

SUMMER, 1950

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CHALLENGE



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 * CHALLENGE
 * The Poetry of the Atomic Age
 * SUMMER, 1950 (A Quarterly) VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1*

Editor and publisher, Lilith Lorraine; Associates; Stanton A. Cob-
 lentz and Evelyn Thorne. Sponsored by Avalon World Arts Academy,
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 Prophetic Poetry is not an escape but a challenge, not a day-dream
 but a blue-print, not the Swan-Song of an old world but the Dawn-
 Song of a new.

PEGASUS WAS HERE

Since CHALLENGE has been designed to constitute one of the first
 attempts in the literary field to encourage the writing of a new
 kind of poetry best adapted to foreshadow and interpret the tre-
 mendous implications of the Atomic Age, we feel the obligation in
 our first issue to state a few of our editorials ideals for the ben-
 efit of our readers, contributors, and subscribers.

Poetry because of its direct appeal to the human emotions and its
 subtler approach through the symbolisms, rhythms, and cadences un-
 derlying all creation from the periodicity of the tides to the sym-
 phonic sweep of the galaxies, has always led the vanguard of the
 march of man from his first wild chant in the shadow of the cave to
 the ultimate reach of his atom-powered imagination toward the con-
 quest of the stars.

Poets have always been the prophets and the architects of the only
 worlds worth saving, of the only lives worth living, of the only
 dreams worth dreaming. Poetry because of its compressed atomic pow-
 er, reduces to the least common denominator of dynamic communication
 ideas incommunicable in prose. Speaking in those symbols which con-
 stitute the common mind-pool of the race, it is the winged steed
 which has carried thought beyond the barriers of the senses, level-
 ing the walls of the improbabilities, shattering the axioms and draw-
 ing the blue-prints of incredible yet attainable futures. It has
 held the lone torch of Freedom through all the cultural blackouts
 when the spirit of man was at war with the powers of darkness. It
 has rallied lone, lost causes to victory over hate and fear, and has
 finally raised man from his earth grovelling to a vision of his
 throne among the stars. And at long last the poet is beginning to
 suspect what the stars have always known; "There is no force more
 invincible than a poet conscious of his power.

And when the moon lies prone beneath our feet, when Mars is a re-
 born miracle for the joy and the glory of man, when Pluto is only
 a whistle stop to the outer galaxies of earth's expanding empire,
 let us remember this; let us read it deeply graven in the convol-
 utions of the questing brain and carved upon the imperial peaks of
 the outmost reaches of creation -- PEGASUS WAS HERE!

And so today Avalon, as yet an almost legendary empire of the rising
 poets of a nation that despite its alleged materialism, boasts more
 that two million disciples of the Muse, hopes through CHALLENGE to
 set the pace for a kind of poetry that will lift the mind of man

above the war hypnosis that leads the many to die for the few, the young for the old and the fit for the unfit and turn our mental and material resources toward the building of a free world from which the untrammelled mind can reach upward to the conquest of the stars.

For if we can survive the perils of this hour and use the power now given to our hands for the sowing of the seeds of peace and brotherhood, all space lies fallow for that sowing, all time lies open like the petals of a rose.

In reaching outward from the sphere of the well-known poets who have formed our nucleus of service to the cause of poetry, and beyond that of the student poets who for some ten years we have trained in the appreciation, writing and marketing of better poetry, we realize that our expansion now touches the orbit of the daring, fast growing and progressive realm of the thousands of science-fiction fans, readers, authors, publications and poets.

We know that we are striving to spark to a still greater flame, a fire already burning in the minds of earth's most dynamic dreamers, of men who dreamed the atom before it became a nebulous theory in the mind of science, before that phantom mushroomed into flaming fact upon the hills of Hiroshima and that now, both glorious and terrible waits upon our decision to use its power for suicide or for millennium.

We are reaching out, in other words, to the Conquerors of Space. For you who dreamed that conquest and the weapons of that conquest, who prophesied the ships below the seas and the wings above the world, are the true Conquistadores of the Infinities. Those who tomorrow or a hundred years from now, will build the star-ships and sail them from Venus to Betelgeuse, are your eternal debtors. For they would be forever visionless had not some poet dreamed, had not some thinker reached out the fragile fronds of imagination into the unfertilized cells of science and brought those dreams to birth.

Therefore, CHALLENGE salutes you, star-kings of the only ever-lasting empire, the kingdom of constructive dreams, and challenges you to give us your best in poetry and to guard the atomic fires of the modern Muse that if tended by the Sons of Peace, will burn forever.

When we ask you for nothing less than your best, we mean just that. We ask you to remember that poetry is a great profession, that the poet is a prophet of tomorrow, an architect of today, a handmaid of destiny. We ask you to realize that while poetic talent may be inborn, while its source may be what men have called divine, that the channel through which that inspiration flows, must be made smooth and perfect by serious training and infinite consecration; or the product will do dishonor to the Source, and men will be moved to scorn by the shabby escape mechanisms erected by the inferior craftsman to disguise his laziness and his inadequacy.

We regret the necessity of having to reject dozens of poems submitted to us for every one accepted and published in this issue. We realize that they were sent to us with high hopes and in the finest spirit of cooperation by poets, who like thousands of other

people, do not realize that poetry, like all other creative arts, has its techniques, its backgrounds, its special and peculiar language, its ancient ritualistic pageantry, and its modern streamlined economy adapted to our day and age.

We appreciate that in most cases where rejection was necessary, the "rejectees" accepted our comments in the spirit in which they were given. They were big enough to take it. They were willing to try harder next time, they refused to surrender because of one rejection. But what else can one expect from the Conquerors of Space?

In this connection we are reminded of a high-ranking officer of World War II, whose publisher would not accept a volume of his poetry until its technical defects had been eliminated by a competent critic. Having been selected by the publisher to do this work, and becoming exasperated by the slipshod craftsmanship of my involuntary victim, I finally wrote him, "If you command armies like you write poetry, I tremble for the safety of the Republic." He fired back, "You take care of my poetry and I'll take care of your army, and you need not tremble for the safety of the Republic." Be it noted that he was divinely right, for the Republic, in some fashion, still survives. So does this officer's poetry.

Since for the first year at least, we shall have to publish CHALLENGE at a considerable loss, and since we wish to get it into printed form as soon as possible to give more finished representation to your work we solicit your cooperation in telling your friends about us that we may build up our subscription list as quickly as possible. You will note on another page how you may secure your own subscription free by doing this. As in the case of our six-year-old magazine DIFFERENT, official organ of Avalon's international family of writers, you can depend on us to give you CHALLENGE on or before its deadline of the 30th of June, September, December and March; to answer all letters and fill all orders the day they are received and to accept or reject every manuscript the day it reaches our desk.

We ask all perfectionists to bear with us during our first year of publication, remembering that the poems in the first few issues, NOT collectively speaking be taken as a criterion of this editor's highest standards or as finished poetic products. Many of our poets are taking their first plunge into an entirely new type of poetry, and most of them with the exception of the widely published ones who in this and the following issues have generously contributed their work as pace-setters, do not as yet realize, as they will later, if they "stick around", that poetry is not achieved by sitting under a tree and waiting for an inspiration, but that greatness in the art and publication in the best mediums can be attained only by hard work, serious study, space-wide vision and by reading at least fifty times as many poems, great poems - as they attempt to write.

In closing, we express our deep appreciation for your courtesy, your cooperation, your suggestions and your sincerely expressed approval of our venture, all of which made it an inspringtask to launch CHALLENGE on the stormy waters of the Atomic Age. We shall at all times welcome your constructive comments, and we hope that you will feel free to consult us at all times on your poetic problems.

LILITH LORRAINE

Duverne Konrick

THE HALF-WORLD

There is a haunted kingdom,
Where shapes half-human dwell,
Where weird unearthly music
Weaves its awesome spell.

Beside a twisted oak tree
Stands a massive throne,
In a hush surcharged with terror,
The demon shapes fall prone.

There the monstrous shadows,
In a strange moon's lurid glow,
Whisper of things unholy
No mortal man should know.

The huge black throne is mounted
By one you dare not name,
And his terrible chilling laughter
Sears your soul with flame.

Linn Carter

THE WIZARD ISLE

Once in a dream I sailed
Uncharted seas aboard a galleon
Whose silken sails were filled by magic winds,
And long we plied the breast of timeless seas,
Our gilded prow rode high the foamy waves,
And sea gulls circled in our frothy wake.

We reached at last that far-ensorcelled isle
Where Thamshyd rules as King; we saw it gleam
Across the tossing waves, a Wizard Isle
Of green mist-mantled hills. A bay
As blue as wine. We saw the city rise
Before us, gilded domes touched with the sun,
And towers crusted with a thousand gems,
And soaring minarets of burning gold....

This was Khymyrium, that fabled realm
Where ancient Amir wrought in living stone
The story of Eternity.

Orma McCormick

THE ALIEN

What strange belief is this that bids me hie
To that forgotten isle where Devils trod?
What force is this that makes my thoughts belie
The ancient wisdom of an honest God?
When life and death, immortal veillings rent,
Impress upon my soul such power and pride,
That I seek other goals, emotions pent -
Can I be called a coward if I hide?
Why do I frequent this weird lonely dell?
What lures me? Does the blackened night reveal
To me the hidden depths of Heaven and Hell?
How could I worship distant gods with zeal?

I answer calls not heard by earth-born men,
And wonder, Will my race come back again?

Alan Donovan

PRINCE OF ATLANTIS

I know I saw him once, Enardith from Atlantis,
Enardith tall and straight as a swift-flung spear;
He stood on the shore in the terrible green twilight,
And the white-lipped waves curled back in snarling fear.

In spite of the stinging spray I saw him clearly,
The arrogant brow, the wild quick-silver eyes,
The emerald mantle billowing from his shoulders,
The dolphin grace that nothing could disguise.

One moment he was there -- then there was nothing,
The wind shrieked down the beach, he had disappeared,
Only far out in the water a sudden whirlpool,
And deep in my mind a sudden knowledge leered.

I know they will rise from the sea, a green-clad army
Led by Enardith from the ocean caves,
Atlanteans grown wise and hungry for the sunlight,
And we shall make peace with them -- or be their slaves.

When that day comes, Oh Prince of drowned Atlantis,
I will surrender, kneeling on the sand,
For I saw wonder in your silver eyes and wisdom,
And these have vanished from our starvling land.

Vera L. Eckert

REFUGEES FROM CHAOS

They came from earth's black storm of cosmic doom
To vega's fair atoll, these daring few;
And each was bound, as pilgrims, each of whom
Were of a race apart. For now they knew
Survival made them one. The Curse of Cain
Was ended with their flight; this was the dawn
Beyond the ebon world where hate had slain,
And here no wars had been, nor weapons drawn.
The stars that shone on earth shone on them still,
But these, the refugees from chaos read
New wonder in the skies, new hope to fill
A dream arisen from an old world dead.

Dariell Dunay

WHEN?

When will the flying saucers land
With visitors from space?
When we have killed each other off,
They are a peaceful race.

They listen to the radio
And wait for nuclear fission,
They are a canny, frugal breed,
Who save their ammunition.

Felix E. Luck

SINISTER SAUCERS

Flying saucers
Up in sky,
Won't come down,
Much too high !
Prop or jet-
Driven plane
Chases them
All in vain !
Maintain space-ships
Come at last?

Can't tell,
Much too fast,
Visitors
Out of space?
Come to kill
Human race?
Kill us all
In one shot?
Would we know?
Reckon not !

John W. Jakes

MARCO CAIN
(A spaceman's ballad)

Marco Cain ! Marco Cain !
Striding in a jungle dawn.
Marco Cain ! Marco Cain !
Drums of Venus, thunder on.

Who's the brawny king of space?
Great big Marco Cain !
(Epit right in the sun's hot face).
Great big Marco Cain.

For whom do Maids of Mercury cry
And Mars Maids weep in pain?
(Who drank the Deep Mars desert dry)?
Hell, it's Marco Cain !

Who will ship from year to year,
Out to any place?
Who do all the spacedogs cheer?
Marco Cain, by space !

Marco Cain ! Marco Cain !
Tamed the stars with atom roar.
Marco Cain ! Marco Cain !
Drums of Venus, beat no more.

Stanton A. Soblentz

THE TRAVELER

The traveler's hands were gnarled, and white his beard;
Shadowed his crater eyes, and stooped his back.
"There is a world," he said, "Whose face is black,
Tar-black from fires by which her children seared
Her fair green face, before they disappeared.
And there is one where many a spire and stack
Collapse when steel automatons attack,
With hill-long arms, mechanical and weird.

"And one there is with shores of morning blue
And fields gold-petalled....But the tinder's dry.
And what is this with fuses, hooves and horn?" ...
"Oh, stop!" I cried, fear-shaken. "Who are you?" ...
The traveler pointed to the star-flecked sky;
And when I looked more closely, he was gone.

Evelyn Thorne

THE VISION

In soft gray cells within the skull of man
The vision grew; steel tendoned arms to lift
The savage load from goaded human backs,
Electric nerves, precise to weigh and sift
The unseen substance of the universe.
And so the great machines were born to free
The dream, and minds of men are found germane
To those of gods. Now we can hope to see
The subtle structure of all time and space,
To build with star-dust and to train our keen
Bright lenses on the arcane source of life.
Our lost divinity lies coiled in the machine.

THELMA ALLINDER

SORCERY

The Aethers weave their ageless beauty where
I sail the cosmic tide, companion of
The stars, to find a secret, perfect isle.
They watch and bless me as I seek above,
Communing spirit-wise, where naught is vile,
With thought that permeates all time and space.
For one brief interlude I know all love
And sense the wonder of this mystic place.

Afgar Moran

VACATION SPOT

"The earth is such a quiet spot,"
The men from Venus said,
"They dropped a little hydro-bomb,
And everybody's dead."

Lilith Lorraine

UNTIL HE SHALL DISCOVER

The golden maids of Ganymede were mistresses of Pan,
In the love-bewildered mornings before the earth began,
For Pan, the timeless lover, through every star must roam,
Until he shall discover the wine beneath the foam.

He loved them in the morning, the maids with emerald hair,
Before our small sun's burning, he climbed their silvered stair,
His little goat-feet tapping beat out their thin, sweet rhymes,
Their strange, mad voices mingled like splintered temple chimes.

He watched the moons of Ganymede grow pale in orchid skies,
He watched its star-spawned empires die in loveliness and lies,
He felt the maids of Ganymede grow cold beneath his kiss,
Nor yet believed that all the gods must come at last to this.

He left them in the half-light when the sapphire flames had died,
When the ebbing life of Ganymede flowed outward with the tide,
And left upon the beaches tall cities washed in doom,
And the fragile dream-drowned maidens who lived beyond the tomb.

Beyond the crypt of passion, beyond the reach of pain,
They wait the cool millenniums when Pan shall come again,
On slow but rhythmic goat-feet to climb the silvered stair,
To drown the Last Futility in waves of emerald hair.

Earle Franklin Baker

FACE TO THE STARS

The urge still comes when the sky-jets ring,
When a great ship heads for Mars,
It is then that the far-off sirens sing
To call me back to the stars.

As I watch tall spacemen hurry by
I think of my ship again,
And a time-lost rock in a blazing sky
And the eyes of six doomed men.

I feel the lure of red-rockets wink
As vast power drives me on;
I am Captain Kane who loves his drink
And the words of a siren song.

I make my way through dreams a-whirl,
Where the langorous sirens bloom;
And my sul is dead to an earthbound girl
Who kneels by a spaceman's tomb.

The urge still comes when the rockets flash,
And a great ship cleaves the blue;
My thoughts will ride with each upward dash
To the graves of my valiant crew!

James E. Warren, Jr.

I'LL ASK AND WAIT

Leaving the metal doorways thick on Mars,
By such a moonlight as its two moons give,
We'll seek a clearing in the giant ferns
To stare at Earth. (I'll take your hand to stare)

We shall be silent in the alien night,
Remembering our journey down the dark,
The horror of such loneliness so long,
The landward lunge, the terrible new world.
We shall lean closer and we shall be glad
We were together in that other land
Flaring some fifty million miles away.

"What do you miss the most?" I'll ask and wait
While far away the crested reptiles cough
And bellow by the banks of cold canals.
A wind will come and toss the ferns and slap
Their slimy fronds together. In the caves
Along the ocher cliffs the Sighing Ones,
Who speak somehow with sighs, will breathe and say
Their sad and silver legends in the dusk.

And then you'll weep; and, "Dogwood blooms !" you'll say.

Helen Harrington.

ALWAYS THE WEARY CONTEST.

Poised on a gleaming star
They stare at earth
And ponder what we are
And weigh our worth.

Men of the Here and There...
A curious race...
Feverishly prepare
To ravish space.

Perched on our spinning globe,
We stare at them
And speculate and probe
Their strategem.

But -- tell me -- when we meet --
Tell me -- what then?
Will it be war, defeat,
And war again?

YOU WHO WRITE THESE LINES

DARIELL DUNAY

You who write these lines today are conquerors of space,
Though you may never walk the moon or ride where comets race,
For who has dared with pen of flame to trace the starry track,
For silver ships of futuremen has been to Mars and back.
And when you dream of things to do that thing is someday done,
For He who dreamed the Universe and forged each fiery sun,
Has throned the dreamer high above the realms of time and
place,

You who write these lines today are conquerors of space.

Olive V. Applegate

EXILED

There was a day when men were gods,
Not bound upon the earth.
They were the lords--dimensionless--
Of time, and space, and birth.
There was a day, an ancient day,
When minds of men were free;
Until the great Agarth, in rage,
Wrapped them in mystery.
There was a day when men were gods--
I knew Agarth, The Great !
I saw his ship trail fire through space
And called his name too late.
But first he stood in anger there
Upon our planet's rim,
And rolled the noiseless thunder down
Until all thought grew dim.
He left a fire, he left a fog,
He left a secret curse;
And still men build great staring eyes
That pry the universe;
And men still look toward the east
And search the endless night,
And think that every passing star
Is Argarth in his flight.

Felix E. Luck

STAR-GAZING

I've gazed into the sky for hours on end;
I've watched our sister planets rise and set;
I've thought and thought of how these worlds might send
A message we would get.

It has to happen some day if there are
Inhabitants on planets of the sun,
That travel round our radiant golden star -
It simply must be done.

It's possible that Martians might exist;
Venusians on Venus still could be;
Vast planets that are mostly frozen mist
Might even be the key.

And as I gaze there always comes the thought
That any day a message might come through;
And we shall know at last what planet sought
Our earth and found it too.

Dariell Dunay

UNCHARTED

We can measure the planets and weigh them at will,
But the mind with the yardstick is measureless still.
We may fashion machines that are swifter than light,
But the mind of the Thinker is shrouded in night.

Emili A.

A SOLILOQUY

Where did you spring from,
Ayan race?
With your fair body
And proud face?

Did the sun lend your hair
Its golden hue,
Did the sea give your eyes
Their cobalt blue?

Who forged your sinews?
Who shaped your brain?
Who made you master
Of wind and rain?

Bending the lightning
To do your will;
Bidding its potency
Increase or stand still...

Guarding the atom,
Conquering space -
Decoying, destroying
Each lesser race.

Frank E. McNamar

THE MIND SOARS FREE

Each night I contemplate the stars
That blaze in glory in the sky,
And longing like a rocket blast,
Lifts me to where their glories lie.

And then my soul is free to roam,
Among the spheres of blazing light,
Each one a sun that dwarfs our own,
A cosmic furnace burning bright.

But when I waken bound to earth,
To find the breathless beauty fled,
No dawn-born joys can compensate
For dreams that haunt my magic bed.

For there my soul soars far and free,
Beyond the thrall of earthly bars,
And there all mortal barriers yield
To him who walks among the stars.

Lucrezia Reynard

TIME IS A HIGHWAY

Time is a highway,
Where all worlds pass,
Or time is a shadow
Upon a glass.

Some take the left turn,
Some take the right,
Some take the strange roads
Into the night.

Nations and planets,
Monsters and men,
Travel the highway
Again and again.

Sometimes a world splits
Mountain to coast,
One is a new world,
One is a ghost.

Earth will you travel,
Where brave worlds pass,
Or be only a shadow
Upon a glass?

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

We shall be glad to exchange CHALLENGE with any Fanzine whose editor requests it. Please make it official by writing us to that effect if you wish to exchange. We are deeply appreciative of the cooperation of the many editors who have already put us on their exchange.

We shall also be happy to give a five line announcement to any Fanzine who will accord us the same courtesy. We suggest that you give us the name of your magazine, its address, name of editor, and general type of reading material. Also mention if you use poetry.

PRIZE! PRIZE!

We are offering a \$5.00 prize for the most constructive letter received before July 30 telling us what we can do to improve CHALLENGE. Don't think of new ways for us to spend money, for until our subs. meet us at least half-way we can't do it. But be a real genius and tell us how to give you a better magazine with what we've got. Don't remind us of our typographical errors, that's too late, and we aren't Manly Banister. And don't ask us to lower our literary standards, or to raise them beyond the ability of this whole new field of poets to meet until they fully realize that poetry too has its techniques which they must learn to meet our CHALLENGE. Anyway here's \$5.00 that says somebody is a genius.

AND THERE'S A YEAR'S FREE SUB. TO CHALLENGE for any one who brings us three subscriptions, not including his own.

AND DON'T FORGET we also publish DIFFERENT, a literary "slick" with a six year dateline, which circulates in every state and in several foreign nations. DIFFERENT is the official organ of AVALON which trains more than 400 poets each year in the elements of verse-writing, helps hundreds of them to secure quality publication and gives its instruction free to those who are members of the organization, who subscribe to its magazine and who secure the text books. Beginning with the July-August number now off the press, our fiction department will use only science-fiction and fantasy. Per copy 35¢, per year \$2.00. DIFFERENT, Rogers, Arkansas.

Please make out all checks and money orders intended for CHALLENGE, to DIFFERENT, as our bank account is carried that way, and address all correspondence to DIFFERENT, but indicate on the manuscript that it is intended for CHALLENGE. This makes it easier on the postoffice.

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VERY IMPORTANT: Those who submit manuscripts to CHALLENGE are requested to please observe the professional ethics of sending a stamped addressed return envelope, business size, with sufficient return postage with each submission, as your editor for the first year at least must meet a considerable deficit promoting your poetry.

Norm Storer

SACRILEGE

A million stars and one have shone
Upon this timeless plain.
Their glory lies inherent where
No hands of man profane.
This dust has lain for years and will
Continue to remain,
 If Man will pass it by.

But blind to simple beauty is
The mind of modern man.
His hot-dog stands now desecrate
The place where waters ran --
The Martians' great canals are torn
And twisted from their plan;
 Man did not pass them by.

Yet there are other sacred spots
Within this universe;
They hold their beauty close against
The final man-made curse.
And evermore the silent stars
Shall bitterly converse;
 Man will not pass them by.

Ruth Weinstein

ENIGMA

Myriad stars like beacons of light
Ponaird-like slashed through the ebony night,
Spell-bound I watched as in light-spaced race
We jetted through chartless and measureless space.

At last, oh, at last, the voyage was done,
As we sighted a world with a glorious sun,
And emerged from our perilous tryst with fate,
But alas, too late ! Too late ! Too late !

For I gazed on a shambles of carnage and death,
Where nothing could breathe the poisonous breath.
The dread radiations of man-made shells,
That had burst with the scream of a thousand hells.

Bones rose in pyramids ghostly white,
What horror had spawned this gruesome sight?
Towers leaned on one side, pits on the other,
Could it be that brother had turned against brother?

We from a world of beauty and power,
What can we know of your terrible dower,
Oh planet called Terra, we journeyed to seek,
You hold a grim secret -- I wish you could speak.

Helen Reid Chase

GROWING PAINS

Man, a child-god grasps for planets, bubbles in the sun,
Reaches for the twinkling star-globes; let him have his fun.
Galaxies are schools to teach him what a god should know,
Shining toys are strung around him, coaxing him to grow.
Let him point his spaceships skyward, starchine in his eyes,
Never bother if he stumbles, he is sure to rise.
Bear with all his little failings, godhood's growing pains,
All too soon he'll find that losses balance up with gains.
Soon he'll take his turn as teacher, tolerant and mild;
Let him have his fun and danger while he's still a child.

Sally Pepos

OUT OF THE VASTNESS

Out of the vastness the Disk-Men came
Swifter than light-years, time or sound,
Slicing the voids with a knife of flame-
A burgeoning world the Disk-Men found,
But horror replaced their first surmise,
And they flashed away from the world of men,
And never in sight of our war-torn skies,
Will the Disk-men come with their dreams again.

Alwyn Coristine

AFTER ALL

Why must your subtle hands caress my brow
Aalina of Arcturus, day by day?
I lie with eyelids closed and resting. Now,
You seek my will by fragrance to betray.
This mantling guise precludes my taking flight
With you through stellar space where Beings stray
With whom I cannot claim ascendant right
Into the sphere that lies light-years away.
Be pleased to go; Obsession strangely fair,
Ceding me sleep wherein to lave the mind
Of thought of you, awakened. I but care
For a soul-comrade of terrestrial kind.

Ken F. Slater

THE WAITING GOD

Choked with dust, the temple gates -
Within them yet, a god awaits;
For there perhaps will come a day
When one last pilgrin kneels to pray.
To him rewarding the faith he kept
The god may give the tears he wept.
Tears of a god, a drink divine,
Immortal life forever thine.

Michael DeAngelis

THE CASTLE

High on a marble hill it stood,
Outlined against a gilded sky;
A castle built of sandalwood -
Where none shall ever die.

Of ebony the gates were wrought,
By demons old and wise;
And Chimerae far worlds have sought,
To build the halls of chrysophryse.

I saw then in a tarnished dream,
That all that glitter and display,
Crumpled in the bright sky's gleam -
And vanished in one crystal day.

And that's all the poems folks, all the acceptable ones that we received. We think that most of them are pretty good for a start and we hope you will agree with us. We've tried to be nice to everybody and at the same time impress upon our poets that they must send us their best, that our standards must be those of increasing excellence. You can't buy your way into CHALLENGE by subscribing, as we're not making any money out of this venture, we're only trying to inspire the writing of fine poetry in this new and challenging field. But you can eventually write acceptable poetry of the kind we would be proud to accept, if you will READ Challenge and study the diction, style and thought-content of the best poets appearing therein. And now a few suggestions for the improvement of your poetry that will bring it nearer to professional standards: Do everything possible to increase your vocabulary (since words are the tools of ideas and of thought), by reading the best poetry of the past and present. Avoid trite and over-used word combinations such as you see in the tons of mediocre verse that appears ad nauseum in publications whose editors themselves do not realize the harm they do such poets by letting them appear in public with their literary petticoats showing. Use rich and exotic, or daring and dynamic imagery instead of literal, reportorial factual statements which belong to the realm of prose, avoid preachiness, philosophizing, and moralizing. The great sermons are preached in poetry, the greatest philosophies expounded by subtlety and the indirect approach. Do not use obsolete English like "thee and thy," ere, o'er 'neath, 'tis, 'twas, fain, methinks, forsooth, etc. and go easy on the oh's, ah's and lo's. Use the English of the year 1950, unless you are a time-traveler. If you are send for our text book, THE LOST WORD, and let us bring you up to date. Always write on letter size paper, in a business-size envelope, with your name and address in upper left hand corner of your ms. and enclosed a business size folded, stamped return envelope with your address and ours in the proper places.

All honor to our cover artist, the well-known delver into the realms of the weird and fantastic, who has given to CHALLENGE its cover for some time to come. You will all admit that Ralph did a grand job, and we hope you will call on him for your illustrative needs. And oh, yes! THERE'S A PRIZE OF \$3.00 for the best poem that we receive not later than August 30, interpreting the meaning of this cover in the poet's own way. The winning poem will be published in CHALLENGE. Why not send us a poem on the cover and submit three others at same time? L.L.

THE NIKROMANTIKON

Amateur Magazine of Weird and Fantasy

1905 Spruce Avenue

Kansas City, 1, Mo.

Amateur weird, fantasy, and science-fiction manuscripts welcomed. About 5,000 words preferred, any treatment. Shorter or longer material considered. Payment only by free copy containing work. If material is unacceptable we tell you why--offer suggestions and help rework, only if requested. Also use weird and fantasy art-work, black ink only, suitable for reproduction by line-engraving process. No color, wash or tone effects. Issues 1 and 2 available at 25¢ a copy. Year subscription, 4 issues, \$1.00. Manly Banister, Editor.

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BLACK NIGHT is a forthcoming mimeographed anthology of fantasy-science-fiction-weird poetry to be edited and published by Stewart Mechette, 3555 Edison, #E, Hillsdale, San Mateo, California. Send Mr.Mechette your best poetry in these fields, either published or unpublished. The former must be accompanied by reprint permission from both author and previous publisher. Poems must be sent immediately as the deadline is near. Poets whose work is accepted will receive a free copy.

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