

LOS PAISES DEL SOL DILATAN EL ALMA

THE LAND OF
SUNSHINE
& OUT WEST



A CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY
OF EIGHTY POEMS

SELECTED FROM THE TWO JOURNALS

1894-1917

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TEXT/TECH JOURNALS

Editor's Note

This anthology is a critical selection, not a claim to a permanent canon. I favored poems whose language remains active on the page: poems with pressure in their rhythms, precision in their images, convincing dramatic voices, or forms that do more than carry regional description. Historical importance mattered, but reputation alone did not guarantee inclusion.

The selection also tries to show the magazines' breadth. Landscape lyric and frontier ballad appear beside devotional, comic, civic, borderlands, Indigenous-mediated, and early modernist work. Some poems participate in the settler-colonial and racial vocabularies of their period. Their craft can be recognized without treating those vocabularies as neutral; individual editorial notes indicate where that tension is central.

Texts follow the corrected issue-level reading editions. Original lineation, stanza spacing, signatures, and meaningful indentation are retained. When a long poetic line exceeds the measure, its continuation is set with a hanging indent so that typographic wrapping cannot be mistaken for a new verse line. Titles and source lines link to the corresponding reading-edition PDFs.

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The Old Mestizo

by Charles F. Lummis

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 2, No. 3, February 1895; frontispiece; physical source PDF p. 230

Editorial note. *Its compact portraiture avoids mere local-color display: voice, age, labor, and cultural displacement are held in a few sharply observed details.*

Todos dicen que soy un viejo,

Yo no sé en que se puede fundar.

Old Folk-Song.

God give you good evening, paisano and yet unknowing
This land that you were born in, your land that has ceased to be!
Where is it gone—come tell us, you who have seen its going—
That slow, good, patriarchal world that was by the Western Sea?

Where? Quien sabe? But somewhere gone, and beyond our sifting;
Lost as the years behind you and the faces long unseen.
Under your feet you felt it—the very landscape shifting,
Ever the Olden withering, ever the New grown green.

Let, if he will, disprize you, the lofty latter comer
(Neither will learn from the other the thing that God knows best).
He, so much the wiser—shall he in his hundredth summer
Turn more steady and even-eyed his face to the shadowy west?

San Juan's Day at Dolores

by Charles F. Lummis

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 1895, p. 2; source PDF pp. 18-19

Editorial note. *I chose this for its quick dramatic movement and its ability to make ceremony audible through cadence rather than explanatory scenery.*

Ay! Never was fiesta fair as good San Juan's today—
A thousand souls at mass this morn, and what a glory when
They ran the chicken-races! How Felipe swept away
The squawking prize—first cavalier among a hundred men!

How like a rock from off the cliff he thundered down the plain!
And how the chase behind him roared in a tumultuous flood!
And how he beat the grapplers off, with feathered blows amain!
And how his white teeth laughed thro' bronze besplashed with manly blood!

Ah, tall Felipe of my soul—Felipe of the vow!—
The princeliest and proudest and the bravest everywhere!
There in Don Pedro's portico they make the baile now—
Ay! how my heart is dancing, for Felipe will be there!

The candles, how they flutter on the snowy-whitened wall—
Coquetting with the shadows in the rafters dark above!
And yonder hobbles Crooked Juan, best musico of all;
And old Jose, with his guitar that knows the songs of love.
And now they come by twos and fours along the darkening street—
The señoritas all in white; in decent black, the men.
Ah, what a pretty, when with weaving arms and twinkling feet
We'll swing the sinuous cuna down the porch and back again!

And now the music kindles, and the 'dobe floor's awake
To pulse with eager feet—and still Felipe no 'st' aqui!
Ungrateful!—And I sit me here a laughed-at for his sake
Who swore to waltz the cradle-waltz with me—with none but me!

Ay, Holiest Mother! Here! With her?—Perdita on his arm!
So, perjurer and unashamed, ye know me? Stand apart!
Tu, little fool, run blameless, who couldst not withstand his charm.
But he—I love him—love him—and with this I claim his heart!

Give Me the Desert

by Joaquin Miller

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 1895, p. 103; source PDF p. 178

Editorial note. *Miller's grand manner is best when matched by an austere subject. The repetitions gather force, and the desert resists becoming mere backdrop.*

And oh, the music of this world—
That sweetest music, of mute lips:
White ships with canvas ever furled;
Proud, silent, stately, peopled ships
That wait, wait winds that never come—
Forever breathless, ever dumb!

And oh, the pathos of the path
By hermit hut on mountain chine!
The drama of that hermit hath
Such music as the mountain pine.
But where the master, minstrel where
To strike the hermit's harp of air?

Give me the desert! I should trust
Nor sea nor ship nor mountain chine.
Nude nature, ashen, prone in dust;
So like this bittered life of mine.
Give me the desert, emptied quite
Of all that maketh man's delight.

The desert! dust, bone, stone for me,
And there, companioned but by Him
Behold my faith shall grow a tree
So bright all others shall grow dim;
So tall no serpent eye can sight;
So green no slander tongue can blight.

The Hights, Oakland, June 3, '95.

It Is Good to Be Alive

by Charlotte Perkins Stetson

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 1895, p. 116; source PDF p. 192

Editorial note. *The poem's exhilaration is argumentative rather than merely cheerful. Its plain diction and forward rhythm turn vitality into a social claim.*

It is good to be alive when the trees shine green
And the steep red hills stand up against the sky;
Big sky, blue sky, with flying clouds between—
It is good to be alive and see the clouds drive by.

It is good to be alive when the strong winds blow,
The strong sweet winds blowing straight off the sea,
Great sea, green sea, with swinging ebb and flow—
It is good to be alive and see the waves roll free.

Death Valley

by Eleanor F. Lewis

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 3, No. 6, November 1895, p. 261; source PDF p. 394

Editorial note. *Lewis avoids spectacular excess. Heat, silence, animals, and the unburied dead accumulate into a controlled and morally charged landscape.*

It is a space of silence, strange and deep;
The sun-burnt mountains, near its ashen side,
Look down impassive on its death-like sleep.
Under its "skeleton plant" the rattlers glide,
Among its painted rocks the lizards creep.
Across the brazen madness of the sky
A flock of wild geese wing their faltering way,
With weary pinions, and with echoing cry.
Below, in desert sands that shine and shift,
Lie the unburied dead; the heat-waves drift
Over the loneliness of graves; by torrid day
Or torrid night, breathless and gleaming, lie
Its barren reaches where no shadows hide;
And over all, its silence, strange and deep.

Los Angeles.

California

by Grace Ellery Channing

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 4, No. 1, December 1895, p. 18; source PDF p. 33

Editorial note. Channing's poem earns its public scale through controlled imagery and cadence. It is regional praise with enough formal intelligence to exceed booster verse.

Quick birds pour out the exulting strain;
The sun was ne'er so bold;
Spring lays a green upon the plain,
And summer makes it gold;
When Earth hath all it can contain,
What joy more can Earth hold?

Pasadena.

California Car Windows

by Charlotte Perkins Stetson

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 4, No. 2, January 1896, p. 59; source PDF p. 104

Editorial note. *Gilman compresses migration, climate, and spectatorship into a brisk travel lyric. The passing view becomes a test of how quickly a new region is consumed.*

Lark-songs ringing to heaven—
Earth-light clear as the sky—
Air like the breath of a greenhouse
With the greenhouse roof on high.

Flowers to see till you're weary—
To travel in hours and hours—
Ranches of gold and purple—
Counties covered with flowers!

A rainbow, a running rainbow,
That flies at our side for hours!
A ribbon, a brodered ribbon,
A rainbow ribbon of flowers!

Hull House, Chicago.

Wachita

by John Vance Cheney

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 4, No. 2, January 1896, p. 59; source PDF p. 104

Editorial note. *The poem turns legend into a spare narrative song. Its restraint, recurring sounds, and clear emotional arc give it unusual staying power.*

Here's to Wachita, out in the West,
Bright as the poppy-blow at her breast;

Here's to the girl of the gold sunshine,
Up in the hills where the winds are wine;

Here's to gold-robin, out in the nest
Molded and warmed by her own bird-breast:

Over the Rockies, hey, heart, we go
Where the great stars drop, and the poppies blow.

Newberry Library, Chicago.

A Dance in Old San Diego

by John Vance Cheney

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 4, No. 5, April 1896, p. 203; source PDF p. 344

Editorial note. *This is one of the magazines' most graceful historical lyrics: light on its feet, musically exact, and alert to the fragility of its reconstructed past.*

It is on the bough-roofed dancing-floor,
'Way back in the brave days now no more:
It is among the cavaliers,
A-tripping with the lissome dears
That bared those famous ankles, down
In gay old San Diego town.

The viols strike up and the guitar,
And yonder, as comes the evening star,
Her piney skirt a little lifted—
A curling cloud afloat, wind-shifted,
Blown now to left, and now to right—
Glides Josefita into sight.

Yon rider, he to every dear
The boldest, gayest cavalier,
Is rocking, rocking in his seat,
Keeping the motion of her feet.
He turns his horse, he runs him round
The circuit of the dancing-ground.
The earth is heaving like the ocean,
Witched with Josefita's motion.

He comes again, he comes a-riding,
And comes, too, Josefita gliding.
The bamba! brighter shines the star;
He claps his spurs, he leaps the bar.
Dancing! Sweet heavens, look on her now!
Not so light are the leaves that dance on the bough.
The brimming glass upon her head
Dreams like a lily upon its bed!
See! something she whispers in his ear
That you would give the world to hear.
Aha! somebody will go down,
To-night, in San Diego town;
But where's the shape that he could fear,
He, Josefita's cavalier!

Newberry Library, Chicago.

Charlie Graham

by Eugene Manlove Rhodes

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 4, No. 5, April 1896, p. 227; source PDF p. 368

Editorial note. Rhodes's first credited publication already has the virtues of his later fiction: oral ease, exact range knowledge, humor, and moral pressure.

From the cliff that frowns beside
Amargosa's bitter tide,
Charlie Graham's signal light
O'er the desert parched and brown
Flamed its nightly message down, "All is well! good night! good night!"

From the shadows gaunt and gray
Charlie Graham, where he lay
Dying, by his beacon light,
With his latest strength and breath
Flashed across the Valley of Death—"All is well! good night! good night!"

* * *

Where the farther slopes are dark
One is watching for the spark
That shall kindle on the height;
Shows her child the sudden star
Where love's message gleams afar—"All is well! good night! good night!"

Low she croons a cradle song, "Sleep, my baby, not for long
Shall the mine from home delay him."
Sleep, poor mother! dream and rest,
With your babe upon your breast—
All is well with Charlie Graham!

Engle, N. M.

Coyote

by John Vance Cheney

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 5, No. 3, August 1896, p. 95; source PDF p. 152

Editorial note. *The poem's compact animal presence and dry tonal control distinguish it from more decorative nature verse in the magazines.*

A dim, pale shape moves over the mesa,
Roves with the night wind up and down;
The light-foot ghost, the wild dog of the shadow,
Howls on the levels beyond the town;
Cry, cry, Coyote!

No fellow has he, with leg or wing,
No mate has that spectre, in fur or feather;
In the sagebrush is whelped a fuzzy thing,
And mischief itself helps lick him together—
Up, cub Coyote!

The winds come blowing over and over,
The great white moon is looking down;
In the throat of the dog is devils' laughter;
Is he baying the moon or baying the town?
Howl, howl, Coyote!

The shadow-dog on the windy mesa,
He sits and he laughs in his devil's way;
Look to the roost and lock up the lambkin—
A deal may happen 'twixt now and the day:
Ha, ha! Coyote!

Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill.

Daybreak in Ventura

by Sharlot M. Hall

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 6, No. 1, December 1896, p. 27; source PDF p. 44

Editorial note. Hall catches a whole coast at the instant of waking. The poem is concise, sensuous, and unusually disciplined in its handling of light.

The sunrise drifted in across the sea,
And lay in rosy light upon the palms
That stretched their green leaf-fingers down to me
Like beggars asking alms.

I tossed them each a coin of memory
From out her garnered store;
Some pictured dream of olden Araby
Or Tunis' white-walled shore.

The dawn-wind waked the pepper trees again,
And whispering music made;
And on the Mission's Moorish turrets then
The early sunbeams played.

Along the wharf the little wavelets sped,
Playing at hide and seek;
And on the sea-line Anacapa's head
Rose up all bare and bleak.

Behind the sleeping town the sea-mist's lace
Veiled hill and mountain dome;
I heard a step, a word, and raised my face—
Morning and Love had come.

Prescott, Arizona.

Memory

by Grace Ellery Channing

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 1897, p. 43; source PDF p. 86

Editorial note. *This lyric is quieter and more inward than most magazine verse of its moment. Its emotional restraint gives the remembered scene genuine depth.*

I watched the almond blossoms blow
And whiten the warm earth below:
“Even so,” I said, “they used to fall—
The slow, white petals of the snow,
In my first, earliest home of all,
And I, a child, would watch them fall
In my New England, long ago.”

I watched the petals of the snow
Cover New England's breast; and “So,”
I said, “I've seen my almond trees
Snow down their blossoms when the breeze
Blew soft as breezes used to blow
In that sweet season long ago,
In the dear Land of Sundown Seas.”

A dweller in a distant star,
Watching the worlds fade and arise
Down the long vistas of the skies,
Shall I still yearn with eyes afar
And mists of memory in those eyes—
“In my old earthly paradise
Where all my lost beloveds are,
Even so I watched earth's fireflies.”

Pasadena, Cal.

Their Grass

by Charlotte Perkins Stetson

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 1897, p. 64; source PDF p. 107

Editorial note. *The wit is exact and unsentimental. A small botanical contrast becomes a compact satire on inherited standards and regional self-confidence.*

They say we have no grass!
To hear them talk
You'd think that grass could walk,
And was their bosom friend—no day to pass
Between them and their grass!

No grass! they say, who live
Where hot bricks give
The hot stones all their heat and back again—
A baking hell for men.

“Oh but,” they haste to say, “we have our parks”—
Where fat policemen check the children's larks,
And sign to sign repeats as in a glass
“Keep off the grass!”

“We have our city parks and grass, you see—”
Well—so have we!

But 'tis the country that they sing of most. “Alas!”
They sing, “for our wide acres of soft grass!
To please us living and to hide us dead!”—

You'd think Walt Whitman's first was all they read!
You'd think they all went out upon the quiet
Nebuchadnezzar to outdo in diet!

You'd think they found no other green thing fair—
Even its seed an honor in their hair!
You'd think they had this bliss the whole year 'round—
Evergreen grass!—and we, plowed ground!

But come now! How does earth's pet plumage grow
Under your snow?
Is your beloved grass as softly nice
When packed in ice?
For six long months you live beneath a blight—
No grass in sight.

You bear up bravely. And not only that,
But leave your grass and travel. And thereat

We marvel deeply, with slow Western mind,
Wondering within us what these people find
Among our common oranges and palms
To tear them from the well-remembered charms
Of their dear vegetable. But still they come,
Frost-bitten invalids, to our bright home,
And chide our grasslessness, until we say—
But if you hate it so—why come? why stay?
Just go away!
Go to—your grass!

Near the Carraras

by Grace Ellery Channing

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 8, No. 3, February 1898, p. 123; source PDF p. 206

Editorial note. *The poem's cosmopolitan reach matters, but I chose it chiefly for the poise with which landscape, art, and mortality enter the same frame.*

The violets of mountains! Such they seem;
Pale purple dreams within a purple dream;
Faint, fading noonday blossoms; or again,
Wet violets after rain,
Blooming above the stone pine's lofty stem
Whose forest is but greensward unto them;
And the Ligurian sea breaks here alone
To feed the roots of the eternal stone.

A few years past I thought our earth had not
On her broad breast (that breast so thickly sown
With graves of hearts) a more memorial spot,
Remembering how these purple waters bore
The Prince of Song and laid him on the shore
With sob of wave and the slow breakers' moan.
I deemed the marbles—white when Angelo came
Seeking his prisoned Titans—caught the flame
Out of that Heart of hearts laid at their feet,
And blossomed into all these purples sweet,
To be his deathless chaplet evermore.

God is our witness—if a God there be—
How he hath fashioned us all mystery.
Not less today is Shelley's song to me,
But Life, the Poem, is more than poesy.
Far have I fared, much seen with these eyes' sight;
The white Alps flashing back their awful light,—
Soft shadow of the Apennines' piney light,
And skiey needle of the Dolomite.
How little of itself the eye can see!
How less than nothing all these things can be!
For I have learned, unto each human heart
How greater than the whole its own small part,
Its little human portion, though that be
Sorrow or joy, passion or misery.
Have I not learned? who look with longing eyes
Across two worlds to where their summits rise—
The Mother Mountains* of the golden West;

Earth's highest heights, dearest and loveliest,—
The Mother Mountains, in whose shadows deep
No poet, but a mother, fell asleep.

The Sierra Madre.

Night on the Range

by John Vance Cheney

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 8, No. 5, April 1898, p. 205; source PDF p. 356

Editorial note. *Cheney makes stillness active. Sparse sound and distance create a night scene whose emotional force comes from what remains unsaid.*

'T is ho, 't is ho, for the wind and the rain!
The trees on the ridges hiss and strain,
Over the heads of the cattle
The stript limbs whistle, they wrench and rattle.
Hark, hark!
The thin wolves bark,
They whimper and whine
For the mild moonshine,
They snap at the flapping wings o' the dark.

It's ho for the bleat of the wedging sheep,
For the shout of the owl on the howling steep;
The hale old gods of the hill,
They clash the tankards, they take their fill.
Howl, howl!
The great gray owl,
His eyeballs blaze
Down the windy ways;
Scamper, wolves, by the eyes of the owl!

Newberry Library, Chicago.

The Mother Mountain

by Julia Boynton Green

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 9, No. 3, August 1898, p. 138; source PDF p. 207

Editorial note. *Green makes mountain weather maternal without softening its scale. The poem's personification is sustained by exact seasonal observation.*

She is well named the Madre: at her feet,
Upon her skirts and in her lap they lie
Her helpless ones, she hears their hunger-cry,
And in her breast are welling, full and sweet,
The vital streams those thirsty lips to meet.

The California Year

by Ina Coolbrith

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 1, December 1898, p. 3; source PDF p. 32

Editorial note. Coolbrith gives the seasonal calendar both elegance and local exactness. The lyric moves confidently between civic poem and intimate observation.

All the long summer hill and valley wide,
Crimson with roses, gold with poppies glow;
But when the days draw near the Christmas-tide
They clothe themselves with lilies, as with snow.

San Francisco, Cal.

In the Padre's Garden

by Edwin Markham

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 1899, p. 57; source PDF p. 126

Editorial note. Markham's best effects here are tonal. The garden's apparent peace is complicated by history, labor, and the uneasy persistence of the mission past.

A hurrying whirl of eager sound—
And now a something throbs around
The flowers that watch the fountain. Look!
It touched the rose, the green leaves shook,
I think, and yet so lightly tost
That not a spark of dew was lost.

Tell me, O Rose, what thing it is
That now appears, now vanishes?
Surely it took its fire-green hue
From daybreaks that it glittered through;
Quick, for this sparkle of the dawn
Glints through the garden and is gone.

What was the message, Rose, what word;
Delight foretold, or hope deferred?

Oakland, Cal., Nov., 1898.

By Moonlight

by Nora May French

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 5, April 1899; magazine p. 229; source PDF p. 384

Editorial note. French's gift for emotional compression is already visible: a few precise shifts in light carry the entire burden of longing.

Is this the world I know? Beneath the Day
It glowed with golden heat, with vivid hues;
Mountains and sky that merged in melting blues,
And hazy air that shimmered far away.

This world is white, 'neath amethystine sky,
White with pale brightness, luminously chill;
The moon reigns queen, but faintly shining still
The dim stars glimmer o'er the hill-tops high.

Here, where long grasses touch across the stream
That threads with babbling laugh its narrow way,
My face turned upward to pale gleams, that stray
Through whispering willow boughs... I dream and dream.

La Canada, Cal

By the Sea

by Yone Noguchi

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 5, April 1899; magazine p. 240; source PDF p. 395

Editorial note. *Noguchi's compressed image and suspended syntax bring a different modernist pressure into the magazine. The poem is small, strange, and exact.*

The moon came sadly out of a hill;
I from the city silently stole:

Many an hour had passed since I shook
The sorrow-thoughts to the wind.

The moon's beautiful cold steps were my steps,
In silvery peace, apart from paths of men:
The dewy mysterious beams, as love-whispers,
Stole into my hair which zephyr stirred
As cloud; I was as in the mazy sweet,
I knew not why. I smiled unto the moon;
The moon understood me: the silence was profound,
On the sea-face unearthly dreams
And greenly melancholic autumn voicelessly stepped:
The moon threw a large soft smile over the sea.
The sea was verily proud to sing:

The sea's passions wooing the shore,
Taught me the secret how to win woman;
But the love of woman was left far behind.

I slowly thought how beautiful to sink
Into the moon-sea and to rise
With worshipping face unto the moon:

A sea-bird suddenly sprung from the wave,
Scattering sea-pearls with lavish wing.

I sat me down on the shore,
With tragic eyes upon the stars,
With my ears unto the sea;
The silence of the stars was as great
As the voice of the sea; it is so
Since the First Day, that the stars
Keep the silence and the sea the voice.

I walked with the moon, by the sea,
Till the dawn: what I thought was that
The moon thought, I knew not what.

San Francisco, Cal.

Little Light Moccasin

by Mary Austin

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 5, April 1899; magazine p. 261; source PDF p. 416

Editorial note. *Austin's lyric has genuine delicacy of address and object. Its period primitivism must be recognized, but the formal tenderness is difficult to dismiss.*

Little Light Moccasin swings in her basket,
Woven of willow and sinew of deer,
Rocked by the breezes and nursed by the pine tree,
Wonderful things are to see and to hear.

Wide is the sky from the top of the mountain,
Sheltered the cañon from glare of the sun,
Ere she is wearied of watching their changes,
Little Light Moccasin finds she can run.

Brown is her skin as the bark of the birches,
Light are her feet as the feet of a fawn,
Shy little daughter of mesa and mountain,
Little Light Moccasin wakes with the dawn.

All of the treasures of summer-time cañons,
These are the playthings the little maid knows,
Berry time, blossom time, bird calls, and butterflies,
Columbine trumpets, and sweet brier rose.

Bear meat and deer meat, with pine-nuts and acorns,
Handsful of honey-comb dripping with sweet,
Tubers of joint grass the meadows provide her,
Bulbs of wild hyacinth, pleasant to eat.
Holes in the rocks for the wild bee's hiving,
Leaping of trout in the sun-dappled pool,
Down dropping cones of the broad spreading pine tree,
Piping of quail when the mornings are cool.
When on the mesa the meadow lark stooping,
Folds her brown wings on the safe hidden nest,
Hearing the hoot of the owlets at twilight,
Little Light Moccasin goes to her rest.
Counting the stars through the chinks of the wickiup
Watching the flames of the campfire leap,
Hearing the songs of the wind in the pine tree,
Little Light Moccasin falls fast asleep.

Independence, Cal.

The Coming of the Silence

by Blanche Trask

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 10, No. 6, May 1899; magazine p. 309; source PDF p. 500

Editorial note. *Trask's island solitude becomes an acoustic event. The poem moves convincingly from outer stillness to inward apprehension.*

(After The Summer Tide.)

She doth not walk the village street,
Lest ways too smooth should harm her feet;

She waits until the tide is low,
And there 'mid old rocks, see her go

(The rocks which long must buried be,
Till winter's low tide sets them free).

She loiters on the long wet sand,
A trailing seaweed in her hand.

The gulls which loud, discordant cry,
Fly seaward as she passes by;

The fog which long for her doth wait
Enthrones and mantles her in state.

The winds that pray her slaves to be,
As scepters holds she o'er the sea.

The low, low tides yet lower creep,
'Till all the world is lost in sleep.

* * *

The mantled fog she throws aside,
The sceptred wind she scatters wide,

And thro' long days she dares to be
What she meant—eternity.

Avalon, Catalina.

Leaves from the Popol-Vuh

by John Vance Cheney

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 1899; magazine p. 3; source PDF p. 20

Editorial note. *The adaptations are formally lucid and haunting. They also preserve the period's mediation of Indigenous texts, a history the anthology should make visible rather than conceal.*

The First Dawn

He that engenders had called forth the world;
The mist, ingathered from the vast of space,
Together drawn, had fashioned a great face
Of vale and mountain, tree, and river curled.
Of all the leaves and flowers was none unfurled,
No bird had song, no voice the giant race
Of beasts; for darkness held her ancient place,
The day-god's bolt glowed in his hand, unhurled.
But eastward, now, dream colors, faint and far
Foretold to those first lives the end of night,
And from the sea and land all rose as one;
The mother-dark, with neither moon nor star,
Was thick with wild eyes looking for the light,
And throats of thunder for the coming sun.

The Death of the Fathers Four

Strange tremor seized and shook them, hoar and old,
The Fathers Four, the Sires, of mighty frame;
Down on their clear gods'-eyes a dimness came,
As when the rain-wings on the mountains fold.
While to their hearts crept up the numbing cold,
And flickered, as in wind, the spirit's flame.
Calling their sons and weeping wives by name,
Thus said they, of all men the font and mold:—
"Once more the Shadow Chief across the sky
We follow, with Him who brought us we return;
'Twill fall to you as first to us it fell.
The days and nights come hither, and go by,
The fire within will sink, no longer burn
But, as with us, with you it shall be well."

The folklore of the ancient Central Americans.

Newberry Library, Chicago.

Summer Dusk

by Nora May French

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 11, No. 4, September 1899; magazine p. 195; source PDF p. 324

Editorial note. *The poem is almost weightless, yet each image arrives at exactly the right interval. Its music depends on restraint rather than ornament.*

Earth's parched lips
Drink coolness once again, for daylight dies,
The young moon dips
A threaded gleam where sunset languid lies,
And slowly twilight opens starry eyes.

Low in the west
Day's fading embers cast a last faint glow
Behind a crest
Where curving hills on primrose paleness show
Sharp-lined in jet. Dusk stillness broods below.

A first long sigh
Stirs from the broad and dew-wet breast of night;
The leaves reply
With soft small rustlings; moths take ghostly flight,
And waking crickets shrill long-drawn delight.

La Canada, Cal

A Blossom of Barren Lands

by Eugene Manlove Rhodes

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 11, No. 5, October 1899; magazine p. 251; source PDF p. 420

Editorial note. *The central contrast is familiar, but Rhodes renews it through concrete desert botany and an unforced lyric tenderness.*

A flower grows in old Cathay
Whose blood-red petals ease our woes,
It lulls our haunting cares away
And gives our weariness repose.
When tortured heart and fevered brain
Long for black slumber, dull and deep,
The poppy's charm can ease our pain
And bid us — sleep.

And subtler Egypt's fabled bloom,
The lotus of forgetful breath,
Brings to remorse oblivion's doom
And gives the shameful past to death.
When bitter memories, fierce and fell,
Scourge our dark hearts with wild regret—
O for the flower whose languorous spell
Bids us — forget!

But dearer, more divinely born,
Amid the deserts desolate,
The yucca blooms above its thorn
Triumphant o'er an evil fate.
Brave, stainless, waxen miracle,
So may we with our fortunes cope,
Who in life's burning deserts dwell,
You bid us — hope!

Engle, N. M.

The Desert Queen

by Sharlot M. Hall

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 12, No. 2, January 1900; magazine p. 103; source PDF p. 166

Editorial note. *Hall's narrative control is at its best here. Character, danger, and desert scale emerge through action instead of scenic padding.*

I was Zenobia in the olden time
And ruled the desert from Palmyra's walls.
I flung my challenge to imperial Rome
So far that still across the years it calls
In proud defiance; but my halls are dust,
The jackal suns him at the temple door,
The wind-blown sands hide street and corridor
And heap the palace floor.

Forgotten is Aurelian and his might.

Above his grave the beggar children smile,
And I who ruled the East in other days
Am mistress now of many a Western mile;
Crowned with a coronal of ruby flowers,
And armed and guarded with a thousand spears,
I dream until the mirage re-creates
In shimmering light the splendor of past years.

Prescott, Ariz.

The Mission Graves

by Nora May French

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 12, No. 2, January 1900; magazine p. 71; source PDF p. 134

Editorial note. French turns a familiar California subject away from pageantry and toward silence, erasure, and the moral pressure of the buried.

Nature remembers with her fitful tears:

The wooden slabs lose name and date with years,
And crumble, rotten.

The Father, there,
One Saint's Day from an evening mass returning,
Set for each unknown soul a candle burning,
With muttered prayer.

Glow-worms, they shone—
Strange, spectral-gleaming through the lonely dark.
Whose nameless dust did each faint glimmer mark?
Skull, crumbling bone?

Ah! the Dead knew—
Each to his taper drawn through voids of space,
Each on his grave (eyes, in a formless face!)
Watched—the night through.

La Cañada, Cal.

The Feet of the Young Men

by Mary Austin

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 12, No. 3, February 1900; magazine p. 139; source PDF p. 242

Editorial note. *The chant-like repetitions generate real propulsion. The poem makes movement, youth, danger, and communal expectation inseparable.*

Where the nations sat in council, scarlet robe and purple hem,
From the four-went ways of travel came the poor of God to them;
Came the blind of right and reason, came the halt of rule and law,
Came the feeble, feckless peoples, crying dole of all they saw.

“Lo, to you God giveth bread,
Break a crust to us,” they said,
“We have eaten fruit of bondage to the core.”
“Take, and eat,” the nations cried,
“Here is freedom;” but they lied,
And the young men's feet were at the door.

“All we know of truth to God-ward, all we can of love beside,
All our good sword arm hath won us,” quoth the nations; but they lied,
Bid them wait upon the scarlet, puppet to the purple hem—
As they dealt with hungry peoples, so the Lord hath dealt with them.

They have felt the threshing flail,
They have passed beyond the pale,
To the limbo of lost empires, gone before,
They are stricken in their pride,
They are dead, because they lied—
And the young men's feet are at the door.

Though your word shall run with power, and your arm reach overseas,
Yet the questing bolt shall find you if you keep not faith with these;
Lest you be at one with Egypt, lest you lie as Rome lies now
In the potter's field of empires, mint and cumin, keep the vow.

Keep the truth your fathers made,
Lest your children grow afraid,
Lest you hear the captive's mothers weeping sore—
There is little worth beside—
They are dead because they lied,
And the young men's feet are at the door.

Acts V, 9.

The Old Garden

by Nora May French

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 12, No. 4, March 1900; magazine p. 205; source PDF p. 370

Editorial note. *The garden is rendered as a structure of memory rather than decoration. Decay, enclosure, and desire are held in a finely controlled lyric space.*

The garden of Dolores! Here she walked,
When, fretted on the twilight's pallid space,
The trees were black and delicate as lace,
And palms were etchings, sharp and slender-stalked.

Now riots summer in these magic closes,
And life is rounded in the frailest spray.

Dolores, cold, and buried yesterday,
Is it thy spirit here among the roses?

For restless murmurs thro' the garden seek,
To shadowy caress the flowers unclose,
A blossom in the dark magnolia glows—
Or leaning pallor of an oval cheek?

Upon the dark is borne a strange long cry;
And one quick sob of wind the air has moved.
Ah! perfect garden that Dolores loved,
Her soul has called to thee... a last good-by.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Wind Song

by Sharlot M. Hall

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 1901; magazine p. 3; source PDF p. 20

Editorial note. *The poem is all motion and cadence. Its repeated pressures reproduce wind without sacrificing clarity of image.*

One day upon the wings of air
My soul shall get him forth,
And nothing know I whence or where,
'To east or south or north;
And little care I through what ways
This soul of mine shall ride,
Or if the call be soon or late,
At morn or eventide.

But I would go when strong winds blow
Full-throated down the heaven,
And on the blast like pennants cast
The wild black hawks are driven.

Oh, kith and kin are they to me,
Wild-winged my soul shall pass
With them, as their own shadows drive
Across the wind-swept grass.

Free winds that wander up and down
The weary hills of earth,
What call like yours can sorrow drown,
Or touch her seas to mirth?

Strong winds that were tempestuous souls,
O brothers, bend and wait;
Take up my longings on your wings
And I shall conquer fate!

Prescott, Ariz.

On the Trail of Death

by Sharlot M. Hall

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 14, No. 2, February 1901; magazine pp. 95-96; source PDF pp. 138-139

Editorial note. *This is a severe narrative poem whose power comes from pacing. Hall knows when to withhold description and when to make one detail decisive.*

We rode from daybreak; white and hot,
The sun beat like a hammer-stroke
On molten iron; the blistered dust
Rose up in clouds to sear and choke;
But on we rode, gray-white as ghosts,
Bepowdered with that bitter snow,
The stinging breath of alkali
From the grim, crusted earth below.

Silent, our footsteps scarcely wrung
An echo from the sullen trail;
Silent, parched lip and stiffening tongue,
We watched the horses fall and fail:
Jack's first; he caught my stirrup strap;
God help me! but I shook him off;
Death had not diced for two that day
To meet him in that devil's trough.

I flung him back my dry canteen,
An ounce at most, weighed drop by drop
With life: he clutched it, drank, and laughed;
Hard, hideous, appeal to stop
The strongest heart; then turned and ran
With outflung arms, and mad eyes set,
Straight on where 'gainst the dun sky's rim
Green trees stood up, and cool and wet

Long silver waves broke on the sand.
The cursed mirage! that lures and taunts
The thirst-scourged lip and tortured sight
Like some lost hope that mocking haunts
A dying soul. I tried to call,
The dry words rattled in my throat;
And sun and sand and crouching sky—
God! How they seemed to glare and gloat!

Reeling, I caught the saddle-horn;
On, on; but now it seemed to be
The spring-house path, and at the well

My mother stood and beckoned me:
The bucket glistened; drip, drip, drip,
I heard the water fall and plash;
Then keen as hell the burning wind
Awoke me with its fiery lash.

On, on; what was that bleaching thing
Across the trail? I dared not look;
But on—blind, aimless, till the sun
Crept grudging past the hills and took
His curse from off the gasping land;
The blessed dusk! my gaunt horse raised
His head and neighed, and staggered on;
And I, with bleeding lips, half-crazed,

Laughed out; for just above us there,
Rock-caught, against a blackened ledge
A little pool; one last hard climb;
Full spent we fell upon its edge,—
One still forever; weak I lay
And drank; hot hands and temples laved:
Jack gone, alas! the horses dead;
But night and water; I was saved!

The old desert trail from Sonora to California.

Prescott, Ariz.

A Twilight Hill

by Mary Austin

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 14, No. 3, March 1901; magazine p. 181; source PDF p. 258

Editorial note. This is Austin at her most exact: spare desert color, measured silence, and no unnecessary explanation between landscape and feeling.

A grove I know, set circling like a crown,
Of slanting oaks; it overlooks a town,
And thence the hill front slopeth broadly down
And gives a prospect fair.
When days of spring draw lengthening to a close,
The while from room to room the housewife goes
With busy cares about the night's repose,
I love to linger there.

It is the season when the streamlets sing,
Sweet misty censers do the grape vines swing,
And at their thresholds birds are gossiping
While holds the lengthening light.
And here the blundering night-moth doth disclose
The scented hollow where the currant grows,
And there the musky bloom of gilia glows
Like nuns at prayer, milk-white.

Some beams still light the far, dark, tapered firs,
A quail belated to its covert whirrs
In nestling hollows where a warm wind stirs
The lupins everywhere.
The hill folk have no fear of such as I.
The questing night hawk hurtles dauntless by,
I hear the speckled owlets hoot, and spy
Their matings unaware.

While lowing upward from the winding creek
The warm, last-lighted slopes the cattle seek,
Up climbs the dark along the jacinth steep,
And every far hill glows
Blue with the blue of seas encompassing,
Divinely purpled to its outer ring,
In such uncounted hours remembering
The sea from which it rose.

Independence, Cal.

The Colorado River

by Sharlot M. Hall

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 14, No. 4, April 1901; magazine p. 275; source PDF p. 368

Editorial note. *The river's force is built through syntax and sound, not just adjectives. The poem sustains a large subject without losing physical immediacy.*

At High Water, June, 1900

Long, silent leagues of ever-shifting sand,
White-hot and shimmering to the distant hills
Where wheeling slow the whirlwind dips and fills,
Or beckons like some shadowy, giant hand;

Gray wisps of greasewood and mesquite that stand
In withered patches like an old man's beard,
Ragged and grizzled; nearer, dark and weird,
The river slips along the cringeing land,

Swift to possess and loath to give again;
Foam-ribbed and sullen, staggering with the weight
Of forests spoiled, he takes his price in full;

Stern toll for every drop to land and men—
In witness there—poor pawn of love or hate!—
Caught in a drift a grinning human skull.

The Burgher's Wife

by Mary Austin

Land of Sunshine, Vol. 15, No. 6, December 1901; magazine pp. 423–424; source PDF pp. 572–573

Editorial note. *The dramatic voice is unusually convincing, and the ballad form carries domestic endurance without reducing it to sentiment.*

(In the British Detention Camp.)

Outside, the guard goes heavily, the sun beats on the roof,
He hears the sick ones moaning but he holds his eyes aloof;
In heaven is only sun-glare, dust-devils on the veldt,
We could not pray the clouds up, however long we knelt.

There are women who are sullen, there are women who are wild,
And one perhaps is hopeful, but that one has no child;
Katrina raved when yesternoon they took her last away,
Annetje's went at candle light, and mine will go today.

And is it you, brave England, that holds us in the pen—
Making war on wives and children, since you cannot match our men?
Will you swallow up our nation, make our name as naught, you think?
By the living God of Dutchmen, you shall spew the broth you drink!

I had seven sons, how long ago! Seven and my good man,
And Greta—only woman-child that came to me and Jan—
Six strong sons of my body, and one that still was small;
They were stout for war or praying, and their country took them all—

The wolf, the kite, the river trench, by kopje and by veldt.
I did not weep, though all their wounds I in my body felt;
It was I that scoured their rifles—one had hardly done with play—
I did not weep to see them go, but I shall weep today.

And is it wise, Great England, to build your greatness so?
You that fatten on small peoples—though, God's faith, the meal is slow!—
Growing wider by the holdings of a simpler, feebler folk,
It is fatness where no strength is, and you too shall feel the yoke.

But once I wept for Wilhelm—he had his father's looks—
The day that he was turned sixteen he put away his books,
"Now, kiss me mother, let me go, for I am grown a man"—
And so I wept for Wilhelm, though I did not weep for Jan.

And for myself no whimper. I am past my bearing time,
But I weep to know my woman-child must die before her prime.
Is no coolness on the pillow for the tender, fevered head?
Is no comfort in the sickness but my tear, and captive's bread?

It is not for you, O England, to give me back my sons,
We have paid the tale twice over by the coughing, spitting guns;
But the small graves of the children, they are yawning in the sod—
Deep enough to gulf your glory—high to witness unto God.

Independence, Cal.

The California Poppy

by Joaquin Miller

Out West, Vol. 16, February 1902; magazine p. 211; physical source PDF p. 58

Editorial note. *The poem's public rhetoric is balanced by a memorable floral image and a deft sense of color moving across the landscape.*

The golden poppy is God's gold,
The gold that lifts, nor weighs us down,
The gold that knows no miser's hold,
The gold that banks not in the town,
But singing, laughing, freely spills
Its hoard far up the happy hills;
Far up, far down, on every turn,
What beggar has not gold to burn!

The Hights, Oakland, Cal.

A Ballade of Wild Bees

by Eugene Manlove Rhodes

Out West, Vol. 16, March 1902; magazine p. 322; physical source PDF p. 13

Editorial note. *The elaborate form never stiffens the poem. Refrain, humor, and close observation keep the ballade alive and surprising.*

Afar, in a dim and lonely land,
Where desert breezes swoon and die,
She dwells, and waves of drifting sand
In league-long silence 'round her lie;
She hears the wild bees humming by
In drowsy minor melodies;
She calls them friends—yet scarce knows why—
My Lady of the Honey Bees!

She loves at eventide to stand
And watch the sunset flame and die.
Shading her clear eyes with her hand
She marks her cheerful comrades fly
Athwart the golden glory nigh;
She hears the night winds in the trees;
She joys in God's fair earth and sky,
My Lady of the Honey Bees!

Dear, have you learned to understand
The wild bees' lore and mystery?
The love that makes all labor grand,
The grateful heart, the patient eye,
That from a barren land and dry
Can gather sweets and song—like these
Your wise wee kin, whose courage high
Is yours—my Queen of Honey Bees!

L'ENVOI

Brave heart! Too strong for moan or sigh,
You shame us in our slothful ease;
Sing on! The grudging fates defy,
And learn life's lesson—from the bees!

Tularosa, N. Mex.

The Cactus Hedge

by Ina Coolbrith

Out West, Vol. 17, October 1902; magazine p. 616; physical source PDF p. 51

Editorial note. *The poem is vivid, compressed, and formally clean. Its beauty depends on the cactus remaining defensive, difficult, and materially present.*

Sharp are the thorns of the cactus path—
Ay, Felipe!
But sharper still is the madre's wrath!
The cactus-hedge is a blossomed flame—
Red star-blooms of the heart untame.
Listen! I hear the mock-bird's song.
Felipe, Felipe,
The day is long,
Is long!

The doors are fast, and the gates are barred,
Ay, Felipe!
The sky with a thousand lamps is starred.
Under the rose at the vineyard edge,
But a step to the thick of the cactus-hedge!
Listen, the ring-dove's cooing sweet!
Felipe, Felipe,
The night is fleet,
Is fleet!

The old California vineyards were frequently hedged with the "prickly-pear" cactus. See page 427.

San Francisco, Cal.

Mañana

by Julia Boynton Green

Out West, Vol. 17, November 1902; magazine p. 883; physical source PDF p. 130

Editorial note. *The repeated temporal hesitation is both musical and psychological. What could have been a regional cliché becomes a subtle poem about desire deferred.*

Though with light laugh we quote your word,
O dark-eyed brothers of the South,
We should be meek, we too have erred,
Your phrase is often in our mouth,
"Mañana."

Mañana! ah, the opulent hour!
Enriched with all heroic deeds,
And clothed upon with all the power
Today refuses to our needs,
Mañana.

Tomorrow we will start the book,
Will pay the debt; reform our ways;
We will seek pardon for the look
The word that gloomed a dear one's days,
Mañana.

Tomorrow comes, and is today;
Old habit's strong; our funds are low;
The muse is shy; the friends away;
The voice still whispers, soothing, slow,
Mañana.

Redlands, Cal.

To a Child's Moccasin

by Hartley Alexander

Out West, Vol. 18, February 1903; magazine p. 197. The source leaf is absent from the bound scan; restored from the author's *The Mid Earth Life* (1907), pp. 64–66.

Editorial note. *The poem's ceremonial tenderness and careful object-centered imagery are formally impressive, even as its cultural framing requires historical caution.*

Looted from the body of an Indian child killed at Wounded Knee. 'Twas complained that Indian women—some were killed—fought with the braves; which, indeed, they did.

A wild mother's patterned fancy—white beads, green and blue,
With here, like heart-stained arrows, scarlet zigzagged through,
Thy lining furry rabbit, little shoe!
How joyously she wrought thee, the long blue sunny day,
On the wind-stroked grass of the prairie, 'neath the willows' shady sway,
Singing the old song mothers sing alway:

Chaske, my little Chaske, Chaske my brave to be!
Fleet shall he run as the stallion, stand tall as the tall pine-tree,
As the storm be mighty and valiant,—Chaske my chief to be!

Stringing the beads in patterns, zigzag red and blue;
Sewing with thread of tendon the furry edges true;
Singing the song of mothers the blue day through.

II.

A hill-slope, a desolation; yonder the cordoned crest
Of glinting gun and sabre,—here, like mole in nest,
Trapped in the hill-crest's hollow, the huntsmen's quest.

A solitude of heaven high and sunny still
Above a breadth of desert,—sudden the locust shrill
Of bullets, then death, and sudden the war-whoop's thrill.

And here a wild squaw-mother—something dead at the breast,
Something live at the shoulder, spitting lead with the best,—
Singing a song of wild heart's cradle-rest:

Death, ye have taught me to mother! Death, I will mother well!
With red, red blood I will nourish, I will lull with the rifle's spell!
For ye have taught me to suckle and I will suckle them well!

Only a wild squaw-mother, bullet-stung at the start,
Quiet out there in the desert, something dead nigh the heart.
See! her quaint fancy's beading, zigzag art.

William Keith

by Ina Coolbrith

Out West, Vol. 18, April 1903; magazine p. 432; physical source PDF p. 677

Editorial note. *This is an accomplished poem about painting because it thinks in visual relations: distance, atmosphere, color, and the human pressure behind landscape.*

Suggested by Lillie V. O’Ryan’s miniature portrait of the famous artist.

We read that under the far Indian skies,
The dusk magician with his mystic wand
Calls from the arid and unseeded sand,
Whereon the shadowless sun’s white fervor lies,
A perfect tree before our wondering eyes.
First its green shoot uplifts a tender hand;
Then trunk and spreading foliage expand
To flower and fruit; and then it droops and dies.
But he—our wizard of the tinted brush—
In God’s diviner necromancy skilled,
Gives to our vision Earth, in grandeur free!
Rose-gold of dawn and evening’s purple hush,
The Druid-woods with Nature’s worship filled,
The mountains and the everlasting sea.

This highly satisfactory miniature has just been completed by Miss O’Ryan, and is here reproduced for the first time.

Was It the Sea?

by Edward Salisbury Field

Out West, Vol. 18, June 1903; magazine p. 721; physical source PDF p. 1074

Editorial note. *The question organizes the whole poem, keeping memory and sound unresolved. Its ambiguity is unusually modern for the magazine.*

The song of the sea is in my ears—
The song of the sea, the song of the sea!
Souls that have lived in the bygone years,
Singing to me, singing to me!
Off to the west the dark sky clears;
A sea-gull circles, and wheels, and peers.
The cloud fleets sail to the southward—Hist!
Was it a voice that called to me—
A voice that I have not heard in years—
Or was it the sea?

My cheek is wet with a dash of spray—
A dash of spray, a dash of spray!
And into my heart come, creeping, fears;
And I look away, I look away!
And into my eyes there comes a mist,
A mist of spray—or is it tears?

Los Angeles, Cal.

The Santa Fé Trail

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 19, July 1903; magazine pp. 3–4; physical source PDF pp. 32–33

Editorial note. Hall balances historical sweep with the repeated bodily facts of travel. The result is both public ballad and memorial.

This way walked Fate; and as she went, flung far the line of destiny
That bound an untracked continent to brotherhood from sea to sea—
That long, gray trail of dream and hope marked mile by mile with graves that keep
On every barren hill and slope some stout heart lost in dreamless sleep.
Patience and faith and fortitude were willed to it, and justified;
Stern, homely virtues, plain and rude; eternal as the sky and wide.
Nor ever Viking dared the sea in braver mood than these who went
Strong-armed to wrest from Mystery their birthright, half a continent.

Gay, hawk-eyed, dark-faced voyageurs, tired of the river's muddy tide,
Or drawn by whispered, golden lures, or beckoned by the prairies wide,
These first, and lightly down the wind their songs float backward as they pass;
So light they go, nor leave behind scarce one deep footprint on the grass.
And after them, lean, keen, and grim, one fit untrodden heights to scan;
The gray peak looking down on him knew something kindred in the man.
Half prophet, seer, his eyes could trace, in those lone wastes that seemed to wait,
The larger promise of his race, the germ of many an unborn State.

Then Frémont, passing not alone; beside him, silent, dim, unguessed,
Unheralded, to claim her own, the Soul of the Awakening West.
Behind, above the thundering herds of fear-swept bison, seemed to beat
A hymn prophetic without words, the trample of a million feet.
That long gray trail! That path of fate! For gain or loss, for life or death,
Driven by greed or hope or hate, it drew them to the latest breath:
It broke them to its mighty mold; it seared their weakness to the bone;
It stripped them stark to sun and cold, and mocked at whimperer and drone.

And they were Men who bore its mark; and they were Men its service made—
Strong-souled to face the utter dark, and watch with Fear still unafraid;
Stern school of heroes unconfessed; unweighed for meed of right or wrong;
By glib late-comers dispossessed of honors that to them belong:
As in the fire-tried furnace hour, strange, warring elements will fuse
To purpose, unity and power, to truer strength and nobler use;
Unconscious—save that here was life a man might live as manhood meant—
They wrought a nation from their strife, and shaped it with their discontent.

No pulseless, still-born hope was theirs; each man a later Argonaut,
Who from great dreams and ceaseless cares out-wove the Golden Fleece he sought;
And single-handed out of need made potent opportunity;

Nor shamed the hour with laggard deed, nor quailed from naked Destiny.
They touched the wilderness to flower; they gave the unvoiced solitudes
A tongue that spoke with trumpet power the message of their iron moods;
But ah! the cost! The hands that bled; The toll of heart-aches and of tears!
The stern, white faces of the dead that paved that highway through the years!

The long grass hides the rutted trail where tracked those mighty caravans
Whose far-lit camp-fires low and pale elude, howe'er the vision scans
That lost horizon, shrunk to fit the little roads that come and go,
By easy ways (of greatness quit), that any chance-drawn foot may know;
Light trails that traffic o'er the dust of them that were a braver breed,
Forgotten in the careless lust for larger gain and lesser deed.
Mother of all the roads that hold the power o'er men that makes or mars!
These lead to cities, lands, and gold; this led to the eternal stars!

Dewey, Ariz.

Mist

by Nora May French

Out West, Vol. 19, October 1903; magazine p. 395; physical source PDF p. 578

Editorial note. *This is one of the clearest examples of French's modernity: brief, atmospheric, psychologically exact, and unwilling to explain its final unease.*

Low-arched above me, as I moved, the hollowed air was clear;
Beyond was whiteness, dim and strange, and spectral shapes drew near.
Upon the little shore of brown that touched the misty sea,
Upon the shadowy borderland one paused and looked at me;
Then hurried on with greeting smile and sudden vivid face!
A friend had started into life within my magic space.
Into the world of ghosts again I watched him fade away—
First black he was, then dim he was, then merged in formless gray.

Los Angeles.

The Song of the Bow

by Mary Austin

Out West, Vol. 20, January 1904; magazine p. 55; physical source PDF p. 72

Editorial note. *The poem's tensile rhythm suits its subject. Sound, pressure, and release are organized with a formal intelligence stronger than its ethnographic framing.*

Red Morning came to the evergreen oak
And wove him a screen of boughs,
To lie in wait till the tall dun buck
Came over the hill to browse.

It was all in the time of tender leaves
And the blossoming hour of the vine,
The red fox barked in the cactus scrub
And he heard the wild bees whine.

It was all in the time of tender leaves
And poppies beginning to blow;
Red Morning sat in the evergreen oak
And made him a song of his bow.

The wood was the heart of a juniper tree
On a strong, sea-sloping hill,
And the things it learned in the young green bough
The bow remembered still;
For it learned of the wind, it learned of the sea
And it learned of the spotted snake,
And their threefold sting was loosed from the string
When the will of the bow would wake.

The cord of the bow is the will of the bow,
'Tis the twisted gut of the deer;
Red Morning fingered the feathered shaft
And drew the butt to his ear.

For he was aware of an antlered buck
Come down by the stream to feed;
Red Morning loosened the cord of the bow
And sent him the stinging reed.

And all by night when the braves came in
And the children lay in the byre,
Red Morning sang his song of the bow
As he leaped by the leaping fire.

But the tall buck ranged on the hill no more
Nor belled to the tender doe,

For never a beast runs free in the wood
Who has harked to the song of the bow.

Independence, Cal.

Catalina Fog

by Blanche Trask

Out West, Vol. 20, February 1904; magazine p. 161; physical source PDF p. 232

Editorial note. *The fog is rendered with tactile and emotional precision. Trask's close knowledge of the island prevents the atmosphere from becoming generic.*

Round about the highest peak,
A mighty fog is furled—
He leans to look into the sea,
And shuts out all the world.

And I, who walk this mountain trail,
Have doubts of heaven above,
And listen to the hidden sea
Like voice of one I love.

E'en while I list, this mighty fog
Has torn himself in two,
To show me still that endlessness
Which 'bideth i' the blue!

Avalon, Cal.

Along the Track

by Nora May French

Out West, Vol. 20, March 1904; magazine p. 247; physical source PDF p. 370

Editorial note. *Railway motion gives the poem a broken, cinematic sequence of perceptions. The lineation keeps landscape and restlessness in productive tension.*

The track has led me out beyond the town
To follow day across the waning fields;
The crisping weeds and wastes of tender brown.

On either side the feathered tops are high,
A tracery of broken arabesques
Upon the sullen crimson of the sky.

Into the west the narrowing rails are sped.
They cut the crayon softness of the dusk
With thin converging gleams of bloody red.

Los Angeles.

Night Wind, Wake!

by Mary Austin

Out West, Vol. 20, April 1904; magazine p. 318; physical source PDF p. 489

Editorial note. *Incantation and physical landscape meet with remarkable energy. The repeated command makes the poem feel performed rather than merely described.*

Night Wind wake! now the cattle leave the trail for us,
Huddled on the hill slope by the stony water-scar,
Get you down along the steep
Where the moon-eyed gillias keep,
To go walking in the meadows—
Silver runnels in the meadows—
Where the blossoms star the shadows and the hidden waters are.

Night Wind wake! now the laden vine is calling us,
Calling with the incense of its green and misty blooms,
Now the milk-white alders quake
Where the dark lies like a lake
On the musky scented meadows,
On the many-lilied meadows,
On the chilly mountain meadows where the throaty hylas blooms.

Night Wind wake! I am coming up the trail to you,
Up and past the gullies where the midnight shadows lair,
Past the tangle by the creek
Where the trail is all to seek,
To the damp and dusky meadows,
To the willow-skirted meadows,
To go walking in the meadows with the pleasant Night Wind there.

Independence, Cal.

Among the White Sands

by Isabel Darling

Out West, Vol. 20, May 1904; magazine p. 453; physical source PDF p. 676

Editorial note. *The landscape is luminous but unstable. Darling's shifting scale and restrained music capture the strangeness of the dunes.*

Here lay an inland sea, heavy with bitterness,
Gnawing and clutching at its farther bounds,
Unreconciled, unshaded, fettered, dumb and lone.
The centuries, slow passing on their rounds,
Crept softly near and, in its fierce, defiant breath
Shriveled to moments, shrank affrighted by,
Dropping no token of their tenderness or late regret,
Weaving no mist to veil the burning sky.

In some unknown, uncounted past it had been one
With all the seas, for each remembering wave,
With helpless longing tortured, beat in rippling rage
Against its fellows; yet at length a cave,
With here and there a salty hollow on the plain,
Held scattered pools that, turning slowly gray,
Despairing, clinging, glaring hatred to the last,
Sank in the sands and they, too, passed away.

Waters to waters, dust to dust, each to its own!
As, through its long probation time of woe,
The sea was man's unconscious servant, grain by grain
Assorting, cleansing, tossing to and fro
The sullen, heavy sands, through age on patient age,
So swept the winds, with strong, uplifting grace,
Where neither tomb nor monument gave stony hope,
And lo! white peace shone on the desert's face.

Though Time, perchance, remember not that inland sea
Once pulsing with the ocean's throbbing heart,
And but these caustic crystals, dry as leprous grief,
Give token of its bitter life apart,
Here some crude Eden grew or some rank Sodom raged,
Here waits a Paradise; for, more and more,
The spade of industry is lifting dust from dust
Where lies the seed upon God's ancient threshing floor.

Dimond, Cal.

The Hymn of the Men That Fail

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 20, May 1904; magazine p. 399; physical source PDF p. 622

Editorial note. *The rhetoric is direct but not easy. Its compassion for defeated lives gives the poem moral weight beyond its period conventions.*

Here we face the Weigher with our balance,
We who out of all our toil have won
Only hope forespent and ideals vanished,
Only scars and sweat beneath the sun.
All we dared, and joyed for love of daring,
Grasping as a hand that grasps a star,
Star-wise in its beauty and eluding,
Lies beyond us still as dim and far.

And the soul that panoplied for battle
Once rode bravely forth in Fortune's train,
Wiser now by futile march and foray,
Knows the high adventure was in vain.
We have gained no laurels of our striving,
Naught of praise from them that sit to judge—
Yet while there is room for new endeavor,
Life is all too full for fret or grudge.

We have failed,—and bitter was the failing;
Full the price we paid of faith and trust;
Still our hearts turn back unavailing
To the Gods thrown prostrate in the dust:
For we could not keep the sight of childhood,
And the Grail our hearts set out to seek,
It was but a vessel, empty, earthen—
Yet we had the joy of them that seek.

The Call of the Surf

by Juliette Estelle Mathis

Out West, Vol. 21, September 1904; magazine p. 261; physical source PDF p. 366

Editorial note. Mathis gives the surf both sensuous presence and psychological command. The recurring sound pulls the poem beyond decorative seaside verse.

Last night I longed for mountain trails
Through chaparral, where scented gales
Would touch my face with tenderness—
Renew the dream of Love's caress!

I thought the brown-eyed canon pool,
The whispered rushing of the cool
Swift rivulet as downward sent,
Would banish my hot discontent.

Today I thirst for ocean-spray,
Its foam and surge that cannot stay,
But, restless ever, comes and goes—
To kiss my mouth and give repose.

The sea's wild wooing calls to me,
Its voice is rife with witchery,
It offers peace—its broad, blue breast
Invites with promises of rest!

O bliss to be! The sweet, salt wave
My fevered eyes and limbs shall lave—
Such ecstasy as thrills the Sea
Shall bound, and beat, and throb in me!

The Windward Road

by Aldis Dunbar

Out West, Vol. 21, December 1904; magazine p. 534; physical source PDF p. 795

Editorial note. *The poem's clean momentum and refusal of comfort make it a persuasive road lyric. Its music feels earned by exertion.*

Oh, smoother winds the valley trail,
More softly stirs the air
(With never hint of storm or gale),
Than where the mountain gusts prevail,
And grass and shade are there.

But who would know and prove his soul,
And gain the strength bestowed
Through strife maintained—the self-control—
Who straight and swift would reach the goal
Shall choose the windward road.

Erie, Pa.

The Dream of the Pine

by *Blanche Trask*

Out West, Vol. 22, February 1905; magazine p. 119; physical source PDF p. 188

Editorial note. *The pine's imagined memory of the sea is a striking conceit, sustained through scent, elevation, and deep sound.*

In the alpine meadow, dull and brown,
The gold of the oak comes shimmering down!

The scent of the fern on the withered stem
Clings to the garment's sleeve and hem.

While a sound as deep as the song of the sea
Is borne from the heart of the pine—to me!

For ships still "plough the furrowed main"
But if it be joy or if it be pain

We dwell so high that we may not know
How the white sails fill, or the great winds blow!

For the stars are a gleam in the taper trees,
Which bear in their hearts this dream of the seas!

Idyllwild, San Jacinto Mts.

The Song of Days

by Hartley Alexander

Out West, Vol. 22, February 1905; magazine pp. 112-113; physical source PDF pp. 181-182

Editorial note. *Alexander risks a large mythic voice and largely earns it. Recurring stanza forms make deep time feel sung rather than summarized.*

A fable! How one sultry summer's night
I walked the prairies; black, flame-riven clouds
And scant, reluctant drops of scalding rain
Tenting the thirsting fields and crisped corn.
Afar, coyotes wailing and the long sigh
Of tomb-a-wearied spirits, cradle-rock
Of Earth's old rhythms, and like a lullaby
Crooned in her witch's breast—the Song of Days:

"I am the Eater of Times—
I, the primordial Earth!
Unto what creatures I willed
I gave birth:
Drank their heart's blood till it filled
My Heart's dearth!

"Tomed in my bosom, they bide
Where first they were suckled and kissed;
A chant to their spirits I raise,
Nor desist
Singing the Song of their Days
As I list!

"I feel the warm surge of the primitive sea,
Hear its refrain:
Breathe the fragrance the ashes of blossoms for aye
Ever retain:
Quiver with loves of lovers long free
From their love's pain!

"I throb to the rushing of cattle that thrill
To the storm's rod:
Laugh the wild laughter the prairie-wolves shrill,
Hopeless to God:
Hear the fierce battle-cry echoing still
Under the sod!

"I am Eater of Times;
I am the Future and Past!
None from my holding shall part:

All at last
In the wide house of my heart
I chain fast!
"Tomb'd in my bosom they bide,
Where first they suckled and kissed:
A chant to their spirits I raise,
Nor desist
Singing the Song of their Days
As I list!"

Boston, Mass.

The Wind and the Tree

by Rose Trumbull

Out West, Vol. 22, February 1905; magazine p. 112; physical source PDF p. 181

Editorial note. *The poem's repeated inset rhymes mimic pressure moving through branches. Its Gothic intensity grows from an exact acoustic design.*

When the wind crept into the cottonwood tree
 With a whispered word
 Which I almost heard
As it stole its way past me,

Then the night-hushed tree from its silence stirred—
 For each tiny leaf,
 With a sudden grief,
Trembled at what it heard.

Then the branches moved as in secret pain,
 And I heard a moan
 That was half a groan,
Like the breath of the battle-slain.

Then the long boughs scourged themselves in despair
 Till a shriek and a crash
 Told of death 'neath the lash,
And sobs shook the quivering air.

Thus the night wore on, and the cottonwood tree
 With its piteous wails
 Made me think of the tales
Of a lost soul's agony.

Now the wind crept forth at the sun's first ray,
 And the cottonwood tree
 Hid its agony
In silence before the day.

But what was the whisper of wind and tree.
 Aye, what was the word
 Which I almost heard
As the wind, it stole past me?

Scottsdale, Ariz.

Fog

by Neeta Marquis

Out West, Vol. 22, March 1905; magazine p. 180; physical source PDF p. 301

Editorial note. *Marquis uses obscurity with unusual control: the poem remains visually exact even as streets, distances, and certainties disappear.*

Cool and gray and spirit-soft,
To sick flowers tossed in fever-heat,
I come, a night-nurse from the sea
With quiet treading feet.

I lay calm fingers on each pulse;
I gently wet the parched lips,
And give them drink from mist distilled
That off the palm-tree drips.

To poppy, rose and heliotrope,
Each in her little garden bed,
I glide refreshingly in turn
And ease each aching head.

What time the breeze of day must rest,
I thus my healing vigil keep,
And when she stirs again at morn,
I steal away to sleep.

Los Angeles.

Rain

by Nora May French

Out West, Vol. 22, March 1905; magazine p. 212; physical source PDF p. 333

Editorial note. *The rain is heard as much as seen. French's subtle repetitions create an interior weather without forcing a symbolic conclusion.*

The rain was grey before it fell,
And through a world where light had died,
There ran a mournful little wind
That shook the trees and cried.

The rain was brown upon the earth,
In turbid stream and tiny seas;
In swift and slender shafts that beat
The flowers to their knees.

The rain is mirror to the sky—
Oh, passing words, a blue so dear!
And drifting in the shining pools
The clouds are white and near.

Los Angeles, Cal.

An Adobe Ruin

by Neeta Marquis

Out West, Vol. 23, July 1905; magazine p. 40; physical source PDF p. 63

Editorial note. *The ruin is neither picturesque prop nor simple elegy. Texture and weather carry a more complicated meditation on historical survival.*

Dead labor of the brown untutored hands
That reared thy walk of day against a night,
Unlike the toilers swart who spent their night
To mass the quarried pile on Egypt's sands,

Linking their labor to eternity
With bonds unbroke by tempest-blasts amain,
Whilst thou, rude shelter from the wind and rain,
Unknown to art, dost perish wretchedly.

How like unto that other house of earth
Wherein thy builder's spirit dwelt and yearned
For beauty unattained; like thee, returned
So soon unto the dust that gave it birth.

Los Angeles.

The Constant Ones

by Nora May French

Out West, Vol. 23, October 1905; magazine p. 357; physical source PDF p. 532

Editorial note. *Its irony is quiet but decisive. The poem tests permanence against mortality and lets the final image carry the argument.*

The tossing trees had every flag unfurled
To hail their chief, but now the sun is set,
And in this sweet new quiet on the world
The king is dead, the fickle leaves forget.

A placid earth, an air serene and still,
In misty blue the gradual smoke is thinned—
Only the grasses, leaning to his will,
The grasses hold a memory of wind.

Los Angeles

The Stream

by Robinson Jeffers

Out West, Vol. 23, October 1905; magazine p. 331; physical source PDF p. 506

Editorial note. *The early Jeffers voice is already recognizable in its hard landscape, impersonal movement, and distrust of merely human scale.*

There is a stream far up the mountains,
Thro' slumbrous cañon solitudes,
That flows unnamed from unknown fountains
Beneath the eternal peaks it passes,
Sweet with sharp scent of tall spiced grasses,
Making low laughter in the woods.

Great fronded ferns soft-steeped in slumber
Lean on its edge, to stay and cumber,
Their lustrous lang'rous leaves half furled;
Higher and higher, far above it,
The ancient mountains know not of it,
Unmoved, remote, beyond the world.

Thro' summer noontides hot and glowing,
Beside the lonely waters flowing,
Spring's coolness lingers with fair shade;
And in the midnight's heavy vastness
The stream sings down its rocky fastness,
And makes sweet music, unafraid.

At dawn with ghostly flags and horses
Like some old king's long-buried forces,
The silent mists go up the vale:
The great grey winds blow calmness thither,
And there are flowers that never wither,
And smooth small leaves that never fail.

So when the plain glooms dull and dreary,
And when one's heart is sadly weary
With the day's heat and the day's fret,
One might seek peace and find her yonder,
Where waters wild and wet winds wander,
And having found, one might forget.

Manhattan Beach, Cal.

The Mirage

by Theresa Russell

Out West, Vol. 23, December 1905; magazine p. 550; physical source PDF p. 833

Editorial note. *Russell keeps the phenomenon materially specific while allowing perception and desire to become inseparable. The poem is exact without becoming clinical.*

Misted green and silver bright,
Gleaming through the arid light,
Be thy intent to deceive us
Or from dullness to relieve us
Fair thou art to wistful sight.

E'en though thou be as false as fair,
Aphrodite of the air,
Sprung from Hope-deluded vision,
Smiling, mocking in derision,
Luring trust to black despair—

Yet shine on, oh phantom dear;
Joys are sweeter far than near.
All thy empty, vain effulgence
Wins our pardoning indulgence—
Lacking thee, the waste were drear.

The Prayer of the Bound

by Ethel Griffith

Out West, Vol. 23, December 1905; magazine p. 538; physical source PDF p. 821

Editorial note. *The devotional address is powered by a physical hunger for open space. Its urgency exceeds the conventions of the prayer poem.*

Father of All, grant me this single plea:
God of the Open Sky,
Let me go free!
As wide as mighty winds Thy earth around,
O Lord, the loosened throat;
The soul unbound!
To me the rugged heart of mountains bare;
The hoar strength of Thy hills,
God of the Open Air!
Unchecked and wild Thy mighty waves drive free;
Grant me my course as they,
Lord of the Untamed Sea!
Father of All, grant me this single plea:
God of the Open Sky,
Let me go free!

Arizona

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 24, February 1906; magazine pp. 67-69; physical source PDF pp. 162-164

Editorial note. *The poem's civic ambition is matched by strong stanzaic control. Hall makes regional identity emerge from labor, conflict, weather, and scale.*

No beggar she in the mighty hall where her bay-crowned sisters wait,
No empty-handed pleader for the right of a free-born state,
No child, with a child's insistence, demanding a gilded toy,
But a fair-browed, queenly woman, strong to create or destroy—
Wise for the need of the sons she has bred in the school where weaklings fail,
Where cunning is less than manhood, and deeds, not words, avail—
With the high, unswerving purpose that measures and overcomes,
And the faith in the Farthest Vision that builded her hard-won homes.

Link her, in her clean-proved fitness, in her right to stand alone—
Secure for whatever future in the strength that her past has won—
Link her, in her morning beauty, with another, however fair?
And open your jealous portal and bid her enter there
With shackles on wrist and ankle, and dust on her stately head,
And her proud eyes dim with weeping? No! Bar your doors instead
And seal them fast forever! but let her go her way—
Uncrowned if you will, but unshackled, to wait for a larger day.

Ay! Let her go bare-handed, bound with no grudging gift,
Back to her own free spaces where her rock-ribbed mountains lift
Their walls like a sheltering fortress—back to her house and blood.
And we of her blood will go our way and reckon your judgment good.
We will wait outside your sullen door till the stars you wear grow dim
As the pale dawn-stars that swim and fade o'er our mighty Cañon's rim.
We will lift no hand for the bays ye wear, nor covet your robes of state—
But ah! by the skies above us all, we will shame ye while we wait!

We will make ye the mold of an empire here in the land ye scorn,
While ye drowse and dream in your well-housed ease that States at your nod are born.
Ye have blotted your own beginnings, and taught your sons to forget
That ye did not spring fat-fed and old from the powers that bear and beget.
But the while ye follow your smooth-made roads to a fireside safe of fears,
Shall come a voice from a land still young, to sing in your age-dulled ears
The hero song of a strife as fine as your fathers' fathers knew,
When they dared the rivers of unmapped wilds at the will of a bark canoe—
The song of the deed in the doing, of the work still hot from the hand;
Of the yoke of man laid friendly-wise on the neck of a tameless land.

While your merchandise is weighing, we will bit and bridle and rein

The floods of the storm-rocked mountains and lead them down to the plain;
And the foam-ribbed, dark-hued waters, tired from that mighty race,
Shall lie at the feet of palm and vine and know their appointed place;
And out of that subtle union, desert and mountain-flood,
Shall be homes for a nation's choosing, where no home else had stood.

We will match the gold of your minting, with its mint-stamp dulled and marred
By the tears and blood that have stained it and the hands that have clutched too hard,
With the gold that no man has lied for—the gold no woman has made
The price of her truth and honor, plying a shameless trade—
The clean, pure gold of the mountains, straight from the strong, dark earth,
With no tang or taint upon it from the hour of its primal birth.
The trick of the money-changer, shifting his coins as he wills,
Ye may keep—no Christ was bartered for the wealth of our lavish hills.

"Yet we are a little people—too weak for the cares of state!"
Let us go our way! When ye look again, ye shall find us, mayhap, too great.
Cities we lack—and gutters where children snatch for bread;
Numbers—and hordes of starvelings, toiling but never fed.
Spare pains that would make us greater in the pattern that ye have set;
We hold to the larger measure of the men that ye forget—
The men who, from trackless forests and prairies lone and far,
Hewed out the land where ye sit at ease and grudge us our fair-won star.

"There yet be men, my masters," though the net that the trickster flings
Lies wide on the land to its bitter shame, and his cunning parleyings
Have deafened the ears of Justice, that was blind and slow of old.
Yet time, the last Great Judge, is not bought, or bribed, or sold;
And Time and the Race shall judge us—not a league of trafficking men,
Selling the trust of the people, to barter it back again;
Palming the lives of millions as a handful of easy coin,
With a single heart to the narrow verge where craft and statecraft join.

Dewey, Arizona

The Lone Trail

by Nellie Suydam

Out West, Vol. 24, March 1906; magazine p. 207; physical source PDF p. 380

Editorial note. *The trail is rendered through solitude, distance, and bodily motion. The poem's directness gives its regional imagery unusual authority.*

He knew the round-up trails that swing
O'er sunny plains where faint winds drift,
Up through the cañon's dusky rift
To some hill-meadow's moss-rimmed spring;

The trails that plod through wind-smoothed sands,
When lips are black and canteens clank,
From bitter spring and dust-filled tank,
Toward dim sky lines of lonely lands;

Trails drifted deep with snows that fall,
When the last daylight flickers out,
And, on the peaks, the storm-winds shout
Among the pines: we knew them all.

O Love, the trail today you ride
Too fearful is for me to tread—
The Lonely Pathway of the Dead,
It leads across the Great Divine.

Martinez, Arizona.

The Mass of Mangas

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 24, March 1906; magazine pp. 169-173; physical source PDF pp. 342-346

Editorial note. *This is one of Hall's most ambitious historical poems. Ritual structure and recurring voices create a complex, troubling act of remembrance.*

Years had the Mission stood alone,
Its silent chapels bat-tenanted;
On its altars the gray owl nested her young,
And the ground squirrels burrowed above the dead
By the western wall, nor stirred their sleep;
Bare lay the fields, sun-scorched and white:
As scatter from black hawks the timorous quail,
Padre and soldier and neophyte

Scattered before the Apache hordes
That swept the valley with death and flame.
Now back at last, like quail to their nests,
Timorous, fearing, they slowly came,
Priest and people—to wring anew
From the sullen desert a grudging chance
For scanty food and room to toil,
Or a quick-won end on a blood-stained lance.

With fragrant branches of gray mesquite,
And waxen yuccas fair and tall—
Lifting their bells like hands in prayer,
Slender and snowy and virginal—
And desert lilies as frail as hope,
They wreathed the altars, and lit once more
The long-dead tapers, and set the rood
Over the arrow-bitten door.

The pale Christ leaned from the ironwood cross,
High in its niche deep-walled and gray;
And under his feet, in order set,
Censer and chalice in rough-wrought clay,
Where once was silver shaped in Spain—
Now spoil of fight to the savage foe,
And bandied from careless hand to hand,
Unblest uses and lips to know.

The tapers flickered; and tenderly
The last words whispered and echoed up
To the painted saints in the dusk above,

As the padre lifted the earthen cup
And the blessed wine—but crash it fell,
Staining the floor with a crimson tide,
Unseen of the startled worshippers.
For look—where the door unbarred swings wide!

Somber and splendid in paint and plume,
With claws of eagle and puma skin,
Mangas, the dread Apache chief,
And a hundred braves at his back crowd in!
He swept the shards of the cup aside
And its silver mate on the altar set:
"Padre, the boy you stopped to draw
From the lion's jaws makes good his debt.

"With Death hot-heel on your track you turned
To save a child of the enemy;
Let these, beloved of your Hidden God,
Be bond of peace for mine and me!
And this in thanks for that other day!"
Censer and chalice, he set them down,
And bared his arms of their turquoise bands,
And stripped the robe from his shoulders brown.

Man by man his men heaped up
The pile, till it grew to the Virgin's feet:
Skin and blanket, and beads that hung
Like jewelled buds in the pale mesquite.
Then, swift as they came, they went, again.
But, so 'tis writ in the Mission rolls;
With wine and incense the Padre straight
Said holy mass for their heathen souls,

And held them saved to the Mother Church;
For a grateful heart is a thing indeed
That, weighed in the palm of the Savior's hand,
Out-values penance and prayer and creed.
And year by year, when the yucca bells,
Like flags of truce swung tall and white,
The name of Mangas was blessed anew
With bell and taper and solemn rite.

Dewey, Arizona

The Desert

by Theresa Russell

Out West, Vol. 24, April 1906; magazine p. 310; physical source PDF p. 563

Editorial note. *The severe imagery and measured rhetoric give the desert genuine otherness. It is not asked to become simply beautiful or consoling.*

"God must have made thee in His anger, and forgot." Not in His anger, no, but in a mood
Of pure creative power, by any need
Or law unfettered, uncompelled to heed
Necessity, by Beauty wholly woo'd.

In other portions of His earth He placed
Fair gardens, teeming fields, abounding streams,
Deep sombre forests lit with mellow gleams,
Song-filled and fragrant, panoplied and graced.

In wisdom and in sympathy He made
These things for men, His children, that they should
Be clothed and nourished, dowered with every good,
And never feel their lives mocked or betrayed.

This gracious deed accomplished He was free
To fashion what He would for His own joy,
To wield Infinite power without alloy,
To please Himself—then, Desert, He made thee.

He made thy sands and flooded them with light—
Thy sun's hot-hearted passion never faints;
With brush of fine and jeweled hues He paints
Thy skies and rocks and blossoms—e'en thy night.

So dost thou glow and quiver; yet the spell
Of Silence is upon thee, for He willed
The voice of pain and anguish to be stilled
And mirth hushed. Smites His ear nor chime nor knell.

Thus all thy life is silent. Here the snake
And lizard glide; slow circle birds of prey;
The scorpion crawls; wolf and coyote grey
Move stealthily—and none that silence break.

In silence and in mystery thou'rt made,
But thy God loves thee; in thy spaces shrined
He has His dwelling where who seek may find,
Though thy still vastness makes the heart afraid.

Stanford University.

Death Valley

by Robinson Jeffers

Out West, Vol. 26, May 1907; magazine p. 443; physical source PDF p. 740

Editorial note. *This spare early poem strips the desert of picturesque reassurance. Its severity anticipates the uncompromising landscape ethics of Jeffers's mature work.*

Here is the term of life that lives by breath.
Lo, here Death's place!—yet not by darkening night
Made terrible, but clothed in glaring light
Deadlier than darkness. Fiercely from beneath
And from above, the heat, aflame with death,
Strikes like some desert reptile coiled and white,
Hideous, that carries death within its bite,
And madness in the hollow of its teeth.

There is a Fate that sways this deadly land—
A silent Fate that smiles and is accurst,
Bearing strange gifts for men in each hand's hold.
Loose on the open palm of the right hand
Are death and madness and a hell of thirst—
But in the tight-clenched left is yellow gold.

Manhattan Beach, Cal.

The City's Voice

by Eleanor F. Lewis

Out West, Vol. 27, July 1907; magazine p. 56; physical source PDF p. 73

Editorial note. *The civic personification has real dramatic force. Disaster, endurance, and defiance are compressed into a voice that feels public without becoming hollow.*

From far-off verdant heights you gaze on me—
My ruins, with their hue of tragic age.
Ay, look you well!—for slow, insistently,
I cover up all trace of Nature's rage.

Deep in the night you hear the distant beat
Of mighty pulse that knows not sleep nor rest
Sounding—in clang of hammers, tramp of feet—
The heart that throbs unconquered in my breast
Though seven times seven the fiery holocaust
Consumeth all the sordid world holds great,
I rise—nor counting what is gone and lost—
Fling my defiance in the teeth of Fate!

San Francisco.

Night-Fall

by Neeta Marquis

Out West, Vol. 27, August 1907; magazine p. 175; physical source PDF p. 234

Editorial note. *The lyric is modest in scale but beautifully paced. Each darkening image arrives as part of a single, continuous change.*

Misty gray has quenched the smoldering west
Like sprinkled ashes, and the deeper sky
Is yet unwarmed with stars. The clouds, once high,
Have lowered to the tree-tops, where they rest.

A ghost-wind gasps and starts, as one oppressed
With guilty burden, one that may not die
And let the vexed world pass unnoted by,
But must live on by memory obsessed.

Now is the lonesome hour of all the day
When cheerful toil is over. From the street
That quick last sound of homeward-hasting feet
Within some fire-lit hush has died away.

The lonesome hour—day past, the night to come—
God guide his steps who has no waiting home!

Los Angeles.

The Landward Call o' the Sea

by Ethel Griffith

Out West, Vol. 27, August 1907; magazine pp. 125-126; physical source PDF pp. 184, 186

Editorial note. *Long lines, repeated appeals, and deliberate overflow create a restless music. The poem turns wandering into an argument with settled life.*

The swinging flank of a marching Sea;
The strong command of the tide;
And borne on the night's great symphony,
Like cavalry hosts to a martial air,
The storm-flung breakers ride.
The strong attack! The swift retreat!
The stinging breath of the Sea—
And over the salt brine, bitter-sweet,
Comes the call o' thy Love to thee!
The call o' thy Love to Ye-o'-the-Land,
For he hath sought ye long;
To you the kiss of the salt-wet sand,
And the Sea's brave marching song!

"Captain and Lord-of-Myself am I,
With none to say me nay:
Master of Fate and the Iron Gate
That swings for my Destiny.
Czar and King of mine own brave Soul,
Strong in a warrior's right."
To hearts that be free, "Reveille!" chants the Sea,
"Awake and arise in thy Soul's great might!"
But heavy of sleep ye have drowsed ye long,
The dull, deep swoon o' the Land,
And hardly ye dared to dream ye heard
The call of His Marching Song.

The strong attack! The swift retreat!
The stinging breath of the Sea—
And over the salt brine, bitter-sweet,
Comes the call o' thy Love to thee!
The call o' thy Love to Ye-o'-the-Land,
For he hath sought ye long;
To you the kiss of the salt-wet sand,
And the Sea's brave marching song!

National City, Cal.

Boot Hill

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 27, November 1907; magazine p. 391; physical source PDF p. 610

Editorial note. *The ballad compresses violence, anonymity, and frontier myth into a hard, memorable sequence. Its humor never entirely cancels its bleakness.*

In the old days of the Frontier, the cemetery in every town and mining-camp was called "Boot Hill," because many of its inmates died, literally, "with their boots on." Today these graveyards, with their sunken, half-obliterated graves, are all that is left of many a once-thriving camp. Their nameless dead are the drift that mark forgotten channels where once the tide of human life flowed full and strong.

Go softly, you whose careless feet
Would crush the sage-brush, pungent, sweet,
And brush the rabbit-weed aside
From burrows where ground-squirrels hide
And prairie-dog his watch-tower keeps
Among the ragged gravel heaps.
Year long the wind blows up and down
Each lessening mound, and drifts the brown
Dried wander-weed there at their feet—
Who no more wander, slow or fleet.
Sun-bleached, rain-warped, the head boards hold
One story, all too quickly told;
That here some wild heart takes its rest
From spent desire and fruitless quest.

Here in the greasewood's scanty shade
How many a daring soul was laid!
Boots on, full-garbed as when he died;
The pistol belted at his side;
The worn sombrero on his breast—
To prove another man the best.
Arrow, or knife, or quick-drawn gun—
The glad, mad, fearless game was done.
A life for stakes—play slow or fast—
Win, lose—yet Death was trumps at last.

On the Road to Nogales

by Nellie Suydam

Out West, Vol. 27, December 1907; magazine p. 507; physical source PDF p. 772

Editorial note. *This is a vivid border-road poem with an alert eye for changing terrain. Its narrative movement keeps every image in transit.*

From the road's wind-swept niche,
High up the mountain range,
We peer into the depths
Of valleys lone and strange;
Of valleys strange as those
Which shadow the wan moon—
A land whose silence chills
At flood-tide of the noon,
Across the dark'ning gulf
Pale, flame-scarred mountains stand—
The forge on which were shaped
The vast beams of this land.

Beyond those distant peaks
Of ashen blue and red,
Nor lamp nor fire is lit,
Nor candle for the dead.

No cowboys ride the range;
There is no camping place—
Only the starless depths
Of chill, eternal space.

Glendora, Cal.

Sea Mist

by Arthur Guiterman

Out West, Vol. 28, March 1908; magazine p. 231; physical source PDF p. 324

Editorial note. *Its short lines and dissolving visual field are perfectly matched. The poem understands mist as a change in perception, not merely weather.*

On wings bronze-dappled, swings through heaven's dome
An eagle, far above the rugged comb
Whereon we stand to gaze where bursts of foam
Are flung, white wreath on wreath, against the brow
Of that long cliff. The cedar-forests bow,
For landward drives a dripping wind; and now,
Sun-kissed, the mist in amethyst and gold,
A phantom dragon, rolling fold on fold,
Engulfs the wondrous peaks of mountains old.

New York.

The Death of the Old Hunter

by Sharlot M. Hall

Out West, Vol. 28, May 1908; magazine p. 355; physical source PDF p. 526

Editorial note. Hall's elegy is strongest in its concrete knowledge of work, age, and terrain. The poem grieves without polishing away the life it records.

Out! Carry me out! I choke in these cabin walls!
Lay me down on the earth under the wide night sky;
Straight on the strong, clean earth—no idle blanket between;
Cheek to cheek with the dust I will watch my last lean hour go by.

Farther! Push back that bough till I face the stars;
North star—Dipper—Pointer that still sets true;
Many a night ye have led—through storm and wind-whipped cloud;
Lead still, old guides—I line my last long course by you.

Hark! The night wind sweeps through the crackling grass,
Nosing the thin, sere weeds that hide in the prairie swale;
Rattling the hunted reeds that shiver and shrink in the marsh,
With a whimper and snarl and whine like a hound that bays on the trail.

Lift me up! My soul hunts with you tonight,
Old mate of a hundred trails—speed on the lagging pack!
There was never a road ye knew too wild for my feet to take—
Tonight they will keep the way when even ye turn back.

Lift me up—to my feet! A hand-clasp each!
May your trail be long as mine—knife keen—and powder dry—
Eye true to the bead! Now go—quick—while I keep my feet!
I die as I lived—alone with the wind and the stars and the sky.

Dewey, Arizona.

November Poplars

by Neeta Marquis

Out West, Vol. 32, February 1910; physical source PDF p. 44

Editorial note. *Color, vertical movement, and seasonal loss are handled with painterly economy. The poem knows exactly when to stop.*

Erect brown poplars, slender and unleafed,
Like tall masts rise against the evening gray,
As if a company of wind-spent ships
Had come to anchor in a friendly bay.

When March returns, their rustling sails will spread
With eager swell and buoyant fluttering
To catch the breeze of earth's new wonderment
And ride the blue, aerial deeps of Spring.

Los Angeles, Cal.

The Zahuaro

by Marion Cummings Stanley

Out West, Vol. 32, March 1910; physical source PDF p. 95

Editorial note. Stanley's philosophical intelligence is grounded in a single desert form. The cactus becomes monumental without losing its botanical specificity.

There is a forest where no cooling shade
Falls ever through the long, still summer day,
There is a tree whose boughs have never made
A harp whereon the wandering winds may play.

Go where across the desert's blanching sand
The tall Zahuaro's fluted columns rise:
Gaunt warders of the waste you see them stand
Dark etched against the burning sapphire skies.

Silent they stand, though fiercest winds may beat,
The desert winds, keen-lashing, wild and free,
Unshaken still though all around their feet
The shifting sands drift like the surging sea;

Else on some barren mountain's shattered slope
'Midst ruin of rocks far scattered, huge as hurled
By Titan's hand, their slender columns stand
As though memorial of an earlier world.

Or like those storied broken shafts that rise
Far hence beneath another desert sun,
To mark where ancient Egypt buried lies,
Beneath the drifting sand's oblivion.

Yet these bear witness not of death, as those,
Here, rather, fortified in the fluted green,
Triumphant life her lifted banner shows,
And makes a mock of death in death's demesne.

For though these wear no leafy garlanding,
Nor ever feel the blight of winter snow,
Yet once a year the angel of the Spring
With lighted torch far-flown descends, and lo,

The waste is as an altar side whereon
A thousand branched candles sudden shine,
For every spire is tipped with flowered fire,
Yea lit with Spring's white flower flame divine.

Tucson, Ariz.

The Immutable God

by Lannie Haynes Martin

Out West, Vol. 3 New Series, March 1912; physical source PDF p. 3

Editorial note. *Martin gives metaphysical argument a firm stanzaic body. The poem's skepticism and devotion remain productively unresolved.*

The Great God is not falling. He stands sure. The parallax
Is man's general resurrection from the sepulcher of creeds.
The renaissance, strong re-ligioning of humanity to
God,
Breaking hideous, graven image of oblique theology;
Pointing from tradition's idol to a self-revealing Power;
Teaching Love with Love's own impulse, not with
Fear's debasing force;
Teaching joyousness in labor and in prayer, humility;
Ending sacrilegious promptings we, presumptuous, made to God;
Ending caviling dissensions over forms, inconsequent;—
This, the coming of the spirit which makes perfect, which sets free!
This the coming of the kingdom—works and will made one on earth.
And “that in part shall pass away,” the fulness of His power
Shall manifest unto His own this never-changing Truth:
Love abides, abounds, forever, Love creates and Love is
God.

God at the Cabaret

by Lannie Haynes Martin

Out West, Vol. 44, August 1916; physical source PDF p. 23

Editorial note. *The collision of sacred vocabulary and urban entertainment is bold, witty, and more morally complicated than the title first suggests.*

The sad God standing by the door went in;
He heard the sobbing violin that wailed
The “Humoresque”; He saw the tired eyes
Of painted girls whose wan and wistful smiles
Kept sorry measure with their dancing feet ;
He saw the women gulp Martinis down
To medicine the misery of their souls;
He heard their piteous, high-pitched, rasping laugh
That echoed all their aching loneliness;
He saw men’s roving eyes that longed and sought
For comradeship; then bowed His head and wept.
A passing churchman stopped, looked in and gasped :
“You look respectable! What brings you here?”
“You teach that I am everywhere,” God said,
“But fear and hate have barred me from that place
You call my ‘House’.
I, too, am desolate
And long, like these, for fellowship with men.
They knew my face as Love before your creeds
Distorted all their vision; now they seek
Through revelry—a magic they can buy—
The half-remembered God you never knew!”

The Variant

by Lannie Haynes Martin

Out West, Vol. 44, November 1916; physical source PDF p. 4

Editorial note. *This is an unusually sharp poem about deviation and social judgment. Its compressed form lets the final turn register cleanly.*

Some days I see men come and go
Like marionettes in puppet show
And all they do, or seem to feel,
Is but some grotesque dream, unreal;
Ah! then the whole of life to me
Is one great, cruel comedy!
Some days it seems that only I
Am shadow-creature floating by
A place where every one I see
Possesses Life's reality:
And then existence is for me
Grim, diabolic tragedy.
But there are times when I have been
Sojourner for a day within
The very heart of Life and knew
I lived and loved as all men do!
And this was given me to see:
I stand in balanced harmony
With Life when I can know I send
Conviction to the heart of friend
That I am true—then Heav'n *with* me—
And earth breathes lyric poetry!

Verses: Inadequacy; Freedom

by Lannie Haynes Martin

Out West, Vol. 44, December 1916; physical source PDF p. 26

Editorial note. *The paired pieces work through self-doubt and release without inflated consolation. Their brevity gives the abstractions edge.*

Freedom

No slave is he who labors long and hard
With hand or brain, if, working, he project
His inner vision, crystallized in form;
No slave is he, though fetters bind his hands
If he his thought in freedom can express;
But he whose mind is gyved by Force or Fear—
However subtly gilded be the chains
By creed, convention or commodity—
Is bond-slave to a monster. Freedom cries:
“Defiance or dependence!” “Crush or cringe!”

Inadequacy

O mighty Bards, with all thy potent spell
Of word-enchantment, why didst not thou tell
How Love would speak when first she came to me?
That I might know this wide infinity
Of anguish as her voice! That I might bring
To her some worthy offering!
Thine epic chant, thy lyrical refrain,
Thy thunder-song of music all one vain
And stammering attempt to put in speech
That which the lips of God alone can teach!