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NO. 3

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

john Curtis Underwood | Lew Sarett

Eleanor M. Denny | Paul Eldridge

Bernice Lesbia Kenyon and others

WHITE-THROAT

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The Lyric West

Vol. II, No. 3

A Magazine Of Verse

June, 1922

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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John Curtis Underwood

Waiting—Mist

Today the mountains are gray with clouds.
And curtains of mists have hidden their summits.
Something tells me that something magical is
 happening behind that misty curtain.
Nature is setting her scenes for blue summer days of
 bright beauty the world is waiting for.

More than ever today they seem gray stairs to the
 skies,
Where the mists hang low like slow trailing garments
 of goddesses that tread on them,
Ascending to Heaven on high errands of their own,
Descending scornfully and tenderly to bring back
 memories immortal to men who must die for them.
They are swaying gray shadows like the cloaks of the
 Norns and the clinging veils of Oreads who answer
 men in mountain echoes,
Playing their heavenly hide and seek with all the sons
of of
 men in every mountain range from Arcady to Ari-
 zona.

Now all sound like the light is stilled and nature like
 life herself seems hiding from us.

Something tells me that below this stillness, behind
these
 veils, above these hills, something more wonderful
 still is making ready;
Some more splendid scene of that vast and endless
 drama of creation,
For which all sunsets and dawns, all planets and stars
 in silver processions are far footlights;
Into which some day or midnight, taking me by the
 hand,
 you shall lead me when our world is ready and we
 are ready.

John Curtis Underwood

Aria

The wind and the hills and I
Have had wild times together.
And they hurled at me huge waves of sky
And I plunged through whirlpool weather.

And we set high fires alight
To brand the dawn's returning
On timber lines of day and night.
And we dried us by their burning.

And we lay in clefts of noon
Where the sunbeams plumbed the passes,
And shadowy breezes seemed to swoon
And died amid gray grasses.

And we saw the sunset drowned
In night, like candles guttering,
In storms that whirled the sky around,
While pines were groaning, muttering.

The wind and the hills drew near
And grew to be my brothers,
Because they hid your heart, my dear,
Brown mirror of all mothers:

Of all that breathe our air,

Bare flesh and fur and feather.
And winds and hilltops whispered there
And brought us here together.

Victor Watson—The Rancher

He knew enough of ant hills on a farm
In crowded lands, and human ants in cities
To know, before the years had done their harm,
He must be bigger than his competition—
If he was not to turn to one who pities
Himself at last, accepting his condition,
Weary of life because he knew his doom.
He craved for power and for elbow room
Between the hills and stars, and, knowing that
He was not great enough to push the great
Aside for his desires, he bought a hat
Like ranchmen wear—to help him start the thing
He was about to do and, braver then,
Sought out new western land for his estate,
And saved enough to hire less wistful men.
Where men had feared the land his acres spread—
Bunch grass and cactus and the blowing sand
And jagged hills were his, and it is said
His herds surpassed his plans, and valley land
Was tilled where no one dared to till before.
He had imagination—Something more
He had that turned near-desert to dominions
For his own will borne on an eagle's pinions,
Until his eyes grew like an eagle's eyes,
And some men hated him, some called him wise—
He saw the flash of feldspar in the ledge

That barred his way and made him go around
By drifted sands, and often at the edge
Of some sheer cliff he paused and heard the sound
Of cedars gesturing against the sky.
His toes were stubbed on age-worn meteorites
His eyes were stung by blown sands snarling by
Upon the winds, and in the desert nights
He knew he had not conquered such a land—
It is enough for one to understand
That he was satisfied no time to be
An ant in swarmed hills of futility.

The Hills of Santa Fe

I get my strength from the hills
Each time I go out upon them God shows me
something.
Yesterday it was a blue bird.
Today it was a curious stone, colored red and green.
Every time I go out on the hills, God tells me
something.
Today he told me that each clod and twig and stone
Vibrates with creative life.
That the smallest weed expresses him
As much as the noblest mountain.
Out on the hills if you are very quiet
You may hear the beating of God's heart
In the deep hollows of the earth.

THE BLUE BIRD

Yesterday while walking on the hill, I saw a blue bird
on a brown bush.
Poised for an instant like a flash of blue fire,
A throbbing, perfect, precious thing.
Without sorrow and without shame.
Blue bird, you have made a burning bush of the brown
twig,
And you have helped me understand more about God.

Catherine Parmenter

The Voice of the Wilderness

The mountain winds are calling from afar,
The mountain meadows beckon me away,
The high, clear peaks with arms out-reaching, are
Entreating me to come to them to-day.

Above the valleys' verdant shadows rise
Gigantic cliffs, their columns upward flinging,
Like bits of paper pressed against the skies.
While far below the mountain brooks are singing.

God of the wilderness, cease—cease your calling!
I cannot come—yet in my dreams I see
The evening dusk across the mountains falling—
The crescent moon above a hemlock tree.

Mail Day

I

There's a bow-legged boy with his shoulders
 swinging,
 Riding into town to get the mail,
Loping through the dust, with a meadowlark singing
 Happy little greetings by the trail.
And it's June weather, and the sun shines
 bright,
And the creak of leather is a keen delight;
So he laughs at the curlew's startled flight,
 And the green hills echo his hail.

At the Silver Dollar there's a welcome ready,
 Cooling things to cut the alkali;
Friendly little game with his old pal, Eddie,
 Helps to keep the minutes on the fly.
But the day is shading into afternoon,
And the hills are fading all too soon,
And he rides by the stars and a pale new moon
 When he turns toward home with a sigh.

II

Down in the coulee a woman waits,
A dull-eyed girl with rough, red hands,
And hair drawn back in ragged plaits.

The bare hills fold their leaden bands
North, and south, and east, and west.

The trail gleams empty, far away.
Her thin lips quiver, close compressed,
For the mail from home is due today.

Power Dalton

Triumph

Laurel grows high
On the mountain,
The thorn grows
Low——low——

Yet the thorn
Has crowned A Height
Laurel will
Never know.

Lew Sarett

Fisher of Stars

My wild blood leaped as I watched the falling stars
Flash through the night and gleam,
Like spawning trout that hurtle the riffled bars
Of a dusky mountain stream.

Like quivering rainbow trout that run in spring,
Arching the water-slides,—
Out of the limpid sky, in a wild wet fling,
They shook their crimson sides.

My sportsman's heart flamed up, as the fishes dashed
In school on shimmering school,
Through high cascades and waterfalls, and splashed
In the deep of a cloudy pool.

I fished that pond; I chose my longest line,
And cast my supplest rod—
The one was a thing of dreams, oh, gossamer-fine,
The other a gift from God.

I flicked the Milky Way from edge to edge
With my iridescent fly;
I whipped the polar rapids, and every ledge
And cut-bank in the sky.

To the Pleiades I cast my willowy pole;

And I let my line run out
To the farthest foamy cove and skyey hole,—
And I snagged nine rainbow trout.

And every time one struck my fragile hook,
He shattered the trembling sea,
With a sweep of his shivering silver fin, and he shook
A silver rain on me.

My line spun out, my fly-rod bent in twain,
As over the sky he fought;
My fingers bled, my elbows throbbed with pain—
But my fishing went for naught.

I landed never a one; my fragile hackle
Was much too small and fine;
For angling stars one wants less flimsy tackle,—
No delicate rod and line.

Bernard Raymund

Over the Hill

Flick, flick of the buggy lash,
Hoofs jogging over the hill to Bethlehem,—
In the ditches pale myosotis,
Tall stems of purple fringed orchis.
The old man does not see them;
Eyes straight ahead,
Teeth gripping his pipe,
Is he thinking as the hoofs jog along
Over the smooth tarred roadway
Of another road, another time when the dust
Came to the horse's fetlocks?
Another horse and buggy,
A brand new, spick and span buggy,
The reins lying slack on the dashboard,
And his hands, strong then and supple,
Folded over other hands?

Does he remember a boy and a girl
Gathering the pale forget-me-nots,
The fragrant spikes of orchis,
While a horse wanders along the roadside
Nipping the long grass?
Or does he remember that now
Jogging over the hill
Toward the lights of Bethlehem?

Dixie McCarthy

Hills

Green hills are happy,
Golden hills are mad,
White hills are beautiful,
Brown hills are sad.

Gray hills are changeless,
Waiting in repose,
Until a flaming sunset
Turns them rose.

Whitelaw Saunders

A Wood-Carving

Wood nymphs carved from oak:
Brown legg'd as if the sun
Had held them, kissed their thighs,
 Then set them free to run
Through shadow-dappled glades,
 And, neath their carven trees,
To dance in blossom crowns
 To Pan-played melodies,

Rose Henderson

In the Park

I left the velvet terrace and the straight brick walks,
And the red and striped cannas on their tall, stiff
stalks;

I climbed a windy hilltop glowing gold and brown
With shining, tangled grasses that were soft as down.
I left the tidy golf links with their hard, white balls,
And raced across the meadow where a gray bird calls.
The wind ran on beside me, and a bent pine bough
Kept pointing to a roadway on the next hill's brow.

And up the winding roadway was a clear, bright place,
With the sky blue-gold above it, like a great god's face.
Then all at once I knew it for a brown faun's lair,
By the waving wands of purple and the wine-drenched
air,
By the rustling, crimson oak tree and the little hidden
spring
That had called the something wild in me to dance and
sing. Rose Henderson.

Hazel Hall

Echoes of Her

Brown roads have been too muddy,
Gold roads have been too bright,
And wind and moon and starshine)
Have hurt my rest by night. . . .

The flowers that they bring me
Will wither—Oh, I know!—
And they will freeze in winter
Laid on the hard cold snow.

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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.

Hazel Hall

On the Street

Often I watch the walkers on the street.
A sea bird does not lift sinuous wing
To share the grey wind's wide adventuring
With grace more marvelous than moving feet.
Feet young or wise, defiant and discreet,
With an amazing ease balance and swing,
As in each footstep's even echoing
The slow triumph of time is made complete.

And sometimes I forget what time has told,
Hearing beneath the thud of feet a sound
Articulate as the silence of the sea.
I hear the furtive effort on the ground
Of those that strive to find and struggle to hold
The meaning of their own identity.

Genevieve Taggard

Child Tropics Remembered in New England

An empty sky this evening again:
And in the valley meadow, motionless,
A farmer boy, listening as when
I felt your vague unquiet, quietness.

To catch some rustle, hear what rustles less
Than the sparse wheat around him, he will stare
At the sombre trees—stark arrows quivering—and bare
Angles of oak arms, marvel everywhere
Mute as this old valley, this thin air.

And I who ran as headlong, heedlessly, once ran
Into a airy wall, an indrawn hush, a moment slower
than
The waterfall of sun, and stilled and stood as he
Stands now while mingling darkness broods
Over his meadow, and my music woods.
As hills will listen, so sometimes do we:
An empty evening and a withering sea
Opened my ears, and put dark dreams in me.

This faded place, unfolded like a dress
And frayed and aged, still comes on a child
In one dim zone of wonder—like, unlike my wild
Sea-swinging tropics: this grave monotone

Is in his senses now, bone of his bone.

Where I have been
We do not echo silence, nor the voice
Of insect sorrow, tremulous and thin.
No—beauty burns us, deafens us with noise.
Can this be beauty clad in colors cold,
Timid and austere, who was with me
A tidal wave's assault, a wilful sin,
Kisses and clamor and the bold
Shout of a lover, rushing, sweeping in!

Out of abundance, in the lap of seas,
Wind-widened out to the pure line of skies
Grew an old hunger, and behind my eyes
Is always your lost crimson, your drunk bees,
On my lips your drouth,
And I am always reaching for the mouth
Of the honey nights I've seen wasted in the south.

And then how many days I followed down
The tangled river banks, beside
The cool white-bellied fishes, there to hang
Above the rocky pools and brown
Cupped velvet mosses where they slept.—
Often and often, crackling twigs I crept
Waking them when over them there went
My timid shadow's leaning wonderment.

At night, sitting alone,
Out on the step between my warped tree and the stone

Its roots encircled sundering, I learned
How the white stars burned.
Washing my feet in chilly water, counting bruises,
 staring at the stars—
The uneven dipper and red-bearded Mars
Caught in my thorny tree.—

Oh, the hunger and wild sorrow in me!
Those nights, those honey nights, with the rich swoon
Of mango flowers thick against the moon,
And drawn across the coral reefs, the sea
Flashing its foam-white flatness up to me!

Oh, no, this hunger is not new, not new,
But older hotter than when I
Plunged in the fever marshes where there grew
The cool white ginger buds, or when I flew
Down the small valley desolate and scarred
Between the red volcano hills and hard
Harsh outlines of gesturing trees that fed
On bitter soil until their sap was dead.

How like a fugitive our glad fulfillment goes
Over hills before us, leaving only
Earth's abundance in ruins, earth that grows
Fruit for her children they can never eat,
Food for the starved to see, and honey sweet
Clusters of grapes dropping with the noon heat.

Oh, it is sorrow to see empty eyes
Of men and women, proud that they are grown

Away from their child hunger, their brief moan
Wide arms and wishing brow,
Their will to walk and call the earth their own.

And this small boy, and his big hunger, how
Will he stay beautiful alone?

Never now
Can any river cool me, never can
White silence ease me, or the dew distilled
Even in ginger flowers satisfy, unless
This old quick thirst, this aching aridness,
That urged us once, turn keen torment again
With beauty's wind a knife along the clear
Hot hills, unless we hear
Her tiny plaint in every teeming rain,
Unless her pollen comes
Honey on our senses, and her drums
Beat in our wrists until we turn as then
To find each other radiant in her pain.

Eleanor M. Denny

The Destroyer

Low-drooping tree whose silver symmetry
Against the green hills gave my spirit peace,
Now maimed and stark, your misty magic spent,
No more is beauty yours to bring release;

Clear-murmuring brook that under shadowy boughs
Went warbling softly till your lisps cool
Calmed my heart's fever into quietness,—
Made futile now, a shallow, sullied pool;

O brilliant minstrel bird, your tiny throat
Still throbbing with the ecstasy of song,
Your breast still quivering with its rapture-note,—
How gaping red the hunter's wanton wrong!

Dear tree, and stifled brook, and silent bird,
For each of you I suffer spirit scars;
O blemished beauty, broken innocence—
God, I am glad man cannot touch the stars!

Henrietta C. Penny

The Geyser at Calistoga

Spirit, or ghost, or wraith of mountain stream
 Confined for ages in a molten cave,
Till man, in search of water for his flock
 By chance alone, opened the long closed grave,
And you leaped up to greet the summer rain,
 The passing cloud, the sun, the stars of night,
 To feel the beauty and the joy of light,
Then back to darkness and to gloom again,

A restless spirit now, you cannot stay
 In your dull cave, but springing every hour
Through winter night, and shining summer day,
 You come to charm us, sometimes like a tower
Of snowy marble, or in bride's array
 Fleecy and trailing, passing like a breath,
Mysterious as life, aye even as death.

Harold G. Borland

The Flute Player

Soft, wistfully entreating,
Murmured whispers in full harmony with dusk and
star lit night,
Through the haze from far up on the Big Hill
Come melodies of love, and yearning, and romance;
Clear, mellow notes and harmonies and wild refrains—
The Flute Player wanders through the gamut of them
all,
Grand opera to the latest waltz, and back again.

And I,
Loving, hugging to my body,
Drinking deep the kisses of
My own Purple Hills,
Rise to the heights with the shimmering notes,
Reach the depth of feeling in each full-blown mood,
Lose self and earth in the longing wistfulness of my
own soul's refrain.
Low and tenderly, each note a heart-throb,
Speaks the player to his absent love:

Golden wavelets on infant seas
Tinkle along an amber beach:
Silver mist on an incense breeze;
Rose petal clouds piled each on each.

The last notes slip long, soothing fingers
Over the warm eyes of my soul,
As he softly doubles back and wanders in the
moon-motes of the night:

Cameos cut from the purple shade
And dew-pearls strung on a chain of jade.

Silvery notes from the pool in the valley
Come tumbling up the hill
On the moonlight's web of silver filigree,
And the aromatic breeze, a rush of night spray,
Filters through the silver shower
And soothes the warm ripples in my soul. . . .

Fantastic, airy, a bit of dreamland harmony
Dances down the moon-sheened slopes
And lifts me into cool gardens, with sable eyes kissing
and caressing me:

Clouds of roses and banks of blooms,
Lotus lilies on lakes of sky,
Willows' shade and their weeping plumes,
Lip of cherry and ebony eye.

The soft harmonies drift away,
Whispy incense floating back from the next hill,
And the next, and beyond.

As they softly fade, leaving a delicate fragrance of rose
gardens,

The notes gather themselves into a wild fantasy:

Dancing a dream in a lily's throat,
Singing the night moth's song of love,
Hoarding up moonbeams, mote by mote,
Playing gallant to an evening dove,
Drifting along in a grass-blade boat,
Cloud dreams above.

Caressing the last notes triflingly,
The Flute Player turns once more to life,
And love, and himself:

Wide, wide plains and the Purple Hills,
Mists of love that come and go,
The cool of dawn and evening glow,
And whisps of shade which the sky distills.

Shaping the notes with passionate lips,
He builds again the fretwork of it all,
Interlaced with tendrils of warm love
And rose buds and soft cheeks,
To the last word, the last note of all—

Mother-of-pearl in the evening sky
And the night birds drifting by.

It fades, bit by bit floating away in the night,
And silver chimes tinkle in my memory. . . .

Yes, brother, there's a world more in it all
Than notes and runs and light refrains—
Tears, heartaches, joy and pains:
There's life—

Ivy roots in the rocks of Time
Split off the years from each life-wall:
The bloom of youth is rich and prime,
But the petals fade and fall.

Am I really growing old in' years?
It seems from what I've lived
I might be half as old, at least, as Time itself.

The primrose lives its life in a night:
Birth, love, full fragrance, the night moth's
flight,
Then death with the morning light.
The Flute Player is a blue-eyed lad,
Yet winter-grey and creased with years,
Years felt and known and passed within a day. . . .

The Purple Hills know, and I know, and he knows,
For he has told the Hills and me many nights
With his cool-shadow eyes,
And his cliff of a brow,
And his flute.

4 bulb of white in the desert sand

Sends of itself to the warmth above:
The lily is cupped in a white-hot hand,
But the lily itself is Love.

Helen Thurston

Woodland Sketches

I

Landscape carved in jade;—
Green garnished hills
In velvet panoplies arrayed.
New budding trees
That cast their tracteries of shade
Like filigrees—
Upon the warm brown earth—
Displayed.

II

Tall pines—
Against the cloud-washed blue—
A stately company in priestly file.
Monks—
Garbed in gowns of sombre hue,—
Treading with sandaled feet the mountain's aisle.

Nelchen Armstrong

The White Road

I thought the white road by my door
Could never understand,
It wandered so adventurously
Across the billowy land—
For while it brushed its way past flowers
And shed the torrent's foam
Until it rounded mountain tops—
I had remained at home.

And work and love had come to me
Because I stayed so near
When I had found my valleys
And my many hills were here—
But mellowing years have made me come
At last to understand
The white road would have loved the way
Across my holy land.

Ethel Brooks Stillwell

The Return

Have you seen the monkey flowers spilling down the
mountain hollows?

Do you know the dusty fragrance that is noon on
Sunset trail?

Have you seen the heat-haze shimmer where the
winding ribbon follows

In and out the ragged ruffles, sheer above the
shining vale?

Echo mountain, wonder visioned, high and hot the slim
trail winding;

Still and cool the narrow canyon, purple shadowed
Rubio—

Years ago, in golden summer—bitter sweet the swift
reminding !—

There I roved with Carmencita,—years—and years—
and years ago.

Carmencita! Nimble footed, raven haired, sloe eyed and
slender,

How I loved her dusky beauty, red lipped laughter
clear and low!

How I loved her flaming sweetness, pride that brooked
no tame surrender,

How my hot young soul adored her,—years—and
years —and years ago!

Manuel, her brown young lover, nursed the jealous
rage that tore him,
Traced our steps one fateful morning, found us as the
shadows fell.
Swift the onset, brief the conflict, like a child I fell
before him.
Carmencita crowned the victor—turned and smiled
on
Manuel.

All the sky was flaming sunset, all the vale was
gleaming glory,
Silver, veiled and purple shadowed all the depths of
Rubio,
And the monkey flowers spilling down the ragged
promontory—
And I left them there, together,—years—and years—
and years ago.

* * * *

High and lone on Echo Mountain, where the pleasure
trolley passes,
Hangs a track man's flimsy cabin, where his nine
brown ninos dwell.
Carmencita, old and stolid, in the cooling pine
shademasses,
Heavy armed and sombre featured, washing shirts
for
Manuel.

Does she see the green-gold valley curve its gleaming
length below her?

Does she see the monkey flowers spilling down the
cliffs above?

Carmencita, old and stolid, in the cooling pine
shadeever know her.

Love did this to Carmencita. Does she, then,
remember love?

Does the old smile ever linger on those close-drawn
lips,

I wonder?

Can those sombre eyes rekindle? If I whispered,
would she know?

Does remembrance ever hover where the winding trail
dips under?

Carmencita! Madre——Dios! Years—and years—
and years ago!

Paul Eldridge

To Fo Bargains with Deity

The mutilated rose
Sighs,
And there is perfume:
The tortured grape
Bleeds,
And there is wine—
But To Fo's many sorrows
And endless torment
Bring forth but groans and long complaints,
Annoying his patient friends,
And ruffling the calm, sensitive air,
That should rise, and touch Heaven,
Smoothly,
Like the soft finger-tips
Of a young Empress.
O Lord of Things,
Master Economist,
Gatherer of stray shadows
And forgotten hours,
Why continue this useless extravagance,
This profligate waste?
Shower upon To Fo
Many joys and long pleasures—
He will smile,
Serenely,
With lengthened lips

And half-closed eyes.
He will make less noise
Than a young timid mouse
Testing the new entrance
To a sweetly-odored cup-board.

W. H. Lench

Desire

There is a strange quiet in my heart, while
A copper moon sits lonely as an owl
Among needled pines. My lips form a smile.
I thrill to hear the cry of water-fowl
As a breeze lifts it from a distant marsh
Breaking the silence with lone sounds and harsh.
I love to roam away from silver lights
To the town defying shoulders of a hill—
To breathe the temple calm of silent nights
And beg a fellow-straying cloud to spill
Soft showers on my brow and soak me through
With thoughts that should my ageing mind renew.
I love to roam away from silver lights
To the town-defying shoulders of a hill.

Philip Gray

June Scherzo

SING! DANCE!

Dance me a swift and savage June-dance.
And with your flying feet
And with your arabesques fleet
Outdo the midmost heat
Of summer——Dance!

Dance! Sing!
Sing for the hoyden trees to interpret
The wanton June-flared fire,
The thrill of chaos; inspire
The whole youth-passionate choir
Of summer——Sing!
Sing !——Dance ! | ——Ah | ——
April is done with her wayward chanties
May flung her bodice wide

And sang——and danced——and died ——.
Were you asleep when I cried
“June——sing——dance——
June——sing——dance ?——”

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Allene Gates

The Valedictorian

In dainty dress, sheepskin in hand,
Shy-eyed, pink cheeked, hair softly curled,—
Now that all Life you understand,
What will you do with this old world?

Eunice T. Gray

A College Dance

Through a Prism.

Round go the dancers,
Boom, boom, the drum.
Click, clack, the slippers,
Fiddles wail and hum.

Arms close encircled,
Heart beats to heart,
Each coated savage
Holds his own apart.

Fire of youth in the faces,
Fire of earth in the drum,
Under fire of the primitive
The spirit is dumb.

Like fires in the opal,
The soft garments shade,
Green, amethyst, sunset,
Rose, blue and jade.

Life through a prism,
A thousand desires,
A rainbow of emotion
A horizon of fires.

Winifred Gray Stewart

Summer Rapture

I shall climb a green hill,
With summer winds above it;
And I shall loose my chestnut hair
And I shall love it!

O, I shall climb a green hill,
With clover blossoms scented
And weave a garland frail and fair;
And be contented !

O, I shall climb a green hill,
And when I reach the summit,
I'll find a little song there;
And I shall hum it!

Floyd Meredith

Protest

“It is too warm for April,” you said,
And shook your head.

“Yes,” I agreed,
“There is no need
For June
To come so soon.”

Both of us smiled,
And I had a wild
Desire to tell you all the things,
April flings—
But, do you remember, you shook your head
And so, the words were left unsaid.

Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

White-Throat

Brief, brief is the song I sing;
It cannot profit anything.

High, high are the notes I call,—
So high no echo comes at all.

Far, far where the hills are green
I fly, and call, and am never seen.

You—you will never know
Why I sing,—where I go!

Comment

The freshness and vividness of diction which the best free verse has brought into poetry is one of the strongest arguments in the possession of its admirers. To a sad degree poetry was tending to become vague, nebulous, stereotyped, what is called cosmic verse, in which the poet utters sweeping and sonorous generalities about life, and his universe. This is the poetry which considers man as the center of creation and reads nature and all human action through the medium of his feelings, forgetting that there are really two worlds, one of thought, emotion, passion ; the other, what we have seen, heard and touched. Cosmic poetry deals with the former. The followers of free verse strive for the externality, the objectivity of the latter, unhampered by man's emotional outlook. The end of their expression is clearness, their search is for the exact word, and this word is apt to be crisp and incisive. Through the efforts of the writers of the best free verse, the vocabulary of poetry is dropping off the old, the trite, the commonplace, and insisting upon fine craftsmanship, chiselled beauty of words and images, until well worn thoughts are filled with new life and take on a distinction which is refreshing. So each new development of any art lends a fresh grace of expression.

As a bit of sweet and cheerful philosophy at the close of a long life, filled with varied activities, we print the following lines. They sum up the meaning of life beautifully, out of the depth of human experience:

CONCERNING OLD AGE

Who thinks of growing old with dread,
And pity for us already there,
Should hear the truth, be comforted

And let sweet pity rest elsewhere.

Truth is: that the Immortal Soul
On life's eternal journey bound
Moves toward an ever lifting goal
On spiral pathway, round and round,
Returning on each round again
To former place on higher plane.

Childhood is part of our career
Wherein "to love and to be loved"
Is all the use in being here.

Old age is "second childhood" won,
Wherein "to love and to be loved"
Is sweet excuse for lingering on.

For all of life twixt birth and death—
To tell the whole truth in a breath—
Those six small words in full express
Its meaning, use and blessedness.

Thomas Everts

The Fire Bird, by Gene Stratton-Porter appears this month from the press of Doubleday, Page and Company. It is a long narrative poem dealing with the Indians of early days—when the western land was theirs. It tells the love tragedy of Princess Yiada in a narrative of sustained power and works up to a fine climax in which, one by one, the evils she has heaped upon the rival who wins her lover, Mountain Lion, recoil upon her own head and upon those she loves. The complete, impersonal justice of the tragedy fills the reader with a sense

of awe and the author has proved her ability to handle a theme of great tragic power. It will not be a surprise to learn that Mrs. Porter has always yearned for self expression through poetry. It is the hidden poetry of *Freckles* and *The Girl of the Limberlost* that have endeared them to us. But because success came first through the medium of prose, she has feared to try the other path. We may look for further and even more aspiring poems among Mrs. Porter's future work after the signal success she has achieved in *The Fire Bird*.

Notes

The Lyric West offers two prizes to be awarded next January—One of one hundred dollars, will be given to the best long narrative poem or group of poems published in the Lyric West during the year of 1922. The other, of fifty dollars, will be given to the most distinctive short poem published during the same period.

Owing to the large amount of accepted material on hand, The Lyric West will not consider any manuscripts between June fifteen and September fifteenth. The manuscripts already accepted will be published as rapidly as possible between those respective dates.

The next issue of The Lyric West will be a double summer number, July-August, to be issued about July twentieth. It will be a Sea and Sky number, of enlarged size and pleasing variety.

Are there any of our subscribers who could furnish us with the April and May, 1921, issues of The Lyric West? Both issues are exhausted and we have urgent requests for them from public libraries and universities.