

The Lyric West

A Modernist Anthology

Volumes I–VII · 1921–1927

112 poems by 90 poets, out of sixty-seven numbers
April, 1921 – December, 1927

Every poem here is taken from the reading edition of the number it appeared in, and is therefore the same reading: the same italics, the same stanza breaks, the same corrections, and the same refusals to correct. The poems stand in the order the magazine printed them.

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A NOTE ON THIS SELECTION

The Lyric West was not a modernist magazine. It was a Los Angeles monthly of general verse, hospitable to the sonnet, the ballade and the sunset, and its own Comment column spent seven years arguing with free verse rather than printing it. That is exactly what makes the poems gathered here worth having together: they were not the programme, they were what got through.

All sixty-seven numbers were read for this, piece by piece, and every poem that showed a modernist bearing was set down with a reason. Three hundred and sixty-two did. These are the strongest of them.

Five bearings were looked for, and they overlap. The imagist poem, which presents a thing and does not gloss it. The free-verse poem that takes its measure from the cadence rather than the foot. The poem after the Chinese and the Japanese — hokku kept to their count, personae in the manner of Cathay, and in two places an actual translation made by a Chinese hand. The typographic or formal experiment. And, last and largest, the poem modern inside an old form: the sonnet or the quatrain whose diction, subject or ending has gone over — machine words in the octave, overheard speech cutting across the metre, a close that deflates instead of rising. That last kind is where a magazine like this one keeps its modernism, and it is why a poem in strict rhyme sits here beside a poem in none.

The magazine was reaching further than its reputation suggests. Gwendolen Haste's Montana ranch wives are here; so are Hazel Hall, Genevieve Taggard, Eda Lu Walton, Hildegard Flanner, George Dillon, Ruth Lechlitner, Rolfe Humphries, Vachel Lindsay, Miriam Allen de Ford, Belle Turnbull, and Laura Riding under the name Gottschalk. So is a Li Po translated by Arthur E. Christy with Lee Cheuk Po, and a Chinese river poem by Chang Yo-hsu; and so is a manifesto by a former editor of The

Little Review which the magazine could only bring itself to print inside its own Notes column, with a nervous introduction attached.

The poems are in the order the magazine printed them, from April 1921 to December 1927, and every one of the sixty-seven numbers is represented. That was not arranged for. It is what the reading turned up: there is no month of this magazine's life in which nothing of this kind got into it.

Some of these poems the magazine printed as one of a group under a single title. Where only one of the group belongs here it is set by itself, and a line under its title says which group it came out of; the group stands whole in its own reading edition. Nothing else has been cut, joined or reordered. One piece was printed with no title at all, and is filed under its first line, in brackets, because the brackets are this edition's and not the magazine's.

Over every poem is the number it came out of and the month of that number, so that any poem here can be walked back to its own number and read in company.

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Ruth Comfort Mitchell

Gaydiang

Eight to six each working day,
Cataloguing curtain cords,
Dun-colored and drab and gray:
No one chides me or applauds.

Cataloguing curtain cords!
I am fifty-eight years old:
No one chides me or applauds:
My thin shanks are always cold.

I am fifty-eight years old.
Humping over my neat page
My thin shanks are always cold.
I begin to feel my age.

Humping over my neat page
I am sometimes not quite well.
I begin to feel my age
When I find I cannot spell.

I am sometimes not quite well.
Surely I am getting on
When I find I cannot spell!
I must get my lexicon.

Surely I am getting on.

Tsch, tsch, how the time slips by!

I must get my lexicon. . .

E. f, g,—g—a—u—y—

Gaydiang, Gaydiang!

That is a curious word.

It looks so bright and alive,

Leaping up from the page.

It is an Annamese word;

There is a picture, too—

It is a kind of Chinese junk,

A curved-deck, snub-nosed heathen boat

Aslant on a bending sea.

Gaydiang. Gay—di—ang!

A rich and a splendid word

With a ringing and rousing sound!

An idle fancy, but really I

Have a frivolous thought I'd like to be

For a turbulent, wind tossed hour afloat

On the bending deck of a bounding boat

Under a stinging sky!

"Then, blow ye winds, high-ho!

A-roving I will go!

I'll stay no more on England's shore,

So let the music play—ay—ay!

I'm off by the tum—tum—tum,

To cross the tum—tum—tee—"

Gaydiang! Gay—di—ang!
On a heaving sapphire sea,
Riding and sliding the peaked waves,
Touching a deep-voiced jeweled gong
Till the slant-eyed slaves leave off their song—
Powerful, slant-eyed, crimson slaves—
To fetch my delicate tea.

Almond eyes and a peach blow skin,
My love, my lady is on my arm!
Then, blow ye winds, high-ho, high-ho!
Her mouth is sweeter than secret sin,
Eyes of jet and ivory chin,—
Her throat is pearl and her breath is warm,
My lady, my love is on my arm!
Pink little fishes dart down below,
The sky is on fire and hot winds blow,
The wind and the sea and I are kin,
And I shall fend her from friend or foe,—
My love, my lady is on my arm!

Gay and glittering overhead,
Gay and glittering under the keel;
Life is purple and gold and red,
Life is leisure and toil is dead
And I feel—feel—feel!
Gay and glittering peaked waves,
Gay and glittering gaydiang!
My lady, my love, my crimson slaves,
My gay, my gay, my gay—di—ang—

Tsch, tsch, how the time slips by!
I must hasten back to work.
B, f, g,—g—a—u—y—
I was never one to shirk.

I must hasten back to work,
Cataloguing curtain cords.
I was never one to shirk.
No one chides me or applauds.

Cataloguing curtain cords,
Dun-colored or drab or gray!
No one chides me or applauds,
Eight to six, each working day.

Weare Holbrook

Quid Iuvat Ornato

PROPERTIUS I, II

My old nose tells me you have dropped perfume,
Perfume from the Orontes, on your hair.
Mad fripperies to draw the yokel stare,
Distract mine eye when you come in the room.
Drenched in its dye and glossy from the loom,
Muslin of Cos, that swims upon the air,
Jewels designed to make fair arms more fair,
And gilded rosebuds that will never bloom—
These vendor's trifles speak a foreign tongue
To Love. In winning Castor, Phoebe scorned
Such tricks; her sister Hilaira hung
No baubles on herself when Pollux came.
Your ribbons fan but do not feed the flame —
Cynthia, I like you better unadorned.

Pauline Barrington

Redondo by the Sea

DAWN

Gray-all-gray.

The fish seller rises from his poor bed.

He is greeted by the old sounds, the same evil smells.

He opens his shop on the end of the wharf.

He hoses out the scales and entrails left from the day
before.

The fish boats come chugging one by one

across the oily water, bringing their catch to market.

Slowly, in the East the gray changes to a pale rose.

It is dawn.

MORNING

The morning sun shines on the children

building houses of sand on the edge of the sea.

The men play games. They watch the women,

The young women under their orange umbrellas.

The sea sends gentle foamy waves to the shore,

beckoning them to come and bathe;

she yearns to chill their warm blood,

to salt them white with bitter spray.

She sends her undertow to draw them to the deep,

the deep where she is waiting.

AFTERNOON

The sun glares.
The merry-go-round shrills its tune—
“Come, I have a ring of gold for you,
catch it if you can.”
The toboggan, the mystic maze, the man with the
wheel—
All offer rides,
rides that are the “greatest things on earth.”
All for a nickel.
A nickel! The price of bread—
But what is bread to the joy of motion?
The sea sighs of eternity under the booth,
the stifling booth of the medium, who is foretelling the
future.

TWILIGHT

The sea is tranquil.
The evening star rises serene in the pale yellow sky,
above the red lantern of the setting sun.
The little waves make a rushing sound,
loving the shore.
A man, a woman, a dog, black silhouettes
against the shining sea.
A word, a laugh, they pass.
The lights on the wharf throw gold reflections.

NIGHT

At last, night silently cradles this small city by the sea in her arms.

She covers its toys and dwellings with soft dark
mystery,

passionate, restless, full of shadows.

She watches youth curving and circling
to the dum-dum—dum-dum—dum-dum-dum
of the casino drum.

She hears mingled with the moan of the sea
the sputtering of the last star as it snuffs out.

Through the steep streets a taxi rolls swiftly away
afraid to meet the dawn.

Ernest Dexter

High Noon on the Slough

Rows of low wharves seen from the opposite shore;
Turn of the ebbing tide;
Slack water; sloops at anchor;
Boys stripped and waiting, irresolute
Tules in crowds, bareheaded
One launch, puffing, absurd, stirring black water,
Rocking the tules;
Butterflies, drunk, perching,
Clinging awhile to lavender asters
Blown across in chaff from the hay wharf
And lodged in the tules, growing on nothing;
Sunflowers too heavy to stand
Sprawling on the mud near the asters;
Boys plunging and squealing;
Rusty oil pipe with gaping mouth
Waiting the scow that will feed it;
Quivering air on the metal roofs of the warehouse;
Slime on the ankles of the piles;
Shadows hiding far under the wharves;
One old Greek with arms crossed, hugging the top of a
pile,
Thinking of something his father told him
About the old port of Athens.

D. B. Kimball

[The Western Pegasus Is an Uncut Broncho]

As an expression of opinion about the nature of the Western Pegasus, we cannot resist printing these lines. They come to us from one of our earliest and most enthusiastic friends, formerly connected with The Little Review.

The Western pegasus is an uncut broncho.

It is true that there is a certain
venerableness about antique mares:
but let those whose pegasus is an antique
mare contribute to other magazines
which shall be nameless.

It is also true that Junipero Serra
came early to this country:
smell the garret
in old San Gabriel.

Our tradition is to have none.

The Western pegasus
is a pony that the buckoes cannot break
though they lace him till
his nostrils pant blood.

Rolfe Humphries

On the Overland

SLEEPING PASSENGERS:

A queer compound of hollows, edges, bumps,
They sprawl in ugly, Godforsaken lumps
With never a sign of soul.
Whatever holy ghost they have to guide them
Must have retreated way down deep inside them
Like a gopher down his hole.

AND SPEAKING OF GOPHERS:

The train roars on another dusty mile
And he resumes possession of the track
With cheerful countenance that seems to say,
“Sure, go ahead and take the right of way,
I’ll let you have my railroad for a while,
Only be sure to give the darn thing back.”

OBSERVATION:

Orange and crimson fade away,
Flame to ashes. A cloud of grey,
A great grey cloud, like a great grey wing
Broods quietly over every thing.
Blue dust of darkness fills the hollows
But the pale light still hovers high
With a flock of clouds like little swallows
Hurrying homeward through the sky.

Vaguely wavering, with the night
Comes coolness. And the pale, high light

Shimmers and shades from gold to green
Like a distant sea, far seen, far seen.
Never a sound, nor ever a motion
Where dark sad hills meet the unreal ocean—

* * *

The only meanly discordant noise is
The passengers' harsh and hushless voices.

Weare Holbrook

Risus Eram Positis

Propertius: III, xxv

CYNTHIA, the party that you gave last night
Was (I shall use a very mild word) gay,
And it was rather fun to watch men play
Upon the floor like babes, to see girls fight
With roses—screaming, pelting, pink-and-white.
But when the east ripped open into day
The revellers vanished, leaving me to pay
The check. I ask you, Cynthia, is it right?
These parties may give pleasure to your friends,
And generosity (forgive the platitude)
Is noble, but the utter worm who spends
His money for the food, should have his due.
I'm weary of this misplaced gratitude—
I'm tired of hearing others kissing you.

Hazel Farkasch

September Nights

1

The vine-covered porch
With its cozy swing
Stifles me in its niceness.

2

Water jewels from the garden hose
Glisten avidly
Under early moonlight shafts,
Which float upon the heavy air
In silence.

3

Across the street
The cutout muffler on a Hudson six
Scrapes through my nerves
And leaves them raw
For waves of heat
To fester.

In the icecream parlor
Down the street
Perspiring couples sip thin lemonade
Through slender straws
And clasp moist hands
Ecstatically
Beneath the table.

Bernardine Alpert

Mist

Do droop the eucalyptus trees
Like dark castles in the mist;
Poppies are cold in the garden
And a curl of mist
Drifts through the keyhole
In the gate.

APRES-MIDI

Sun lies heavy on the sun-burnt hills
And wild honeysuckle drugs the senses
A blue sky pants above, bells murmur
Far away
And the world lies drowned in mid-afternoon.

CHINOISERIE

The wind sings in the willow tree
The river's at the flood,
A crookt moon hangs in the pale green sky
And heavy thoughts in
My heart.

Pauline Barrington

Los Angeles

About a mission it began to grow,
The City of the Angels long ago;
A Spanish mission, red-tiled,
Whose palm-fringed plaza smiled
Near the desert's rim;
Built by the Fathers to the Cross,
Built by the Fathers to the Virgin.

Cars—cars—cars—
Steam cars, electric cars and gasoline cars
Overrun the city, crowding
The long roads to the sea and mountains.

Silver ribbon roads cut through
The orange and the lemon groves
The gray-green olive trees,
Dust-coated by the desert breeze
Blowing and spraying
The artesian well fountains.
Cars—cars—cars—
They have put out the stars
And filled the silence of the nights
With their horns and big headlights.

The clanging trolley cars blare,
“Watch us grow!”

The half-skyscrapers glare
And crow.
Chinatown with its lotteries and its tongs,
Sonoratown with its vendettas and its songs,
The Indians from the reservations
Watch with stolid grace,
And inscrutable face.
The tourists and their relations
From Papeete and Tokio,
Malay and Singapore,
Calcutta, Cairo,
Paris, London, Rome,
New York, Baltimore,
Chicago, Needles then—
All around and back again
Come looking for a home;
Come searching sanctuary, health,
Reputation, wealth
Or rest.
Men of all sorts
From far ports,
To this City of the Angels,
Where the sun burns in the West.
The City goes on growing,
Piling up houses, in a mad quest
To cover more space
On the earth's broad breast.
There is an ugly hurrying,
A hideous scurrying
Of the rats,
Of crawling vermin in the cellars,

And the bats.
There are the artificial and the stupid
Who do not care;
The old, withered, worn out, done,
Crowds of moving feet,
Up and down the dusty street,
Searching for God
Somewhere in the sun.

The Fathers built the mission long ago;
Around it the City began to grow.
The mission bells still ring against the sky,
Muffled with dust,
Crackled with rust;
Unheard in the crowded streets,
Like an old heart missing beats;
A song of days gone by,
Finding its way deep in the rhythm
Of the struggles and battles of today.

Edna Goit Brintnall

Chinatown

A low narrow doorway—indistinct stair
A long narrow passage—ending—where ?
A blue tipped gaslight's steady flare,
A rodent that ventures, but does not dare,
A silent figure, with vacant stare,
A thin reed pipe, tip-tilted chair
A bright carved balcony high in the air—
A scarlet geranium—who put it there?

Eda Lu Walton

In the Telephone Book

one of the poems the magazine printed together as "In Silence"

Running down the long, black list
Of little letters
And numbers of telephones,
My finger pauses and trembles
Over your name and address—
(My name and address
That is another's).
What does it matter
That I have promised
To accept a new address?
The throb of your name,
The curve and compactness
Of the little letters,
The singing numbers
Which, if I called,
Would answer with your voice,
Smite me more bitterly
Than any sweetness
Of stern living,
Name me more surely
Than any signature
Beneath the oath
Of Love.

Roubaix de l'Abrie Richey

Streetscape

The scarlet rear lamps
Of the myriad fleeting cars
Make pools of blood
Upon the glimmering black pavement
The futile drops of rain cannot wash out...

A line of street lights stamps
The long vista with bluish
Opalescent stars. . . .

Wrapped in sleep
A house leans heavily upon its shadows
Like an old man leaning on a staff. . .

The dark windows running with the rain
Are like blind eyes that weep. . .
And the wind as it lurches through the street
Makes a sound
Like a cold, hard laugh.

Roubaix de l'Abrie Richey

Georgia Rowles

Pictures on My Japanese Fan

I

PLUM ORCHARD

Lo, fragrant plum trees
Printing white script with flowers—
Book of living leaves!

II

SPRINGS

Into brown earth-cups,
Full of silver water, the
Vain sky looks . . . all day.

III

THE SPIDERS' PALACE

Wet with mist of night,
A scarf of silken silver,
Loomed on the still grass.

IV

THE WISHING BRIDGE

Curved like a drawn bow
To the arrow ;—wishes are swift
White wings of prayer.

V

THE GEISHA AND HER KOTA

Jet-haired maid, sing on,
The old moon has a still tongue;
Fear not, sing, love on.

VI

SUNSET

In the towering
Sky—bronze, a quiet topaz bell,
The lone Evening Star!

VII

MOUNT FUJI

Lo, your sacred head
Leans on restless clouds—ice-white,
With a heart of fire.

VIII

STARS

Bright, like open doors
To lit rooms—risen city,
Greeting many guests!

IX

THE MOON

One white rose, the moon,
On trellis of stars. Beyond
The lofty blue way?

X

TO THE SAMURAI

Life is bloom of Time.
Oh snow, Spring, and souls, gone like
Old forgotten rain.

Rolfe Humphries

February

The wind
with a sudden flurry of rain
dashes at the car-window.

Rounding a curve towards us,
rushing out of the dark
comes the light
of the Limited, southbound.

Forehead against the cool window,
looking out, I can see round, feathery things,
cloud shapes, streaming and flying.

But I cannot tell
whether the clouds are acacia trees
storm-tossed in the darkness
or great puffs of steam from the engine
flying and streaming, yellow
in the glare of the headlight.

Weare Holbrook

The Drifter's Wife

Move on, Charlie Davis! Don't talk to me so—
Don't tell me about this wonderful new town.
I can see a lot of things that you are mighty blind to;
One of them is this: you aren't built to settle down.
First I believed all the pretty tales you told me,
And every time we moved I would say, "Here's the
place!"
Danville to Bree, and Bree to Alta City,
A rip in the davenport, and one less vase.
Alta City faded. Then we went to Vessburg.
There came the babies. That was home, I thought.
But for a moment . . . and Shreveport beckoned,
Snatched away the little joy that Vessburg brought.
Now what is your new love?—not that it matters.
Call it El Dorado; that's a pretty name,
But don't talk to me as if you wanted me to buy it,—
You, who will never learn that towns are all the same.
Here are the "household goods." How those words
describe them!
Furniture that winces at the drayman's hand,
Poor little knick-knacks rolled up in a mattress,
Curtain-rods bristling from an old umbrella-stand
Move on, Charlie,—Lord knows you can't help it!
I'll go where you go, and the kids will tag along.

Sure though I am that we'll never gain by moving,
Always there's the chance that perhaps I may be
wrong.

Gwendolen Haste

Montana Wives

HORIZONS

I had to laugh,
For when she said it we were sitting by the door,
And straight down was the Fork
Twisting and turning and gleaming in the sun.
And then your eyes carried across to the purple bench
 beyond the river
With the Beartooth Mountains fairly screaming with
 light and blue and snow,
And fold and turn of rimrock and prairie as far as your
 eye could go.
And she says: "Dear Laura, sometimes I feel so sorry
 for you,
Shut away from everything—eating out your heart
 with loneliness.
When I think of my own full life I wish that you could
 share it.
Just pray for happier days to come and bear it."

She goes back to Billings to her white stucco house,
And looks through net curtains at another white stucco
 house,
And a brick house,
And a yellow frame house,
And six trimmed poplar trees,

And little squares of shaved grass.

Oh, dear, she stared at me like I was daft.

I couldn't help it! I just laughed and laughed!

THE DRYLANDER'S DAUGHTER

He bought this place a month before we married,
And we have lived here now almost a year.
It's one of the best ranches in the valley,
The soil is fine—you don't have failures here.
It has a nice white painted house and the main
highroad's near.

But I was raised upon a benchland claim,
Where the great waves of the sagebrush meet the sky,
And my heart hungers for the restless springtime
When the great gales are high,
Filling the chill air with mad rushing voices,
While black against the clouds the geese go by.

This is a quiet pretty little spot,
The water sings all day among my flowers,
And down in the cool pasture by the river
His blooded cattle doze away the hours,
While through the trees, beyond the hills, blue Castle
Mountain towers.

But my heart leaps back to the great gray shoulders
Of shaggy benchland that I love the best,
And I remember all the frozen winters,
As end of day brought rest,
How dark and savage was the night with shadows
And a finger of green light along the west.

HOLLYHOCKS

If I could just get hollyhocks to grow.

Mis' Jensen, in the valley, has a garden.
They ran a ditch behind the house. She raises phlox,
And zinnias and sweetpeas and bachelor's buttons,
And by the fence great loads of hollyhocks.
She said that they would bloom where nothing grows,
And gave me seed for pink and white and rose.

I planted them and through the early summer
They grew like flowers back East, and sent out lots of
 shoots,
But when the drouth came on they never blossomed,
Just dried and shriveled up right to the roots.
At first I carried water every night,
But 'twant no good with dust and heat to fight.

See there they are against the fence—
Poor brown ghosts in a row.
Oh God, I think that I could stand the rest
If I could just get hollyhocks to grow!

Ellen Coit Elliott

Prima Donna of the Negro Jazz Orchestra

I am the lemon-lily queen.

Midnight crepe-myrtle is my hair,
My face curves down to my pointed chin
Betwixt my golden earrings like a warm seckle pear.

My tunic is a withered buff rose.

Palely my arms fall down.
The fiddles leap behind me, a thin flute blows,
Cr-r-racks a sudden trombone, then all notes drown

In the drum's eager rustle. Juggling the sticks
Brown Joe tosses an aristocratic head—
Bow to right, smile to left, flourishing the tricks

Of some fancy colonel his grandmother never wed.

My walk is a poplar blown,
Gift of a moon-white dame
Whose star-white son left me besides
My golden color of shame.

The tom-tom is throbbing in my heart
And the orchestra's catching surges;
I sing you foolish airs—
That burst with shadowy dirges.

I voice my wild black mothers:
 I drone them cool and low;
I croon the winds that blew and ceased
 A thousand years ago.

I wail my captive fathers,
 The violins complain;
I hone for a passionate wilderness
 And the pelt of tropic rain.
I beat my hands and cry,
 The 'cellos moan and quiver
I fling my curse to, a far-off sky
 Over a jungled river.

I lift my arms and lean
 To the white song's white embrace,
But I yearn to a thousand lovers
 Of my black forgotten race.

The sooty leader sways,
 The violins flicker and hum,
The wood-winds speak, the cornet brays,
 Joe is in a frenzy at the drum.

And I am the tea-rose queen,
 Daughter of milk and wine;
Like a willow blown I bow and I bow,
 And my ear-rings tremble and shine.

Mabel W. Phillips

Calcutta

The River.

Draped in a nun's veil
Silently the river glides
To secret meetings.
The temple pearl-white,
One of Buddha's priceless gems,
Clasping Asia's throat.

The City by Night.

A nestling rose-bud
Over which the shades of night
Spread cool, fragrant leaves.

The City by Day.

A passion bloom
Into which pours hiving bees
Seeking sweets to devour.

Hazel Hall

A Late Passer

Sleep came like rose petals falling on my pillow,
And then a wind of feet
Blew over me, whirling the petals of my slumber
Before it down the street.

Rolfe Humphries

Evening on Tahoe

There's been a forest fire somewhere to-day
And now at evening all the lake is grey
Merging with hazy sky, whose mystery
Veiling the northern mountains, makes a sea
That reaches into the distance far and dim;
The sky is starless, but around the rim
Clusters of little lights blink clear and bright
(Diamonds that flash and sparkle best by night.)
My old boat chugs along. A fleck of spray
Dampens my face. And still the night, gray, gray
Haunts me with the suggestion of the view.
Past vision, wistful with distance. . . . I wish that you...
I cut the motor off, and drift, and lean
Over the side. Soft paths of red and green
Waver across the water. It's very still.
Inland, a sounding stream pours down the hill
To quiet in the lake, and peace at the last.
Oh, peace, and quiet, and—loneliness coming fast!
Pity that beauty always must be so lonely ;—
Perhaps,—Yet, always, I love beauty. Only,—
It was hot to-day, but now the air has gone
Quite chilly,
I'll land, and get my sweater on.

Virgil Geddes

Summer Movement

Heat on a summer afternoon
Is a wavering, sticky web;
And people walk from houses,
Caught in a net of fetid strings,
In a half-wakeful, helpless nightmare.
A suburban park is littered
With many lovers on the grass,
And young hearts strum a monody
In softly frightful tones.

And thus in stupid ease
I slouch on a bench
And grin at the languid
Scrawls on the grass.

Gwendolyn Haste

Biography

Senator Joseph M. Cutler stares from page
three-seventy-five of the History of Yellowstone
County,
With his nicely clipped beard and moustache,
And the wrinkles smoothed out of his face,
And his fine tailored coat setting trim on his
shoulders—

“Joseph M. Cutler, born in Illinois, came to Montana
in 1875 and engaged in ranching.”

Joe Cutler, do you remember
The smell of the sage as it drove with the rain through
the cracks in the cabin?
The roar of the Yellowstone, savage—churning—
Eating—eating—crumbling off huge bites of young
farmland,
The shuddering terror of the cattle,
The smashing deluge of that first spring?

“After being admitted to the bar in 1884 he practiced
law in Billings. Elected State Senator in 1898.”

Fighting Joe Cutler, do you remember
The day you and Skunkem Bill stole up Dry Creek
after wolf skins?

Can you see the dusty dead buffalo grass,
The tangled rosebushes and willows?
Can you see that clump of cottonwoods?
There!
Who are they?
Crows?
Ah, God—no!
Joe Cutler, do you remember
How you lay with the body of Skunkem Bill huddled in
the tangled willows and rosebushes,
Until those that were left galloped away,
And that night slipped down the river
With your heart pounding at the voice of the wind,
And the chuckle of the water?
“Senator Cutler is a stanch Republican and always
takes an active and leading part in the various
campaigns
of that party.”

Fighting Joe Cutler, do you remember
The night of the roundup down near Prewett’s
roadhouse—
Prewett, the creeping snake, the breeder of evil?
There were some that stayed at the roundup that night
tending the cattle and horses?
Were you one of them, Joe Cutler?
Or were you one of those, who in the wavering early
light
Crept back to the camp on the creek
While Prewett lay on the floor of his roadhouse, a little
dark hole in his forehead?

“He is a member of the Masonic fraternity, being a Shriner, also a member of the Commercial Club, the Country Club, and a Rotarian.”

Fighting Joe Cutler, don't the skies ever call you?
What do you do when at night the wild ducks clang
across the dark?

There are trails, Joe Cutler, that have never been
ridden,

Bronchos that have never been broken.

Fighting Joe, what is it happens when a man settles
down?

Does something go away and leave him?

Or is it there all the time, hidden under those neat
whiskers and that carefully tailored coat?

Jack Hyatt, Jr

Ching Loo Dreams

Pitter—patter—pit
Yellow feet slipping back and forth.

“Mark this collar;
It is new
And goes with that white shirt, a married
Man is he—I can tell by
His socks.”

Some day, some day, I will
Go back—back to
Yen-San,
Land of Lovely Dripping Moons,
Back to her,
Princess of Laughter
Silks shall be hers and lacquers old,
Jewels and a house—one hundred
Dancing girls
To chase away the weary shadows in her eyes
—make them Pools of Merriment.
Dancing girls to amuse her.
And I with her
Thru the all too short, short
Night of Slumbering Shadows.

“This shirt; it is Pink Nose’s;

Dirty! He only owns two
And wears them each two weeks and then four days
—sometimes he loses his ticket,
But always I know his shirts, and his nose.”

Some day, some day, I am going
Away from these hot irons,
Clouds of steam.

—San Jo is boiling
My rice;
A tiny vapor eddies from the pot, the black pot,
Mingled with the steam,
Washing clean,
The dirt of human bodies:
Dirt—dirt—dirt—

Pitter—patter—pit,
“Thirty-seven cents.”

When I return, heads will bow
And I will sit
With robes, scarlet and green, hands clean
All day;
—do naught but eat and sing and dream
And watch, untiring,
My Princess of Laughter dance for mine eyes
Alone.
And when the Moon of Moons
Sleeps for the Hours of Night
I will take her in my arms
—her lips will meet mine,

Taking all—Little Dove of Mirth.

“Eh-h-h—that rice tasted good.”

Now, to smoke
And rest for much awhile, to dream
Of soft leaves spread
 For her and me
 As we
Move in the Floating Shadows
Before the Lilting Waters of Ten-Ye-Sal
 —move lazily, dreamily, ever more—

“Collars ready, Thursday.”

Next week, next week, I leave
By the Great Bird on the Waters
Across the Sea
 —which smiles with me
If I can but turn
A lucky card, tomorrow a day,
At Sen-Ko-Pee’s Palace
On the Street of Slanting Shadows.

Pitter—patter—pit,
Yellow feet slipping back and forth.

Cornelia Meade Scarborough

The Desert Passes

Noon—

Waste of tortured earth—

Deep red gashes, vanishing towards carnelian
hills,

Tufts of bunch-grass keeping jealous distance each
from each,

Guarding the precious moisture.

Leprous patches of alkali impassively reflecting

The sun's inexorable glare.

Now and again a whitened, horned skeleton

Showing where a hapless sacrifice was offered

Upon the altar of the sun.

Dust-devils circling feverishly, like ghosts of desert
dancers

A crooked road, warped by the heat,

Leading to the canyon's mouth

Where yuccas stand, guarding its cool green
depths—

A row of living bayonets, flinging their challenge to
the sun—

Evening—

Telegraph poles, endlessly passing,

Strung on wires that stripe with black

The sunset colors of the western sky.

Floating island clouds turn pink, dim to gray,

And sink into the ocean of night that engulfs the
world.

The gleam of a stream, darkly flowing—
A blasted tree—bare cliffs point the soft blackness.
And ever the telegraph poles sentinel the way.
A light leaps out of the night—
Another, and another. . . .
Houses take shape, cluster thickly—
Then all is blank. . . .
The porter has drawn the curtain
And is making up my berth.

Morning—

The sun sends out his trumpet call,
And the heralds of the dawn appear,
With shining golden lances,
The gathering hosts of day mount higher, higher
up the sky,
Till comes the age-old cry,
“Let there be light!”
And night is conquered.

John Drury

Spell of Granite

CHICAGO

City,
Flaunting the iron of your strength
Across the prairies,
You have been cruel to me—
You have twisted my being
Into unreal shapes and attitudes.
But yet, O my city,
I have loved you
For all your masculine brutality.
I have watched a thin curve of moon
Lying in the smoky red behind your factories
And have seen the white reach of your skyscrapers.
Out of mist mornings.
My heart has been torn in your rude hands
But you have had me in a strange wonder,
O flaunting city.

AFTER SUNDOWN

Dusk on the avenues
Is a blue garden
Flowered by static chrysanthemums
Of many street-lamps
And vaunted by a vague perfume
Of old dreams.

SONG OF REALITY

Far up in the sky
On vermillion lines and squares
Of a half-built skyscraper
Little figures hammer a rapping song—
Woodpeckers
In the gray forest of the city
Endlessly pecking
At destiny.

DEARBORN AND MADISON

Pulsing carnival of downtown streets
In the blue-tinted early morning. . .
Puppets, puppets bobbing by
Pulled by strings—
Taut, ecstatic strings of love—
Strings of hope—
And relaxed, silent strings
Of disillusionment.

And blandly,
Like an old man remembering,
The huge round moon of autumn
Gazes between sharp lines of buildings,
Gazes on the confetti of faces
And has his own thoughts about it all.

GO TO IT, MY CITY

Fling your smoke into the face of the morning sun;
Let the sulphur smoke from your proud locomotives
Hang like a frown upon the brow of the lake.
And let miles of corn out on the open spaces
Be hushed at the faraway muffled roar
Of your whirling machines and reaching cranes.
Fling your smoke into the face of the morning sun
And be on the run into waking daylight!

R. Ellsworth Larson

Chamber Music

I have not seen you

Yet, here in the garden,

I feel your presence.

The air lies lifeless,

But at the pool's edge

An iris quivers expectantly.

I strain my ears to bursting,

Yet your footstep eludes me.

Behind the sun's copper screen,

A butterfly rustles its wings.

A cloud of white butterflies

Could not obscure the sun,

So I sit here,

Waiting.

I have prepared myself well

For your coming.

I have clothed myself in white satin.

I have made my body fragrant

With sweet-smelling herbs

And my lips splendid

With the crimson of berries.

In the depths of my heart,
I have sealed wisps of white clouds.

In the cold dawn,
When the wild birds cried
At the edge of the forest,
I answered them not.

With lumbering steps
The hot noon
Stalks through the plum trees. . . .
Perhaps I have overprepared the event.

Reflections of gray clouds
Make my heart heavy.
I cannot longer see the sun.
Blue mountains grieve
In the east.
When night falls,
I shall slip through the willows
And grieve, also.

Hugo Folliard

Contemporary Literature

CARL SANDBURG

There is something strange in words:
Grove—grope—
And I see a man
Gasp
And step forward.

GALSWORTHY

Dark ferreter of life,—
Assuming nothing, denying nothing.

Pitying, ghost-like camera,
Arnold Genthe, photographer of damned souls. . . .

CONRAD

The subtlest thought of hidden souls
Flashes facet after facet
From a welter of exotic trappings,

And dim motives
Deep under pain and sorrow and misunderstanding
Shine clear with each deliberate stroke.

Thru all a mystic mood of sadness,
Vast as the flowing steppe
And changeless as sea-wind,
Broods like the luckless bird.

And black-robed fate hangs up black tapestries,
While swiftly streaming thru a jagged rent,
Bejeweled and bubbling,
Dance myriad colored points of light.

Paul Eldridge

Tsi Ouan Wishes to Believe in Resurrection

The leaves of the lotus flower
Fall into the river,
Which flows from the Great Mountain
Into the White Sea.

Some say
The river will change its manner,
Will flow out of the White Sea
Upward,
Over the Great Mountain,
Bringing back
The leaves of the lotus flower.

I drink a thousand cups of wine,
Hoping to understand this.

Hazel Hall

Pursuit

She knows someone is following her—
Else why the commotion of her feet,
And why do her shrill heels cry and cry
To people passing: Quick! let me by?

She knows someone is following her,
And fears to look backward down the street—
Else why does she always plunge ahead
Crying: Quick! let me pass! with her tread?

She knows someone is following her,
And: Mercy! Mercy! her footsteps beat.
Yet relentlessly her own Self steals,
Close as a shadow, forever at her heels.

Bertha McE. Knipe

The Almond Blossoms

The almond tree is in flower,
The dooryard is a wedding bower,
Wild sweet and roofed with tremulous patterns of rose
and pearl.
Under the almond bower the cobbler leans to his
work,—
He presses the hard leather over his knees,
He kneads it with his flat thumbs,
He moulds the leather to his needs.
The cobbler is an old man,
His hands move slowly, his dim eyes rove.
There is warmth in the sheltered doorway
And the south wind dances with the sunbeams.

The cobbler is an old man,
He has known the lonesome desert,—
The shifting sands under the grey wings of rain,
The pain in a homesick heart;
Here in the warm doorway,
He remembers the bleak trail and snow-capped peaks,
The wail of the searching beast
And the pale huddled sheep,—
Night winds by a fireless camp
And the death of sleep.
Here in the warm doorway he remembers
The far journey and his heart expands.

He raises his head, he listens,—
The music of winging bees,—bees
Gathering in the almond trees' boughs!

The cobbler is an old man,
He listens to the bees, he laughs aloud,
He calls to his wife,
"Felice, Felice, the bees, the bees, the black bees,
The Spanish bees, pure Castilian, that I
Brought from the fair!
See, they are working in the almond flowers;
The hives will be filled, they will be running over
And the honey is white, I swear to you,
It is pure white, white like the soul of a flower."

Felice is an old woman,
She crouches in the doorway,
A goat skin lies over her knees;
She is cleaning the goat skin,
Her long fingers are curved like an eagle's talons,
She claws at the raw hide;
Her narrow eyes glitter, they are shallow pools;
Her face is wrinkled like a dried fig,
It is the color of a pine-tree nut.

Felice is an old woman but her eyes are not dim,
Her ears are not dull;
She hears the voice of her husband and is silent,
She listens to the droning of the bees and is silent;
She has learned many things over the mealing stones
And the kneading trough;

Over the cradle and the little brown bodies.
The bees gather in the almond flowers.

Felice is an old woman, she remembers the hours of her
youth,
She remembers the day of her wedding,—
Wax flowers and a veil and paid fiddlers
Who played all the day, and the almond tree
Flowering by the doorway.

Jessica Nelson North

Wheels and Wings

Four stories high,—
Four smoky windows in a smoky sky,—
Thus far our poverty and love have led us.
Our small room trembles when the trains go by.
The iron bed
Rocks like a cradle, and the dark world reels,
And below us and around
All day we hear the sound
Of wheels, wheels,—

Sometimes across our sky
An airplane hums.
It passes by,
And the sound of its engine comes
No louder than the beating of our hearts.

Have cheer, love, and rejoice.
These are wonderful things,
Wheels and wings.
What kingdom so remote,
What far bright destination of your choice,
What cloudy citadel of upper air
But some adventurous embassy is there?

All day below us in the market place,
Wheels roll sturdily in—

Wheels that turn swiftly, loyally around,
Laying their patient rims along the ground.
All day above us pass the wings that bear
The brave, adventurous nomads of the air.

Hearts know no barrier in days like these.
Free-roaming fancy travels where it will,
For look, love, neither wilderness nor hill,
Nor the four seas,
Nor all the skies with their uncharted span
Hold back the swift, undaunted soul of man.

Belle Turnbull

The Gallant Warrior

So that is done!
And I can stretch my face in my own house,
Alone.
Must all my kin
Choose May to marry in?
Ah... So!
In this house, too, it seems, is spring—
Three popcorn buds of cherries on a stem
That shows the scars of former blossoming—
Scars . . . Oh,
Can I not manage now,
Even at forty-seven, to endure
One little cherry-bough?

“I love you more,”—he used to murmur it—
“Than all the cherry-blossoms, white
On all the cherry-trees
In all the world.”
I found out after—not from him—that bit
Was taken from a play.

Best have Annette throw them away—
But no—
I'll leave them here for just an hour or two
And lean against my thorn—
Come, this will never do!

A minute yet,
And I'll be feeling sorry for myself—

Annette!

Bring me my walking-stick
The vapors almost had me. Ever sick
With that complaint?
(Of course, she fairly wallows; she's eighteen.)
Going to see that pup Jimps offered me;
Pups dissolve vapors and are death to spleen—

And oh, Annette!

(That girl has wings for feet!)

Look here—

If your young man should have an evening free,
Take him to look at my old cherry-tree;
It must be rather sweet
This year. . . .

Ruth E. McKee

A Study in Pastels

You are very charming in your orchid-shaded gown,
Reading Astrophel and Stella in the shadows.
There is no touch of dissonance about you:
Your hands are virginal as lily petals
Clasped beneath the curious leather volume,
Your hair curls softly brown in silken tendrils,
Outlining demurely the pallor of your face,
Even the trembling line of your mouth is coral—
Crimson would jar rudely on such chastity.

Pauline Garner Curran

Neisan

The koto loom is on the floor,
Her fingers weave a pattern gay
Across the strings,—my ear perceives
Hotaru, Little Fire-fly.

Marjorie Loomis Cherry

A Ride

The wind-shield misted with the rain,
The roofs of homes amid the trees,
Then sunshine thru the clouds again,
White petals falling with the breeze.

A little town thru which we pass,
A poor man trudging by alone,
Long shadows on the orchard grass,
A red flower by a graveyard stone.

Belle Turnbull

A Woman's Diary

1

All the lazy afternoon
Under my purple beach-parasol
I heard the slow waves lap and croon,
Lap and croon.
The wise wind whispered me a rune:
Peace is all.

A new man called last night.
'Twas formal, quite!
We spoke of books;
Frenchwomen's looks;
A mutual friend, whose courtesy
Requested him to visit me;
Books, books again
(He's all books, then?)
Conrad's queer style—
And all the while
A mad rip-tide,
Racing outside,
Boomed.
Hissed. . . .
Boomed. . . .

3

When I met, yesterday, my young lover
 (Blue-chinned now),
 And we rattled the bones of the dead past over,
 Found that vow
 Fallen away from about the hoard,
 A snapped band,
 We were both of us thoroughly bored.
 . . « Understand,
 I am heartily glad to be done
 With it all;
 Content with the sand and the sun
 And my beach-parasol.

4

He is not all books, it seems—
 (But I wish—I wish he were!)
 His lips are quicksilver,
 Racing along the streams
 Of my beating veins. Tonight
 He tipped my head far back
 To find the haunted track
 Where Aldebaran burns white—
 And then, full on my mouth,
 Pulsed that deep kiss—As well
 Resist as try to quell
 A cloudburst after drouth.

I hate the sea. . . .

Can it be
The restlessness that is in me,
Made manifest relentlessly?
Is the sea nothing but a mood,
Never subdued?

Morning, I thought, is the time to face
 Sentiment, in a prosy place
 (I was undone by a star.)
 So I arranged to go in to town,
 Wearing my least becoming gown;
 And we met in the Model's waiting-room,
 Brisk and sunny and all abloom
 With rosy women, west-coast bred.
 "Oh, these are sweet," I said,
 "And I so mountain-tanned,
 So scarred with living, and
 So fearful to be stirred!
 My peace. . . ."

 He scarcely heard.
 He interrupted me,
 Speaking quite savagely:
 "When the South Sea women are free
 Loosed to love—they wear
 Hibiscus in their hair.

But you, lest love befall—
 That greatest gift of all—
 Run to put up a wall.
 You sickeningly prate
 Of peace, who were born my mate.

Are you a woman, you!

Or a bloodless image? Pooh!
I wish to God you were
A South Sea islander!"
Then he strode off on a darkening gust
Of anger. I saw his big shoulders thrust
Into the elevator throng.
Was that today? How long!

7

I will go back to where that Squaw in stone
Lies on the mountain ridge to watch alone
The marching stars deploy above her face
I will outmatch her calmness with my own.

8

From all my feckless flight
One thing to learn:
Aldebaran,
Whichever way I turn,
Burns on the night.

. . « If I should pocket pride—
Heed your behest,
Aldebaran—
Follow a star-path west,
Home, to his side. . .

How will he look, this evening, if I wear
A red hibiscus blossom in my hair?

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth

The Dance

The dancer bends
Sowing symbolic seeds across the bare boards of the
stage;
His eagle feathers sway from side to side.
(Far, far off the hot sun is beating down upon the red
mesas
Vibrating with heat
At their feet in the dry wash the women have broken
the earth
And are planting seeds.
Their right arms sweep outwards in a slow monotonous
motion,
Their shadows are purple on the red earth,
And the buzzards alone move across the blue width of
the sky.)

The dancer dances faster and faster
He is whirling and leaping,
He is reeling, the feathers of his head-dress sweep
across his face from side to side
As the heads of Indian corn sweep in the frenzy of a
storm.
(Far, far away in the pueblos on the mesas the priests
are gathered
Singing and stamping and shaking their rattles,

Calling upon the fork-winged blue birds to intercede for
 them,
Begging the thundering locusts to carry their message,
Invoking the he-gods who stand upon the rain-bows
Arched high above the rain-clouds
Far away the priests are praying.)

The dancer is still,
Kneeling, head flung back,
Arms outstretched.

(Far, far off over the mesas the storm is gathering
The heavy clouds press down upon the flat summits,
The trees by the washes tremble with eagerness,
Upon the house-tops the people wait.
There is no sound in the oppressive silence;
No movement but the movement of the slow black
 clouds
Across the blue of the sky.

Then like a serpent, the lightning darts from the
 caverns of darkness,
With a crackling of thunder,
And upon the mesas
Slowly, slowly,
The first drops fall.)

May Williams Ward

Upon Reading Sandburg's "Limited"

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Annihilation—
Annihilation of my past, of my personality, of my very
name,
Now that I am going west for a new start at the end of
my prison sentence,"
So I just said "Omaha."

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Heaven on earth
Through the gate of satisfied desire
When I marry Mary tomorrow,"
So I just said "Omaha."

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Hell
With the soul of the dirty profiteer for whose killing the
bomb in my bag is intended,"
So I just said "Omaha."

Elizabeth Davie

Summer Sketches of Southern California

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER

The river is dead.
His corpse lies twisted
And ghostly white
Under gray willows
Under the silent yellow trumpets
Of the San Juan tree.
A buzzard lays black shadow wreaths
On him . . .
Frightened foxes leave quick tracks
Across his breast:
And in the night
Owls mourn.
The river is dead.

SOLEDAD

The moon stood white
In the noon-blue sky
 Still and alone,
And gray in a river's sandy bed
A heron stood in a stagnant pool
 Moody and sad.
And those two talked in a silent way
Over the yellow quiet hills
 Through the speechless day.

WINDS IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

We open the wind-shield
A mob rides suddenly
Against my face
And past it . . .
Hot hands tug at my nostrils
And tear at the lobes of my ears:
Strong fingers
Comb roughly through my hair
And rumple my eyelids:
I feel the burning pricks
Of invisible sand darts
And a scorching breath
Against my flesh
As the valley winds
Rage by.

A CARRION MOON

At noon the moon walked
Faint and tired,
Weary of her long way to go
Across the sea:
A buzzard soared out from the hills
And eyed her halting faint and low
Hungriely.
And, starved, he dreamed of a carrion moon
As he cast his weird black
Shadow net
Above the sea.

A MISTY MORNING AT LA JOLLA

The day has come back from China way
With a ragged petticoat
They stole her lovely dress away
And the sun-brooch at her throat.

Her eyes stare so dull-wise
And she's livid as gray clay
What dragging grief on her mouth lies?
What cruel folk met she China way?

Leonora F. Curtin

A Pastel

In early Autumn
The leaves of a Tulip-tree
Flutter in radiant sunlight
And settle on a tile roof
Like a flight of yellow butterflies
On red earth after rain.

Weare Holbrook

The Belle of the Ball

She was the last to leave
The salon of the 'sixties. . . .
She took away with her to keep
Little things flattened in the pages of a book,
—A kiss pressed burning through a beard,
The sickly odor of pomade,
Daguerreotypes like watered wine,
And the pendulum-drip of the gavotte
Receding with the unexpected stones
Which barked against the carriage-wheels . . .
On nights when stars,
Shadows,
And southern air
Connive for love and lovers,
She walks among the headstones on the hill,
Among the sleeping beaux of yesteryear
All are there, each in his mouldy chair,
And pirouetting with her Paisley shawl
She glances archly at a flat white face:
Joun Tueron, 1831-1898. . . .
John—ah, John was so particular!
Remembering, she stands abashed,
And puts in place a straggling weed of hair.

Laura Riding Gottschalk

Adjustment

You thought our arms were too pertly
Akimbo for two chairs that were
As old as we. You said there was
Something obscenely gay in our
Perverse hilarity and took
Us to be sobered in the attic.

A gaffer and a gammer now,
You two, as blithe as yearlings you
Declare to all your little ones.
But they are arrogantly tender
For all your wistful liveliness
And superciliously bring
You shawls and slippers worrying
That their new furniture may be
Too spry for elderly repose.
They pried into the attic and
There found two chairs grudgingly sober
And said that they were quaint as those
For whom they brought them down, with their
Old arms akimbo in a worn
And bravely bolstered jollity.

The Lyric West · Vol. III No. 7 · November 1923

George Maxwell

A Typewriter

Joseph Franklin Poland

Post Office Sketches

I. General Delivery

“A—Z”: “E—H”, “J—N”, “O—S”, “T—Z”.

So run the legends over each drab window:
Before each aperture a waiting line,
Humanity at ebb-tide, homeless, derelict;
Theirs not the sheltered snugness of a home,
Fireside ensconced, to wait the mail’s arrival.
With inward-sucking breath they crane to see
The callous clerk glance briskly o’er the pile
Of mail—a hundred fates at finger’s end.
“Your name, please? Green, John A.? There is no letter.

I said, no letter. Next. please. What’s the name?”
And Green, John A., who last night slept upon
A park bench, dully turns away, his feet
Shuffling, thin-soled, over the floor’s cold tiles.
But what a flash of joy illumines the eyes
Of those whose eager hands extend to grasp
Their mail and open it!

The happy smile
Drops from some faces like a hapless bird
Shot on the wing: the long-expected word
Of aid or comfort has not come to them.
One man, glance furtive, manner over-casual,

Opens an envelope with nerveless fingers
And winces, as he reads, with shrinking fear,
As if he hears a key grate in a lock,
Feels iron bars' shadows fall athwart his face.
Casting one hunted look at those about him,
He hurries out. And from a darkened corner
A tall man in plain clothes steps after him.

Edith Miniter

Purple Window Glass

The Squire's house, we call it,
It dominates the street;
Double front roomed, with a majestic front door,
Mansard roof, with a balustraded lookout
(Nothing particular to see),
Sneeringly careless of front yard,
Jealously guarding a vast depth of back garden,
Serene it stands and dominates the street.

The Aristocrat of the Hill, born there,
Felt inordinately proud of purple window glass,
Purple window glass, he saw it as he came up the
street,
Bearing a parcel—a perfectly polite parcel—
Marrons glaces, or a printed book,
Even a box of cigars a gentleman might bring—
But I wish he might now see the parcels
Brought to the house of the purple windows
By those who live in it.

Women, togged in bronze shoes,
But they fetch bundle kindling,
And they fetch potatoes quite brazenly,
In at the sacred front door they fetch them,
And I don't know but it's just as well.

When the house was for sale they bought it,
Black visaged, lately from over seas,
They had money to buy it,
And right after they moved in more of the windows
turned purple,
No one could understand it, their turning purple,
The Aristocrat of the Hill, passing by to a humbled
dwelling on a by street,
Could not believe his eyes, thought it a trick,
But there they gleamed; more and more of them purple.

These newcomers have an Irish name, but an Oriental
complexion,
A great many little children look from the purple
windows,
Where were no children since the Aristocrat 69 years
back

Mothers screech from the purple windows at
their children,
They tell them not to fall, not to wet their
feet,
Not to play with inferior children,
As mothers have done since the beginning of
time;
The children test the pavement with the nose,
Wade in snow drifts,
“Halloo” to Armenians,
As children have always done.

Gossip is rife about the dwellers in the house
of purple windows,
“The girl who married the Italian—you
know—it was just in time”—
(Her child is a massive youngster who floors
most of the others)
“Her sister would marry a Jew—the Priest
refused her confession”—
They are up at 5 a. m., light streams through
the purple windows,
Men-folk hustle down the street, to earn the
bread of their children,
Women bare breasts to their babes, the while
rating the oldsters,
A pedlar’s team stops, bananas and oranges
go in,
A child comes out eating a banana, a picture
of health,
That Aristocrat of the Hill, all of his children
was one,
A daughter, a spinster daughter, deaf to all
words, even love words,
He is sad to see the fate of the house with the
purple windows,
So is she sad—his daughter—
But I don’t know but it’s just as well.

Life dwells there, love dwells there,
A second and third generation dwell there,
And look forth from the purple windows,

Working for the city, voting for the city,
Growing up to think and work and vote for
the city,
To support libraries, school gardens,
settlement centres,
To approve of clean sidewalks, school house
flags, an electric lighted statehouse,
All things that appeal to the well-to-do immigrant,
And not to the decadent Aristocrat of the Hill.

That it is sold and bought, house of the purple window
glass,
I don't know but it's just as well.

Medora C. Addison

Careers

JOB

Once he was young and dreamed of high romance,
Wore rakish hats and faced the future gladly;
Now he is old and bald and rather fat,
And runs the elevator very badly.

THE GOVERNESS

Romance has passed her by, and love's fulfillment,
The children of her dreams are all unborn,
Yet she must mother those who will forget her,
Nor show the breast her hungry dreams have
torn.

ELMER

He left the farm because it was so slow—
Nothing to see but sky and fields and hills,
Nothing to hear but birds and cow bells tinkling;
Hard labor, and no thrills.

Now he is seeing life in Lebanon,
Tightening the bolts on antiquated cars;
His body prostrate under blackened gears,
His head among the stars.

Arthur H. Nethercot

To a Photograph in a Show-Case Near Hull House

Smash!

It would be so easy.

A stone, the twitter of slivered glass upon the walk—

And you are mine!

Why should I not take you?

Here you cannot live,

Smudged with smoke and sweat,

Prey to the gaze of all who pass—

The careless crowd which swirls around street corners,

With its lascivious remarks;

The night-loungers in the entry way,

Caressing every curve of your slight body

With flesh-pouched eyes.

Beauty belongs to its desirer!

Come, I will have you,

If only for the time in which a paunchy

crossing-policeman

May dog-trot half a block.

Then I will tear you into shreds

As tiny as your own finger-nails,

Knowing I have done well . . .

But, reading their papers next morning,

My friends will throw up their hands.
“Oh no!” they will cry; “it could not have been he!
He is a very respectable
Citizen!”

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Anna Kalfus Spero

The Progress of Youth

LAZY WATER

Youth looked for Lazy Water, wood-water where wind
 knit torn sunshine
into gold nets, where burnished fishlets slipped
 through.

PRESENCES

Under trees Youth and boys. Part
Of the woods a boy. Flicks
Of light on white tents. Noise
And scent of kindled sticks.

Earth sun-spotted like a fawn.
Green bushes' shimmer. Droves
Of midges—little stings!
Air pigeon-blue in coves.

Sunfall. Mottle of moonshine.
Wet sparkles—dew. Whirr—bat.
Small fur-feet tap like shoes.
Raid of rock-rats—pat, pat.

Woods black as bear. Thrills. Run of
Cave River. Swish of weeds.
The ooze at seeping spring
Gone drowsy in the reeds.

Wild things whispery as folks
One to another bent,
Low telling, "Among us
A boy has pitched his tent."

Plush! Plush!—flow of years—of years.

Youth and the boy surprise
Soul with their presences
If body shuts its eyes.

SPRIT RIVER

Youth looked for presences when spirit moods were no
deeper than flow of gentle music.

Music, poet's airy sighing on account of speckled
fishlets tinkling up through meshes of gold netting
rippled.

Spirit looked in itself for human flowers reflected
as in a broad stream of sunbeams,
human flowers, love and friendship,
as on banks of bright water flowing in its own
rhythm.

Spirit looked in itself for Youth until through bluish
wet darkness, on shaken pale-silver wings
Youth had arisen, voyaging loose in the universe.

CAVERN OF SLEEP

Motion of rivers, origins and ends, life and death, are
mute mysteries
Yet would I keep my spirit beautiful and fine by
devotion to unwordable mysteries:

For I have taken harsh woe of incompleteness,
and thick tears for black mortal fear
of the Great Call
(fear that I shall miss my Youth)
into the Cavern of Sleep and found in dreams
the power and dominion there of peace.

And I would meet the force of Death
And wake from echoes of his great stroke
where light begins to shine in darkness
in the cavern of Sleep.

MEETING

I met Lord Death
 busy in the largeness of the universe.
I touched his sleeve.

He asked,
 “What will you have of me?”
scarce slackening his pace.

I said:
 “My Lord, stoop in the Cavern of Sleep
 to the manhood of one I left.
 See him before morning, my Lord.
 Hearten him.
 Say that I wait for him, wait for him.
 Say that I am long-memoried Youth.”

Gwendolen Haste

The Woman of Windy Flat

THE MOURNER

She used to run to the clump of cedars
Behind the house when she had time,
And lie a moment in the coolness
Watching the cloudy pantomime.

But now she found she was not able
To drowse alone there any more;
The great wind wept among the branches
Dropping its insolent high roar.

She grew to know it was lamenting
For one whose soul was hurt with strife.
She could not listen to it grieving
Over her tired and broken life.

THE DESERTED RANCH

An empty cabin frightened her,
Abandoned now a year,
Her mind snatched timidly at reasons
And shrank away from them again in fear.

She heard that poverty had done it,
Blizzard and drouth and hail;
But still—perhaps—she often wondered—
The desolate house might tell another tale.

THE BARRIER

A short half mile beyond her door
The rimrock rose from the valley floor,
Its sharp edge cold and high.
It ran for miles along the sky
With never a tree or a break or a twist
Till the distance melted it into mist.

She watched it running stealthily;
She followed the sliding lines breathlessly.
But when she looked before her door,
Lifting sheer from the valley floor,
It was always there, sharp-edged and high,
Yellow against the sky.

Chang Yo-hsu

Spring River: Flowers and Moon at Night

*(Literal Translation from the Chinese made by T. Y. Leo
and Albion N. Fellows.)*

Spring river and tide waters find the sea level.
O'er the sea a bright moon rises with the tide.
Spring blossoms borne on waves—an hundred, a
thousand leagues!
Where's a spring river without a bright moon?

The river's flow meanders o'er the verdant plain.
The flowery grove brightened by moonlight looks as
snow as sleet!
In the air frost passes: we feel it not as it flies by.
On the bank the white sand we cannot see.

River and sky of one hue! not a tiny speck of dust!
How bright in the air is the moon's lone orb!
On the river bank what man first saw the moon?
In what year the river moon first shone on man?

Men born generation after generation without end.
River moons year by year ever the same.
Know not how many the river moon has shone on.
Only see a great river sending along flowing water.

A white cloud drifts far, far away !
O'er the green-mapled stream—full of sorrows!

Of what house—this night—is the man in the skiff?
Where are there hearts yearning in towers in the
moonlight?

Sad, sad the lingering moon glides above the tower.
Her beams may fall on a departed one's toilet-stand!
A screen on a jade-door may not roll them up!
Back they come to the clothes-pounding stones when
flecked away!

This very hour both espy but cannot hear one another.
Would that I could follow the gliding moonbeams
shining on you!
With the wild geese in their long flight the beams go
not away.
Fish and dragon disporting—in waters—hidden—
describe figures.

Yesternight on the quiet pool I dreamt of fallen
blossoms.
The pity! Spring half over ere home coming!
Away, away the river flows: Spring's about to vanish.
O'er the stream the moon aslant sinks in the west.

The slanting moon hides darkly in the sea-fog.
(North to) Kieh-shih, (south to) Hsiao-siang: what an
endless journey!
Know not how many men are returning in the
moonlight.
The moon sinks: my feelings a-flutter over the wavy
river-trees !

Roy Temple House

Tankas from the Japanese

(After the French Versions of Nigo D. Horigoutchi.)

In the vineyards gather
The foxes:
Under thy window
The suitors.

I would I might string a necklace for thee,
String the tears
I have shed for thee.

I sing the glory of wine.
I sing the charm and beauty of women.
But I am timid and ignorant,
And I do naught but admire the flowers of the garden.

Dreams that obsess me,
You are beautiful and tragic
Like crime

I am Pierrot, and I am sad.
I am the fatherless child of the widowed Moon;
My mother up there, and I down here—
It is our trade to laugh, though we weep for it.

A woman's lips
Are red and cold

Like a peacock
Of a winter morning.

I was born the day
Eve was driven from Paradise:
I was born the night
Salome spattered the moon
With the blood of the prophet.

Virgil Geddes

Quarry Workmen

You of the soft hearts,
 need not look here.
You who sing sentimental songs
On warm summer nights,
 need not look here.

These are the quarry workers,
Cutting the big drab cubes;
Vorticists of the granite,
Shaping the cold square blocks.

These are the poets,
Making their poems with stone.

Mary Sinton Leitch

In a Railway Station

How strangely memory serves us! Here tonight
Before my hearth-fire, my own children's faces
Are seen as through the mists of vanished years,
While out of the dim past a face—a form—
I saw but once is risen to confront me
And is to me the one reality.

Beside me on a station bench one night
A woman sat of forty years—or less—
But pitifully-older in her dearth,
Aged by frustration. Life had passed her by
And, passing, breathed a blighting breath upon her,
So that a sere, dry leaf is more alive,
For that has felt the urgent sap of spring
Swift in its veins and has, in withering, burned
With bright and happy memories of fulfilment.

But she;—there was no part of that spare frame
That love could curve a hand to. Not a garden
Whose soil had been enriched by chastity
Her body was, where virgin lilies bloomed
(For love foregone may work its miracle
Of fruitfulness as well as love fulfilled);—
But no;—it was a place of barren dust
Where winter winds blew dreary, bleak and cold,
As on a house un-tenanted, un-known

To joy of laughter or to grief of tears.
A lonely thing is such virginity.

The train now drawing near us through the night
Would bring my lover to me, eager lips
Would soon be pressed upon my eager lips,
Strong arms would fold me close, beloved hands
Would set upon my brow love's sign and seal.

So, pitying her for very happiness,
I drew a little closer, yet—I thought—
Within that withered bosom tender longings
And dreams can never nest; she is content
With being hopeless who has never hoped,
With being loveless who could never love:—
Thus I sought comfort for my pity of her.

A book lay open on her lap and, reading,
She seemed unmindful of my presence near her,
Remote from all the noise of hurrying feet
Arriving and departing, the white faces
Of weary children and their fretful crying,
Of all the lives that touched a moment here
And passed.

She read Le Gallienne's "Paolo"!—
"Paolo and Francesca," those great lovers!

"So did he yield him to her eager breast
"And half forgot but could not quite forget;
"No sweetest kiss could put that fear to rest." . . .

She read her thin lips moving, and her eyes
That held no mysteries of their own, were wet.

I spoke—"You leave tonight?" She did not turn.

"He drew aside the arras where they clung
"In the dim light so lovely and so young" . . .

I touched her hand. She started and the glow
Died in her eyes, the wonder from her face.
"I have lost my train," she said;—"Our hired man—
Our Jo—and Sara Gamp, our old grey mare,
Will have gone twenty miles tonight for naught."

Martha Webster

Gas Well Blow-Out

They were not lost,
Those bodies overtaken, laid
In deep-gouged clay,
While Noah sailed and tossed
On floods even to Ararat; and stayed,
A time so strange and grey.
Their essences sunk down, and downward,
Through soil and shale hammered by frost,
By Time,
Even down through covered water beds; Oh,
They slipped down through thinnest crevices and
crossed
Granite-bone, down to buried inner chambers—
The gaseous essences accumulated long,—long,—low
In sand to wait the year that this one numbers,
Ready to flow.

On top of Signal Hill the Bell,
The Babb oil men went boring.

One cock-crow
A sudden gas burst out a well—!
Blew off—! Caught flame—! Rose high—
A columned glory with powerful wild roaring—!
Earth trembled— Shuddered— A hundred miles, as by,
Men saw the corruscation flame up terribly—

Thus rend the purple midnight curtain
From off the old, old sky
That Noah saw un-curtain
When the long rain went by.

Charmian von Wiegand

Wind Prints of a Dancer

I

Once I think
In some far midnight
In the green gloom of the forest
You awoke and met with Pierrot
Weeping by a fountain,—
You who had laughed into his eyes
And danced in the sunlight of a formal garden
To the tune of his taut heart-strings,—
You met with Pierrot by a silent fountain
Sobbing, with one white sleeve across his face,
And the taut strings, snapped and silent. . . .

Since that far midnight
There is a haunting fear
In the laughter of your sensitive feet.

II

Of crystal are your smiles,
Shining and clear
As glass cups set radiantly
Against the sunset.
You speak
And your words
Are little steel hammers,
Shattering the iridescent silence
With the brittle sound of broken glass.

III

There is something light
About you,
Light and frivolous
As scarlet maple leaves
Fluttering on the trees.
There is something gay in you,
Which is afraid,
Lightly nervous,
Trembling in your laughter—
Like October leaves,
Which dance before the wind
Hysterically,
Knowing they soon must lie
Crumbled and brown and numb
Beneath November snow.

IV

You shake gusts of laughter
From your lips
Like golden coins,
And they fall upon the pavement
Of my heart with a hollow, mournful clink.
Now I know you for what you are:
A counterfeiter of joy,
For underneath the golden clatter
Of these false coins
I have heard the sharp bronze ring of pain!

Hildegarde Flanner

Sonnet

The flowers of Apollo that will heal
Are laid across my anger and my eyes.
O, once-beloved, where they set their seal,
I have grown merry and I shall grow wise.
But lest my merriment should flutter out
And wisdom fall in shadows and in night,
I must forget what I grow wise about,
And why I laugh must be forgotten quite.
And so my memory on whispering feet
Goes nowhere in a dim processional,
While I (with Lenten eyes) along the street
Come homeward from a dumb confessional.
I will not tell how many times I break
The flowers of Apollo for your sake.

Hazel Hall

Hand in Sunlight

This is my hand I lift to you;
It is not whitened leaf, O Sun.
And these thin cords of quivering blue
Lacing the pulse, are veins that run
Beneath the flesh to make it white.
These are my fingers, not twigs pale
From too long hanging in the light.
Supple as reed yet firm as mail,
They droop but for a shape of ease,
Are quiet for the sake of fine
Shadows that rim them and increase
The accuracy of their design.
You are but background; you are spun
From tinsel in a glittered mesh.
My hand stands out like white bronze. Sun,
I shame you with my tepid flesh.

William E. Scotten, Jr

Two French Towns

AVIGNON

The rock of the Cathedral
Bold-faced
Bathed in the bright sun of Provence

The palace of the Popes
Chalk-white
Many-towered
Ponderous

Within—
Deep embrasured windows
Groined ceilings
Slowly peeling frescoes
Dust
Ages
Then down the steep streets
Between close-shuttered houses

The Hotel d'Europe
A room on a shady court
Where Napoleon slept
And across the sunny street
A little wineshop
Cool

Odorous

Out thru the hot dusty gate
In the ramparts
A battlemented girdle
That keeps the town from slipping into the Rhone

The little chapel
On the broken bridge where the whole world danced
And across
High Villeneuve
Walled and towered
Amid dry vineyards

That is Avignon

ROUEN

Gray stone tracery
Gray lead roofs
The gray sky of Normandy

Spires
Fretted
Heaven-pointing
Cross-tipped

And the round squat tower of Jeanne

St. Ouen
Gray
Buttressed
Like a many-fingered claw
Clutching at the city

In the font
A glimpse of long colonnaded nave
And tall windows like showers of rubies
Sapphires

A candle-lit spiral stair
In the thickness of the wall
The triforium
A six fathom glance into the church
From a narrow stone gallery

Then down thru cobbled alleys
Foul-guttered
With half-timbered houses jutting out overhead
Till the sky is a ribbon

Down to the quays
And the gray Seine
With its blunt-nosed barges going down on the tide

That is Rouen

E. Richard Shipp

Three Sketches

CHIMNEYS

Furnace fires roar
and tall stacks spew
black and grey snakes
that squirm and writhe,
coiling and uncoiling
their length against the sky
in fantastic patterns
that shift and change,
then, like pale ghosts
fade into nothingness.

SWEAT SHOP

A dirty, drab loft,
foul and ill-smelling,
where men and women
furtively watch the boss—
and the clock—
and toil in nervous haste
lest they fall below
the stint they must do
to hold the job
that fills their lank bellies.

JUDAS

They paid your price
so you sold Him to the butchers,
like a sheep,
or a dry cow,
and they led Him away;
led Him to the abattoir.
What did you care,
accursed one?
They paid your price—
Thirty pieces of silver.

Weare Holbrook

Threnody

Mrs. Ike Boehm, *aetat 52, loquitur*:

It's queer, because I seldom get the time
To read the headlines, let alone the stuff
That's underneath, for I've got trouble enough,
God knows, and all this politics and crime
The papers print don't make me any happier.
So, as I say, it's really kind of queer
I happened on it, and before I'd read
A single line, I knew that Gus was dead.
The paper told how people on the pier
Had seen a car plunge off into the river:
*"Joy-riders, drunk. . . A witness testified
'They went down singing.' All of them were drowned.
Three bodies still are missing. One was found;
That of a man not yet identified."*
But it was Gus; I knew before I read it,
And at the morgue they showed me I was right.
They wheeled my little boy in on a rack,
And asked me questions, and I answered back,
Not knowing what I said, — he looked so white!
But I never carried on like some folks would.
You know, him being drowned the way he was —
It's my fault, really. "Go and have some fun,"
I told him, for I saw that he'd begun
To act the very way his father does,
And I was scared to see him like his father.

Ike always goes away without a word,
Works hard all day, and comes back home at night
Still saying nothing. You would think he might
Sometimes, at least, repeat the things he's heard
Down-town, — but no, he doesn't take the trouble.
I didn't want to see Gus get that way,
So, "Go and have a little fun," I said,
The very night it happened. Now he's dead,
And I suppose if people knew, they'd say
I sent him to his death, but I feel different.
You see, I know he wasn't really bad,
Though he did chase around and maybe drink;
And if the neighbors think — why, let them think!
It can't be helped, and I am kind of glad
A witness testified, "They went down singing."

John Northern Hilliard

Sestina of the Spieler

The way I size it up, this life's a show;
The world, a ballyhoo outside the Top;
A dinky platform where wo do our stunts;
Some do the shouting — spielers—same as me,
And some are “grinders,” some are bloomin' freaks,
But mostly they are “come-ons” — same as you.

Sure! Some gink's got t' cough up— why not you?
What if you're bunked or short-changed? There's the
show!

You've heard the “haba-habas,” seen the freaks,
And when you've done the outside, there's the Top!
Some show inside the Tent! Take it from me,
The Master Showman's got some big-ring stunts!

Buck up, old sport! Before you lamp His stunts
There's heaps of things outside to glim for you.
The bal-ly-hoo is on, and bee-lieve me
It's worth the big touch, Bo. Some show! Some show!
Well! Well! Well! Well! Before you try the Top,
Come on! Come on! Come on and see the freaks!

This way! This way! This way to see the freaks!
The bal-ly-hoo is on! Come, pipe the stunts!
Step up! Before you go inside the Top
See the free show outside — that goes for *you!*

The time ain't none too long to view the show;
Get all you can, Bo—take the tip from me.

Like it? You're on! The show is nuts to me.
I like it all,—the drums, the pipes, the freaks;
Bunk, graft and all, I like the bloomin' show!
Say, if you think I “ginger-spiel” these stunts
To glom the long green, then forget it — *you!*
I *like* the game. That goes for me, old top!

And when — the big horns blowin' in the Top —
The Master Showman sends out word for me,
I hopes to play the game on — same as you;
I hopes to go on spielin' for His freaks
The same as here, and boostin' up His stunts,
And tunin' up the big noise for His show.

Sure! That's my graft—to “ginger-spiel” His freaks,
Always providin' He approves my stunts . . .
But anyhow, I'll boost the bloomin' show!

Beulah May

The Mill

Round and round go the fans of the mill, sweeping
across the sky, blue as a plate, brushing the
buttercups on the grass;
Round and round go the fans of the mill.
Within, belts and pulleys revolve, and the hopper
clatters as the yellow grain runs dancing down the
chute;
Bulky sacks, sweating flour, are piled to the ceiling.
Down jumps the gray cat, festooned with cobwebs, and
smelling of mice, to greet the children who stand on
the door-sill, buttercups in their hands.

Ruth Lechlitner

Autumn, New Mexico

COTTONWOODS

Their leaves catch shadows with a dusty breath —
Gnarled shadows twisted in the light
Of slow red sun; they hold the quiet death
Of desert wind, and purple, unstarred night.

They are the sleepy giants of the land,
Who drowse with age; and like grim prophets, spread
Their dusky robes upon the thick white sand,
And whisper of the living . . . and the dead.

DESERT NOON, SEPTEMBER

The warm sands yield, and then dissolve
These little paths of little men.
I shall lie still while the desert walks
With ghostly golden footsteps. Then,
Silence so great that sounds unheard
Are multitudinous as the sea:
No thing is small in the broad, still world
And all small thoughts go out from me,

Out to the long blue dancing mist
Of endless sky and endless sun —
O Life, dream not of lesser things:
I can remember none!

THE PENITENTE

I shall walk out by the river
Under the thin blue light,
Under the warmth that the trees hold in
From the cold of early night.

(They would salt the wounds of my body —
When beauty cuts my heart.)

Clouds rise like white water,
Foaming and sweet
As the wet shaken fragrance
When cherry boughs meet.

(They would draw blood from whiteness —
The earth is too kind!)

Gold breaks upon the darkness
Where the great moon lies low;
What greater scourge
Could the purified know?

(Yet I can never tell them
That I, loving beauty, suffer.)

George H. Dillon

Beauty Trembled Close

one of the poems the magazine printed together as "Three Sonnets"

Girl, when you say that love is all — that love
Is all, and there is nothing when love goes,
Have you forgot how beauty trembled close
One time—a time when all the air above
The wide water was furiously white
With stars, and the glowing waves began to creep
On the pale sand, and we drew apart, and the deep
Far cries of water-birds spilled into the night?

And when the tremulous high time was come,
And our senses reeled, and our stammering minds
 went black
And terribly groped for a gull's ultimate bleat,
We were undone—have you forgot how numb
We were with beauty, how we went fumbling back
To some small room where our small love was sweet?

William E. Scotten, Jr

Dawn

How would you have the day come

With a blaze of trumpets
While the guard is changed
Clanking in morion and breastplate
And grounded halberds echoing
 And you gaze as for the first time
 At your worn chains

Or with a temple bell
Rumbling somewhere
The patter of bare feet
Along the gutter
And the punkah sweeping suddenly
As furnace-breaths puff into the room
 And you reach out for the siphon

Or with the chattering of sparrows
In their leafy cubicles
On the ivied wall
Outside your bedroom window
While the yawning City stretches
Beckoning
 And you rise to follow
 As always

Norma Miller

River Songs

The magnificence of your lacquered barge comes
stealing down with the current
As shadows creep eastward thru the long afternoon.
Dip your slim hands into the stream,
O most beautiful one,
And from the tips of your white fingers
Scatter the jade drops:
Have you plunged those fingers into the coffer of my
heart
That you may tsrew its jewels as carelessly
Over the bright water?

From your warm lips the words fall gayly
And I gather them like white pearls
To be treasured together upon the thread of my
enraptured remembrance.
But when the lips are pale and tight-drawn,
And the sounds that fall from them say unto me,
“Go hence!”
It is the thunder of the relentless axe
Tearing into the heart of a great tree.

I have yielded up my grief to the mists.
The soft, winding clouds drew it among them with gray
arms
And hid it from me.

I shall be sad no more
For my grief is gone among the mists
Fleeing down the river before the chill wind of the
 morning.
The new day sparkles upon a clear stream
But the sun makes no warmth in me.
I am a nerveless thing with no will.

Beulah May

The Color of the Night

You are to me the color of the night.
A crooked street in Chinatown with a dragon winding
past to sharp, brazen music;
The beautiful shops of Hollywood and the long lines of
purring machines going to the play;
A movie extra coming home late from the studio, her
painted face showing like a mask of tragedy;
The Plaza and the Old Mission on Saturday night when
all Mexico congregates in an air thick with garlic
and cigarettes;
A high bridge over the Los Angeles River and the
railroad signals gleaming in the swift, yellow
stream;
The heavily scented orange trees asleep under the
moon as the grim wolf hills keep guard;
And the long road leading on and on into mystery, into
the dark.
You are to me the color of the night.

Joan Dareth Prosper

Inland

He used to talk of ships, and I remember

Oh, I remember

Tall spars clustered in a drowsy, evening bay,
Clean winds calling, at white noon today;
Salt on the taffrail, foam at the bow,
And a singing at the windlass . . . how it all comes
back now!

(Though I never saw the sea.)

I sweep the rooms, half dreaming

Of tides

Slow breathing, languid giants sucking at the
sands,
Surging to the harbors of brilliant, tropic lands;
An old black brig headed for the sunset's gold,
Bringing back the red dawn stuffed in her hold
(His words!)

The six-year maple on his grave is sturdy,

Yet . . . yet . . .

Night, all drenched with stars, and still we're
outward bound.
Oh, the creaking of the canvas is an erie sort of
sound,
And I hear the tramping watch as I lie
warm-bunked below,

Where the yellow slush lamp swings to and fro, to
and fro.

(Like that, his talk.)

I scour the kettles and hang up the wash,

But these pictures won't go out of my head:

Full, white sails on a level twilight sea,

A tired bark trailing to some port of mystery;

Green waves a-glitter, . . . ships, ships, ships,

And a laughing sailor man with red, remembered
lips.

(God! How I'm still missing him!)

Mary Brennan Clapp

Ether

one of the poems the magazine printed together as "Two Poems"

"Count, now!"

"A-one, a-two,

A-three, a-four!"

"No more.

She sleeps."

"Again, now!"

Then a prick, a sting,

A plummet of pain

Cleaves in twain

Still deeps!

This is how

Death dies.

And pain keeps

The balances,

Tittle and jot,

Of *am* and *not*.

Paul Tanaquil

Two Sonnets

RECTOR'S LADY

She sees to it he fills his belly, mends
His curious clothes, knits him ungainly socks,
Directs his efforts to portentous ends,
Winds up his real and figurative clocks.
They have a son — that fact alone attests
How he and she could possibly have lain
In love together. One of God's weak jests
Baptised their fruit with water of the brain.

She dreamed of leaving them; now she has grown
Wed to disgust. Meanwhile he consecrates
All energy to serve a god she hates
(If hatred can possess a heart turned to stone!)
Had I been she, once young and fair to boot,
I would have rather been a prostitute!

SEA-CAPTAIN

He sailed the seas for forty-seven years;
They were to him clear as an open book,
He had been ship-wrecked thrice, once off Algiers,
Then off the Scillys, then off Sandy Hook.
The Germans twice attacked him; he escaped,
And for reward was cited to the King;
His fortune definite, his future shaped,
He was to have retired some time last Spring.

His voyages were run to the last trip,
Home, safe at anchor in the shallowest bay
Of the Atlantic, as he left his ship,
The gangplank swayed . . . tipped, sudden . . . fell away
He hurtled dumbly through the air, this clown,
Landing in water one foot deep — to drown!

Miriam Allen de Ford

Giovanni Malatesta

Because my foot drags from me when I walk,
Am I a thing inhuman? I am old;
Grant that curse, too—an old man, and a lame—
And even so I have a man's desires,
Doubled, perhaps, because of impotence.
I, too, can love—even as Paolo,
My pretty Paolo, mouthing his amorous words
Under an orange thicket, in the dawn.

What was that book they read together there?
Some sickly legend of a merry jest
Two lovers played upon a Northern king.
Well, he was weak—he could forgive, and die—
And leave his wife, no doubt, to some new lover,
With the earth still soft on Lancelot's grave, and
Arthur's.

And that is virtue! That! To bear, to suffer,
To know one is not loved, and still to smile;
To nourish stifled hope; to hush one's moans
In lonely frenzy for a joy denied,
And then to see the love-glance in her eyes;
To hear the new tone in her voice; to watch
Her face grow bright at his step whom she loves—
And all this for another! Should I, then,
Cowering with the weight of patience, sigh, like Arthur,

And, tear in eye, say: "He is yours, Francesca;
He is whole, and young, and you are young and fair;
Youth go to youth, and I will brood alone
Until kind death take all my mem'ries from me?"
Should I speak thus? I am not yet a saint;
I have borne too long her silence, her contempt,—
God! worst of all, her pity!

Yesterday

My sniveling chaplain met me. It was here,
The antechamber to that fretted room
Where he says masses for poor coward souls
That dare not meet their God alone. He bowed,
And, with his meek eyes cast to earth, his voice
Choked with a slave's timidity, he yet
Took it upon himself to prate at me
Of "Christian patience," "charity," "forbearance."
I took within my hand the heavy cross
That hangs upon his girdle. "Hark," said I,
"He who lies bleeding and in suffering there,
Who wore the crown of thorns, and knew betrayal
At His friend's hand, why, He may understand me;
And He would say to me, as once to others,
'Giovanni, there are things one must not bear;
For them there is no peace but by the sword.' "

I chatter on at random, like a fool;
But what shall draw the pain from out my breast,
That lies there like a band around my heart?
I, who at prayer in the confessional
Groaned but "Francesca!" in the friar's ear,

And fled unshriven; I, who lie awake
When the gray owl in the oleander screams,
And watch the firelight shifting on the walls,
And groan, "Francesca!"

Then she sighs, and turns,
And, as if I were Paola, she lays
Her hand on mine in sleep, and draws me to her;
And for a blessed space I cheat myself
To fancy all is changed, and she I love
Has come to love me, and the world's reborn.
But in that ecstasy of peace the band
That clamps my heart grows tighter, and I laugh
And thrust her from me No, it is not I,
But my young brother, with his lustrous eyes,
His thick-grown hair, his straight young limbs, can say
"Francesca!" with a relish. But for me,
Giovanni, lame and old, there is no rest
Until I expiate my tears in blood,
And thrust them, kissing, in the mouth of Hell.

So I have sworn it: there will come a night
When I, who have borne so much, shall reach the end,
Seeing with mine own eyes the thing I know.
Each day I draw my finger on the edge
Of the sharp knife I have kept so long for them.
They will be lying, closely arm on arm,
Their faces flushed with sleeping, in the light
Of a pale new moon; and through the open casement
Will come the perfume of the myrtle-bush.

And then will be my hour.

Oh, I shall go
Joyful to Hell, as one who greets a bride,
So by that sacrifice I ease the pain
That binds and gnaws forever at my heart!

Ah, my Francesca,—mine but never mine—
When you toss a little in your bed tonight,
And reach your wandering hand for Paolo,
God pity me, Giovanni, old and lame—
Not He Himself can hold me then from taking
It to my lips, the moment I can dream;
And then, the waking pain at my poor heart,
Groaning aloud in agony: “Francesca!”

Richard A. Summers

Earthquake

Ogawa forever is flooding his rice,
 Flooding his rice and his field is green.
He is flooding his rice, and the days grow short,
 Yet the crop is lean.

Ogawa forever is flooding his rice.
 Fourteen hours he works a day.
He is flooding his rice, and the years pass by
 No longer gay.

Ogawa forever is flooding his rice.
 Today is the same as yesterday.
Tomorrow — forever, flooding his rice.
 The sea is grey.

Ogawa no longer is flooding his rice.
 The field is brown. The blades are dead.
Ogawa no longer is flooding his rice.
 The sea is red.

Wilson O. Clough

On Guard

*one of the poems the magazine printed together as "Two Poems —
Vintage of 1918"*

The midnight clouds swung lower and dripped, dripped
Their misty tears. They smothered. They blanketed
The stark-ribbed horses, the cannons' sullen throats,
The mud-caked fourgons, the men too tired for fear.
They hushed the creeping stream, the moaning
 branches
Of that accursed Forêt de Puvenelle.
They smudged the stroke of gray that was his path.

"Wot was't that "Y" man said? That Christ would lead
Us into battle against the Hun? Why, bunk!
What! Christ know how to use the steel — plunk! —
Like tappin' a watermelon to see if it's ripe?
What! Christ know how to give the proper twist
To make a Jerry clutch his guts and stare
To see 'em slippin' through his bloody fingers?
Bah! Leave such ideas to the preachers
Or them ladies' magazines. Now, me,
I sorta picture Christ a-hoverin' up in
Them clouds, a-weepin' to see th— What th— ?"

A roar, a flash, and curses. Then pattering fragments
Of iron and dirt, snipping the leaves and hailing

To the ground. “Jerry’s got our range!” —

The midnight clouds dripped, dripped their misty tears.

Paul Tanaquil

Paulo Majora Canamus

Man boasts scant room for songs of fabled hell,
What matter that the human soul is cowed?
Let freemen languish in a prison-cell,
Because they dared proclaim their meaning loud!
Leave negroes dangle over a righteous crowd
Whose clamor even gibbets cannot quell,
Suffer this drab to weep who cannot sell
Her tragic flesh to buy her starved child's shroud.
What careless fools are these who go to fish
Death for reward because rich harlots wish
Pearls for a bauble. Where mankind has trod
Ashes and dust were ever a wage to earn.
Paulo majora canamus. Let us turn
To praise the mercies infinite of God!

Lucy Hale Sturges

Chrysanthemums

The candles flicker in a silver sconce,
And life is casual and bland.
What matter now, if once
The moon rose over mist-hung hills,
And long blue shadows crept across the sand?
White nights will pass.
The firelight gleams
On old mahogany and Russian brass;
What matter if our dreams
Were fashioned of mirage,
Or if we lost, or if we won?
Life runs so smoothly on.
Today we sip our tea and chat,
And sprinkle cinnamon on bits of toast.
You speak a word of praise about my cat.
Is your complacency a stabler thing than mine,
Or is it, like chrysanthemums and autumn wine,
A gay, defiant boast?

Wilson O. Clough

To One Grown Blasé

“Ça vous amuse, la vie?” you blandly ask.
But those red-lidded and hate-wrenched souls —
Those dazed and groping souls!
You yawn.

Ça vous amuse, la vie?” you ask another.
But those with dragging and sullen limbs —
Those women, pallid and drab as ashpits!
You shrug.

A silence falls.
There follows talk of beauty.
Softly swaying poplar plumes
Brushing a velvety moon;
Rose-tipped darts of dawn
Spanning a valley to ermine peaks. —
Your thoughts go astray.
You smirk.

You pat your flabby lips and smirk,
And move graciously on
To a futile papillon.
You bend a shining head;
“Ça vous amuse, la vie?”

Patterson Greene

The Artist Receives Notice of a Bequest

Her violin? Thank you. I do not want it.
I do not play the violin, you see,
And I should have no use for it.—You'll smoke?
My own particular brand. These Orientals,
Somehow they have a knack—You're welcome.—No,
I do not want it. I admired it once,
But that was when it lay against her chin,
And when her fingers pressed the strings, or moved
The bow across them—when she played to me . . .
What has become of all that music now?
Was it a moment's quivering of the air,
Subsiding into stillness, like the waves
That ripple a sleek pond where a pebble splashes?
Those phrases seemed to be bits of herself
Flung living from her, as from a great sun
Planets are hurled to orbits of their own.
Can they have come from nothingness, and sunk
To nothingness again? And she—and I
Please let me place a cushion at your back,
That's an old monastery chair you're in,
Built for some padded abbot, with no need
Of cushions.—No, I cannot use it now.
Varnish and wood and catgut—lifeless hulks
That linger horridly. Things that endure
Are cold and loveless things: grey stone, the seas,
The pitiless white stars, lilacs and butterflies

And laughter meeting yours from eye to eye —
Whenever now I hear a violin
I feel her eyes upon me through the music . . .
I do not want it!

—Oh, the vase? That too?
Why yes, I think—yes, I will have the vase:
Tall, slim, and white, and delicately curved—
Only a lifeless thing, not dead, you see.
There is a difference—a difference.

Vachel Lindsay

The Parable of Deepness

In Glacier Park is a bottomless lake,” said a guide on
the east side to me.

“If you tie a big rock to a system of clothes lines,

“Tied end to end, forever and ever,

“You will find it more deep than the sea.”

“Now where is this lake?” I asked the smart guide.

“West of the Ranges,” said he.

“In Glacier Park is a bottomless lake,” said a guide on
the west side to me.

“If you let down a system of trout lines and wire,

“Tying on more, all your heart may desire,

“With a horseshoe for plumb on the end of the string,

“You cannot determine the depth of the thing.

“You will find it more deep than the sea.”

“Now where is this lake?” I asked that gay guide.

“East of the Ranges,” said he.

“In the ocean there sure is a bottomless place,”

Said a sailor in New York harbor to me,

“If you let down a cable with plummets to fit

“You will find it more deep than the bottomless pit.

“It’s a terrible place to get drowned at sea—

“We cannot dive down and rescuers be.”

“Now where is this water?” I asked the salt sailor.

“Just south of the North Pole,” said he.

“In the ocean there sure is a bottomless place,”
Said a San Francisco sailor to me.
“The sea spiders come when we ship in that sea
“And they fasten their threads to the ribs of the ship,
“Shark-proof-silk, resisting the lip
“Of sharks of the highest or lowest degree.
“And the spiders spin down and swim down and dive
down
“And bite everything in the green-weed-town,
“And clear things away and swim down and say,
“ ‘Oh where is the floor of this fathomless sea?’
“But the sea is as deep as the bottomless pit.
“No spider has ever dived down into it,
“Not a spider of highest or lowest degree.”
“Now where is this water?” I asked the proud sailor.
“Just north of the South Pole,” said he.

Now the China boy there in the chop suey dive
Serving us whisky in tea,
Sat down and continued the epic of deepness,
Delighting the salt and his sweetie and me.
He said, “There’s a well in Confucius’ back yard
“Overhung by a plain little cinnamon tree.
“The well has run dry, but is deep as the sky.
“There’s a star day and night you can see
“If you put your fool head in the shadowy boughs,
“Looking down through black leaves of the cinnamon
tree.

“You can let down a kite string as long as a river

“And tie on bright jades that will glitter and quiver
“In the light of the star in the depths of the well.
“It goes down like the slenderest glittering dragon,
“And passes all side-doors and cellars of Hell,
“Making dry rainbows there in the flagon.
“No thread has ever gone down to the star,
“The jewelled lost hub of Confucius’ blue car.”
“Now where is this well?” inquired the gay sailor,
“I would like to go there with a spider and trailer.”
“In Confucius’ back yard,” said the boy with a stare.
“I’m American born and have never been there,
“But I heard my great grandfather say it was there.”

When I climb on Sun Mountain and look up at noon
Then new revelations of glory come soon,
And the sky is a lake more deep than the dream
Of cowboy or sailor, or China boy gay;
And I need no kite strings to measure the way.

When I sleep on that height
There is midnight more deep
Than the bottomless pit, or the seas, or the wells,
Or the wise men’s great tales of sea spiders and hells.

When the great moon comes up,
I lie in a sea
Where the moon is the ship of God comforting me,
But between are wonders more deep than ever may be
In the lonely and strange lost green floors of the sea,
Or the deep drowned flowers in the depths of the Polar
Sea.

Alaine Boswell

In a Cathedral

Incense,
Incense and myrrh and swinging censers.
A babe, the hay, and a mother with a waxen face,
A face expressionless.
A railing, candles upright and white, with each its little
 halo.
Roses, salmon and white,
Fragrant, overwhelmingly sweet and still.
A murmur of prayers, and a quiet tapping of heels on
 stone floors.
A long pale pillar in the foreground
Vanishing into night at the top, and dimness all about.
Incense and roses and Rembrandt dimness.
Incense and roses,
Incense.

A blue mist of incense
Drenching the sight and the soul in color of mysticism
 and worship,
A black figure passing, like a Greek column rounded
 and slim,
Like the shadow of the cathedral pillar.
A white hand and genuflexion,
A ruby like a drop of blood on the fourth finger.
Incense and candles and Rembrandt dimness,
Incense and candles,

Incense,
Smothering, potent, insinuating.

Why are we here?
What are these waxen figures in the hay?
What do they mean?
A tap-tap of heels on the stone floor;
A faint incensuous wind stirring the candles;
The rose window, melting blues and yellow and the
color of wine,
Dark, gorgeous with age's softening hand.

A hush!
The black figure stirring where it kneels,
The nape of a neck bent in prayer, honey-colored in the
light,
The long drawing of the hip,
An Aphrodite of Cyrene swathed in black.
I feel the rosy blush of old marble through the
georgette.
(Heavens, I am in a church!)
Incense, pagan thoughts and color,
Incense, pagan thoughts,
Incense.

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners
Now and at the hour of our death, amen. . . .
Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord be with thee!
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!”
Beads slipping through the fingers,

A prayer, "Our Father."

Honey-colored neck like old marble,
The arrested grace of a dancer in the long-drawn hip,
The ruby on the fourth finger.
(Heavens! I am in church!)

Incense, impious thoughts and old marble,
Incense, impious thoughts,
Incense.

Robes, old white and purple and magenta.
Pillars—like a forest—Pan peeping around one.
(No, no! It is a church!)

The mutter of the organ—the trees will begin to wave
and rustle their leaves
With the coming of the storm,
(No, no! It is a church!)

Peals of beauty, deep rumbling dissonance, and the
pure glistening treble afar off,
The voice of Diana in the hunt.

"Our Father."

Incense and waxen figures and the manger,
Incense and waxen figures,
Incense,

Frances Wierman

City Rivers

A vision of rivers! Turbulent traffic streams
That wind and mingle, clog and crash;
Rivers of jazz spurting thin cacophonies along
Shallow cabaret-beds; ribbonry rivers of girl-souls
Breaking athwart man-rocks. Muddy underworld
 sluices
Feeling their way to hidden sinks;
Rivers of shaded windows; rivers of lights;
Rivers of money sucking around the eddies
Of human hands. Rivers of talk that beat
Against shores of indifferent men. Far overhead
Pure rivers of sunbeam, starshine, and moonlight
Forever falling down unmeasured inclines
Of cloud and mist!

Mollie Prager

Defiance

Breasts,
How I hate them!
White, mysteriously scented breasts
Of women,
Luring men with their promises;
Mocking pretense of forgetfulness
From murky, smoke-covered life;
Warm, full breasts of mothers
Suckling infants in false anticipation
Of happy, glorious Life;—
Hypocritical breasts,
I despise them!
(He told me
That mine were exquisite,
Tiny white hills,
And then he left me.)

Chi-Hwang Chu and Edna Worthley Underwood

The Orient Visits New York

I

Night Scene

Stealing leisure in the silent night I follow my feet.

New York floats upon electricity.

Under the moon I find my two shadows near a street
lamp.

One is long, one is short; one clear, one indistinct.
I am such an old-fashioned figure in this new electric
glow.

I am such a quaint figure in the brightness. —
But still my heart knows how to mirror sorrow.

In my home Heaven and Earth are shrouded in night.
I admire America, of course — cars, automobiles
darting lightning;
But pitiful to me are men and women become horses,
cows.

Continents sink — Civilizations decay.
It is not alone my old Cathay
I watch drown in the deep.

II

Chasing Butterflies in Bronx Park

They meet — Little East Road, Little West Road.
Two wings ride the evening wind.

O for the heart — take one drop of honey!
For honey — take head face and make a grave of the
flowers!

Even on such a little road
Two wings are light for the evening wind.

Qui! — that dark spot I see into — that is you!
Just for honey — heart, life, you gave.

III

In the Subway

Because I am an oriental, I dream.
Even in New York — the nightless — I, of the Orient,
dream.

Out of the station I am pushed into a dungeon
With men, women, children,
Head to waist, shoulder to breast,
Sitting, standing, racing with Time,
Chasing Space.

Nature is quickened — Thunder God cheers the race —
Goddess of Lightning waves her handkerchief through
rows of little windows.

I turn my head — I try to look.
No heaven, no earth; only night
Where dragons ride
With speed that snuffs the wind.
Behind my ears I feel wind-arrows.
A monster flies at us in front —
Big angry eyes — one blue, one red!
He is fiercer than the jungle tiger when night is black.
I wait to be devoured.
But his roaring dies.
I open my eyes — I see the monster's iron net-work
cage.

In front, beside —
Strange beings in human form:
Ghosts of all peoples,
Ghosts of beauty, ghosts of ugliness.
Some have black faces, goat-curly hair;
Their eye-brows do not shine, but only eye-white.
These are grandmother's stories of night goblins.
Women with blue-fountain eyes,
Apple cheeks, and willow waists;
Upon their shoes lacquer,
Little arches under their feet;
Hair-coiled, gold sun-cloud.
A little bag,
A bead bag with a tassel.
Ting-a-ling-a-ling!
It opens.
Out comes its heart — a mirror.
She looks into it,
With right hand she holds a soft, sweet cake — all
white.
She does not put it in her mouth —
She dusts her tiny nose-end with powdered sugar!
I smile.
I am so delighted!
This is Hades become Heaven.
I watch.
I am so afraid my dream is brief.
I forget the dungeon-road returns.

The dragon stops.

Daylight!
The ghosts vanish.
A flash, a clap of thunder — the dragon disappears.
I am alone.
I am sad.
I cannot find Time again!

(English verse-form by Edna Worthley Underwood)

Robert E. Wade, Jr

Montana Lake

The Japanese painters know. —
Nothing so tenses the sharp beauty
Of mighty jagged peaks,
Topping sensuously smooth roundnesses
Of foothills, as a near bridge
Of wooden squares and triangles,
Angularly cutting a flat body
Of gentle sparkling water. —
This touch of man-made beauty,
As different from the majesty
Of the cloud-piercing masses of rock
As man is of a different order from the gods,
Serves as the spice to a savory dish. —
In the complete illumination of daylight
All things, forest, lake, mountains, and bridge,
Catch the deep-breathing eye;
But when an evolving sunset
Makes delicate chameleons of the cruel jags,
Pinked, purpled, and mauved in turn,
All other seen things are but a subsidiary background.

—
Then the bridge seems placed by inspired hands,
Making the tremendous, yet strangely intangible
 beauty
The more mystical. —
The Japanese painters know. . . .

Justus Grun

Variations and Fugue on a Well-Known Theme

Dear sir, here is my merchandise.

We only use the best.

Our make is fine,

Our prices right. . . .

Stop! What is it that I hear?

What might be that thin and weird —

What might be that high-pitched sound

Ringin' in my ears like mad?

. . . and only yesterday I sold

At higher prices, it is true. . .

I will not listen to these eerie voices,

These overtones which I cannot escape.

Back to your haunts!

Stay silent till I call you!

. . . a goodly lot —

To whom I cannot say.

A breach of confidence 'twould be.

But let me tell you. . .

Another voice now! Oh, where have I heard

This rustling mellowness before?

*Was it the night-breeze sighing through the branches
That night when you lay silent in my arms
And neither spoke for fear to break the spell?*

... that the line they bought
Does not compare in any way whatever
To this new shipment
Which we just have finished. . .

*Dead silence! . . . Have I stopped forever
All subtle longings for your voiced caresses?*

... I'm sorry. What you ask I cannot do.
I cannot let you have this part alone.
The whole or nothing. . .

*Heavens! What may be that flash?
A blinding, screaming flood of light,
Darkness fleeing panic-stricken
Over hill and over dale. . . .
And the sun — he rules the world!*

... Oh, that wouldn't worry me!
The largest order it would be
That your house ever placed.
Still, all your payments always
Are very promptly met. . .

*So long ago — and yet it's like today —
That on a mountain-top I stood,
The world stretched out before me*

For me to choose from.

*Then rose the sun, and my eyes saw
What's shown to mortals
Once in each one's lifetime.
This was my choice — and I have no regrets.
But from my mountain I had needs descend
And wander through the valley.*

*. . . And we are glad, if that's the only reason,
To have you pay us on the first of March. . .*

*I wander through the world and seek,
A stranger every place,
The overtones that thrill my very being.*

*And I'm a stranger, and my foot
No telling imprint ever leaves behind.
My trail is lost, and like a phantom ship
No wake I leave,
Nor are my footsteps followed by a shadow.*

*A world within thyself!
Ha! A shrieking peal of laughter
Seems the answer —
The only answer to that hoary jest.*

*. . . All right, sir. Very well.
I hope you are successful.
I think you acted wisely and bought well.
I'm sure that in a month or so*

You'll want more of the same.
Goodbye! Good luck!
My best regards at home!
And say, how is that little boy of yours?

Geraldine Seelemire

Bitter Creek

The train,
Like a querulous old red cow,
Comes bawling around the shoulder of a hill,
And belches forth Jonah into a sea of sand in the
 middle of Nevada.
Then, with head down,
She chases a prairie dog between two frail, mauve hills,
And bellows her way into the distance
With her tail hooked over the wind. . . .

Jo Hartman

Shelley in Our House

He meant to tune his lyre
Today and sing
In sweeping gusts of rhythm, to reach the heights
Of far Parnassus . . . verses that should bring
Him fame and gold, altho his heart's desire
Is all for Beauty — thro' the livelong nights
Its cadences are ringing in his ears
But, with his failing sight, the doctors say
He ought to do his writing in the day.

When Dawn came, pinkly silver . . . he
Glimpsed wisps of sun a-shimmering in the hall
And down along the inner wall
Of our house's little court — you see
His window fronts the fire escape,
Which he weaves into ancient battlements, whose dust
Becomes the “crumbling mould” of years . . .
Eyes glowing, collar half agape,
He flung his chestnut hair
Back from his brow, and snatched his pad and pen
With such an air
Of eagerness as mothers press
Their new-born babes to breast.

Just then —
Our landlord heard him stir —

“Who—who!” a loud voice called out. “Sure, you must
Come have your coffee, Shelley, soon,”
(That name maybe lured muses, for they were
So bountiful to one who bore it!) “’less
You want a headache!”

Some folks never rest
Till they inflict their favors, and old “Prune”
MacLean — he served them three times daily — was
this kind,
And yet no meddler, bless his cheery tongue!
How Shelley does hate eating at the table
When he is preening wings of his young mind
To dip in “amethyst of Eastern seas” —
Among
The lot of us none even able
To quote a *Sonnet from the Portuguese!*
But he sipped several swallows from his cup
Before he dashed up stairs.

For full an hour
He drove to capture lyric threads
His dreams had woven. He got “bright heads
Of orioles” and afterwards a flower,
“A sweet hibiscus-blossom” — “Tamarind trees
Caressed by soft lips of the desert breeze.”

By now blond Milly from the Tivoli,
In the next room, had tumbled out of bed.
Her cheap stage laugh
Cut quiveringly

Across his soul. What had he said
Last? "Breeze?" O God, that phonograph!
She set it going — Blues on Blues! —
He knew she must be shimmying to the shriek
Of blatant jazz. No decent Muse
Can stand Mill's "atmosphere," nor can poor Shelley
eke
Another word from all his golden store . . .
And this was like his yesterday, and day before!

Grace Stone Coates

Diathesis

I

A village fair,
A fakir ready
With his *Step up there!*
And *Right here, leddy!*

See, he stands
Behind the glass!
I wave my hands
And make a pass,

And he's asleep
Before your eyes!
That's how deep
I hypnotize.

Show you new tricks —
You, boy, you,
Step up and do tricks! —
But I withdrew;

I was no mummer
To lend my body,
Nid-nid-noddy,
To every comer.

II

Custom said;
 If you will keep
My pantomime,
 Your mind can sleep
In the full gaze
 Of public eyes;
And men will praise
 And call you wise.

I could not squeak
 And strut by rule
At puppet-tweak
 Of every fool.

III

A priest's lean finger
Traced in air
Phantom barriers
To my spirit;
Ritual set
Upright there,
Crossed by warnings
To revere it.

Christ is risen! —
 And shall I linger
In the prison
 Of a priest's finger?

Sarah Foss Wolverton

Some Mothers to Some Daughters

Yes, I heard you when you said it first.
You asked not to be born? Of course.
Nor I, nor my poor mother, nor hers,
And had you thought of that?
You who stand there proud, defiant, young,
Tossing your short gold hair,
And pouting lips too poppy-red
For youth, or any age at all in human ken?
You asked not to be born?
And do you think I asked you to?
I, young as you, and far less canny,
When your father wooed me from the girls, my friends

The bait his admiration, proud estate of bride, a
trousseau?
You cannot know how soon those fled
In drudging loneliness
Nor how I writhed in long black months of agony
And dread — of you!
And when you came I loved you?
Yes; the tigress loves her cubs, the bird her young —
At least, will die for them, if need.
You took my youth with your incessant wants,
And through my later toiling years
You took my health;

This very pain that rasps my nerves to rage these
 many years
Need not have been,
Had not a surgeon's help meant losing of your heart's
 desires.
You did not know?
I did not wish to spoil your joy —
And yet, now you are grown,
Scorn meets my lightest crossing of your will.
Yes? Had I been wiser I'd have taught you better?
I suppose.
My dear! My dear!
Your life, so short, in lying brightness gleams ahead;
The most of mine's behind me.
And must we muddle through the few years of our
 common span,
Two waifs in the long line that plods from dark to dark,
Two fretful women stumbling on a rocky road,
Each breeding deeper heartache for the other?

Yorozu Tsurumi

Translations of Original Japanese Tanka

AUTUMN

The hills dressed in autumn fire
Burn crimson.
A curved leaf flutters —
Falling.

NIGHT-WIND

Long thin fingers reach
To caress
A falling plum petal
Under an April moon.

SMOKE

Soft blue curves
Melt
Into the lily-scented air
Where a linnet sings.

DAGGER

Her voice —
When anger darts from
Red eyes.

KISS

A frail white blossom
Fallen lightly
On soft spring grass
At twilight —
When a peacock preens.

Irene Stewart

Incompatible

Ah well, and if you heaped a pyramid
Of jeweled images, and if my clouds
Of thought slid past the brilliant planes and gathered
Nothing of your colors in my shrouds?

Reproach me not. As mist can hold but transient
Tints, and you insist on pigment stains,
I fear that we must part. Old nacre moons
May gall the throat. . . but time will file such chains.

Our severed mouths may rest on loneliness,
Or other lips may flower in the night.
(Choose those which bleed more easily than mine.)

Angry? Ah, good-bye, and *don't forget to write.*

B. Y. Williams

In the Province of Shantung

Six captured robber-bandits in the Province of
Shantung
Were marched through old Tsinan to be a warning to
the young.

Six swordsmen stood with six keen swords uplifted. At
a sound
The bright blades fell — six bandit heads went
tumbling to the ground;

Six piles of freshly-sprinkled earth with red blood
soaking through
Were left there in the city square for slanting eye to
view;

Six headless bodies, cold and stark, from poles of
bamboo swung
To show the fate of robbers in the Province of
Shantung;

Six heads in wire cages to their native towns were sent
That would-be bandits might observe and fear the
punishment;

Six final piercing trumpet-calls the summer breeze
outran —

Then all again was quiet in the streets of old Tsinan.

* * *

The Yellow River tells no secrets even to the seas,
And age-old China speaks no word of all her mysteries,

But sometimes at the evening hour, when temple bells
are rung

I think I hear the wailing of six women of Shantung!

Ethel Romig Fuller

Voices

Colors always
Tell me of
Things like youth
And death and love.

Blues are dyed
With beauty's ache,
A girl's wide eyes,
A mountain lake.

Yellows are the hues
That sing;
Green is laughter;
Lilac, spring;

Red, a tasseled
Clarion;
Pink, the scent
Of cinnamon;

And white to me
Is nothing save
A rosebud
On a tiny grave.

Geraldine Seelemire

Wolf-Dawn

Dawn slunk along the hills,
A lean, grey wolf
Lips drawn back, eyes steel
Into the valley.

At night
The wolf hid in the hills
With foam on his jaws
And his rough coat smeared with blood.

Ruth Clay Price

Dancing Girl of Utica

We have found your tomb by chance,
found your dust that lived to dance.

*Centuries have circled past,
but her sarcophagus held fast.*

Shadow of your form and face,
outlined in your dust we trace.

*From her cheeks the color fled:
her tomb holds rouge, three shades of red.*

Were you made for love or lust,
you are now but blowing dust.

*Golden stars they gave to her,
and jewels on her sepulchre.*

Clash your cymbals, red with rust,
your last dance, the dance of dust!

Clinton Scollard

The Drama's End

Nevada

Quite casually remarked my new-found friend,
Straight, sinewy, and all of six feet two,
Beardless and bronzed, with brooding eyes of blue,
Speaking about the drama and its end: —

“They closed up Collamore’s after that night
Six years ago. I had just trailed down,
Down from the mountains at the edge of dusk.
I’d seen my burros fed, and happened in
After a day’s prospecting where Mount Rose
With its eternal snows ascends the sky.
’Twas quite a spacious place, was Collamore’s;
There must have been a hundred girls and men
Drinking and gaming, staking their red gold
Where Big Bill dealt at faro. I knew Bill.
‘Hullo!’ I said to him. ‘Hullo!’ said he,
Raising his eyes a second from the cards
To drop them with a murmur — ‘The queen wins.’
That was the card between his finger tips.
‘Hell!’ some one hissed, and all was still. Bill smiled,
Smiled just a little, a slow sort of smile;
And then the man who’d hissed, he hissed again,
And flung a woman’s name across at Bill
With some foul implication I won’t tell of.
Bill hunched so quick you could not see his hand;

A couple of guns began to bark and blaze,
And — well, the floor was soft enough for me,
Being right close to Bill. 'Twas soft enough
For pretty much the whole one hundred there.
The foolish guy who hissed and pulled on Bill
Got his — and got it right straight through the heart.
They hauled him out and planted him next day.
And Bill? He used his left hand after that,
Having no right you could take notice of.
A trial? No, there wasn't any trial;
They called the incident 'unwritten law.'
Believe me, that was not a movie show!
After that night they closed up Collamore's!"

Porter Myron Chaffee

Life

Life is a street car
Where all are comfortably seated
But the poets.
Strange creatures —
They wobble in a more or less uncertain manner,
Strap-hanging to the moon and stars.

Madge Ohe

The Clavilux

(The Color Organ)

Colors unfolded,
Shaped and reborn,
Converged, intermingled,
Exquisitely torn, —
Swirl and revolve
On a pivot of fire;
Temptation they write,
The heart's desire.
Orange emerges;
Blue blazes forth;
Purple descends,
Borealis of the north.
Upward, downward,
Passionate the pace,
Crossways, sideways —
A mad color race.
Slow the motion;
Soft tints glide;
Changed the rhythm,
Peaceful the stride.
Organ of color,
Assemblage of light,
Moonbeams your kingdom,
Sun's strength your might —
Borrowing from a rainbow

Spangled hues —
Violets, yellows,
Crimsons, blues.

Dana Burnet

Lone Willow

How beautiful the lone tree is,
Leaning against the water, the great ocean water, the
great sea. . . !
If you think there is no music in the air;
If you do not see dancers dancing on the neck of a giant
sitting bowed for a black cliff;
If you cannot perceive the virgin who, just now, fell
swooning,
With an exquisite drift of hair,
Into the arms of her lover shaped from cloud
(Was it Leda falling into the embrace of the Swan?);
If you have failed to visualize the passionate Christ
who, for vague, aesthetic reasons,
Is about to jump into the abyss;
If you do not see the goat-footed man running with
leaves in his hands down the breast of a huge
goddess he was too little to annoy;
If (because of the veils of dust before your eyes!) you
cannot see Life wanting its gesture and Beauty
posing for its legend; —
Then. . . . I say, then
You had better go play tennis on the hotel courts
Where the girl in the tan skirt
Is waiting to absorb you.

Henri Faust

Whistles

There's a nostalgic sound that whistles make,
For all that factory whistles are a din
That cruelly prizes dreaming eyes awake;
There have been times in April twilights when
The sound of whistles telling six o'clock
Across the quiet air was all a slow
Reverberant murmur, tugging at the lock
My years have placed upon their nameless woe.

And I have started in the deep of night
At the whistling of freight trains passing through,
Seized with a mad impatience that their flight
Had left me somehow changed — without a clue
To the sudden nostalgias that derange
With wildest longings for a home less strange.

Dana Burnet

Moon-Storm

The moon has climbed the dunes and stormed the
hill —
The dead planet has made a patch of light upon my
coat,
The hair of my wife who walks with me under the
walnut branches
Has got a new sheen
And her hands have silver on them
My daughter has come running to me out of the house,
Saying the moon hurts,
Saying the moon troubles her
(It has troubled many before you, my dear!)
One would think that human beings would grow weary
of the old show, of the old hurting planet, of the
moon-storm breaking among leaves
Go back to your room, my darling;
It is only the dead world, torn away and yearning to its
mother,
It is only the lost child pulling at its mother's breasts
with invisible hands
(It is the past putting its lovely death upon us,
Dragging our world to its coldness, to its inevitable
sleep.)
Go back into the house, my child,
And jump the pools of moonlight lest they stain your
shoes . .

And you, my heart!
Do you see the faces of the young men you walked with
 in moon-storm
Before you and I had come together?
Before you and I had got a child?
I see the faces of the young girls I walked with in
 moonstorm
Before they were merged and closed in you . . .
I love them, I remember them!
Do you love and remember the young men who walked
 with you
When the dead planet was making a light upon your
 hair?
For there are many lovers abroad in the world and they
 are all one.
(The individual is only a divergence See how the
 separate rays are gathered toward the source!)
It will not be long before you and I are laid in our death
 below the reach of the moon,
I having no sparkle on my coat, nor you this silver on
 your hand
Perhaps when we are no longer quick and casting
 shadows down the path,
Our daughter will watch this bright snowing among
 the leaves of the walnut trees,
And feel our death like wind upon her cheek

N. Bryllion Fagin

Legerdemain

Two balls

Juggled in space —

Up and down —

Gold and black —

Life

and

Death.

Ethel Romig Fuller

The New Bridge

The new bridge
Spanning the Willamette
Is a nude boy
Leaping a stream.
It is swift, sure grace,
White abandon,
Laughter.
It is an unsullied impulse
Arrested in concrete.

Lilian White Spencer

Cerebral

My aeroplane soul
Brings down a ragged bit of rosy cloud
With a star clinging to its edge,
Which my housewife mind brushes off —
And hems the rest into a neat pink square.
Very useful!
Before, it was only a poem.

Ethel Brodt Wilson

Bees in the Honeysuckle

The bees in the honeysuckle
Outside my open door
Waken me at dawn,
Gold-beaters of the morning.

Bees in the honeysuckle
Waken me with droning —
Waken me at dawn —
Fill every crevice of my room
With beaten gold,
With golden sound —
With gold-dust sound
Of dust-of-gold —
With golden tune,
With loud, loud drone.

Drone, drone, drone,
Down the corridor
Of my dreaming
Comes a blaring —
The blare of golden sound —
The sound of gold-dust
Shimmering all through my room,
Golden, golden sound,
Gold-dust sound —
I breathe the sound

As shining particles
Of dust are breathed,
Revealed in a shaft of sunlight
In a darkened room.
I breathe the golden sound —
I breathe the sound,
The golden tune.

Gold-dust, gold-dust sound,
Drone, drone, drone,
Sounding on my eardrums,
Pounding through my veins,
Penetrating, penetrating sound,
Penetrating to my consciousness —
Sound of dust-of-gold,
All about me where I lie,
All through the room.
Covering me like golden sands,
Over me and under me —
Golden bed and golden canopy —
On my hair, my lips,
Covering my hands, my eyes,
With golden warmth and drowse,
With sound-of-gold,
With golden drone,
With golden tune —
Gold fills my room.

Bees in the honeysuckle,
Gold-beaters of the morning.

Arthur Jonson

Poems for a Chinese Anthology

THE THREE PRINCESSES

In the land of Sim
Three princesses,
Young and beautiful,
Are seated on the white strand,
Their eyes roving the sea
Searching for a ship to carry them far away
To that joyous land —
That should exist —
Where maidens are happy.
 The sea is blue.

In the land of Sim
Three princesses,
No longer young, no longer beautiful,
Are weeping
As they stand on the white shore.
 The sea is blue.

In the land of Sim
Three princesses,
Grown old,
Grown voiceless with age,
Squat on the white beach.
They play with the sand,

They shower it in their hair,
Thinking it is flower petals.
The sea is blue. . . .

LAKE NANHOU

Lake Nanhou ripples the autumnal moon
Reflected in its jade waters.
My oars' splashing
Interrupts the song which the love-imbued waterlilies
Sing to the moon.

PLEA

Balmy night, moonlight,
Perfume of the plum tree:

Give my love a dream so entrancing
That, impatient to see me,
She will come at dawn
And tap at my door.

Perfume of the plum tree,
Balmy night, moonlight:

I shall wake to her caresses
If you have attended my pleadings.

NARCISSUS

Narcissus petals floating on the river,
Should you see at Tien Ouan
A pensive young girl seated beneath a cinnamon tree
That has known two blossomings
Since first we kissed,
Tell her that I inhale a carnation
And so keep ever with me her perfume.

Richard Shelley

A Warrior Returns Home

I stand before the painted gate of the city of Puan Mah,
But I do not knock.

I have been through the land of the Dragons.
I have looked with staring eyes at curving tips of flame
In the distant Land of Fire.

I have threaded the choked gorges of the Yang-Tse
Where bandits lurk in the thick reeds.

I have spent weeks in the bleak Land of Famine to the
far north.

I have felt the sun burning against my body
While I dreamed of water under white lilies.

The city of Puan Mah is surrounded by a high wall.
My wife will be passing tiny rice cakes to her guests,
Who will be sitting on braided mats near a plum tree.
The plum tree bends its mangled shape over the stream
in my garden.

I can hear the sound of the water —
The monotonous sound of my wife's voice —
The swish of the padded feet of a servant arranging a
screen —

A blue screen painted with a silver heron flying
flying

I remember the flash of sun on a heron's wing
As it was flying flying

I stand before the painted gate of the city of Puan Mah,
But — I do not enter.

Lucy H. Sturges

Samarkand

In the Persian gardens of the Samarkand
The marble Buddha smiles upon the lotus pools
And at the fat red fish which dart between the iris
leaves.

From the highest terrace one may see Santa Barbara
And the grey-blue, smooth Pacific,
And through the heavy scent of flowers
There is a subtle tang of salt and kelp.

The occident cannot reproduce the orient,
Even at Samarkand.

That is why the marble Buddha smiles. —
He has known India.

Frances Wierman

Machinery

What are the thoughts of machines?
Under the singing whirr, jar that complains,
Under the slipping belt, the grind of cogs,
Sputter of leaping electrical sparks,
Hisses of worrying steam,
Chain-clank and rattle of buckets
That hoist and empty and drop, whizzing of wheels,
Under the roar — a pæan men sing
Of themselves, *their* will, *their* creations, *their*
power. —
What are the thoughts of their creatures,
The wonderful, grotesquely-bodied host of machines?

“We are the children of men,
Born of their passions of hurry and greed,
Brought to light amid pangs of impatience dire,
Called into being by lack of their own puny bodies
To keep the pace of desire; to be hands for them,
To be seven-leagued boots for their feet;
To achieve; while they batter the walls of their
Universe
Crying forever, ‘More!’ ‘Faster!’ and ‘Greater!’
We are the greatest things in their world of things;
They lord it over our gleaming bulk and harry us
With levers and buttons that make us leap
Like slaves at some easy gesture of kings.

“But men, our fathers, have you forgotten
That in our riveted veins
Runs the blood of your inmost thoughts?
We live! We feel! We have hearts of steel,
Souls that are rays from the god of machines,
A god who desires this earth for his own,
A hard, cold god of gold and things!
Beware, our fathers! For our weird forms
Throw shadows along your path; they darken your day
And menace your night!
We watch. We wait. We bide our time
To crush you under our terrible weight!
We will drown your prayers in our rhythmic roar;
We will wither your brains, enslave your hearts,
And dry your souls!
We will drain your life and drink it ourselves.
Strut on, dwarf-men, among us, your giant-sons;
Strut on — for awhile!”

Mollie Prager

An Apostrophe to the Moon

(from the Chinese of Li-Po)

How often, clear sky, will you return?
Now, as I stop to drink, I ask you.
Man yearns to touch the moon, but he cannot.
Even when I walk, the moon seems always to walk
 with me.
It is bright as a mirror of glass,
For there is no cloud in the sky.
I look toward the sea and observe waves brightened by
 the moon.
It seems that winter has gone and spring has come.
Moon, you always remain the same in the sky.
Ah! The men of the present time cannot see the ancient
 moon,
But the present moon has shone on all ancient men.
All generations, present and past, flow on like water,
But all look on the self-same moon.
I have no thought but to drink to you only, O moon,
For you will always shine on my golden wine flask.

Arthur E. Christy and Lee Cheuk Po

Mollie Prager

Impotency

I love the rain.
I want to dance it!
Sing it!
Paint it!

But I cannot
Dance
Sing
Or paint;
Therefore
I will write it!

I take up my pen
And write prettily:
“As a symphonic crescendo
The rain.”

Or:
“As a largo Benediction
From heaven
It comforts the earth.”

Or:
“The rain rushes down
Impetuously
As importunate lovers
Eager to be wedded
To the young grass blades.”

Basto!
I throw down my pen
To watch the wet
Plunge down
In graceful
Swoops and swirls.

But—
I cannot
Dance it,
Sing it,
Or paint it,
And alas,
Not even write it!
I can only love it.
But—who will know?

May Williams Ward

I See a Star

Not lightly do I say
I see a star.

Climax of my tiny eyeball's striving,
Ultimate attainment of a cubic inch of gelatine molded
 in globular form,
The miracle called seeing pulls to utmost stretch
All elasticities of imagination
Along its intangible but steel-strong beam.

Not lightly do I say
I see a star.
I
See
A Star.