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The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Weare Holbrook | Doris Packard

E. O. James | Dorothy Haddox

William C. de Mille and others

DREAMS, A PLAYLET IN ONE ACT

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The Lyric West

No. 2

A Magazine Of Verse

May, 1921

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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The Lyric West for May, 1921.

Grace Atherton Dennen, Editor and Publisher.

Mary Ritchie, Business Representative.

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THE LYRIC WEST is a magazine of verse designed to foster the poetic development of the expanding West, though it will at all times be an open market for the work of all verse writers of all places. Those who believe in the purpose and power of such a magazine are invited to become Guarantee Subscribers by the payment of ten dollars toward a Guarantee Fund.

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.

Edna Goit Brintnall

Songs of the Wanderlust

THE CITY WIFE

Little whispering wind, don't beg me so!
When you know full well, how I long to go—
 (Don't beg, little whispering wind!)
The valley is green, and the stream flows free—
What matters it, though—they are not for me,
 (Don't sigh, little whispering wind!)

Little whispering wind, I love it so!
The great, wide place, where the lupins blow
 (All blue,—little whispering wind!)
And the golden poppies their largess throw;
How can I stay —when my heart cries, “Go!”!
 (But I must, little whispering wind!)

Little whispering wind, be kind, be still!
As you flutter the sash at my opened sill.
 (Be kind, little whispering wind!)
Lest I burst my fetters, and bend to your will—
Seeking the stream,—o'er the poppy-strewn hill:
 (Little whispering wind, be still!)

THE DESERT WIFE

An eerie thing! You chain of golden light—
Wending your serpent-way across the night;

Rending the stillness of this sun-cursed plain
'With shrieks of warning, to the stars—in vain!

Is it a protest, or do you merely mock—
That in this thund'rous silence—
You still find me—sane?

THE COUNTRY WIFE

Oh, the lights of the City are suns burned low,—
At rest, in their orbits, row on row;
And they glimmer and glisten and softly glow,
And wink to themselves, as if they know,
All of the joy, and most of the woe,—
Deep hid in the hearts of men.

Oh, the song of the City, is gladsome and free—
While shrill is her laughter, all empty of glee;
But, her weeping is hushed (as all weeping should be)
And she darkens her sky,—that her God may not see!
Yet, the moan of the City, is music to me,—
For it breathes of the souls of men!

Joy Bennett

Fashion-Show in Fairyland

It's Fashion Show in Fairyland, each tiny elfin loom
Is busy weaving silky stuff to form the flowerets' bloom.
The fairy tailors crosslegged there upon their
 toadstools sit,
And sew and measure carefully, that everything may
 fit.

And when the work is quite complete, the flowers all
 arrayed,
The fairies hold their Fashion Show, and view them in
 parade.
The Violet's heavenly purple robe, the Rose's velvet
 gown,
The fragile charm of Baby's Breath, the Pussywillow's
 down.

The Appleblossom's rose-flecked foam, the blushing
 bloom of Peach,
How could one choose, so perfect seems the garniture of
 each?
The Poppy's dress of shimmering gold came from the
 Sun himself.
(I know it's so, for I was told this by a truthful elf!)

And when the last has sauntered past, the fairy joy
 bells chime,
A dulcet carillon to greet once more the glad
 Springtime.

Doris Packard

Come Home a Little While

Come home a little while from over there,
Mother! such long years have you been away;
Come home some winter night, and while you stay
Let me build up the fire and draw your chair,
And puff the pillow right, and smooth your hair;
Then we will talk—there is so much to say.
I have been waiting for you every day;
Oh I could show you now how much I care!

I would not hurt you, dear, with anything,
Or let your eyes grow troubled at my tears,
If you could come to me again somehow;
But I would comfort you—with mothering
That you were lonely for through all the years,
And I have never understood till now.

Ethel Brooks Stillwell

Wanderer

I have climbed to the far steep mountain heights, and
down to the valleys fair,
I have tried the magic of desert nights; but I could not
rest me there.

I have searched great rivers and roamed wide plains,
and walked through the wooded aisles
Of deep old forests, and dragged my chains through
pitiful miles on miles
Back and forward and up and down, over the whole
world's span
From Mauna Loa to London Town and the realms of
Khublai Khan.

Now to my own low cliffs I come, where the sea shines
blue and clear,
And the long waves break into flying foam, but I cannot
rest me here.

What, is there never a place at all that is not troubled
with graves?
Never in all this great round world a happy small place
to play?

Why must I always hear your voice singing above the
waves?

Why must I always see your face fashioned in thin
white spray?

Ethel Brooks Stillwell

A Morning Walk

I left the sleepers snug in bed,
 And climbed a lonely hill.
The birds sang madly overhead,
 But all the winds were still.

I saw the bright dawn pierce and thrill
 A gray world unaware.
I thought to climb a lonely hill
 But God himself was there.

Emily Ferl

Desert Interval

Remote, austere, divinely white and high,
Law graved in stone, winter bound Sinai;
Your lower slopes are too stern of access
For the wayfaring feet of men who die.

One spirit only in the middle land
Dream walking, aching at the leagues of sand,
Divines thru drifted snow your burning bush,
And takes his life and fortune in his hand.

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Emily Ferl

Spring Snow

In winter wind out of the north cypresses lean,
Today new in the mountain paths
The snow lies clean—
And we know early rain and late,
Keen hail between.
In the green garden of my soul
New snow lies clean.

E. O. James

Motley

*O where have you been, Sir Jester,
With your harlequin bauble and your bells?
A-mocking the princes and lords of State,
Fox-nosed bishops and captains great,
Judges and rogues in plush that fester
In the King's high citadels.*

*And what is your pay for jesting?
A motley cloak—when I lie.
Trencher-scrapings the butlers owe me,
A morsel the silken courtiers throw me;
Tell 'em truth, and they send me questing
In rags to a mouldy sty.*

*Is it lone in your windy kennel?
Lone as a bitter jest.
But wise men whipt of fortune find me,
And minstrels beg for the dreams that blind me,
And once when I couched me in straw and fennel
I had my King for a guest.*

*Have you no more pay for your mocking?
When my King runs mad on the moor,
Tis mine to limp through the brambles after
And fend him with folly and antic laughter,*

To wheedle a crust from yokels gawking
And a pallet from the poor.

*Where hide you in the wars, poor Motley,
When the death-keen arrows fly?*
In yeoman's brown in the ranks I ha' cheated
The chill of fear in a heart defeated,
I ha' turned my brothers to battle hotly,
And led them laughing to die.

*They ringed you with ribald laughter
When your biting answer flashed,*
But your cheeks are wet with tears. I have purged
My own heart's folly in him I scourged,
(King and Motley—and which is dafter?)
And I loved the one whom I lashed.

If your wage be rags and weeping,
Why jest? In part for my crust,
But more for my vision of blinding wonder,
And my anger flares at the fools that blunder
And batten well in my kind lord's keeping,
Turning the splendor to dust.

A pathos from the crumbling stones
Still pleads in mute distress
Where Gone but not forgotten owns
Love's sweet forgetfulness.

But his the mockery to surmise
Complete oblivion
Who reads in men's unanswering eyes:
Forgotten—but not gone.

E. O. James

Gertrude E. Darlow

Beyond

Beyond!
To that word I respond.
It seems
An echo from my dreams;
The goal
Of my outreaching soul;
Away,
Far distant from today,
Remote
As ships at sea afloat.
Afar,
Like a bright, shining star,
Apart,
Yet hidden in my heart.
Akin
To all that is within.
Ponder!
What if beyond be yonder?

Grace Atherton Dennen

Poems of Every Day

THE WIDOW BARKER VOTES

A score of us were lounging at the polls
When she came there.
Down at Chris Heyward's barn the polling place,
And all the air
Heavy with smoke and talk, the usual din
When the door opened and they brought her in,
No man of us but knew her, on the street
We passed her every day
In customary dress of decent black
And hair of faded gray.
Jed Barker's widow—poor enough to see—
What could the suffrage mean to such as she?

But she came toward us with determined tread
And proudly lifted head,
And in her face a hush, as she were bent
Upon some holy sacrament.
We stared—almost forgot to smoke or talk,
There was a grandeur in her look, her walk,
It stirred dim memories of old pioneers,
Of stalwart Molly Pitcher and the years
Of Valley Forge and the Republic's making.
Strange, sudden memories to come breaking

Upon our comfortable way
Of managing election day
As we had always done;
The polls seemed such an odd place to remember
Washington
And the frozen horror of that far December.

“What is your party?” So we questioned her.
Putting the ballot in her outstretched hand.
“No party. Just the best man for the place,
We women want the best, you understand.”
We looked each other, doubtful in the face,
As those who hear
Footsteps of some pale portent drawing near,
Though still remote,
Silent, we watched the Widow Barker vote.

THE NEW HOUSE AND THE OLD

A fine new house is very grand, with smoothly polished
floors,
Fresh paint with never a finger mark and shining walls
and doors,
The prim, complacent windows, arrayed in
well-starched frills,
Extend a decorous welcome across their spotless sills.

But I love most an old house mellowed by sun and rain.
I love to take an old house and make it live again,
To mend the roof and patch the walls and clean the
chimney place
And smooth the stains and wrinkles from its kind,
old-fashioned face.

It seems to be so grateful for every loving touch,
As one too long neglected whose heart has suffered
much;
Refreshed again and strengthened, it learns to laugh
and glow,
Forgetting in this glad new life the long neglect and
woe.

A fine new house is very grand, but sweeter far to me
To build new fires on old hearthstones and set their
memories free;
To learn the wonder and the hope of those who laid
them first,

And all the rich experience of hours that blest or curst.

Beneath that roof, before that fire, my spirit is aware
Of kinship with all others who joyed or sorrowed there,
And close around our common hearth the haunted
 silence clings,
And tells in soft, unuttered speech of deep, eternal
 things.

Dorothy Haddox

The Pomegranate Tree

Vermilion flowers of the pomegranate tree,
Fine lily-chaliced things stained with desire,
Yet in thick-cloistered foliage seem to be
A secret altar-fire.

Alight in some dim chapel, set apart,
Where holy nuns and saintly maidens pray;
Where strays a gorgeous sinner with sad heart,
Who sighing, looks, unshriven turns away.

M. T. MacMillan

Re-Union

I could not see the beauty of the flowers;
The sun shone not, the sky was dull and grey;
The sea-moan seemed to echo in my heart
Through lonely seasons, since you went away.

None knew what poignancy of grief was mine—
I sought to hide it for your own dear sake—
That day you sailed away across the sea,
I smiled “Good-bye”, but thought my heart would
break.

But now the world is beautiful and bright;
The sun reflects its glory o’er the sea
Making a shining road on which your ship
Sailed straight into the harbour—and to me.

Then blow the western winds—I care not now—
Again toss high the waves o’er restless sea!
Though clouds may come, my heart shall still rejoice,
For you, beloved, are safe at home with me.

Charles Hanson Towne

Questions

Does the rose know its beauty? Does it guess
Its wonderful red loveliness?
Is the wide sky unconscious of its blue
When the gold stars look through?

I wonder if the trees see other trees
And sense life's mystery?
Does the sea hear its thunder? Does it know
When the loud, black storms blow?

And are you sure of your unceasing power?
You, fragile as a flower—
Were it not better that you never knew
All the long, bright years through?

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William C. de Mille

Dreams

A Playlet in One Act

Characters

WINKMERE: President of Winkmere & Co.,
Manufacturers and Importers of Dreams.

BRAXON: Fairy Superintendent of the Dream Factory.

SUSELLE: A Fairy Workwoman in the Dream Factory.

JOHN L. RAMSEY: A Mortal Boy.

Dreams

SCENE: Winkmere's office—in the Factory under a big oak tree. There is a sign on the wall on the right hand side which says: "Winkmere & Co., Day Dreams, Night Dreams & Nightmares," and another sign on the left hand side which says: "Private Entrance to Dream Factory."

There are a small desk and two chairs in the room.

When the curtain rises Winkmere is sitting at his desk looking over some papers. He wears glasses and looks just like a mortal except for his wings which stick outside of his business clothes and show that he really is a fairy.

Braxon enters from the Left. He has on overalls and his wings are all that show him, too, to be a fairy. He is carrying a half made dream in his hand which looks more like a filmy mixture of Mosquito Netting and Cotton Wool than anything else.

Braxon: Look here, Winkmere!

Winkmere (Looking at him sharply over his glasses):
Braxon, I'm getting tired of telling you to call me Mr. Winkmere.

Braxon: Mr. Winkmere; huh! you're just a fairy the same as I am.

Winkmere: Not at all; I am President of Winkmere & Company, and by my work and sleepless days I have formed this trust which makes all the dreams used in the world—while you are just a common working Fairy—Ha!—Fairies may have been equal in the old days, Braxon, before we learned a thing or two from the mortals; but now that the Fairy business is run by modern methods, and we have rich Fairies and poor Fairies, I'll trouble you to call me Mr. Winkmere.

Braxon: And if I don't: what then?

Winkmere: You'll lose your job—and as making dreams is the only thing you can do—you and your family will starve.

Braxon: No, we won't—I'll make dreams myself and sell them.

Winkmere: Ha! Ha! My poor Braxon. You can't make dreams without dream flowers: they only grow in the land of Nod, and Winkmere & Co. have just bought the whole land of Nod. That's why we have the trust. Dreams come from the land, and we own the land. So, now will you call me Mr. Winkmere?

Braxon: And how about us working Fairies? You can't make your flowers into dreams without us?

Winkmere: No; but you've got to eat, and the only way you can eat is to make dreams, and the only way you can make dreams is by using flowers from my land, and the only way you can do that is to work for me, and the only way you can do that is to call me Mr. Winkmere.

Braxon: All right, Mr. Winkmere; I think we've been cheated somewhere, but I don't see where, so I guess I'll have to do as you say.

Winkmere: That's better. Now what do you want?

Braxon: Mr. Winkmere, all the workers in the factory say they don't get enough to live on. You know Fairies can only live on belief; all the people who use fairy dreams pay for them in belief; but since you bought the Land of Nod, you've cut down our wages and kept most of the belief for yourself.

Winkmere: That's business, Braxon. Any of you could have bought the Land of Nod, but I saw it first, and now you'll take what I give you, or get out!

Braxon: Then we'll strike, and there won't be a dream dreamed in this country until you give us all the belief we earn!

Winkmere: Go ahead and strike! I've got enough belief saved up to last the rest of my life: You'll starve before I will!

Braxon: Oh! I knew this would happen when we started to live like mortals.

Winkmere: You don't understand business, Braxon. You see we had to pay an enormous amount for the Land of Nod, and now complaints are pouring in about the quality of the dreams.

Braxon: I don't wonder! (Showing the dream in his hand). Look at this: You can't expect us to make good dreams out of stuff like this. The dream flowers were picked before they had time to bloom, and half the dreams turn into nightmares like this before we can weave them.

Winkmere: Well, do the best you can. People have got to use the dreams we make or do without. That's the beauty of a trust.

Braxon: Hush; what's that?

Winkmere: A mortal footstep.

John L. Ramsey enters from the Right. He is a mortal boy and wears his regular clothes.

John: Hello! Are you Winkmere?

Winkmere: I'm Mr. Winkmere. Who are you and how did you find this place?

John: I'm John L. Ramsey. I live on Central Park West, and I've got two little fairies named Flexine and Winspray who live in my back yard. They told me how to find you.

Braxon: Then you believe in fairies?

John: Of course; that's why I'm here.

Winkmere: What can I do for you?

John: You can make me some decent dreams. The ones I've been getting are the worst I ever had; they don't last half the night. They turn sour before I wake up and they're not fast colors. The minute daylight strikes them the colors all run together and I can't remember them long enough to tell my Mother what they were.

Winkmere: Maybe you don't take them properly? Have you tried lying on your face?

John: I've tried them every way there is, and Flexine has worked over them for hours. No, they're just bad workmanship and that's all there is to it.

Braxon: Don't say that, John. The workmen do the best they can: but they can't get the right stuff. You see it's Winkmere's Trust!

John: Oh! that's it, eh? I see: well, do I get any good dreams or not?

Winkmere: If our dreams don't suit you, you don't have to use them.

John: Of course I have to use them if you've got a Trust. My father's got a trust and that's why I can afford to support Fairies in my back yard.

Winkmere: But, my dear John—

John: Mr. Ramsey, please!

Winkmere: My dear Mr. Ramsey, what are you going to do about it?

Suselle enters from the Left. She is a poor working fairy whose wings are drooping over her factory clothes. Her sleeves are rolled up and she carries even a worse looking dream than Braxon's.

Suselle: I won't stand it any longer (seeing John). Oh, a mortal!

John: Why; how much you look like Flexine!

Suselle: Flexine! Do you know Flexine?

John: Rather! She lives in my yard.

Suselle: Then I have found her at last. Oh, take me to her! I am her sister Suselle.

John: Oh, she told me about you. You ran away from home when you were only eight hundred years old, because you wanted to make dreams and your mother wouldn't let you!

Suselle: Yes, and for years I made the most beautiful dreams you ever dreamed, until Winkmere bought the land where dream flowers grow, and I had to work for him, and now I've got little fairies of my own—the youngest is only two hundred years old and she is teething, and Winkmere won't pay me enough to live on!

Winkmere: Oh, I'm getting tired of all this. Suselle, you're discharged, and you too, Braxon. I'll have only willing workers in my dream factory!

Braxon: Oh, Mr. Winkmere, think of my family. What will they do?

Suselle: And what will mine do? Oh, Mr. Winkmere!

Winkmere: Can't help it. Business is business. I've stood all I intend to from you both. Come, get out!

Braxon: (Putting his arm around Suselle). Come Suselle, we may as well go. He treats us as if we were mortals.

John: Here, hold on (to Winkmere). You've no right to discharge these fairy workers for nothing!

Suselle: Not in the old days, John; but now our business is run by the laws of man, and everywhere you find hungry fairies who can't get work. Come, Braxon!

John: Wait! Look here, Winkmere. Have you no heart? Have you lost your fairyhood completely?

Winkmere: I use my heart outside of business hours only, and as I said before, what are you going to do about it?

John: I'll tell you what I'm going to do about it. If people don't believe in you, you'll die; very well, I'm going to get hold of everyone who believes in fairies and we'll have a trust of our own. A Belief Trust! Oh, I know something about business myself, and we'll all agree not to dream a single dream until you make them better and treat your workfairies properly. That's what they call a consumer's league, Winkmere, and it will put your old trust out of business.

Winkmere: Oh, Mr. Ramsey! You wouldn't be so cruel to a poor hard working fairy.

John: Oh, wouldn't I? Well, what's the answer?

Winkmere: It shall be just as you say, Mr. Ramsey. Go back to work, Suselle; you too, Braxon, and your wages are doubled.

Suselle: Oh, Goody!

Braxon: Hurray!

John: They'll work to-morrow, Winkmere. You're going to give them a holiday now, so that Suselle can see her sister.

Winkmere: Anything you wish, Mr. Ramsey. But oh, why didn't I think of making my trust out of something you've got to have, something you can't do without, then your old consumer's league couldn't agree not to use it. Oh, why didn't I think of that ?

John: Because you're only a fairy, Winkmere. A mortal would have thought of that the first thing. Come, Suselle, Flexine will be so glad to see you.

He leads Suselle out. Winkmere and Braxon are looking first at him and then at each other as the curtain falls.

Comment

Opening up paths! Few things are more interesting and perhaps nothing more vital than the expression of life through poetry. A poet worthy the great name is one of the highest achievements of any country or any section of the country, he is the inspired voice of his time and his people. If this is true, no effort is too great to create a worthy medium where the impulse of sympathy may meet the creative impulse, and through the glowing interchange, living poetry is born. Therefore it is a work of love to open up paths through which young poets may walk with lifted heads and feel the warmth of sunlight upon them: to clear away the stone walls of prejudice and outworn traditions; to send the fresh winds of honest opinion blowing through the stagnant atmosphere of indifference until the air is keen and clear and healthy for the young creative mind to live and grow in. Such paths the Lyric West is trying to open up to the many whose verses have come in profusion to the editor since the initial number appeared a month ago. Who knows what young star-treaders shall walk in these open paths, bringing with them radiance of vision and the sound of music? The west is the land of possibilities, the promise of the morning has not yet passed into the fulfilment of the day. We love the morning and its promises.

Notes

Perhaps when *The Lyric West* is a few months older and its cheerful face has become a familiar sight in magazine offices and on publisher's desks, it may have real reviews of new books of poetry and poetic criticism to offer its readers. At present, like all well-behaved children, it must be rather seen than heard, and offers its table of contents largely without comment, hoping it will speak for itself. A few facts about our contributors may prove interesting, however. William C. de Mille is so widely known as a writer and producer of picture plays, that the delightful little playlet, "Dreams," will present him in a new light to most readers. Mr. de Mille has other playlets of the same sort tucked away in his desk, most of them revealing the same intimacy with the hearts of children. Professor E. O. James, head of the Department of Literature in Mills College, is one of our most valued contributors and supporters, and his poems, known in the pages of many magazines are of the sterling quality which adds dignity and strength. Charles Hanson Towne who has honored our pages with the lovely lyric "Questions," is managing editor of McClure's Magazine and now writes exclusively for the Century Magazine in whose interest, he has been visiting California.

May we not feel a little proud and a great deal encouraged by so staunch an array of friends and contributors, as we go to press for the second number of *The Lyric West*? Well known to a wide circle of Pacific coast readers is another contributor, Miss Gertrude Darlow, a poet and a lecturer on poetry and modern literature. And then there is the interesting and sturdy group of newer writers whom we are glad to welcome into our pages. Many of them have fresh and interesting things to say, some of them say the old things in a melodious and pleasing reiteration.