

The Orchid Grower

(Clinton F. Larson, 1919-94)

Patricia Gunter Karamesines

Clinton F. Larson's use of the "baroque style," a style he said he intended to "reveal the sinew of intellectual accuracy and proportion, besides spiritual elevation," imbued his poetry with a level of difficulty that perhaps placed his meanings beyond the reach of general audiences. Yet as a BYU professor he influenced many who count him as the spiritual father of their literary strivings, the author of this poem among them.

He sought to grow rare orchids up bright air
On theory they were closer to the sun.
Such trailing gardens of the blue compare
To virga with refractions overrun.
And since these curious blossoms manifest
Some edgeless artifice their vines conceal,
All fanciers must their clayey stuff divest
To see what Sol his tropic buds congeal.
His mazes trellis on the light's pure ease,
Where petals, nearly colorless from glare,
Distill all hours estranged eternities
That tease the tethered eye's myopic stare.
Such speeches of flower to heaven's plots aspire,
Bind root twixt worlds and hang exotic fire.

PATRICIA GUNTER KARAMESINES lives with her husband Mark and three children in Payson, Utah. She has published poetry and essays in a number of periodicals. She has also published a folk-mystery novel, *The Pictograph Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).