

1944

Background

Joseph Hopkins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq>

Recommended Citation

Hopkins, Joseph. "Background." *New Mexico Quarterly* 14, 4 (1944). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol14/iss4/22>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by the University of New Mexico Press at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Quarterly* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

TWO POEMS

BUS STOP, WARTIME

The buses are an unpleasant proposition
 Leave me with an altered disposition.
 Each a.m. brings the fearful debate
 Walk?—run the block! Or . . . wait?
 A hopeless kind of decision
 The bus speeds by with precision.

Walk—run—or skip
 Hate-filled, casual, flip
 Tears blind your eye. Halt, villain!
 The bus speeds by.

On certain mornings in the falling rain
 I am reminded of a childhood game—
 Catch me if you can!

(Inside)

The gas-fumed, swaying aisle
 Hang, hang, and smile.
 Cockeyed, experienced-eyed girls
 Lunatics, and dissipated churls
 Meet the warlike people!
 You're close to the pulse of the people
 (A doctor could make money here).
 She's wearing a girdle.
 Red light. The people gather
 like a moment in political history
 to surge forward. No one hurt.

BACKGROUND

regards the winking mirror
 thinks name's jack jones
 greets all with hi-hello

says her name easily
drinks a beer makes a play
works the same 8-hour day
cuts with a dull-edged knife
the reoccurring pattern of
anybody's life.
beneath it all, the dipping
of the ladle,
persists feeling of change
permanent, fatal.

JOSEPH HOPKINS

CLEANING OUT A SPRING

*Very near here
as a boy live never
failing water I
remember gushed.

Poke your clumsy shovel into the muck,
Scrape filth with stiff sweeps to a heap,
Slash gravel, lay open clay and loam,
Cleanse the basin clean to the blank stone.

And wait.

Still we have not unstoppered that conduit.

Wait.

Only a sweat prickles the bank.

Oh am I too late to unbury the precious body
Of that pulse, unsilt that ancient artery, letting
Its life flush from the past, restoring its throat
To sing, resurrecting spasm and flourish?

Wait!

The turbid seep begins to stir. A clearness,
Look! like storm-pallid sunshine, ribbons through.