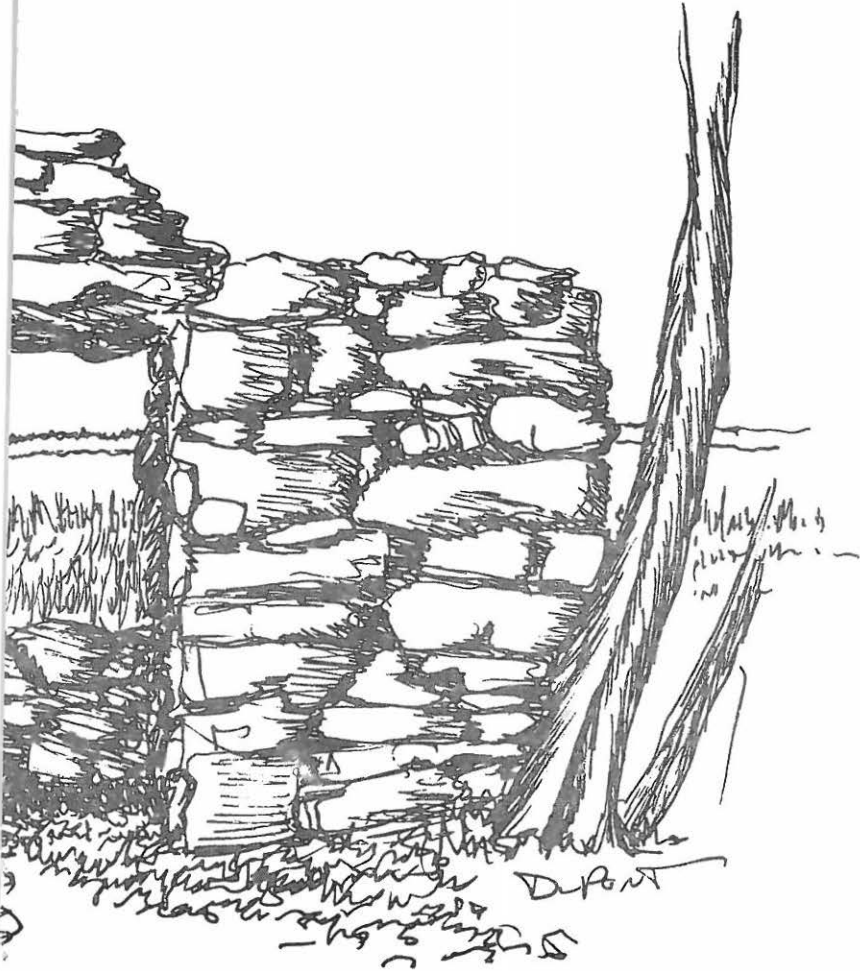
*Bill Hopkins*

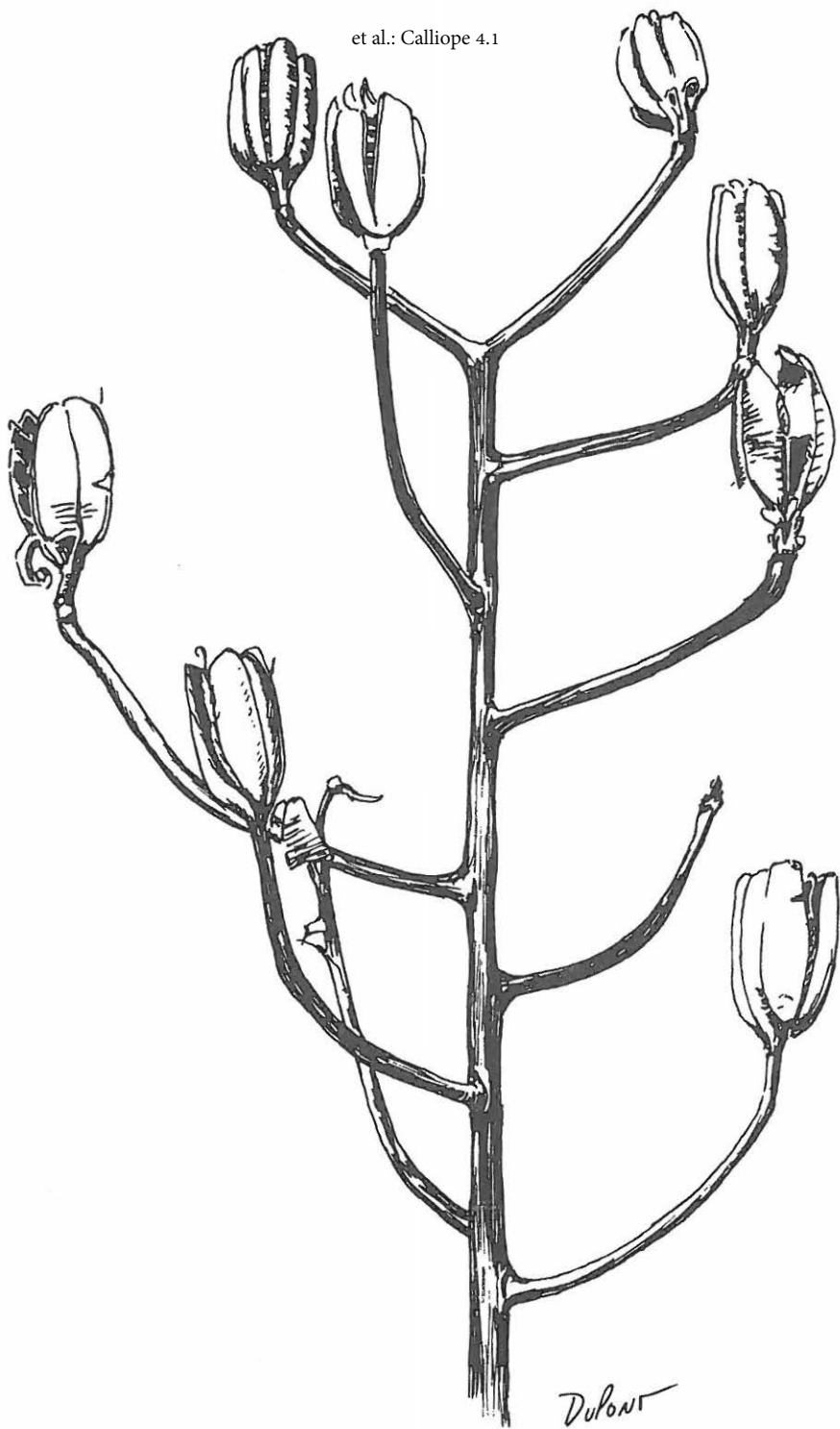
SEPTEMBER RAINS

There has been no rain since August  
heat seared the land free of its  
green wardens clutching soil  
with the grip of hoarders expecting  
a hard winter. Now scent of autumn  
lies along brown earth; ground  
lean and spare from water's desertion  
sighs in the morning nearly hushed  
in its thirst. Gray clouds  
spread at last over the air  
like a restless mother waking  
before dawn to fold a blanket  
over her sleeping child  
in the first cool morning of fall,  
touching his forehead lightly  
so he doesn't stir.  
In the north  
the archangel of winter smiles,  
caressing his wings of snow,  
commanding frost to follow the rain.









Joan Colby

MADONNA IN BONE LACE

by Grela Sondberg

Woman of interstices.  
Threads and space.  
Design  
of maternity. Halo  
of stars, halo of spokes.

The infant stares perpetually outward  
ready to grasp a world.  
The mother holds him  
with her gaze, her elaborate cloak  
of fictions. They stand in an arch  
of intricacy. Frost on a window  
in Scandinavia  
where a traveler seldom  
meets another soul.

A woman's hands  
must be occupied. Silver hooks,  
child executed in lace.

Hold these figures to the frailest light  
of the midnight sun. They knit  
like bone until the fractures become  
an overgrowth, flowers of healing. Spun  
out of the realm of mother and son  
what does the future hold  
but empty arms,  
a difficult question.



*Deborah Pye*

A ROOT CELLAR TIME

1

Winter: The white simplicity of it    all  
The wind leaves its mark  
in heaps and shallows  
and pine trees outlined    like passions:  
bare on one side    full on another

We have come this far  
testing our passions    or rather  
our ability    to adapt to survive

You say: It's a matter  
of keeping    calm, meaning  
self-control

I tell you I have had too much  
of self-control  
Nervous intellectual,  
I have feared my body    ignored  
its seasons  
its heating and cooling  
Untrustworthy, I called them    and washed  
between my legs  
Blood and sickness and sweat:  
I made no concessions    pursued perfection

2

Once I lay on my back in the snow  
making snow angels    kicking  
snow angels    arms and legs spread-eagled, thrashing  
wings' impressions  
My socks in their waterproof boots wrinkled down, down  
to clammy rubber cold    Not that I ever minded  
that    But each time, each angel  
something wasn't perfect: scrawny,  
unhaloed head    Footmark in a wing  
My standing up

Today, this snow, it is harder  
and colder    It is sills of windows stuffed with paper  
It is pockmarks on the crookbacked Queen Anne's Lace  
Pockmarks  
on the bricks and ashcans    on the trashmen  
Laughing through

3

In winter the sun  
stoops closest to earth    a root cellar  
time    In winter our love encloses  
so much    of cruelty  
As always, we think    how we might have done  
better

*Victor M. Depta*

I CLIMBED ABOVE THE REDWOODS CARRYING

I climbed above the redwoods carrying a cliched pamphlet about  
THE CATHEDRALS OF GOD in my backpack actually I thought  
the place was gloomy and the trees had awful looking burls  
on them and the huge sorrel and ferns reminded me of dinosaurs  
and I felt out of place

I struggled for about 3 hours toward the ocean and finally came  
out on a cliff so fantastically high that the Pacific looked  
like it was on a postcard waving at me and the gulls soared  
20 feet out in front of my face like punctuation marks for  
the sublime

but my eyes felt like the dots in the billboard pleading for the  
ecology of Point Reyes two eighth inch spots of sea spray  
above a boulder between SAVE and CALIFORNIA

I guess I couldn't manage the grandeur or even the greasy waxed  
paper and the flies and the Shasta Root Beer can with the  
ants stuck on the lip like Roman soldiers in an orgy of  
brown sperm.

*Gregoire Turgeon*

NOAH

I heard it while I slept  
but an old man  
is prone to voices:  
his dead speak in his sleep  
just so, dead but relentless.

Soon the sky's blue  
cast daylong upon water  
was magic. I watched.  
Then my sons' faces  
gleamed one night  
with terror: I woke  
screaming to the rain.

Now I sleep  
weighted with purpose  
like a white stone. I learn  
more, and morning clouds  
break with light enough.  
We build and watch.  
The dream is precise  
as the work, and we hurry.

*Gregoire Turgeon*

NIGHT SNOW

Snow always affects you  
like this. You hold the drape  
and light captures it,  
small batterings that go on  
for hours, instead of sleep.  
Upstairs, her dream released  
and dissolving, your wife  
turns and discovers the sudden  
coldness of your absence  
but does not call. She knows.  
She knows everything,  
the impulsive energy  
of your obsessions, your moods  
that shift like balance  
she alone can hold.  
Listen to her, footsteps now  
from the bed's broken folds  
to the window just above you.  
In that special silence only  
you recognize, she recalls  
all the facts you have become:  
husband, lover,  
and a web of habits  
undeniable as dark hours,  
as whitest snow.

PAYTON MEYER'S PILLOW

Love is done this afternoon. I dress, watching you tuck and stretch love's tangle from our bed. You shake and slap the pillows, and I think of the Navy and Payton Meyer, how after recon-flights he'd sit on his bunk's edge, staring as if he saw more than a pillow. I remember his cry *Dzau!* as he slammed and slammed his hand's hardened edge deep into the pillow's center. Careful, he smoothed and shaped its canvas before he struck. I hear you speak in tones foreign as the Mandarin he spoke. And I stare at our perfect pillows, wait for love's calloused stroke.

*Ken Poyner*

AT THE PROPER TIME

Some trees hold their snow.  
Others let it drag into icycles,  
Then drip and lie in small crystal puddles.  
Five wolves chase the tracks  
Of one rabbit. You hold your rifle  
Like a candle stick. Out in the drifts  
The wind makes snowmen, little helmeted  
Bastards, who last a second and then  
Leap into the white heap's lee. Your deer  
Have passed to the North. The wolves are proof.  
A hot bath waits; the cabin's dining room fire  
Will blare like a devil's mouth. One shell  
Is in the chamber, four in the stock.  
The snowmen rise like Yeti warriors  
And your shoulder aches for something to withstand.

Meanwhile, the sun is dying.  
Your wife's leather skin arches along her back,  
The claws of her feet dig in hardwood floors.  
A boy watches at the window for Father  
To bring home the corpse of anything. He has made  
A wonderful snowman, the Komodo.

Ken Poyner

CHRISTMAS BY THE LAKE

Night creeps over the ice like a hunter.  
The metal of its spear gleams from my porch roof.  
Come into the house; I must latch the door.  
The lake rises from its tomb and dances  
In the moon's frigid sigh. Wolves  
Chuckle under the eaves. Dogs  
Fat with snow circle the wood pile  
Waiting for the fire to sputter.  
Owls in the dark can take your eyes  
For starving mice. Never mind the bones;  
Those long white fingers still at the window sash.  
They belong to no one you know.



*Laurence J. Sasso, Jr.*

AN EPIPHANY IN WHICH  
THE SOUL OF ALL THINGS  
IS SEEN TO RESIDE IN  
THE MUD

A Vermont restaurant  
in the rain

Even the joggers, like cats,  
crouch in phone booths  
and doorways.  
Our view is through steamed  
windows.

The day is like seventh grade,  
no recess, imperfect vision  
of a gray bird sitting in the yard,  
the bicycles dripping  
their own metal.

You order hot cheese  
and salad, coffee, one sugar.

Can you imagine the others  
in this?

Mid-day lovers in Vermont  
like stalks sunk in the mud.  
Soggy ardor in damp cloistral  
cells, swelling and reverting  
under skylights  
as wet on the inside as out.

American rain sinks like guilt  
into the flesh.  
Even the stone absorbs it.

*Laurence J. Sasso, Jr.*

You mention the flag off its staff,  
outside, wet, wrapped  
like a shroud on the post office  
sculpture.

We are here without program,  
digesting stale soup and croutons,  
becoming aware the rain is impartial,  
our lives soluble as sugar.

Always the wise one, you have the insight.  
The downpour is grace,  
an ordering force.

We hurry out, wetter than confessors,  
knowing now that we must seek  
the moment that water  
comes closest to loam,  
the moment the earth  
is about to be water.



## REVIEWS

*(The opinions expressed are those of the individual editor whose initials follow the review.)*

**CAT'S EYE** (930 Kirkwood Ave., Nashville, TN 37204) Fall 80. The first issue of a well-designed magazine with high quality content. The choice of format and paper as well as print are quite professional. The poetry is very fresh and the graphics are simply-done line drawings which add without distraction. Overall a subtle and creative work well worth one's time. *JB*

**THE GREYLEEDGE REVIEW** (P.O. Box 481, Greenville, RI 02828) Spring/Summer 80. Magazine has professional appearance and content of the same high calibre. There is good balance between fiction, poetry and review sections. Fiction is varied in form and generally excellent. Poetry offerings are mixture of traditional and contemporary styles. *DS*

**IRONWOOD** (P.O. Box 40907, Tucson, AZ 85717) Spring 80. A fine magazine but not quite the type for just anyone to relax with. Very intellectual material. As is usually the case this issue has more poetry than fiction, but the small amount of good fiction holds its own. *CT*

**THE LITTLE MAGAZINE** (P.O. Box 207, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025) Vol. 12, nos. 3/4. Having read past issues, this issue was disappointing. Even though the cover is explained inside, the logos and the impossible to read script were overall a quite unsuccessful ploy. The content was better than the cover, and both fiction and poetry were on the whole competent. Continuations of poems on reverse pages was bothersome; a staff so design conscious could have avoided this altogether. *JB*

**NEW LETTERS** (University of Missouri-Kansas City, 5346 Charlotte, Kansas City, MO 64110) Spring 80. It seems the only poetry we are inclined to be aware of is that which originates from within the culture we are part of. This issue features a sensitive collection of Australian

work and should be congratulated for this effort to broaden readers' exposure. *JD*

*NORTHWEST REVIEW* (University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403) Vol. XVII, no. 3. Contains a great variety of fiction, poetry and graphics, very well put together. Of special interest are an interview with Olga Broumas, drawings of Craig Spilman, and a small press feature on Graywolf Press. *EP*

*PLOUGHSHARES* (Box 529, Cambridge, MA 02139) Vol. 6, no. 3. Special fiction issue. Edited by Jay Neugeboren with an introduction highly recommended to any aspiring writer. High quality fiction by authors ranging from first time published to established. General theme of stories is that of "loss, exile, displacement." *DM*

*PRAIRIE SCHOONER* (201 Andrews Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588) Summer 80. This issue compiles a large selection of mature poetry, prose and fiction. Certainly not light reading to relax with, as the words are defiant and energetic in their force. A sequence portfolio by David Wagoner reinforces that strength of meaning and imagery. *JES*

*SENECA REVIEW* (Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 10021) 79-80. A double volume. This special double issue is exceptionally well designed. Donald Hall's essays began this issue very enjoyably, especially "Polonius' Advice to Poets." The special section "Diversities: Some New French Poetry," was very interesting and worth reading. A very good collection of photography, essays and poems makes this an enjoyable and interesting special double issue. *KY*

*SING HEAVENLY MUSE!* (P.O. Box 1427, Minneapolis, MN 55414) Summer 80. An outstanding quality piece containing unusual photographs, and imagistic, thought-provoking poetry and prose. This twice-yearly magazine is devoted to expressing a woman's innerself, through male and female writers who are sensitive to a female's outlook. *DA*

*SOUNDINGS EAST* (Salem State College, Salem, MA 01970) Spring 80. This magazine contains a good balance of poetry, imaginative fiction, interviews and reviews. The very limited artwork is excellent; I wish more had been included. LO

*SOUTHWEST REVIEW* (Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, TX 75275) Summer 80. This issue contains high quality prose that enjoyably grasps and holds the reader while employing good diction and intense, clear images, and contemporary poems that will appeal to a wide variety of readers. Reviews and an interview with William Goyen that are both precise and informative, and an interesting section on photographic satire are also included. Generally, a well rounded and well balanced eclectic issue. GS

## CONTRIBUTORS

Shirley Buettner's poems have recently appeared in *Cottonwood Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, and Ted Kooser's *Windflower Almanac*.

Joan Colby has published widely in little magazines. Her third book, *Blue Woman Dancing in the Nerve*, was published by Alembic Press in December 1979.

Victor M. Depta teaches at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He has published widely in little magazines including *Ohio Review*, *Red Cedar Review*, and *Poetry Now*.

Pat Therese Francis is currently a writer-in-residence in North Brookfield, Mass. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in many publications, including *Prairie Schooner*, *Greenfield Review*, and *Dark Horse*.

Bill Hopkins has been published in *River Styx*, *The Cape Rock*, and *Ozark Review*.

Janet Krauss has had poems in *Red Fox Review*, *Kudzu*, and *13th Moon*. In the summer of 1979 she received one of the first prizes in Triton College's All Nations Poetry Contest.

Nancy Sherman Lewis recently graduated from the Goddard College MFA Writing Program. Her poems have appeared in *The Poetry Miscellany*, *Ploughshares*, *Bits* and other publications.

Sheila E. Murphy has published in several little magazines including *Paintbrush* and *Salt Lick*. She lives in Phoenix where she divides her time between writing and teaching.

Angela Peckenpough is the editor of *Sackbut Review*, author of a chapbook, *Letters from Lee's Army* (Morgan Press) and has had her poems and reviews published in a variety of magazines.

Ken Poyner's poems have been published widely in little magazines and anthologies.

Deborah Pye is a poet, a freelance journalist, and the mother of an eight-month-old son. Her poetry has appeared in *Tendrill*, *Hollow Spring Review*, and *Red Cedar Review*.

Laurence J. Sasso, Jr. is the editor of *The Greyledge Review* and director of the News Bureau at Rhode Island College. He has previously been published in *Commonweal*, *California Quarterly*, and *Yankee*.

Lisa Smith is a student at Brown University. She is the illustrator of Menke Katz's *Forever and Ever and a Wednesday* (The Smith).

Gregoire Turgeon's work has appeared in many magazines, including *Poetry*, *Carolina Quarterly* and *Poetry Northwest*. He teaches at the University of Lowell.

Sharon DuPont Tyler teaches 6th and 7th grade art at Guiteras School in Bristol, RI, and also works as a freelance artist.

Craig Weeden has published in *Southern Poetry Review*, *Chowder Review* and *The Smith*. He is a former Navy officer and building contractor and presently teaches at Roger Williams College.





SHIRLEY BUETTNER

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JANET KRAUSS

NANCY SHERMAN LEWIS

SHEILA E. MURPHY

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