



PEGASUS

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME I, NUMBER 4

July 1923

A NEW DIGITAL READING EDITION

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The July number is the most explicitly regional issue so far. Ben Field opens with 'Carriso Gorge,' a poem of engineering forced through San Diego's burned mountains; Samuel M. Sargent, Jr., follows with a lagoon, and E. Richard Shipp turns westward again. Against those landscapes, Charles Howard Marsh, Lilian White Spencer, William Griffith, and Howard McKinley Corning supply candlelight, cathedral glass, classical figures, and city fragments.

Fred Gronberg's essay 'Ver Libre: An Accepted School' gives the number its critical edge. Free verse was no longer new in 1923, but Pegasus presents the question from the working desk of a small regional magazine: which formal freedoms have become usable, and which merely fashionable? The issue's mixture of sonnet-like stanzas, imagist fragments, and prose debate makes that question visible in practice. Archival and federal records place Pegasus securely among the short-lived American little magazines of the period.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- University of Chicago little-magazine finding aid
- U.S. copyright catalog, 1923 periodicals

TEXTUAL AND EDITORIAL NOTE

This edition is newly typeset from the supplied HathiTrust scan. Obvious OCR artifacts, broken words, duplicated drop capitals, and spacing errors have been corrected against the page images. Period spelling, capitalization, and unusual diction have otherwise been retained. Hyphens and em dashes have been checked against the printed pages rather than normalized into a single mark. Each poem begins on a new page, with its printed issue page and scan page identified, and every poet's name is placed immediately beneath the corresponding title.

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CARRISO GORGE

Ben Field

Eastward the wise men sought to find a pass
Where steel could lie and stretch its glistening limbs,
Where steam could whistle from its lips of brass
And continental traffic shriek its hymn;
But from the javelined San Diego bay
Across the chaos of the mountains' girth
There is no place where nature made a way
To reach her empire burgeoned on the earth.
A hundred million boulders piled on high
While over age-dead heights the eagles pass,
God's hands flung down these mountains burnt and dry—
Yet in the canyons' depths grow tufts of grass,
Then came a man whose dream was not forespent—
Where mauve and orange lit the panicked forge
He built a road that is time's monument
And spun his steel along Carriso Gorge.

Issue p. 4 · Scan p. 6.

CANDLELIGHT

Charles Howard Marsh

With nimble delicacy
The soft fingers of the candlelight
Caress the dear contour of your face.
With wistful grace, the beams
Tangle themselves like fairy lanterns
In the golden maze of your hair;
They leap with devout reverence —
Into the blue pools of your eyes;
They dance with buoyant abandon
On your cheeks—;
But when they come to your lips—
Ah, they are on holy ground—
Then they kneel in silent adoration;
I, too, have worshipped there.
Even as the lingering candlelight.

Issue p. 5 · Scan p. 7.

THE GRAVES OF KEATS AND SHELLEY IN THE ENGLISH
CEMETERY, ROME

Charles J. Quirk

No Homer he, no Shakespeare King of Song!
Only a sad and lonely dream-led boy;
Who sought forevermore, 'mid green cool woods,
To catch the farewells of a fleeting Joy!

Shelley

Eternal sorrow hovers over thee
And thy short span; now moans the world too late
The doom of thee, her uncrowned potentate
Of lyric deathless song, whose tragedy,
She knows, is wedded to the destiny
Of those whom Fame shall scorn until the tomb
Hath called them on to deep marmoreal gloom,
Leaving behind but dreams' lost memory.
Such was thy lot. Thy name was writ by woe.
Since that thy life—O sad, sad life,—is done,
The laurel and the cypress blend as one;
Grief's urn with tears for thee doth overflow,
For fame is cruel and with careless laugh
Carves now her praises on thine epitaph.

Issue p. 6 · Scan p. 8.

THE CATHEDRAL WINDOW

José Maria de Heredia · translated by Lilian White Spencer

This old stained glass saw folk of high degree,
Beneath its lucent azure, pearl and flame,
Incline for churchly blessings; knight and dame,
Resplendent in the pomps of chivalry.

Then, they went forth; horns sounding merrily;
Upholding cross or sword or falcon tame,
Toward field and wood or wars of holy fame,
To hunt the heron or Christ's grave to free.

And now... The Lords beside their ladies sleep;
At heel, their hounds eternal virgil keep
All sepulchred on pavements black and white.

Deaf, dumb and still they lie. From every tomb
Stone eyes regard with never gleam of sight
The great rose window and its fadeless bloom.

Issue p. 7 · Scan p. 9.

SEGMENTS

Howard McKinley Corning

A Portfolio of the City by Night

MIRAGE

The lighted city
Is a mirage
Of the stars:
Gaunt buildings
With tapers in their eyes
Reach black roots,
Tenaciously,
Toward oblivion.

ARC LIGHTS

Swollen cats' eyes
That cut
Like darts
Through obscurity.

DARK ALLEYS

Coffins
From which the corpses
Have been stolen.

EMPTY STREETS

Moments
Struck out of time.

Issue p. 8 · Scan p. 10.

SACRIFICE

William Griffith

With hands that now are idle
She wove a simple shroud
For something never mentioned,
Nor dwelt upon aloud:
She wove it without breaking
The silence of a thread,
Lest she be thought presuming
To interrupt the dead.
With what a gracious gesture
She motioned life away;
And beckoned to the darkness,
And bade adieu to day!
So a defeated mother,
To whom much was denied,
With small reward in heaven,
Put happiness aside.

Issue p. 9 · Scan p. 11.

CIRCE

William Griffith

She was a spirit in eclipse at noon,
Hidden and lost in solar hours of light;
Waning by day and waxing in the night,
Too soon she came, and then she went—too soon.
A sort of glory such as, seen in June,
Enchants the vision of an anchorite,
This woman made the darkness strangely bright,
Whose beauty shone on mortals like the moon.
Caresses such as hers are seldom felt,
Such kisses have been sought but rarely found,
Except by those who, goblinwise, have dwelt
Half in the air and halfway underground;
And who have clutched, been staggered and been hurled
Backward by that sham enemy, the world.

Issue p. 10 · Scan p. 12.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD JEW

Albert A. Rosenthal

Alone, among the shadow-haunted benches
Of the deserted synagogue,
His prayer cap crowning his age-frosted hair
His frayed grey tallith wrapped tightly
About his toil-bent body
He sways... a shadow among shadows...
Between the two tall candles that bronze the altar.
The words of his beloved Torah blur...
His eyes fill with distant things
And his soul is a taut violin string
Quivering with muted melodies
That Life forgot to play.

Issue p. 11 · Scan p. 13.

LAGOON

Samuel M. Sargent, Jr.

Splashes of amber from the moon,
And etchings of grey and of blue;
And mirrored in the mute lagoon
There is painted the look of you.
Off on a far and haunted isle
Glow the embers of other days,
End of a path to buried things,
Blurred in the fog and misty haze.
Down on a lone and haunted isle
Where the moonlight shines amber bright,
With grey palms in the rhythmic swing
Of the stars in a tropic night.
Far in a nooked-in shoreline cool,
In the world of the years slipped on,
The black waves cool, the moon a jewel
In the dark of a snuffed out sun.
There the look of the vanished you
That was mine in the days ago,
The days before the blurred mist came
And the years crept carelessly on.
There is never a road that never forks,
Nor a laneway that never parts—
The knife of time is sharp and cruel,
And it drew the blood of our hearts.
Far on an isle of dim, dim mist
That rides like a veil on the sea
I gaze in the blue of a blue lagoon
With your eyes smiling out at me...

Issue p. 12 · Scan p. 14.

ON THE TRAIL

Alice Ward Baker

A Cinquain

Footsteps
On the dusty trail
Denoting strength. Others,
Weaker perhaps, efface the first—
This is life.

Issue p. 12 · Scan p. 14.

ODELET

Henri de Régnier · translated by Lilian White Spencer

If I have told my love,
It is but to the brook,
When in its face I look.
If I have told my love,
It is but to the breeze,
That whispers in the trees.
If I have told my love,
It is to birds awing;
They pass and sing
With every wind that blows.
If I have told my love,
The echo, only, knows.
If I have loved too well;
It was, in joyous guise
Or sad; your eyes.
If I have loved too well,
Your tender mouth and grave,
Sweet lips that gave—
If I have loved too well,
Dear flesh of hand and cheek
O these are ghosts I seek!

Issue p. 13 · Scan p. 15.

THE WEST
E. Richard Shipp

Men of the East
call it a Desert.

If it be so
then much loveliness
much beauty
lies in its heart.

Beauty so great
that the Sun
(Prince of Lovers)
peeps through His windows,
hurries his toilet,
hastens his coming
that the day may be long
with his Sweetheart.

As Night
riding bareback on the Wind,
a great black coat whipping
the flanks of his horse,
comes galloping,
the Sun, hesitating,
slowly,
reluctantly
draws the curtain,
closes the blind,
and locks the door.

The Heart of the Desert
has much beauty,
much loveliness
In the eyes of her Lover.

EDITORIAL AND BACK MATTER

VER LIBRE: AN ACCEPTED SCHOOL

The position that vers libre holds or should not hold in the field of poetry today has been the subject of much futile argument in the last twenty years. While a merry and friendly little clash is constantly going on within the ranks of verse-writers themselves it seems that the brunt of opprobrium against vers libre comes mostly from verse-tasters and outsiders—those who know nothing either of the mechanics or the psychology of verse-writing.

It is sadly true that in the earlier stages of the cult much sickening twaddle was exposed in the name of vers libre. It is unnecessary here, however, to bring the time-worn examples of Milton, Shelley or Whitman into defense of vers libre, or to reiterate that it is as old as language itself.

In an age of steel, bill-boards and chewing gum, vers libre gave to the younger generation a vehicle of expression unhampered by tradition, form or idea. The triumph of vers libre was accomplished through the fact that its proponents had courage and foresight enough to pool their interests and to found a school. Herein they have room for spontaneity, fluency, and unfettered emotion such as the rhymed moulds would never permit. The majority of vers librists today are not ignorant of the technique of old fixed verse-forms, and it is somewhat due to this advantage that they can write better poetry in free verse.

On the other hand many writers know little or nothing concerning the brass-bound conventions of metre and rhyme, yet are turning out products of their fancy entirely acceptable at the shrine of their Muse. Absence of restraint in any form is absolutely necessary for all artists in order to do the most creditable work, and where may one find more freedom for the poet than in the empyrean vastnesses of vers libre?

Vers libre may be, and is, decadent, but only insofar as the “state” is subjugated to the needs and usefulness of the “individual,” or as Havelock Ellis explains it by comparison of St. Mark’s with the Parthenon.

Pegasus, however, is not an out-and-out champion of vers libre alone, but is open to every conceivable form of verse, old or new, and in another issue we shall be equally pleased to discuss the merits of other schools.

Pegasus has been patronizingly accused of belonging to the “mushroom” class of little magazines, that is, sporadic and ephemeral, but this has not given us even a flutter of irritability. Rather, have we accepted the criticism as a compliment and are bold enough to add that as poetic sauce “mushrooms” make palatable many a prosaic and more substantial dish. Our subscribers are hereby assured that only a drought of contributions or a deluge of printers’ bills can stop the progress and improvement of Pegasus.

Fred Gronberg.

COMMENT

A northern contemporary who is editing “the only western literary magazine” writes us that Pegasus “is down to the dead-level of triteness and opinionless mediocrity.” We appreciate this criticism as we have worked for a higher standard and we wish to state that in the future we will be more discriminating in our selection of material. As regards being “opinionless” we cheerfully admit it, for a magazine of this size cannot hope to have the range of Harriet Monroe’s Poetry. As we grow in friends and finances we hope to make Pegasus a force in all that is literary in western life. At present, we must be content to struggle along merely existing, printing the work of the poets that is original and vigorous. We are proud of our magazine; we enjoy the associations it has brought us, and we are hopeful in a year’s time to have sent our roots deep enough in fruitful soil to assure our regular appearance.

Poetry is one of the greatest literary forces in the world today as evidenced by the numerous magazines that have come into being during the past four years. The north, south, east and west now have a host of little magazines each singing in its own key, and, it seems to us,—singing harmoniously.

These magazines, devoted to poetry, are doing more for the Art than college professors could hope to do in the class room. When a university student graduates, his estimate of good poetry comprises what has been taught him by conservative instructors. He remembers Shelley as the writer of “The Skylark,” and Keats by his poem “The Nightingale.” We are sorry these students rarely read “Endymion” or “Prometheus.” We have looked over the libraries of many cultured university graduates and we find a shelf of the poets from Chaucer to Whitman. A mustiness and dustiness on these volumes is proof they are never read.

We do not wish to imply the smaller magazines will revive a love of poetry. We do believe, however, if a man or woman would subscribe to one or two contemporary poetry

magazines giving them a casual perusal, it would do much to bring back the love for good verse lost to them when they left college.

‘We have studied the magazines of verse sent to us from all parts of the country for June. We emphatically state, as a result of a careful study of these magazines, more good verse is being written in America today than ever before in her history. But we have no voices such as Lowell or Whitman in contemporary poetry.

Our desire is to print better poetry, if possible, than any of our contemporaries. “Up!—forth again, Pegasus!”

Harriet Monroe has gone to Europe. We understand this is her first visit since she launched Poetry in 1910. For a decade she has worked for greater poetic expression in America and has earned a period of rest from her editorial duties. Harriet Monroe is a distinguished and discriminating editor as is evidenced by her discovery of many nationally-known poets, among whom are Sandburg, Tagore, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. And what a difference there is in the work of these writers! Her magazine reflects an imagination, a wholesomeness and a decided touch of masculinity that merits our admiration. In the fall we will welcome her back and predict she will give to Poetry a greater virility as the result of her European contacts.

Charles Wharton Stork has left for a visit to his native Norway. As an editor he has done much for poetry in this country. He has published Contemporary Verse for ten years without financial help, without advertising and without endowment. Such a magazine deserves, at least, the moral support of every editor in the country.

We have been interested in the spring exhibition of the San Diego Art Guild at the San Diego Museum Art Gallery. This is a move in the right direction. San Diego has now become an art center and these exhibitions will do much to foster a love of good pictures in this community. The Art Guild and the patrons of art have given us an exhibition that calls forth our sincere approval and appreciation.

Samuel T. Clover, editor of the Los Angeles Saturday Night and William Griffith, editor of Current Opinion, will act as judges in the Ben Field prize contest. The announcement appeared in the May number.

H. Thompson Rich won the May prize of ten dollars offered by Pegasus for his sonnets “Twilight” and “After Twilight.”

THE CONTRIBUTORS

HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING and CHARLES HOWARD MARSH appeared in the May number.

E. RICHARD SHIPP, "The Wyoming Poet," is well-known as a contributor to current magazines. More of his work will appear in future issues of Pegasus.

ALICE WARD BAKER sends her work from Painsville, Ohio.

WILLIAM GRIFFITH is the editor of Current Opinion.

CHARLES J. QUIRK is a young American, studying at the College St. Jean Berchmans, Louvain, Belgium.

Lillian White Spencer has favored Pegasus with her French translations. She lives in Denver, Colo.

BEN FIELD, Los Angeles, in his poem, Carriso Gorge, has written something typically San Diegan.

ALBERT A. ROSENTHAL is the editor of The Nomad published in Birmingham, Ala.

SAMUEL M. SARGENT, JR., has appeared in Caprice and other magazines.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION,
ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF
PEGASUS, PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY AT SAN DIEGO, CAL., FOR APRIL 1,
1923.

State of California, County of San Diego. Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared W. H. Lench, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of Pegasus and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

That the name and address of the publisher, editor, managing editor and owner is W. H. Lench, P. O. Box 424.

That the owner is: (Give name and address of individual owner, or, if a corporation give its name and the names and addresses of the stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of stock.) W. H. Lench, P. O. Box 424.

That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are (if there are none, so state): None.

W. H. Lench, Owner.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of March, 1923.

Florence Olive, Notary.

(My commission expires July 27, 1924.)