



PEGASUS

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME I, NUMBER 5

October 1923

A NEW DIGITAL READING EDITION

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

October's Pegasus is darker and more theatrical. Henri Faust's long valley of silenced birds gives the issue an atmosphere of suspended song; Margaret Tod Ritter compresses dusk, dawn, and release into stark images; Lilian White Spencer's hospital sequence turns white rooms and uniforms into a modern devotional setting. Even the shorter poems often work by juxtaposition, shifting quickly between beauty, dread, charity, and death.

The editorial pages show Lench continuing to define the magazine's purpose while maintaining the contributor network established earlier in the year. This is the phase in which Pegasus most clearly behaves as a durable serial rather than a one-off pamphlet: it has recurring departments, visual continuity, and a recognizable circle of writers. Yet the surviving institutional record remains slight. The University of Chicago finding aid and the federal copyright catalog are valuable precisely because they preserve a trace of a local publication whose main historical evidence is otherwise the issues themselves.

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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THE VALLEY OF THE MUTED SONGBIRDS

Henri Faust

Beyond all sorrow-sings and all silences
Of those who mourn in exile
And the pale stained meadows of Nirvana
Where the flame of rapture dies—
Deep plunged in an utter stillness,
In vast windless groves
That sigh not nor give incense
Unto the night
But hallow a listening void—
Is the Valley of the Muted Songbirds.
Here are the robin and the lark,
Nightingale, bluebird, bobolink,
Woodthrush, oriole, red-eyed vireo,
Cardinal, grosbeak, yellow-throated warbler,
The Wren and the jay.
Silence broods,
Tiredly they draw their beaks
Into their shrunken breasts—
Their eyes stir not,
They build no nests,
But sit in motley company
And dream...
Dream of the lost enchanted hillsides,
White rivers spinning in the spring,
Bloom-foam of the haw lanes in the spring,
Retreats under the wide cool eaves
Of poplars shingled jade and silver
Jade and silver in the censer of the spring...
What madrigals of the dawn!
What delights of the drowsy noon!
They swoon at remembrance of passion
In the azure-dim hour of twilight...
Their dreams are wrung with music,
Strange holy chords—
Whether grass or tree the habitat
They hear delirious flutings of the fields,
Wild intimate cravings
Of the old loved symphony...
Tiredly they draw their beaks
Into their shrunken breasts,
And dream.
The vast windless groves sigh not
Nor give incense unto the night
In the Valley of the Muted Songbirds.

Issue p. 5 · Scan p. 5.

AS NIGHT COMES

E. Richard Shipp

Soft feathery clouds low-hanging,
A sweet, woody smell in the air,
Spirals of pearl-grey smoke drifting,
Distant bells calling to prayer.
Through a smooth mellow purple haze
That lies against the mountain's face
Dim trails trace their devious ways
And squirm about from place to place.
A scolding, quarreling magpie
Flitters and flutters round my camp;
Swiftly a ground squirrel scuttles by—
A frisky, cunning little scamp.
The sun dips down behind the hills
And twilight creeps slowly through the trees;
The voice of tumbling water shrills,
Bold stars step out by twos and threes.
A coyote sings his wild, weird song,
A lonely, lonesome melody;
A blood-thirsty lobo calls his "Tong"
In long-drawn, chilling monody.
A sharp-cut moon hangs on the clouds,
Black shadows dance in the fading light;
In the hills, far from noisy crowds,
The Peace of God lies on the night.

Issue p. 6 · Scan p. 6.

DUSK

Margaret Tod Ritter

A tree
Against the sky
And then no tree at all
But just an inky silhouette
On grey.

Issue p. 6 · Scan p. 6.

DAWN

Margaret Tod Ritter

Has then
A sword been run
Through an exultant heart
That all this red should drench the floor
Of heaven?

Issue p. 6 · Scan p. 6.

RELEASE

Margaret Tod Ritter

I will not sob myself to sleep, nor waken
With tears upon my lashes; night will shelter
No wild abandonment of grief; my weeping
Shall not disturb you.
Against my burning eyelids I will fasten
The lovely image of your youthful mistress
Until at daybreak, having passed Golgotha,
I shall release you.

Issue p. 7 · Scan p. 7.

INTERLUDE

Lilian White Spencer

HOSPITAL

Grim Cloisters
Where miracles are wrought
Among maimed proselytes;
But these, made whole,
Are thrust out again
To the torturer.

SURGEONS

White robed gamblers
In white hells
At white tables
Play with death
And cheat.

NURSES—TRAINING

Youth, in stripes,
Serves two hard masters.
Setting her cap for both,
She smiles.

CONVALESCENCE

Reprieve!
O God, I would not sit quiet in
 prison!
Send me out to break stones
For new roads.
Then, I shall sing
Under the lash!

Issue p. 8 · Scan p. 8.

TO BEG YOUR CHARITY

H. Thompson Rich

I have run fleet
Through crimson clover, Marie,
Through scarlet poppies;
Little you know of me,
So fleet I've run.
Ah, I've been wild,
Known many a lover, Marie,
Neath many a coppice—
A vagrant honey-bee!
Yea, passing wild.
I have drunk wine
Frighted with passion, Marie,
And charged with madness;
I have lived vividly,
Drunk crimson wine.
Ah, I've dreamed dreams
Till Christ went ashen, Marie,
And wept for sadness—
I have lived vividly,
Dreamed scarlet dreams.
Long since I made
Of Sin a chalice, Marie,
And drank my fill;
And cursed all chastity,
Long since, long since.
And then I reared
For Lust a palace, Marie—
Bats reign there still,
And beat wings hideously
In that stone tomb.
But Youth is dead,
The revel over, Marie;
By this last coppice
I beg your charity
For cold, dead Youth.
I bow my head
For Sins of clover, Marie,
And Lusts of poppies—
I beg your charity...
And bow my head.

Issue p. 9 · Scan p. 9.

EPHEMER A

Ada Crandall

Heaped!
Tossed!
Billowed!
Piled!
The waves are sand-dunes,
Catching saucers of light.
They are race-horses
Bannered with green.
They are dying elephants,
Writhing in agony.
They are swirling octopi
Reaching out questing tentacles.
 Languidly liquid,
 Foamingly turgid.
The waves are children
At play in the crab-holes.
They are long wrinkled sunshafts
Glinting mile on mile.
They are fairy gleams—
Now here—now gone.

Issue p. 10 • Scan p. 10.

TWO POEMS

Challiss Silway

Your strange beauty arrested me
And I found my eyes searching
For the secret of it all.
How the pulses must sing
In the delicate temples!
Your mouth, scarlet and irregular,
Is like a young wound
Living in white flesh!
When I met your glance
My disappointment was tragedy—
I knew the soul had fled from your eyes!
From his mountain of philosophy
He sighted me in the valley of obscurity.
I heard his call:
“Why not climb the heights?
There are rich fruits
Growing on these trees of logic!”
I gazed upward—
Knew an instant’s temptation—
But happily resumed
The contented munching
Of my dear crusts of dreams.

Issue p. II · Scan p. II.

CYNICAL CYTATION

Dorothy Cartwright

Once I lost my sense of humor.
Oh yes, that's why I thought I loved you!

You were forty, and getting grey,
And calling for your pipe and bath slippers
At dusk,
And dieting a bit, and getting "finicky"
If your coffee were strong or your tea weak.
You weighed your learned words
Like so much hay or cattle
Put up for market.
Funny I cared!...

I guess it was your Steady Dependability—
'Self-made man,' they called you.
I was twenty...

I clamored for perfumed Morrisettes
And brocaded dancing slippers

About the conservative hour of eleven.

Cocktails with a naughty sophistication delighted me;
If I thought of anything so vulgarly prosaic as food
It was to wish that the nuts in my fondant were pecans
Instead of peanuts,
And that six handsome-dark-men had appeared
In my tea-cup fortune.

My words were scintillating, effervescing,
With a wicked naivete which made them
Interesting and absorbingly fascinating.
People didn't speak of me in advertising terms,
As though I were a toothpaste
Or a non-skid garter...

They called me "keen," "some baby,"
Spoke of me as "cute." I was.

Yes, I lost my sense of humor.
I set you up on a pedestal,
Worshipped as at a shrine.
You did look so topheavy perched up there
That I got a thrill jarring the stand
And watching your graceless downfall.
How I laughed!

Once I lost my sense of humor...
That's why I ever thought I loved you!

Issue p. 12 · Scan p. 12.

HEAT

Jack Cooper

rich yellow heat—
Statuesque trees—
motionless—
throwing cobalt shadows
on the rich yellow pavement.
Lawns—
soft, voluptuous,
and a pink cement walk
leading to a bluish-white house
where she lives.
We shall lie on the green plush lawn
and lazily watch the statuesque trees
which throw cobalt shadows
on the rich yellow pavement.

Issue p. 12 · Scan p. 12.

[SMALL STREAM-LIKE THOUGHTS OF YOU]

Jack Cooper

To flow musically
over the hardened protuberances
of my mind
and distance is slowly strangling
the harsh sound
of your incongruities.
And I wish that I may never see you
or touch your hand again
for now
I love you dearly.

Issue p. 13 · Scan p. 13.

THE MASTER EARTH

Ben Field

It lies there coarse and sprawling
Where God flung it down to its fate,
A Gargantuan live thing
Of lust and love and hate.
Its hairy limbs are mountains,
 Its breast is the valleys below,
Its passion is the fountains
 That run and race and flow.
The sea is a clinging woman
Who glides to her lover's breast,
A desire-exhausted woman
 Who lies on the earth to rest.
And the earth is brutal and spurns her.
After he has made her his bride;
Sobbing and crying, she turns her
 Wet face to the ebbing tide.
I said: "The sea is weeping
 As it steals from its master's shore"—
Then I saw the water creeping
 To the earth's embrace once more.

EDITORIAL AND BACK MATTER

EDITORIAL

The human arts are divided into five groups: The Divine, the intellectual, the aesthetic, the moral and the physical. The Divine is queen of all the arts, the mystical unfoldment of the higher nature (soul), while a union with the others in the group goes to make up a well-rounded mental and physical development. Art is either productive or interpretative, productive in the case of original work, interpretative because it is directed toward the ascertaining of something—literary criticism or the study of philology.

A work of art is original if it represents a new artificial form, otherwise it constitutes a mere multiplication of some form already existing. That is why experiments are valuable in the arts today. There is a desire to create new forms rather than follow the old ones. Eventually a genius will arrive, take advantage of the experiments of a decade and give the world a work equaling or possibly eclipsing the masterpieces of past ages.

What is a masterpiece! A work of art becomes a masterpiece in proportion to the unity of ideas that pervades it, or the degree in which all the simplest details are executed. This is particularly true of Michaelangelo, for his work on the highest pinnacles of a cathedral is executed with the same fine workmanship characteristic of the statues one can study at close range. This is not true of modern sculpture where detail is not considered, only the idea being evident; it is not true either of modern painting or modern poetry, although poetry comes nearer to perfection of detail than any of the modern arts.

Perhaps our next great masterpiece will be produced through the medium of poetry.

W. H. L.

COMMENT

Experiments are always valuable. They are also necessary even if they end in failure, for if they are successful they add something to the sum substance of knowledge; if unsuccessful they have endeavored to prove the impossibility of a thing which end them for still other experiments.

For the first time in this country a group of four young men, all under thirty, have published a portfolio of their latest work. The introduction to the reader says: "FOUR is

not a magazine. The work of each member may at times carry the approval of the entire group. It may carry only the conviction of its author. At any rate, FOUR will reflect a drastic workshop wherein the group discuss the elements of life, particularly their interpretations through the medium of poetry." The first number is illuminating in that certain "elements of life" are set forth with force and feeling. The members of the group are: H. Thompson Rich, W. H. Lench, David N. Grokowsky and Yossef Gaer. FOUR will be published quarterly. The price is twenty-five cents per copy, one dollar per year. Subscriptions and communications should be sent to 301 Phillips Building, 224 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, Calif.

Since the appearance of the July number Fred Gronberg has resigned the associate editorship of Pegasus.

In one of our letters to the poetry editor of a northern monthly we mentioned that "sweetness" permeated too much of contemporary verse. He replied to us as follows: "You are undoubtedly right in saying the verse of today has too much 'sweetness.' On the other hand a great quantity of that which pretends to depth is too evidently forced. Its insincerity is so evident it tends to throw the whole modern movement into disrepute. I prefer a 'sweet' poem which is sincere to an unpolished one which is only an attempt to make an effect." The modern movement will always be in disrepute and usually gets its black eye from unenlightened people who never read contemporary poetry, or any kind of poetry for that matter. Poetry is not read by the masses and is not likely to be for a long time. But it is looking up, courses are offered in many universities and in some of the high schools. With the educating of the younger generation for a love of contemporary verse, a poetry magazine in the near future will have a better chance of an existence. The praise will be due to the small, much laughed at poetry magazines of today which went on in spite of opposition printing the best verse procurable.

Palms, a magazine of verse from Guadalajara, Mexico, for August, publishes its poems anonymously. A northern editor writes us: "I have a late copy of Palms and do not like it. It looks cowardly to me to print a lot of poor stuff and ask other people to pass on it." This is not true. Palms for August contains much good work, and there is an open letter well-worth reading in which many of the verse magazines come in for a great deal of criticism while others are praised. The death of Amy Sebree Smith came as a surprise to us. Miss Smith's work is the best we have seen of any San Diego poet. She has contributed to Poetry and Harriet Monroe's anthology contains her verses. During her last years she wrote little that was given to the world. There is a simplicity and lyrical quality in her work that breathes a haunting loveliness. The following stanza from her poem "Dawn-Sea" ranks her a true poet: The waves of the dawn-sea Are baptismal waters Washing my thought clean Of

earth-dust.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

H. THOMPSON RICH, BEN FIELD, CHALLISS SILVAY and LILIAN WHITE SPENCER have contributed to previous issues of Pegasus. E. RICHARD SHIPP, "The Wyoming Poet," has just returned from a visit to Alaska. A series of articles on his trip are appearing in Sunday supplements of eastern newspapers. ADA CRANDALL, National City, Cal., is a senior at the University of Redlands. She is the youngest contributor to appear in Pegasus. HENRI FAUST sends his work from Monticello, Ark. MARGARET TOD RITTER, Colorado Springs, Colo., is well-known to western readers. JACK COOPER, Los Angeles, Cal., is an artist and critic. DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT, Los Angeles, Cal., appears for the first time in a verse magazine.