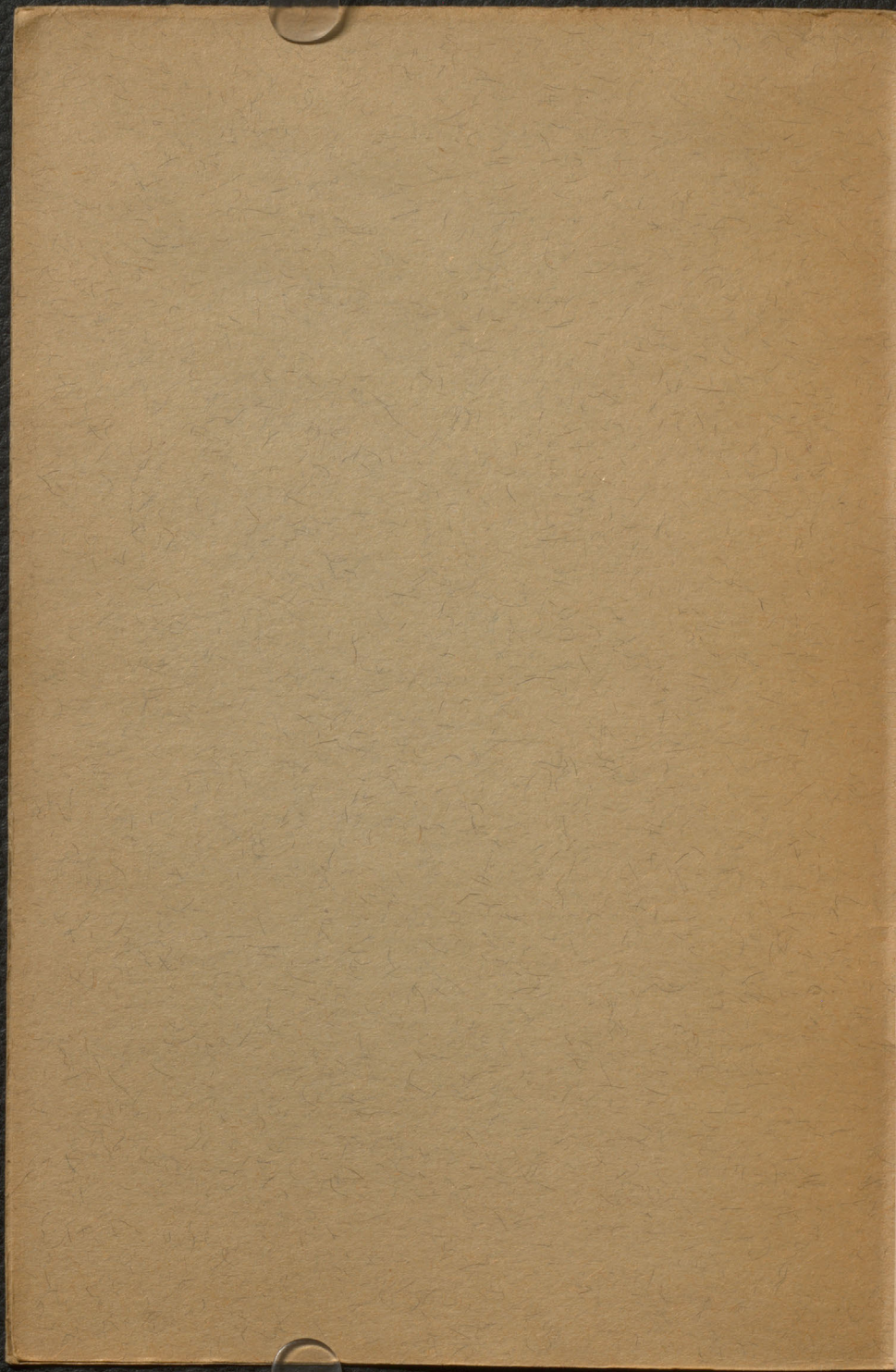


    THE MCGILL CHAPBOOK

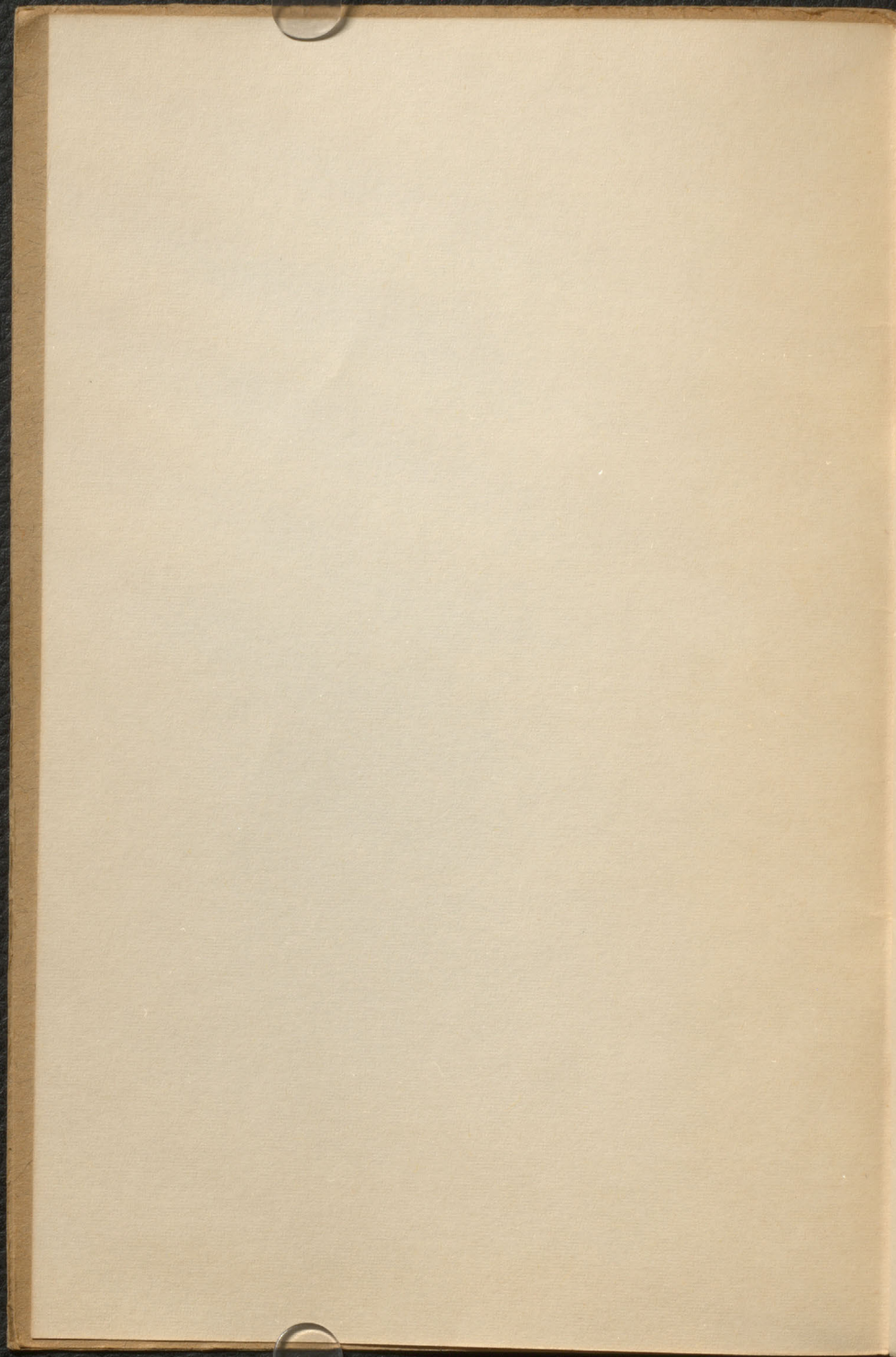
EDITED BY *Leslie L. Kaye*



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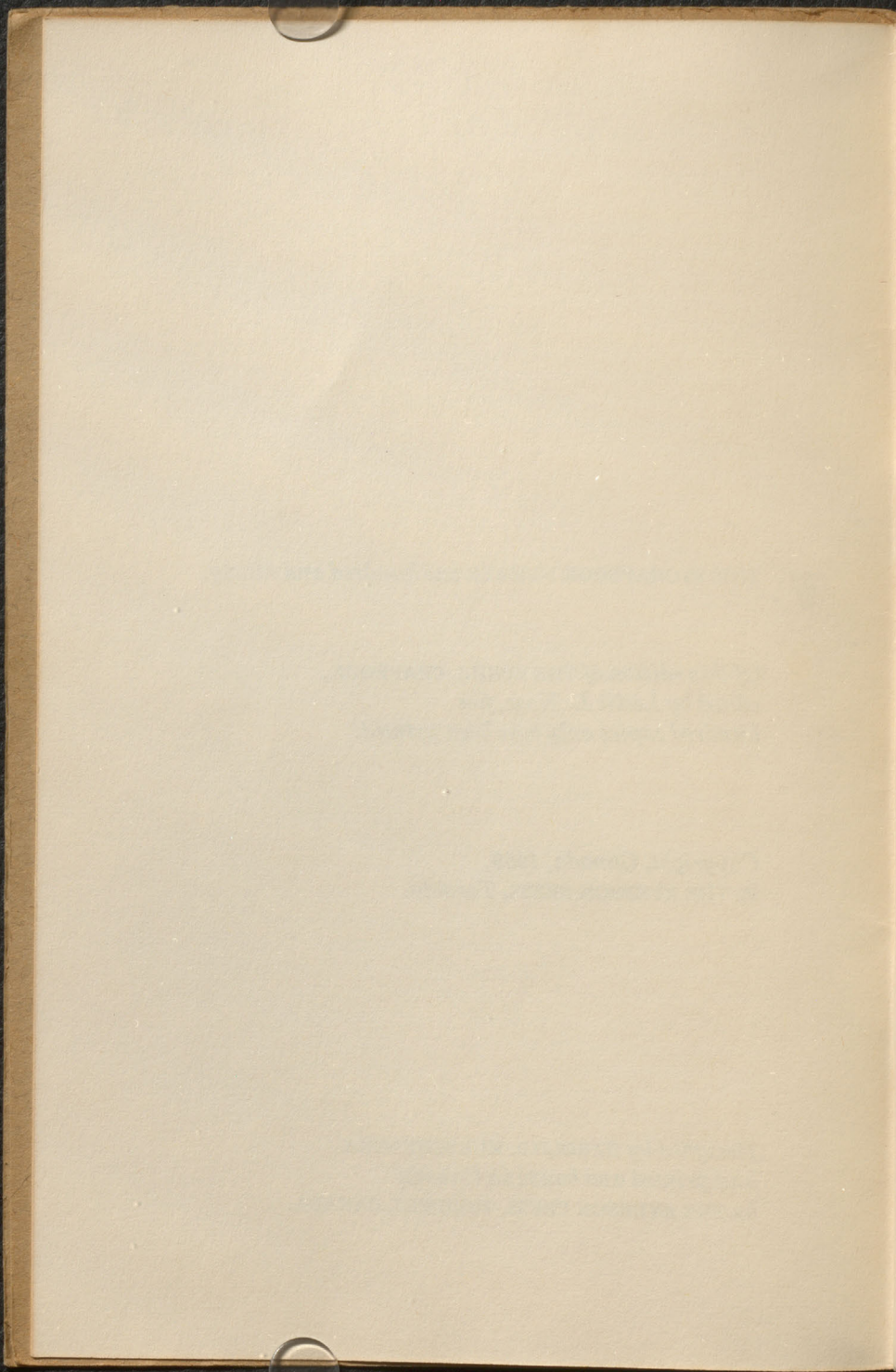


THIS IS CHAPBOOK NUMBER *one hundred and ninety*.

*Of this edition of THE MCGILL CHAPBOOK,
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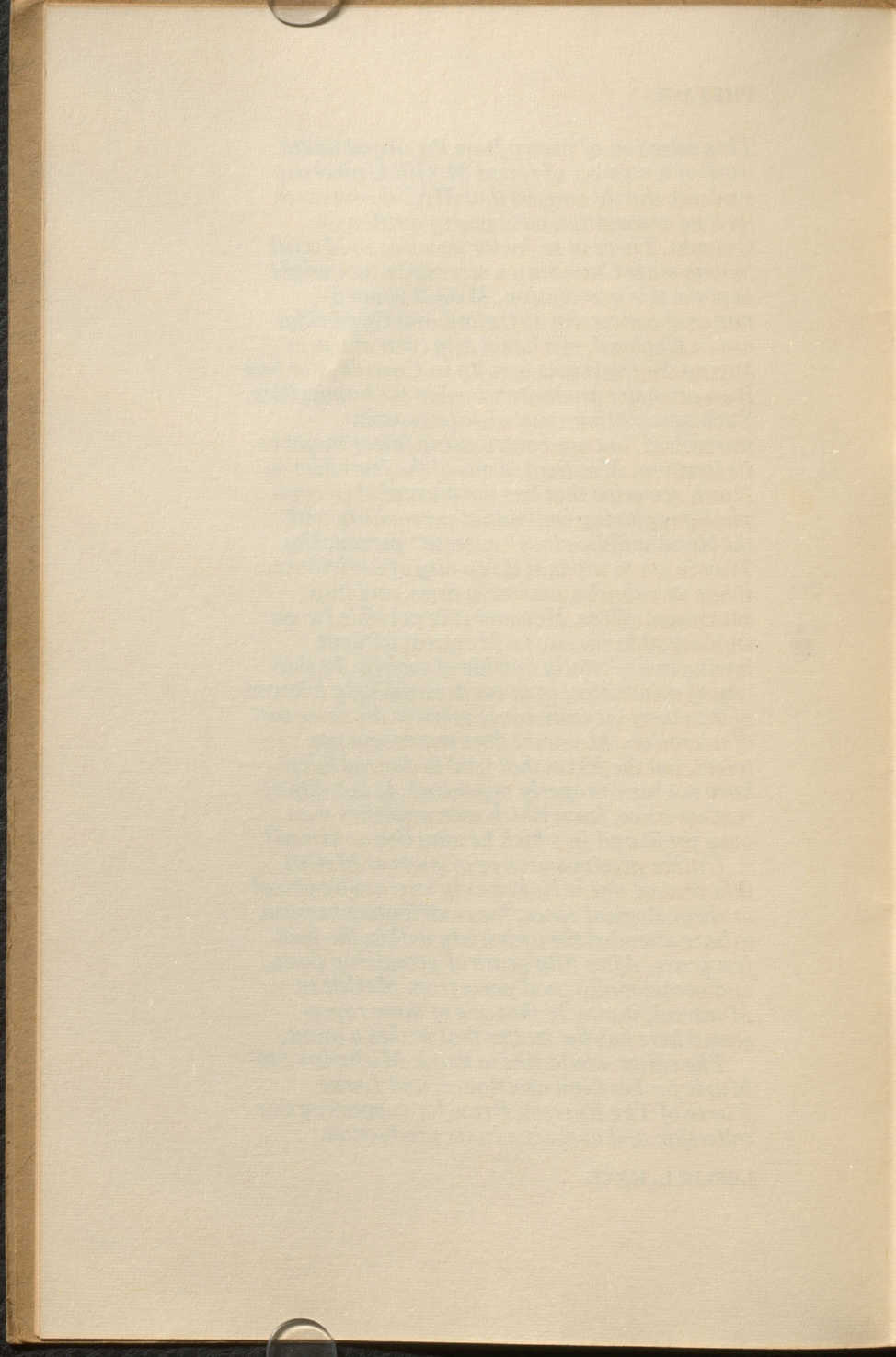
PREFACE

This selection of poetry from the unpublished work of a number of recent McGill University students should suggest that McGill continues its long association with poetry written in Canada. There is no factor peculiar to McGill among other Canadian universities that might explain this association. McGill is not a national university as Oxford and Cambridge are in England, nor has it any clear claim to having the finest arts faculty in Canada, nor has it an extensive graduate school in the humanities. Such speculation must always remain unresolved, but one contributing factor might be its location. Montreal is one of the few cities in North America that has not succeeded in completely replacing individual personality with the bland middle-class "success" personality. This is not to say that it is a city of individuals; it has its suburbs, assembly lines, and huge insurance offices. However it is possible for an individual to survive in Montreal without having to live totally outside of society. In this city of minorities, each condescendingly tolerant of the other, the individual receives the same sort of toleration. Montreal does not encourage talent, but the forces that tend to destroy talent have not been properly organized. It is a city of restless truce, from which even a weaker man may profit and in which he may live as himself.

Unlike previous groups of poets at McGill, this present one is linked only in a geographical or chronological sense; the contributors happen to have attended the university within the past few years. After fifty years of promising poets, and occasionally good poets from McGill in Montreal, it may be that one of those represented here has the matter that makes a giant.

The editor would like to thank Micheline Ste-Marie for her kind assistance, and Lorne Pierce of The Ryerson Press for suggesting this collection and assisting in its production.

LESLIE L. KAYE




WINTER IN PARIS

Morty Schiff

Dear friend, a better time will visit you
Than these cruel moments you now put up with.
The ghostly rain will dry, the sombre air
Will begin to smell differently, and the strictures

On your heart will ease. I know
The darkness of the city and the smoke
From sidewalk gratings do your melancholy
No good; and it would be insensitive

To think they were not an element
Contributing in the total sadness.
 But their gloom is no more reasoned than your
Inner one, or mine. Our despondent equations

Do not vary with the way of the world, or the void
Consequent on the decline of faith; and I see
Nothing looking like a personal defeat
Signing the creases of your brow.

The times are troubled, though, it is true,
And it's a fool who doesn't take seriously
The splayed hares hanging in the butcher shops,
The various rabbits' feet strewn on their floors,

The worried looks one sees in the Luxembourg.
But, dear friend, recall how the senses betray the mind:
You intimidate the angels only when you feel
That logic is the best part of your sorrow.

BEAUTIFUL CREATURES BRIEF AS THESE

D. G. Jones

Like butterflies but lately come
From long cocoons of summer
These little girls start back to school
To swarm the sidewalks, playing fields,
And litter air with colour.

So slight they look within their clothes,
Their dresses looser than the sulphur's wings,
It seems that even if the wind alone
Were not to break them in the lofty trees,
They could not bear the weight of *things*.

And yet they cry into the morning air
And hang from railings upside down
And laugh, as though the world were theirs
And all its buildings, trees, and stones
Were toys, were gifts of a benignant sun.



HOMMAGE A L'AVANT GARDE

D. G. Jones

The girl did not even
take off her coat

the room
was heavy with art

she bent, suddenly,
her hand to her mouth

and the laughter
danced in her throat

nakedness, even,
would have been academic

LIKE ONE OF BOTTICELLI'S DAUGHTERS

D. G. Jones

The flesh is such a sweet thing
the tooth longs to engage it:

the pubescent limbs
run in the wind, and the hair
streams in the mouth.

But the apple bitten is destroyed;
broken to the hungry air, the flesh
turns brown at once.

The flesh is lonely and its beauty serves
but nuns; it welters in the wind
and will not be.



The girl in green and yellow
sings on the grass;
her hair, like the Primavera,
blows in her mouth—

and I am lost.

I welter in the sun
and like a mortal man rejoice
to be so moved—

to apprehend, but hardly,
what cannot be caught:

the wind that streaks the waters
and the shadows
in the bright flesh . . .

O angels, what has heaven lost!

BLUE JAY IN HALIBURTON

D. G. Jones

Forked sticks upon the air,
Half-dead trees, where two
Blue jays shriek the summer sky
To a deaf world, their blue
The only water here.

The sun is axeman among dry
Slashing; he would clear
Kindling from these rocky hills:
The logos as belated pioneer,
One cry with the fanatic jay.



Long grass and fireweed spills
Crisscross every which way
Among the poplar and seed pine,
As if a tempest strewed the sun's hay
Helter skelter upon granite knolls.

Everywhere some small design
Erupts, and the profusion foals
Chaos on the mind. The sky
Aches for water which controls
Mirror-wise its single cry—
The blue jay screams in vain.

DEATH OF A GOLDFISH

Deborah Eibel



Adventure was reduced within the bowl:
A golden fish was dying. There could be
No good recovery for him, whose soul
Played aimlessly below his private sea.
He must have heard the music of a glass
Guitar, a dirge without an echo, tossed
Against him when his body turned to brass,
And meanings of his life-in-gold were lost.
The death experience of fish, alone
In private seas, is sad. They fall on sands
Not made for dreams, and there they turn to stone,
And lie unconscious of Redeeming Hands.
Adventure is no longer in that cove
Where gentle-rhythmed goldfish loved to move.


TROMPE L'ŒIL

Daryl Hine

There is a way of seeing that is not seeing.
Ignoring the true dimensions of our being,
Who doubts that there are things we cannot see?
Nor merely the naive employment of the eye
On decorated wall and ceiling,
The spirit's exercise consists in telling
Not right from wrong but rather true from false.
Looking at lies the eye sees something else,
In the pattern of the folded handkerchief
The tacks that hold its corners up; but if
They yield, it will not fall, it is not real.
Reality then is something that we feel
The outlines of even as it dissolves.
Figures with no more meaning than ourselves
In a glass, conduct their brighter lives
In chambers where reality survives
Only as long as it can fool and charm.

There at least we cannot come to harm,
Therein we, and our desires, belong
Where lusts, like bees, perish as they sting.
Accidents that elsewhere never happen
Befall us there: doors that will not open,
Drawers that cannot ever be pulled out.
Disappointment waits until we doubt
And say the fatal words: "It all is painted,
"A queer affair but hardly what we wanted,
"A box containing everything but nature,
"Not one unpremeditated creature,
"Every landscape copied out of dreams.
"Its meaning is, it is not what it seems."

The shadow of a fly upon the fruit
Whose suspect flesh appears substantial to it,
The deeper, broader shadow, on the fly,
Of the sparrow it is hunted by,
Both dark, arrested, minatory,—and
Over both the shadow of a hand
With wide-extended fingers seems to hover.
Will it move, or will it rest forever
On its work, a part of its creation,
The imitation of an imitation?

 Around the ceiling runs a balustrade
In false perspective, there the gods, portrayed
As painted men and women leaning over
Laugh and smile and talk, none whatsoever
Bored by their old immortality.
Above their heads a prospect of the sky.
The light declining on their painted flesh
Colours with ripeness what was lately fresh
Despite the fixed and arbitrary sun.
They do not seem to know their day is done,
Themselves perfected out of all ambition;
Each lolling in a different position,
Sumptuously clothed or gloriously nude
Endymion asleep, Andromeda pursued,
Ageless nymphs and rude priapic satyrs,
They show such features as illusion flatters
And throw from the perspective of the ceiling
The long deceptive shadows cast by feeling.

There is a way of seeing that is not sight
Like a candle lit in broad day-light,
And blindness, too, that is not always night.

ALLEGORY OF SLEEP II

Daryl Hine

Le sommeil est une image de la mort
And those who sleep will die,
Excluded, in the closing of an eye,
By a curtained door.
For all who sleep, sleep is death's metaphor:

For those who breathe their last, by death surprised
In the middle of a dream,
For those who in their breathless pallor seem
More than hypnotized,
For lovers, and for children, unbaptized,

Morning stalks in vain the summer fields.
In fields of Asphodel
Where summer cannot penetrate, in hell
Where Proserpina wields
The power of life in exile, morning yields



To evening, and evening to delight.
To sleep is to begin
To die, to rest, and those who rest in sin
Evening will requite
With one eternal dormitory night. . .

Touch them, they will not stir, nor, called to, wake
From deep oblivion.
Darkness fades and blushes before dawn
Unseen, day does not break
Upon their souls, nor sun rise for their sake.

Holy night, you fall upon the eyes
Like dreams, of meaning free:
You I love, you are sleep's effigy,
You are death's prize.
So sleep, that you may sleep in paradise!

"THE SECOND COMING"

Lilian Stern

L'univers qui rempli des signes du zodiaque
Attend passivement sa fin ;
Et l'homme qui courbé sous le fardeau ramasse
Les cendres et le sang de ses avides mains
Récoltent à pas lents les fruits qui de la terre
Pourrissent à leurs pieds,
Humant l'air putréfié qui, des cieus grands ouverts
S'exhale sans pitié
De gargouilles géantes. O monstres implacables
Dont ruisselle sans fin
Un flot toujours plus noir, teinté de rouge bave,
Une mer infinie qui s'étire au lointain
Venue dont ne sait où, de quels autres rivages,
Furie des noirs autels,
De quels sacrifices, l'odeur te reste-t-elle
Epinglée au corsage?



Ton rire démoniaque enivre les nuées
Et passe frénétique au travers des armées,
La ville entière dort d'un sommeil angoissé
S'effaçant, dans la froide brume ensanglantée
De défuntes passions, que tu as recréées
Cependant que là-bas, hors de ta pâle étreinte
Conduit par Celui qui lui offre chaque éclat
D'une nouvelle aurore, un peuple accourt sans crainte
Tiré de son répit par ton meurtre et opprobre
Il court. Palmes! Lueurs!
Pétales!

TRANSITION AS A SHARP MUSICAL NOTE

Mike Gnarowski

I

He held in fief a small felucca,
and being felix in those days
he'd crowd her lateen sails.

He banked her oars
for they gave hint of slavery
he thought.

He loved to watch his avocado sails fill out,
for avocado was a loyal colour then.

Upon her prow



felicitas

in gothic script
reflects
a gothic mind.

In port he loved femes sole
and femes covert, until one day
he said:

You'all must come and visit me
in my new world
of small inventions

and turned away
dispensing such new gems of wisdom
as gallonage of pumps
and tachometric spec of old machines.

II

He is a dweller in small perils now.
He moves with caution and design
as if in simple step devised
to music that he hears with inner ear.

He has found out the futile quality
of being great,
so now he studies to be small.

The spiders have her avocado sails.
The arab digs her heel into the sand.

AN ABSOLUTE, BODILESS HEAD

Mike Gnarowski



Say rather that going south
he carried his roots with him
in a small
gossamer basket.

In an alien corner,
going south slowly
this man protects himself

against

alien things

with charms
tokens
woven about him
carried on his neck;
with due regard for omens:
he keeps:
a weather eye.

Say rather that even blue firs
are humped
over this horizon
for rootless types;

that
the hide of his bullock
has dipped over this horizon,
carrying him as its sail.

Say rather that he makes do
with awayness;

that
when he raised the last
black rump in Terre Haute,
he wore his slick cordovan boots,
letting the fog roll in.

Say rather that hereabouts
south by south/east,
the private parts of his bullock
are not to be seen,
carrying him still as a sail.

Say rather that he is a counterpart,
the slight foot-fall of great men,
their almost quiet speech;
that
he is awed by cruciform structures,
and knows nothing
of the crying of the wind.

BALLAD TO BREUGHEL

Sylvia Barnard

The northern night is swifter than the day
And more at ease, the passion for a bitter death
Designed by Breughel is a Flemish song.
The Spaniard came with horses, pikes, and dogs,
And so did Herod come to Bethlehem.

The building of an arch to reach the sky
Is northern, too—but in the Tower of Babel lies
Homage to a chimera struck in stone,
Reviled by all the sober gabled fronts
Who know their places and instruct their lords.



But now we see the drunken feasters of
Cockayne, precursor of the welfare state and filled
With wedding dances and the rites of spring,
Buffoons with bag-pipes and the brazen boy
Who stole a bird's egg from a summer tree.

Yet northern winter is reality.
The ashen Lent defeats Prince Carnival and snow
Enables sullen hunters to stalk prey
Above the villages where fires burn
In huts and bastard beggars howl for alms.

The northern sea is frame and fortress of
His work—poor sailors toss a barrel at a whale
And face a gold-green tempest of despair
Or shipwrecks hover at the edge of death
Or Naples' Harbour seen by Flemish eyes.

THE SPECTRES

Sylvia Barnard

I

Numidian jungles guard the mentored mind,
Mosaic citadel of thought.
The dead increase with fleshless faces white
Against the structure of the code.

The snarling animals who propagate
These skulls defile the subtle strength
Of self-respect's recurring monarchy,
Obstruct the Anglo-Saxon pride
Forbidding definition of a thought.



II

In the Numidian jungles of the mind
Are poised contiguous castles, straight and square.

Proud canopies of decked apparel screen
The women who watch tournaments of bone
To cry to God in metamorphosis,
And, dragon-seeming, raise their blooded thighs
In rapine and in vigilance of death,
For Aristotle's bastion of contempt
Is governed by a shaman's world of ghosts,
And they, the watchers of the tournament,
Feel sorcery and witchcraft rise in flames
Along their crescent ribs but wince apart
When they perceive the galaxies of wrath,
Their exile from the wilderness of peace.

TOURIST IN MAMPONG

Lionel Tiger

In Mampong, a town of Ghana,
we were shown blind children
who drummed for us incredibly.

Later we sipped tea
and heard a blind black boy
play heaving hymns to God on an old organ.
God stroked his blind eyes
and told him how the negro Christ suffered
who strained passionately on the ebony cross.

FOR JUNE



John Lachs

Eighteen and her
blonde hair rippling
she is my Helen

but
as we walk
"One of my lungs had been
removed when I was small"
wheezes and puffs

BEHIND THE FACADE OF THIS FACE


Behind the
soft provocative order of your lines
I did not expect the organs' disarray.
A thin membrane of beauty hides
decay
your young smile
superimposed on nature
deceives, below the elegant
mouth lurk degenerate kidneys
lush rivers of bad blood.

NOW OF SLEEPING

Leonard Cohen

Under her grandmother's patchwork quilt
a calico bird's eye view
of crops and boundaries
naming dimly the districts of her body
sleeps my Annie like a perfect lady

Like ages of weightless snow
on tiny oceans filled with light
her eyelids enclose deeply
a shade tree of birthday candles
one for every morning
until the now of sleeping

 The small banner of blood
kept and flown by Brother Wind
long after the pierced bird fell down
is like her red mouth
among the squalls of pillow

Bearers of evil fancy
of dark intention and corrupting fashion
who come to rend the quilt
plough the eye and ground the mouth
will contend with mighty Mother Goose
and Farmer Brown and all good stories
of invincible belief
which surround her sleep
like the golden weather of a halo

Well-wishers and her true lover
may stay to watch my Annie
sleeping like a perfect lady
under her grandmother's patchwork quilt
but they must promise to whisper—
and to vanish by morning—
all but her one true lover.

IT SWINGS, JOCKO

Leonard Cohen

It swings, Jocko,
but we do not want too much flesh in it.
Make it like fifteenth century prayers,
love with no climax,
constant love,
and passion without flesh.
(Draw those out, Jocko,
like the long snake from Moses' arm;
how he must have screamed
to see a snake come out of him;
no wonder he never felt holy:
We want that scream tonight.)
Lightly, lightly,
I want to be hungry,
hungry for food,
for love, for flesh;
I want my dreams to be of deprivation,
gold thorns being drawn from my temples.
If I am hungry
then I am great,
and I love like the passionate scientist
who knows the sky
is made only of wavelengths.
Now if you want to stand up,
stand up lightly,
we'll lightly march around the city.
I'm behind you, man,
and the streets are spread with chicks and palms,
white branches and summer arms.
We're going through on tiptoe,
like monks before the Virgin's statue.
We built the city,
we drew the water through,
we hang around the rinks,
the bars, the festive halls,
like Breughel's men.
Hungry, hungry.
Come back, Jocko,
bring it all back for the people here,
it's your turn now.

SONG TO MAKE ME STILL

Leonard Cohen

Lower your eyelids
over the water
Join the night
like the trees
you lie under



How many crickets
How many waves
easy after easy
on the one way shore

There are stars
from another view
and a moon
to draw the seaweed through

No one calls the crickets vain
in their time
in their time
No one will call you idle
for dying with the sun

WE

Irving Wolfe

You are mad and I am mad
and we are godlike in insanity

for when, like love,
we fling our madness at each other

laughter blooms
where only darkness grew.



NIGHT SONG

Malcolm Miller

O they do fly
my birds of flesh and bone
until they crash their flaming heads
upon the moon,
undying they do jar
the sky ablaze, their songs
do shake the stars
like apples from their roots
into an ecstasy
of rain upon my roof;
it drums all night
within my arms
until I spring upon the earth
at dawn, street by street
in search of you.

ISHMAEL

Phyllis Webb

There is so much sea,
a permanent crisis of loneliness,
an intimate eternity,
and God, and the white, infinite Mother,
and I am but a name.
Call me Ishmael,
for the sky beyond portends potential sea
and fear is around me
and death by water sure
as grass is green
certain as the pitiful grain
of sand contrives a desert
to pretend a land.
I am the name
adrift upon a broken coffin raft.
I pray, in hungry solitude decay.
The sea is lonely.
Call me Ishmael.
May my day be done,
and the gull of whiteness sing.



IMAGES IN CRYSTAL

Phyllis Webb

Crystal cuts sharp again into the mind
as love came clear that once-upon-a-time,
so crystal takes this morning and this air
dazzles the shadow, the sentiment, and finds
diamond calligraphy, crystallized despairs.

Venetian workers blowing that glass horse
which catches now the Paris atmosphere,
that chandelier upholding one friend's doom
reflected in the mirrors of his room;
And then the crystal slipping through the night
as Coleridge noted moonlight stops a tear;
only this burning crystal at the heart
cuts into time and daggers into near,
slaying flesh, here crystal cannot come
and live endeared. Here crystal mortifies the flesh
as love withdraws inside its crystal tomb:

A thousand chandeliers flare up: a glass horse
trots through light, and splinters into ruin.



GALAXY

Phyllis Webb

A curious bright tragedy grew that week,
as if a luminous chandelier
had hung and swung a hundred years
but, suddenly, burst to a throng of stars
taking the night into a system total, luminous,
oracular, creating, catching, describing
my long love and my long waiting.
All the glass of my tears and motion
of my desires hung there in the night sky,
and this was the shape of my loving:
a crystal fire flung from the great-globe moon,
sun, universe, shaking there, shining,
and deep distances, dark, around and around,
and loneliness there complete, and in the night
shining, shining.

A TALL TALE OR A MORAL SONG

Phyllis Webb

The whale, improbable as lust,
carved out a cave
for the seagirl's rest;
with rest the seagirl, sweet as dust, devised
a manner for the whale
to lie between her thighs.
Like this they lay
within the shadowed cave
under the waters, under the waters wise,
and nested there, and nested there and stayed,
this coldest whale aslant the seagirl's thighs.



Two hundred years, perhaps, swam by them there
before the cunning waters so distilled the pair
they turned to brutal artifacts of stone
polished, and petrified prisoners of their lair.
And thus, with quiet, submerged in deathly calm,
the two disclosed a future geologic long,
lying cold, whale to thigh revealed
the secret of their comfort
to the marine weeds,
to fish, to shell, sand, sediment and wave,
to the broken, dying sun
which probed their ocean grave.
These, whale and seagirl, stone gods,
stone lust, stone grief,
interred on the sedimented sand
amongst the orange starfish,
these cold and stony mariners
invoked the moral snail
and in sepulchral voice intoned a moral tale:

“Under the waters, under the waters wise,
all loving flesh will quickly meet demise,
the cave, the shadow cave is nowhere wholly safe
and even the oddest couple can scarcely find relief:
appear then to submit to this tide and timing sea
but secrete a skilfull shell and stone and perfect be.”

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BARNARD, SYLVIA: b. 1937 in Greenfield, Mass. Studied Classics at McGill 1955-1959. Has published one book of poetry, *The Timeless Forest*, 1959. Presently studying Classics at Cambridge.

COHEN, LEONARD: b. 5695 (Hebrew Calendar) in Montreal. A Commerce and Arts student at McGill 1951-1955. *Let Us Compare Mythologies* 1956 was his first book, his second *Spice-box of the Earth* will be published in the fall of 1960. Awarded a Canada Council Grant 1959, and plans to spend the year in Europe.

EIBEL, DEBORAH: b. 1940 in Montreal. Studying English at McGill. Won a Mademoiselle Magazine College Board Award. Will begin post-graduate work in English next year.

GNAROWSKI, MIKE: b. 1934 in Shanghai, China. An English and Political Science student at McGill 1951-1956. An editor of *Yes* and has appeared in *Fiddlehead* and *Delta*. Presently in the insurance business.

HINE, DARYL: b. 1936 in Vancouver. A student of Greek and Philosophy at McGill 1954-1958. Has published two books, *Five Poems* 1954, and *The Carnal and the Crane* 1957. Awarded a Canada Foundation Grant 1958, and a Canada Council Grant 1959. Now writing in Paris.

JONES, D. G.: b. 1929 in Bancroft, Ontario. A student of English at McGill 1946-1951. Appeared in *Poets 56*, and has published one book of poems, *Frost on the Sun* 1957. Lecturing in English at Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph.

LACHS, JOHN: b. 1934 in Budapest. A Philosophy student at McGill 1952-1957. An editor of *Yes*. Appeared in *Queen's Quarterly* and *Delta*. Now Assistant Professor of Philosophy at College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

MILLER, MALCOLM: b. 1930 in Salem, Mass. Was in the U.S. Navy. Attended McGill 1950-1955. Now writing a novel.

SCHIFF, MORTY: b. 1936 in Montreal. A Mathematics and Physics student at McGill 1953-1957. Appeared in *Poets 56* and in *Delta*. Studied at the Sorbonne. Now lecturing in Mathematics at McGill and working towards a doctorate.

STERN, MRS. LILIAN: (formerly Wilker) b. 1939 in Paris. Attended McGill 1955-1957 as an Arts student. Appeared in *Delta*. Presently housewife.

TIGER, LIONEL: b. 1937 in Montreal. Studied Sociology at McGill 1953-1959. Was an editor of *The McGill Daily*. Appeared in *Delta*. Awarded a scholarship to study at The London School of Economics.

WEBB, PHYLLIS: b. 1927 in Victoria, B.C. Did post-graduate work in English at McGill in 1952. Appeared in the group anthology *Trio* 1954, and has published one book, *Even Your Right Eye* 1956. Awarded a Canadian Government Overseas Award 1957, and spent a year and a half in France. Now living in Vancouver.

WOLFE, IRVING: b. 1934 in Montreal. Studied at McGill 1952-1958; received an M.A. in English. Now plans trip to Europe.

NOTE: To avoid repetition I did not mention that nearly all of the above poets appeared in *Forge*, the McGill undergraduate literary magazine, and in the *McGill Daily*. In addition a number of them were awarded the McGill, Chester MacNaughton Prizes for creative writing.

