

For My Turtle Primeva

ALLYN WOOD

*(First prize, Butler Literary Contest,
Poetry Division)*

Children of the dry bright and cool light
and gleam of water-skin and absorbent
shadow,

Ageless children creeping out of mud
with wisdom in your eyes and half-
smiles of carven idols:

One of you has been washed onto the
shoal unknown
To bask and lay his head down on the sand,
His sun become
A more mysterious one.

I have watched your different way of dying
Knowing the difference from your life to
mine;
Yours the Mesozoic, mine the Cenozoic—
You are not as separate from death
And do not have as far to go as I.
And you are nearer to the source of life,

Our symphonic river below the sun!
I have leaned down from the bridge so
many times,
Searched, and returned the idol's smile;
Breathed deeply with you as you filled
The sailcloth of your throat and turned
With a Viking lift of the figure-head.

Children of rivers; one of you is dead.

Midsummer's Eve

(the meeting of mysteries)

ALLYN WOOD

St. John's Eve—
A cinnamon moon is rising.

Shall I set the plum-baited trap
(a way to catch fairies)
Or paint the tree boles with fermenting
sugar?
(a way to catch moths)

On other summer nights than this,
Cecropias come beneath the sycamores.
Stay. What rumor through the weaving
air?
That magic ferns unfurl their seeds.
There is hospitality in Lob's garden.
And fairies ride their velutinous steeds,
The mullein leaves, to a birthday party

For him who wildly wandered
Eating locusts and honey.

A Petrel in the Poet's Breast

ALLYN WOOD

A petrel in the poet's breast
Beats up and down, up and down
Upon a sea seldom at rest.

Sometimes it seems the bird must drown
Down there in the breast alone,
A thing mysterious not his own;

And yet it is a kindred thing
That, if the poet drown, will lift
Him on the vision of a wing.