

PS
3525
M453A17
1955

selected

poems



SELECTED POEMS : 1950 - 1955

james boyer may

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inferno press

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LAMIA: 1950

The craw of that conspicuous year yawned widely
upon toy-counters of atomic play;
and yet, the ivy-hid prognosticators
were not agog.

They coolly noted suns had glowered setting
through ages known for lusts of murdered days.

. . . Well, Spengler'd told of such, and forms of fate had
declined before.

For Jews and Medes and Greeks had stripped long veils from
old worlds — with this, but second scene of nine;
and Norsemen's myths had passed down, wisely rinsing
those twilight's' bloods.

Depressing-hued must seem the veins of men who
there married larger bombs . . . and Toynbee wrote
in curtate cycloids tracing turns to prove that
no sun stays set.

To sad-eyed Europe's pleas, such nimble provings;
and who'd prefer an ascian plain so shade-
less? . . . Oh, horisoned sun, refulgent, warming!

Pray, watch charmed shapes
of shadows where new furious fighting poets
were baking there those catalysts to mix
elixirs never known to rhyme before —
and Chaucer fought.

And having laid grey eggs of death, young pilots
then sang more sweetly of old garden rapes.
And wouldn't Hiroshima pregnate them? And —
 yes, hadn't green
come back? . . . Lo — nitwits too, and wheezings beastly
thence odored conclaves where they talked of peace,
how dragon's teeth need not be sown those nights — yet
 digestive shades
of second molars slanted moistly deeper
where all those ivy-hidden thinkers stayed too long
in situs there behind those cautious casements,
 till nova flamed.

ACCELERATION

Thrive by passage, moving
always . . . moving where ob-
 struction's breathless . . .
taking flight's quick moment
anti-pause intended.
Bride of even faster
motion contemplated —
now invention's shaped her.
Oh! swift four-flushed freak of
circumstantial speed — these
maddening beds have jet-pro-
pulsioned aftermaths.

UNDEDICATED

Unless we every wit revolt,
ideals shall surely snare us;
all model souls shall sweat,
due homagers to Romes,
so framed, and so, and so,
upon exalted patterns,
first Plato, then the bear, and last the food-dispenser.

They thrust upon our want such bland inducements:
What good is good, if goods are undivided?
Don't goods divided warrant bliss?
The suspect men have clever virile glands;
oh, watch they do not procreate ambition!
No pains bite sharper than the pangs of birth;
 rest here, unfeeling, uniformed.
How snugger soothe you fair to die?

If life you love, disgorge!
Yes, vomit forth in haste
this jellifying ideality,
before it stiffens in your guts
and makes you prayerful thank the orthodox
 forever.

C O R N A S E S S E N C E

Feeding of porkers is practical prayer;
otherwise bacon forms leanly from blessings.

Provender and higher grace,
the pitch of man's afflictions —
lend us uncharacteristic sight
to measure the nutriment's good.

Luring as corn to the hogs of green heaven,
lights of the chapel of science's credo.

Secularly bright with facts —
no guessing spires, prosaic
data in moment-to-moment view,
translating creation's signs.

Language is tallow for reason's trim candles;
thought cannot flame without words for the lectern —

habit's warm embrace of verbs,
unprescient voweled roundness,
validly hardened semantically
to manna-filled prayerful wands.

Dreams of white candles from lard off the pig meat,
formulae, gruntless, unsquealingly met —

instrument, accreted God!
Analogy — and rendered

scathlessly pure now, unsmelling grace
with orthodox ultima sound.

Kneelers to phrases of habit and science,
captivated to fatten new droves for the word troughs —
crowd then without real ideals,
munch droolingly sanest deductions.
Grow to sure tapers on doubt's curtained shrine —
and drip to the vat of the damned!

T H E D A Y H A S C O M E

Consuming stone, their coffins — no
mere mummies kept, for memory
of niggard martyred quaestorships
of wisdom coins. Beneath grey bar-
oque chamber walled with porphyry:
panopticon encompassing
three Fascist bastard monsters carved
from purple lava . . .

Next candidates ascend declining
sword of book-crowned mountainside . . .
They'll write in majuscules profound,
fine abstruse meanings from
cramped terms of application,
by quick-eyed rules of learned vengeance bound.

Who carved three purple monsters —
WISE DOLT, FREE THRALL, and BROTHER STRIFE?
That's all observers ask today.

THE HOTEL PARTY

Elwes' tower to mercantile pander
with lift-car of Mammon and red-button numbers
to halt it at floors of sleek barter.

A fun-fingered loaf-maiden strokes them,
while we vibrate ascending.

Revertive anthemion dollars,
rich chromium frieze of her car,
this procuress decorously presses
on mixed-number redness.

We pass to the floor of spiced whoredom,
through brisk scissor-doors of perfume,
a refuge of dilettante magic,
of deft-angled wonders; and puerile,
staid others, unpracticed,
unsensing real arts nor of letters.
Receptive white palms hug our own;
bland essence of cocktails commingling
with odors of under-arm salves —
and nearby, intentional music,
another bored nickel inserted
in pore of dull popular moment.
At this bar for inebriate samplings,
raping tongues will reverse all finesse;
though, constrained with first drinks,

seeking eyes parry postures of culture.

Fast chatter and proffered hors d'euvres . . .
crowded dissonant faked British accents . . .
some questions of import cathartic:

What commerce does one do and where?

WHOSE MERCHANDISE SELLS BEST
AND WHY?

*And making Paris on devalued pounds
exchanged in Geneva and — nothing
else will trouble a person of round sense.*

And should the exchange make him worry,
an able psychiatrist remedies that . . .

Rich supper for glibness —
pale shrimps and young capon, rare steaks,
with clatter and yammer. The chit
for it dribbled on neckties . . .

How replete over frettingly problems,
if new wars and some rabble go hungry in Asia?

But more drinks soon will nudge on drab answers
and ruin cute fun of mixed numbers.

SURROGATE

(A Study in Modern Culture)

This counterfeit's defined by semblances
which fix not what ensues bright duplicate
aluminum and hollow shining house-
ware symbols. Adding cheers for wres-
tling champions, past archwayed gates
of sweaty stadia . . . Relax then
ventureward through mirrored bars,
inhaling rolling-bellied songs
of heterosexual maidens with long breasts . . .
add night-late flights along
gold-flashing boulevards
in high-g geared misdirections.

Lo! here one sits, red-lovely yoked,
crooning into five blue telephones
in close-ranked drill on desk parade,
with button-summons for a sloe-
eyed secretary's dashed epitomes
in wired shalt notebooks. Nervous clowns run corridors
of apparitioned omened form.
See Triumph's bloody countenance? Pellmell
ahead, white chariot desk!
Minus charioteer, ahead
of weeping captives where matriculants

adore prize mass curricula . . .
and every hour served,
if senselessly. Pomaded
tailored flourishes of
bright-appareled egress.

Through anachronistic shams . . .
insensitive, though naked-robed and counter-quoted.

A paralalian link through interval
of undelved prophecies,
he's ego-censored, smelling incensed
shouted-silent purposes; mere smoke
enwraps these seeds of utter
cigarette survival,
non-gratuitous inter-
course of commerce, procreating
spurious-dollarated man . . .
His book records no mysteries,
in spite of Paracelsus.

ON DEFINING SUBVERSIVE CITIZENS

Patriotic show of zealot
chauvinistic hands
has cast into each market place
pink ostrakon,
rejected fragmentation
for writing which

quick names intelligence has
earned dull hatred from the ignorant.

My country not of thee
these warranties of banishment
to independent thought;
for Thomas Paine and other
dangerous men who fathered us
held never fears for chippings from
intolerant-lawed chalices
promoting universal state.

Tyrants spring not sportlike
from whom break set rules.
Again, erred farce of banishing
Hyperbolus — Nicias
joined with Alcibiades
to villify all men who won't
approve triskelion seal
of conquest, trin-
ity, emasculate,
of dollars, demo-cratic votes,
and bureaurcrats.

Democracy! — how breed
essential cranky critics
in deserts where rich oil wells flow
obediently for chewing gum?

Before ten days have locked smart trunks
for travel of so brash and raffish
culture into every continent
for ten long testing years,
inquire who stops at home
to tipple on returns.

OF JUNE NECESSITY

Where green, ensue close whirring blades,
to lop and mangle succulence of summer . . .
Later, leap chill flickering
sprinkler sprays of night-pall, so
that cockcrow sun may cook shorn grasses, steaming . . .
sweet green death endued
for staggering bugs to wade,
before quenched midday steeps in sick-
ish haybarn odor, fryingly.
Moreover, once steel music cuts
to quiet in mown freshest afternoon,
charm's fastly wilted
in greenest moistly shades . . .
Wet second twilight bleeds no chlorophyll —
top grasses yellow in warm dark.

ON LOST HEROISM'S FRUSTRATIONS

Repurposive endurements endlessly
soar, eoning fulfillments in
 blue stellar places
where nebulating fires whirl lightless —
but for eyes eternal-blind,
 on world like ours.
We strain sight, strive to find
what verges on cold violet dark
out there amongst white turning spheres
ellipsing countlessly in time's
 far-lost dimension . . .
while inner conflicts spell
indulgence for rude primal vandals
whom some Freudists cite as too repressed
 for virile animals.

But where's fit cause for approbation . . .
 curving backwards
then, by Darwin dial? Nor by measure
 of high sentiment
of foregone super-abnegation . . .
'gat by galaxies or —
 by nuclear view —
 wrong climbers out of space.

AD HOMINEM

Tall concept always imitates
the act. No wilderness inspires a march . . .
nor speculative minds inspired to blaze
wise theory marks on boles of history
 before achievement's interpassed.
Else, men would never serve in lotteries,
 conjoined to follow and to fight
 until their homilied descent,
catabasis, sad consequence of triumph . . .

Between ravines of sense-split orisons,
 juts fond-deluding Trebizond,
where viewed that prayed-for ocean Odyssey.
 But premature-wept thankfulness . . .
 for swallowed up at once,
 good evil and bad good —
 and whether lashed or led.

Pore closer then in Xenophon's
far Cyropaedic narrative . . .
 Greeks lost, endure again —
 with specious gratitudes.
Long-sighing suicidal tryst
 that Pantheia there kept
for Abradatas, killed in littoral strife . . .

These fancied they moved by wish —
as men will follow self-regard
today, toward 'freedom,' if not spoils;
while after opportunist war,
all trees of prejudice are axed
to mark new trails no politics foretells.

TO LONG WAR

What spring's incarnate here?
Fecundity but manifest
in loving atom bombs . . .
and for chilled thousand years from fate,
what freedoms at the U.S. bargain sales
or peerless Russian heaven, Kremlin-bound!
Whoever wins, what more rhapsodic gain
than gothic front on Strawberry Hill?
Across the polar wastes, what fundamentals? —
embattled continents to meed this fud-
dled history, this century?
O — hyperbolean differences
those beauties disparate
as those of Cuzco, Mycenae . . .
perhaps long plunge from rock to sea,
and fast-won deaths for saline worshippers . . .
And wouldn't Hypnos be a fitter god
than bright Apollo here?

ESTIVATION (*Réchauffé*)

Adust, brown rock-sharp crouching morbid mountains
pore over these
from thirsty mistless heights;
perpetually relentless skies
shape canopy
and backdrop
for torpid long-indulgent sands
which lap enverdured place
of holiday oasis
without submerging it.

Here, air-conditioned fagtail bars
entomb each last resistance,
in parities through autumn days
which never cry —
but, rose-clear every dawn,
unmournful blot out fervid stars and then
extinguish Venus and
an hibernacular moon.
The listless wealthy, come to rest; but tired,
they diddle with desire
which won't reglow in them.

They play unsentient in dim chromium haunts
where only jukebox souls resound —

not knowing that their shrinking earth but rolls
in warring ellipse
in varied annual routes about the blaze
the desert valley greets diurnally.

No cycloid certainties,
no circle-borne returns.

They placid wait, as though for young resurgence.

Aged moneyed derelicts, they slurp
on teenballs at brass rails

where cancered verdigris denies them.

No draught restores voyeurs who can but coddle

vague desires

to squint at wearily when gin-dry morn

overtakes their trials,
remote displaced in time.

Here next may glare an imitative sun

as impotent as sex-numb boredoms
which vacant watch
two homosexual

tortured ancient antic boxers televised

(they pummel feebly each
the other wornout ardent bleeding
face).

GENIUS POPULI AMERICANI

My country, 'tis where not-
so-mystic twelve's libations
pray shuffle-rooted plantings yield
fat juicy-fruited affluence.
Presiding genius of this wealthy state —
oh, grant discerning fraudulence
to hear each least susurrus
hint sophisticated
where which billboarded piedmont
next rebuds the easy dollar!

Some Mizpah vantage grant to them
above so-needy-searching fratres —
proxenos' aid in Latin climes
where versatile investment earns
twice more than pensive scholarship.

Topographical percentages,
steep price-exalted hills —
between which causeways soar,
where paupers may be ever gorged
on rich-oiled hash of Cadillacs'
spare parts by swabbing cash-
lined curbside spittle-pots.

Geniculate entrepreneurs
are best-clothed jugglers here —

they swing smart shifts, full-profiting
each stichomythic intercourse
of harlot law-inflicting ghouls.
The topmost key-voissoir intends
a connotative arch above
 arvales greenly-verdured,
multi-branched, indentured to
a soil whose every inch is profit-seeded.

REFLECTION AFTER EMPIRE

Bitumen flanges of this living track
burn Congo flames, low brown in color,
painingly by blacked crowds of banyan trees
seeing how purposely resentments spread
 to Burma. Darkest continent won't hold
such fires, nor white denials quench them
in mid-ocean; for every isthmus shorts
 the circuits with steel strictures.

Not red names of movements, but
their common knowledge of rapacities
 ending hatted bosses of
those bareheaded gangs which
 built these roads.

OSSIA

Incredibly, ideals of bomb-feared noons —
 here, volent blooms should scintillate,
men supplicate annihilative plans.
Restore they Dorian syssitia?
 What disciplined inversions!
Blessed sodomies! This bread,
 to idealize catastrophists —
 the samely sort who mouth it mumbling,
rigid soldierly in firm-struck ranks
against spare Spartan threats of Soviets
they imitate and wish to parody.

Hear Creon's voice through Sophocles:
"Obedience due . . . unjust or just
commandments . . . pay it and be governed
well . . . deny the fiend of Anarchy
 which ruins states . . . preserve
 the ordered host alive!"

Alive in what? Alive for what?
Whose children eating whose planned loaves?
No haze of death from threatened bombs — this wraith's
invisibility seeps into each
in noon of modern Athens. Feel!
Means subjugate those who do
this to themselves. Where martial Greeks

today? Whose house turned out of doors,
oh, Sophocles? And Plato too —
What state-approved tunes resound?
Which circumspected dance ensures
wise mimicries of safe considerations?

STRAYED (Concerning some post-Poundians)

All around this locus of drouthed searchings,
pale-caution-tinctured maps of longitudes
 of pages others scaled —
plains they crossing scrawled on there
 with aptly-trod pretense
 of richly-greening print . . .
just type sticks, for grey altitudes.
 Arid dun-inked pens —
no blooded courses, running love . . .
parched streambeds, marling stilled, ensilt
about dulled whitenesses of bones
 afloat unmotioned there.

Binomial by Eros
as necessity . . .
but integers cannot
expand by sterile radicals,
 equated minus rains.
Season for attainment needs

mersive contacts also —
dactyloid, creative.
Forswearing waters perish . . .
As well, addition's desert —
better that — for there, oases
practice palm-tree dactylology,
dependably, against blue skies;
and sparkling liquid daemons deep inspire
some re-enfoliated libertines
 of conscious artifice.

THE CHIEF DELUSION

Death is a place; but not a country.
Days are events; and not of measure . . .
 In them, next that place, is where
 all concepts meet all consequence.

When the forest makes a blue room,
pond reflecting sky in narrow clearing,
 true isolation's recognized . . .
 that always-place of mirror-last-
 ing knowledge. There, green rushes make
 their counterparts. We see the sub-
terfuge, and sense how they reflect us
 (or we do them) . . . how bountiful,
unstrait, may be each passage into no-place.

EARLY L.A. MORNING AFTER FREEZE

Oh, merrily, bright fore-damp lustre
of faked sheets of bastard winter
when pale southern sun first lights
 cold father frost across
 greyed lawns and darkened tiles
of modern real estate development!
Still stand, crisp blackening heliotropes,
as pointing where sky-chariot rides;
and briskly, little dogs do squirt
 their fore-day duties, smelling
wisely where some parking lover tossed
a crumpled whiteness from an hurried
wasted need. Here still, cold damages
of night lie undiscovered . . . weak
appetites distraining primal urges
while mock-virile impulse decks
descendants of dull subdivisions.

BEACHSIDE AFFAIR

Down to sighing sea by avid night . . .
 Across black serpent waves, a low
enpurpled star demarks horizon west
 where hampering daytime sun has dropped . . .
Within wet dark and lichen-odored cave,

embracing thighs of carnal moment's blessedness . . .
All heat of afternoon boils through the loins,
 while hiss of surf beats one-to-ten
for charging blood, which via vena cava
always fills swelled heart again with knowledge
after facts. . . . Till, leaving last that place,
 before slow tide, while lingering
to gaze at Jupiter, that princely pimp
 once glorified as Merodach,
 because all women — then as now —
 rejected lust's realities
in bedrooms of white burning sun . . .

Like dripping-uddered sea-cow mothers still,
 their primal urges sanctified,
these appetites for easy pleasures, close
 as blood to bone; some godhead make of
itching-rendered searched significance,
 relationship to vision, each
 poor watel of experience
 upon a seashore couch. And each
engenderment to find that early eastern moon,
reminder both of god-sun and sure boundlessness —
 no prostitution role.

TREE TIME WAS

Analogy-sic, balmless: knowledge
of a toe-strong ancestry . . .
and similar to blaming glands
for mental aberrations
hibernated through one's years
of wastrel learning. What one wants
is reassurance there's a brain
 that's stouter than a toe . . .
 that one now can dominate
 one's glands, and be a man.

THIS PAGEANT PRESENT

Dark other streets are lighted for this fool-
ery of crowning this Elizabeth . . .
where dimly daylong centuries
have crowded hungry masses (no
cathedrals), and long foggy dawns
have seen belligerence of emp-
ty bellies . . . never diamonds, nor am-
ethysts embroidered on whose gowns.
Oh, tempora, indeed! Which crying need
of culture's met by womb-infested pre-
sent day descendants of these after-
gloried namesakes of a virile past?

ON MODERN PERSPICACITY

White planes in flight — tautologous —
portend beak-sharp resorts to dark-
nesses of air-raid-sheltered
words in labyrinth . . .
undivinely conjectured
known to every gas-masked reader of
new verse! Which images demand
rare vision in translations?
What merds of brown refinement,
such late blue-sky-drunk rhapsodies?
Must every pilot vibrate sole-
ly to connivances
of treadle-wheels of brookish platitudes?
These motors roar confusion; but
unvaguely through mist metaphysic,
inscribed to shorn combustions.
More minds relate by spirit than
by mawkish owls of woodsy cunning . . .
or conning snapshots of old snowy
egret clauses.

SCRUTINY

Each face of evil is neglect;
no circumstance makes summer
 falling leaves . . . but failed
intentions of some husbandman.
And when some generation's
 ugliness has awed
prognosticators of the doom
of man, why doesn't one of these
take heed which legends are
repeated oftenest in beer-
halls of our time, whose ways
of making love are tried as
best examples . . . where books
are being burned for honesties?

STAYS NOT

Those who would be fasteners of time are fools;
 it will not fasten.
Never aspect makes an ending,
for every one is ipso facto more.
No stopping time's expansion, act to act,
 and endlessly resolving,
leaving else for changing ever . . .
will on will to kindle new-bent worlds'
 varieties, expenditures,

and neoteric forms and sounds
and colors, interventions limitless.
What reason so? Why never entropy?
Each act *demand*s new purpose by new being;
action is becoming — *has* to form
 awarely knowledgeable
 containless life. The latter
quite impedeless . . . always is, was, shall
enact a farther being, never dying
burster of whatever hinge defines.

LOVE AMONG US

Liaisons poetical
are not sodalities,
but bitterness, wrong for-
titudes with poisoned barbs,
holding hands beside cold ditches next some other
poet's road, to jab him on his way to death with
quoting tongues. Oh, charity! *identified with*
shirking of one's duty: rendering more intense those
sufferings which bleed the richest verse.
 Intended was this way; so
make no concordance for mutual readings —
meet no common ground for loved discussions —
scale no peak together. *Only one may*
climb long narrow back of only mountain — his.

A R E BIGGER THE BETTER

Apt comparisons of what with which
grow rarer with time's progress —
as (most likely) bombs are instances.
Speed makes much with speed, and yet
meaning only speed, not faster;
for, to see this needs a size,
and eyes are never comprehensive.
Nor brightness — for the sun's the only.
Were it quite unparsing dull,
in sky so master-mixed invention'd stop,
we'd be just less encumbered with
new whatnots of effulgency,
for what-of laughter. Think
an instant which utensil
has a sum (of anything) . . .
add all size to sizes (anywhere) . . .
then make a prayer for guiding who've
gone crazy building sky-high fire!

SLICE OF DEATH (A Memory of a Military Camp)

Where am I? . . . Who am I?
Who was that, back there
I seem to be related to —
in conscious tried conception only . . .
Which pole of being? None —

just marching-school to bend
illusion toward an assignation
over waters purposeless,
if purposed by war's masquerade
of living. This between-land where
the will is overridden,
learning other selves decide;
and other-letting, till sore feet
beat heartwise unison — or hearts
tell numbers to the feet. All time's
become mere meeting of commands.
Here, thinks no baffled moment's solitude,
unless tight cot at night — and snores and sighs
there multisound, and sleep-drugged voices speak
of where had been whose homes? Or were
these ever entities? Or self-
deceived, where commonplace?

To so deceive myself
again! And test this will
to turn my own invention of
command's delusion, some one single
choosing of a way to stand!

DISCUSSING DREAMS

Another self, or truly self?
Those problems fought in antic
circumstances there on myriad
 ladders through long tunnels
 which are found suspended
 where one boards weird Pullman
 cars for homes in cities
never seen by common sense of
day . . . and yet, in waking, also
conjurable . . . events still turning
on that frame of other actions,
past mere knowing reference.
And will these wondrous places
all confirm translations into
other meanings? Holds each tumbled
bedtime, only symbols? Or may
loveliness and horror factual
 wait us there our dousing
 of that final taper?

LOVE OF COUNTRY DEFINED

In fond embrace of symbol,
kissing nothing-self, whose self
attenuated growth in
speciousness which lends illusions

of security for what
 was never first secured.
Not other than, say Sam
or Uncle Bull, my Johnnie boy —
 there's no one there — no
parent nor majority
nor king nor tribal chief —
just father-image, un-
predictable intended deeds.

Reversed, participants in power
neither act those acts they claim to act.
Who paints fine signs: "PUT OUT
ALL FIRES . . . NO SPITTING ON
THE SIDEWALK . . . SMOKING HERE
PROHIBITED?"
Anonymous that hand, as reaching armed
from corporation octopus, obese
and tendonless and flexing never
 muscles, roll on roll . . .
 sightless, yet is always
 there and prying unctuously
into affairs such as what does
or does not happen in a wedded bedroom night.

W H A T ' S FUTURE'S PAST

A store is for gulled future strength,
no matter what the food.
A needless contradiction here?
Then why do stores lie rot?
Anxiety's the key —
its blight on every act,
as worm which may already creep
within fouled meat of holed-safe nuts,
or munch on mustily about
germed core of apple-doom.
On hearing tons of butter have
gone rancid, ponder semen shot
against avoider's closet wall . . .
misunderstanding life's the same.
Each bin of beans or what, laid here
pretentioned to defeat some fu-
ture of misfortune? Yet,
misfortune always dwells in pasts,
and all that burdens coincides
with very stores' security!

Present only, as sensation, rise
those selfsame fears, denying now,
cringing after memories,
wasting what a future offers,
dying over other deaths . . .
and storing then but falsity,
because the worm gnaws ever past,
is never overtaken, and
must always so defeat those frugal.

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