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NO. 9

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Harold Vinal | Edna Worthley Underwood

Oliver Jenkins | Doris Packard

Weare Holbrook and others

PACIS AMOR DEUS . . .

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The Lyric West

No. 9

A Magazine Of Verse

January, 1922

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Harold Vinal

Snow Nocturne

A swirl of snow blown behind the wind
Like a swirl of waves over a sandy place,
I had forgotten how beautiful it was,
Or how cool it felt against the face.

The gusty year is over, let it go,
Blown like running leaves into the blue;
Motionless a flight of birds goes by—
With so much beauty, why must I think of you!

Why must I remember April on the hills,
Your wind-tossed hair, laughter in your eyes;
Oh, that the snow could hide the look of you,
Silence your voice, until I grow more wise.

Will I forget some day your loveliness,
When such a winter storm goes swirling past,
Will the bondage that I know drop from me then,
And like white snow will I be free at last?

Harold Vinal

Early Loves

Tomorrow you will forget our love,
You will forget, but I will not;
There still remains the memory
Of Guinevere and Launcelot.

Sappho's flowering words flame still
In memory, though you forget;
And there remains the lovely thought
Of Aucassin and Nicolette.

Interludes

Gray concourse of dull, bare trees—
Like breaths of smoke, wind-stilled
In columns, eddy-spiraled
Gray rhythm graying into dusk:
 Clustered mistletoe,
 Plastic, dull moist green,
 Berried with myriad pleiads of pearl.

Gray conclave of ancient clouds
Blurring the ashen sky;
Gray rhythm graying into dusk:
 Retardative pansy-purple,
 Larkspur-blue and cowslip-yellow.

Gray confluence of slow-moving rivers;
Gray rhythm graying into dusk:
 Madreperl, dimmed-silver, moon-gold.

Gray rhythm graying————

Grace Atherton Dennen

The Frost

The dawn—cold, pallid, half afraid, it seems.
Within the house she moves about her tasks,
Making the fire burn for the morning meal.
I stand outside like one who fears to enter.
She's singing—I can hear the happy notes—
She has been mute for many months, I think,
And now she sings. O God, delay the dawn,
She sings again tonight after long months!

How the wan sickly light of these gray skies
Reveals each makeshift of our cottage home
As if in scorn. I brought her here to this,
Plucked her with rude hands as one plucks a blossom
Out of a sheltered garden.
There was to be a new house long ago,
We planned it in those first days of our love.
But each new year, rising with newer hope,
Saw some strange, stern experience forced upon us;
First came the flood,
And countless tons of devastating rock
Crashed down the mountain slopes and carried
My newly planted crops. When with fresh hope
And infinite labor I had cleared the land anew,
Then came the drought.
Each glad green blade became a blackened thing,
Scorched in the burning furrow where it grew.

Tempest and drought—that was enough, you'd think,

Indeed, it seemed as tho the fate that teased us
Had wearied or grown kind. There came the spring,
So warm, so genial, such a fall of rain
That all my acres plucked up heart again
And smiled in the sun's good face—the vines hung full,
The orchard laughed with promise.
Then in the vibrant gladness of those days
She came to me, and whispered me her secret
'Twas time to build our home, for one would come
To share it with us by another spring.
And so she sings tonight.

There breaks the dawn—and she is at the door,
Has heard my step—now must I tell her all;
Soul of my soul, the frost has done its work.
You sob—and each sob is a sharpened knife
To tear my heart. Creep close within my arms,
And let us talk this over quietly,
With understanding that shall bring us peace.

The man who plants his acres in full faith
Has God for partner. Nothing is more near
To the Eternal Heart than that a man
Should help the barren earth to flower and fruit—
And fill the world with plenty. Such a man
Becomes High Priest to all the growing plants,
For this the summer skies, the winter storms,
Rainbows and friendly stars have said to me.
I find Him here in every springing blade—

I hear Him speak—But in the city streets
There are so many voices, can a man
Be sure of what he hears? I must be sure.

What, then, if such eternal partnership
Requires eternal patience? All the forces
That work with God are patient—love, pity,
Remorse for wrong and fuller understanding.
And when the child shall come, he'll find his home
Within the loving shelter of our hearts.
You smile—there's hope—there's courage both at once.
So we take up our gracious task again.
Shall we go in? For the new day is here.

Sarah Hammond Kelly

Fog

One by one, and two by two,
The ghosts fly over the town.
They come from the reefs that once I knew,
Where my lover's ship went down.

One by one, and two by two,
They shudder, they dance and play,
They cover the sky that once was blue,
With their shapeless forms and gray.

Slowly they come, and, oh, so still—
(These ghosts nor shriek nor wail)—
They come from the bay beyond the hill,
Where my lover's ship set sail.

One by one, and two by two,
They hide my own door from me;
Whispering a tale of a maid untrue,
And a life that was lost at sea.

Babette Deutsch

“Now Speak of Love No More”

Now speak of love no more, you said, speak only
Of wind-blown apples, or the passion of sun,
Of hard and helpless streets, and of the lonely
Tides racing toward a goal not ever won...

The tide is never tired ; its march is certain
While a moon ripens, or a moon decays.
Rising or falling, tides are like a curtain
Before the drama of inhuman days. . .

Streets are like women: some are hard and bony
And grey with hunger; some quick streets are had
By many men; some streets are smooth and stony
In silk and crystal. And some streets are mad...

Orchards are gold the wind of autumn fingers.
Wind: a sightless beauty moving through the trees.
The thud of dropping apples shudders and lingers
In the first scent of cold, in the last sound of bees. . .

The proud sun is the deserts' fierce begetter
From his loins Egypt sprang. Green isles, black
land—
He is forever father and forgetter
Of these, of us, of all his seed of sand...

Now speak of love no more, you said. Replying,
I find the songs that you would have me do,
Of apples growing and of planets dying.
And every song, Beloved, is of you.

Edna Worthley Underwood

Dances of the Flame

A LITTLE SEQUENCE

*All the joy the world has known
Round my dancing feet is blown.*

SCARLET FLAME

I go by the road that the red rose knows,
When the perilous wind of pleasure blows,
And joys are so helplessly, sweetly brief
They are cradled to sleep in the arms of grief.
I go by the road of dancing feet,
I go by the road of all things sweet,
To a lonely place where a woman stands
With leafless roses within her hands
And dreams of a face whose lips were red
As multitudinous roses shed.
Yet no sound comes, no word, no song,
For here the silence lasteth long.

Dust is the rose,
Ashes, the flame,
All life goes
Whence it came.

ALL THE FLAMES DANCING

Have you heard of Royal Rome
Which was once the Caesars' home—

Jewels, splendor, lust, and gold,
Banners down the day unrolled,
Proud conquest's most brutal crown?
Yet its towers toppled down
When the blond-haired Norsemen came
Bearing in their hands the flame.

Dust is the rose,
Ashes and shame,
Light life goes
Whence it came.

*All the joy the world has known
Round my dancing feet is blown.*

GOLD FLAME

I poise on my toes on the Celebees,
My arrow points toward the Northern Seas,
I string the bow until it snaps in twain,
Night—shattered—dies. Day has come again!

ALL THE FLAMES DANCING

Have you heard of Babylon,
How its splendor smote the sun,
And its laughter rippled bright
Like silk stung by wind and light,
Till in haughtiness it cried:
I am Pleasure, Power, and Pride?
Then the unleashed furies came,
Bearing in their hands the flame,
So that now there is no trace
Of the city on Earth's face.

*Life is a flame
Born of the light;
Pleasure and shame,
Ashes—and night.*

*All the joy the world has known
Round my dancing feet is blown.*

BLUE FLAME

Life is the actor,
Death, the clown;
The years of flame
Drop down and down.
The actor kisses his hand,
Then sighs—
Maliciously grin
The clown's deep eyes,
Coarse laughter brims
The pit's rim up,
Bubbling, o'erflows,
Like wine a cup.
Dizzier spins
The dancing clown,
Life's drop-curtain
Flutters down.

*Life is a flame
Born of the light;
Pleasure and shame,
Ashes—and night.*

*All the joy the world has known
Round my dancing feet is blown.*

Virgil Geddes

Winds

O winds of the open spaces,
Why do your currents
Induce me to yield?

I will be sitting in quiet,
Enfolded in thought,
When a gust from your arm
Slaps me full in the face,
Sends me riding away
On the crest of your frolic.

I will be standing alone
On the ridge of a hill,
Contemplating the seriousness
In the lines of the landscape,
When over the hill you come
Chasing some wild desire,
And I turn myself, laughing.
But against the onslaught of your strength
I am helpless,
And I am borne, running along,
In the mad rush of your gale.

When other motives work on me
Must you come rattling the windows,

Displaying your will,
Lest for one moment I should forget
There are winds driving us on?

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

Miriam Allen de Ford

Santa Cruz

All sweet things have turned bitter, for you were
The meaning of all loveliness to me;
Perfumed and pungent as the sun-fed air,
Heart-stirring as the first glimpse of the sea.

When on its blueness breaks the curling crest,
That shivers lightly to a flowery shore:
Oh, in what ocean shall I drown that breast
Whose heart will beat for loveliness no more?

Virginia McCormick

Mountains

I turn my back upon the mountains,
The lazy mountains
Sleeping in the sun.
They bring me peace,
A profound satisfaction with self,
A desire to rest always
In the shadow of their beauty.
But life is short,
So I turn my back upon the mountains
And set my face to the sea;
The sea, whose restlessness
Spurs me to new tasks,
To vast undertakings!
Verily life is short,
And I would work,
Not sleep!

Virginia McCormick

Thought

It is winter;
Winds, fresh from the ocean,
Blow through the house of my soul;
New thoughts are born,
Instinct is awakened ..
I seek words to clothe these,
My thought-children,
Born out of due season,
To cover them from the cold,
To conceal them
From those who do not understand
Their beauty, their frailty
To protect them from harsh contacts.
My body has acquired new life
Sensuous
With the passion of spirit
I turn my eyes to the coming spring.

Oliver Jenkins

Home-Coming

Now that you are coming home
Will the syringas kneel white and reverent?

Under the dazed moon you have caressed them,
In the chill rain you have given them your kisses
Night after night,
Coming alone down the long path,
Loving and fearless
You have opened your heart.

Now that you are coming home
Will they kneel white and reverent?

Oliver Jenkins

Awakening

This wind, cold and purple-edged,
cuts little holes in my soul,
deep, jagged holes,
criss-crossing
in blood-red lines.

Before this, it was different,
this wind—
before this it was sensuous,
gentle, caressing, soothing. . . .

Before this, you were here, too!

Belle Cooper

Sonnet

A DESERTED CITY

Carved in the living rock ages ago,
Petra lies deep in Edom's mountain-side,
In narrow cleft where dust and silence hide;
Her towering crags like ruddy embers glow;
Where here and there pale oleanders blow,
Was once a teeming mart, the merchants' pride;
No shambling camels pass, no shadows glide,
Save where hyenas howl, vultures swoop low.

Gone is the ancient glory of her crown,
Her crumbling temples lie in gorge untrod
By man today, save those who fain would see
A jewel-casket of antiquity.
One wealth of blushing tint, all her renown!
And all her history, in the hand of God!

Jasper Barnett Cowdin

The Home Nest

Behold how temporary is the nest

That I have reared, where snug and warm my brood
Of blue-eyed mischiefs thrive! Mild motherhood
Watches unsleeping, with a tender zest,
The swift unfoldings and the bright unrest,
Correcting faults and guiding all to good.
So home-love ripens—till some sudden mood
The under-work of Change makes manifest.

Ah! then a secret terror chills my heart

That all must end and pass, despite regret.
Dear things we gather crumble and fall apart;
Sweet faces daily loved and daily met
Disperse for unknown ports. The dim tears start.
Unlike the careless birds, can we forget?

Herta Uerkvitz

Mud

Limber young palms
 With life in sheaves;
Spreading green plants
 With flat-hung leaves

Blueish-black hills
 'Gainst pale late skies;
All these reflected
 In a young girl's eyes.

Rip'ning womanhood,
 Blood thinly veined
Shamelessly coursing,
 Uncheckt—unreined.

Green buds in sheaf,
 Veins with red blood,
Nature's sweet chanson,
 All spring from mud.

Herta Uerkvitz

Moon Madness

Ah, wondrous, full moon!
As I stand here watching
 Thee,
I raise my arms high above
 My head
To gather thy soft beauty,
And I feel the silken folds
 Of my
 Magenta robe
Slide jerkily down my
 Naked arms
To my bare shoulders,
Leaving them free to bathe
 In your
Glances.

Clare Shipman

Orange Pekoe

Out of the teacup floats a magic mist.
A scented wraith hangs in the air.
 A faint perfume
 Drifts through the room,
Of orange blossoms, spirit white. . .
The firelight, and the walls are gone,
And I have crossed a span of seas,
To wonder-gardens glinting warm
 Under rose trellises.
Drifting and dreaming, shadows gather up
Their evening purple, and deft sandalled feet
Step light and silently along the ancient walks
Where trailing, silken winds have wrapped
 The dreaming gods,
Who stonily have prayed a thousand years.
A word, a voice forms in the golden air. . .
It is your voice ... “A bit more tea?”
The winter walls are up,—the gardens gone,
 My instant journey done.

Clare Shipman

Recompense

Your mind is like a sheltering wing
That covers every helpless thing.

Its silvery silence in the room
Is like the drift of thistle bloom.

What gave to you the instant flame
Of sympathy at Sorrow's name,

And makes you carry where you go
What Lovers and Great Comrades know?

And if some memory should say
A shadow cheated youth away,

Or that a burden's bitterness
Can leave the soul with scar or stress,

What made you like a strong, white wing,
To cover every helpless thing?

Doris Packard

Thievery

Twilight is such a friend to thievery!
There is a deal of quiet mischief done
When day is lost in blue uncertainty,
And night has not begun!

The paling colors of the after-light

Are full of tricks—and I can hardly say
Whether the day has stolen part of night,
Or night a part of day.

And loneliness, before the lamps are lit,
Will rob the dusk of any cheer it claims;
Then I shall coax the fire, and steal a bit
Of comfort from the flames.

Antoinette De Coursey Patterson

The Magician

The wind with his skillful, restless fingers
Takes from a wavelet's crest its foam;
Over his work a moment lingers—
And sends a white sea-bird fluttering home!

Antoinette De Coursey Patterson

Challenged

The slip of a moon showed such a frail white face
Against the blue of the gentle noonday sky—
It seemed a puff of wind in passing by
Might blow her like a feather into space.

But since the night has come with its threatening chill,
Behold a change. That delicate, feathery line
Has stiffened into silver, strong and fine;
Nothing can move her now, against her will.

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Antoinette De Coursey Patterson

Judgments of History

No puritannic god is History, keeping
Immortal fame for virtue's votaries
Lucrezia, Cleopatra, Mary Stuart
Will live forever—through their frailties.

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.

John R. McCarthy

Rue Anemone

The cold earth hears a whisper from the south:
The sun's wind-messengers have poured a song
Like honey down the hills:
The cold earth, being very old and gray,
And fearful of strange gods,
Sends forth a charm to hold the song
Until it sing itself to June:
Wee white prayers
Like children of angels
Creep forth and smile.

John R. McCarthy

Priests

The great white stars are priests, chanting forever,
Chanting forever mass for their dead brothers,
Dead and buried in their own cemetery,
The cemetery of the timeless skies.

Glenn Ward Dresbach

The Road

The loveliest road I followed
In any year or clime
Was a narrow road on a mountain
In the autumn-time.

Boughs loved to touch each other
Above it, and their words
Were gold leaves dropped so sweetly
I did not miss the birds.

“It will lead,” I said, “to the ocean
And waiting sails in a bay
By a little white town that is wistful
Because it must stay.”

But the road reached a house on the mountain
The house was little and cool
And it smelled of grass-musk and cedar
By a spring-water pool.

O the road reached a house on the mountain
And late roses stirred at the door—
And the road that led on beyond it
Wasn’t the same any more!

Pacis Amor Deus . . .

Propertius, III, v

Cupid is a peaceful little god—

Archness and archery his only games.

The trouble is, he shoots before he aims—

Hits me, and misses Cynthia by a rod,

Or vice versa. Thus, about the clod

A passion-flower curls its futile flames.

I kiss the lips that call me cruel names;

The wheel spins, but the number's always odd.

And so, since love is war, I think I'll turn

To quiet contemplation of the spheres,

To natural science—studying through the years

The half-guessed secrets of the stars above,

And why the subterranean rivers burn

I will learn much, but never how to love.

Comment

Current exhibitions of painting and sculpture, highly endowed and bestowing large prizes upon winning competitors, have become a matter of course. The critics and the public have long since granted to the painter and sculptor and the musician these rich opportunities for winning his way to recognition, both in the direct and immediate circle of his own community and among the far-reaching audience of his own and other countries; in short, wherever artists abide and art journals flourish. It is only lately that the same opportunity has been granted to the poet. Many magazines of verse and many individuals are now offering annual prizes of from one hundred to five hundred dollars for poetry, and their purpose is similar to that of the art patron, to give the poet a fair chance to bring his best work before a public whose interest is aroused and whose curiosity is stimulated by the announcement of such a prize. Also, it offers to the poet, whose work is so inadequately paid, if paid at all, the possibility of earning a man-sized check for his effort. Best of all, it leads to the production of better work. No magazine can expect to fill its pages with masterpieces, but if under the genial influence of assured interest and possible reward, we find now and then a poem throbbing with genuine feeling and beauty, a poem to be cherished by coming ages, and if it chanced to be the offer of a prize which had called that poem into notice and given it a wide recognition, then may we not consider such prize offers as among the beneficent efforts toward winning for the poet greater public respect and attention, such as are the prerogative of other arts? That is the way it seems to us.

In accordance with this conviction it is our pleasant task to award the Esther Yarnell prize of one hundred dollars for the best poem or group of poems printed in *The Lyric West* before January, 1922, in the issues from April to December, 1921,

inclusive. The choice proved unexpectedly difficult and the judges expressed their surprise at the richness of material offered them from which to choose. In the end it was deemed best to divide the prize equally between two poems which seemed to the judges to be of equal distinction, with honorable mention given to several others. The two poems are *Song of David Before Saul*, by Constance Lindsay Skinner, printed in the September number, and *The Alien*, by Neeta Marquis, which appeared in the June number.

Constance Lindsay Skinner is known to thousands for her beautiful lyrics. Her "Songs of the Coast Dwellers" won a prize from Poetry, and her Indian poem, "Song of Cradle-Making," won a prize from the London Bookman. A poetic play, "David and Saul," opened the Forest Theatre at Carmel in 1910. She writes for Scribner's, the British Review, and other leading American and English magazines. Miss Skinner lived six years in Los Angeles, where she was dramatic critic on the Los Angeles Times and the Examiner. Her present home is in New York.

Neeta Marquis lives in Los Angeles and is well known as a writer of short stories and charming lyrics. She has won a number of local prizes for her work, which is favorably known in Eastern magazines also.

We reprint the two poems in part.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Song of David Before Saul

Saul, Saul,
Stand forth that which thou art:
The image of God,
The Son of His Being!
Cast thy sceptre and crown,
Let the throne of thy world-pomp decay;
The things of the flesh are past—
Dust to Dust, and Death to its own death.
The Spirit who dwelleth in Heaven,
Our God and our Father!
Hath made the great globe for a path for His Son;
Yea, He hath revealed us—
The Christ-man walketh the Earth!
Lift, Lift,
To thy greater dominion:
Faithful is He who calleth thee;
Arise, thou Eternally Royal,
Arise, Son of God—MAN!

Neeta Marquis

The Alien

A slender slip of maple tree
Lives in a garden near to me,—
A young, exotic visitor
Of virginal simplicity.

Acacias droop beside her there,
With sumptuous golden bloom to spare,
While close, above pink camphor-tips,
Proud palms rear glistening crests in air.

When all the world is blithe with spring
She is a vital, winsome thing—
A dainty silver-plumaged bird
That flutters to be on the wing.

The tears of March, the smiles of May
Speak love to her. Sweet winds that play
From plum to oleander pause
To pass the floral time of day.

She makes but modest show, it's true,
When jacaranda's tents of blue
Unfold above the shimmering lawn
For days of loveliness too few;

Or when a fringe-like crimson fall

Of eucalyptus-flower shades all
The quiet walk, as if it were
A Hindu prince's parasol.

But when bold summer-suns have shone,
With winged September lately flown,
While rare October's noons blaze white,
The maple tree comes to her own!

A flame of glory wraps her round—
Those lambent hues in jewels found—
As if a god had kissed her red
And made the garden magic ground.

I go like any pilgrim then
To gaze on her, and gaze again:
This alien, of nativity
Afar removed from tropic ken.

I, drenched in beauty all the year—
Warm amber, rose, pomegranate clear—
Abate my breath and bow my heart;
I find transcendent beauty here!

The following poems received honorable mention:

Gaydiang, by Ruth Comfort Mitchell, in the April number.

Thunderdrums, by Lew Sarett, in the September number.

The Lifted Cup, by Jessie Rittenhouse, in the November number.

Half Thought, by Zona Gale, in the December number.

Long White Roads, by Joseph Andrew Galahad, in the December number.

In connection with the giving of prizes for musical compositions, a most generous offer has just been made to local musicians by Mr. W. A. Clark, Jr., president of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Clark offers a prize of one thousand dollars for the best symphonic poem composed during the present season by any member of the orchestra or any musician residing in Los Angeles County. Among the judges are such noted musicians as Madame Schumann-Heink; Mr. Rothwell, leader of the orchestra; Mr. Thilo Becker and Mr. Adolf Tandler. The manuscripts must be submitted by March 1st to Mrs. Caroline E. Smith, care Philharmonic Orchestra, 521 Auditorium Building, Los Angeles, Calif.