

VOL. II

JULY-AUGUST 1922

NO. 4

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Helen Frazee-Bower | Esther Yarnell

Roy T. Thompson | Neal Gallatin

Carrie Woodward Stryker and others

GARDENS

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The Lyric West

Vol. II, No. 4

A Magazine Of Verse

July-August, 1922

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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A Book of Sea and Sky

Issue p. 3 · Scan p. 6

Helen Frazee-Bower

There Is No Word

White cliffs where for a moment starlight gleams,
 Gray ocean ebbing to a sound not heard,
And silver sand dunes burdened with their dreams,
 Are things too beautiful for any word.
There is a language that may sing in part
 The grace and wonder of the sea by day:
Bright flecks of foam, blue waves that leap and start,
 And mad-cap winds that turn the foam to spray,

But who shall dare to utter with the lips
 A beauty like to this; for here is wrought
Of moonlight and of mist a web that slips
 Too subtly into place—and speech is caught. . . .
Across the gray seascape the thought flies far—
But lips are silent as the white cliffs are.

Helen Frazee-Bower

Sea Gulls

The gray fog pearled to tears . . . and twilight came
To lean upon the bosom of the sea.
One moment gave to earth the sudden flame
Of day,—the next denied it utterly.
But etched upon the silver of a cloud,
In that brief interim of passing light,
I saw white wings of sea gulls, stately, proud,
As sails bound homeward for the port of night.

A quiet peace they knew in drifting so,
I felt assured. . . . And then the light went out.
I heard a rush, a flutter—and more slow,
The sound of bird-thoughts hovering in doubt—
And wings that flattened to a thin white cry
And beat upon the cavern of the sky.

Helen Frazee-Bower

Sea Lover

I may not sleep as others do, when night
 Lets down the quiet curtain of her dreams—
Far in the lavish splendor of the light
 The mad moon squanders from her hoard of beams
One waits, and all his silence is a prayer,
 A still, white prayer that mounts to something
 higher,
And bursts at last, a full cry, on the air—
 The rising flood-tide of his young desire.

It is the sea—my lover. From afar
 He comes to deck my beauty: moon-soft pearls
Are flung about my neck, a silver star
 Burns for my hair, and lightly he unfurls
Fold after fold of gray chiffon, mist-spun.
 I stoop, I yield—Beloved, I am won!

Mildred Plew Merryman

Thoughts of a Bookkeeper

Ledger, ledger, let me be!
Past my window winds the sea!

*Morn is a moth wing, silver frail;
Puff, tall wind, in my tipsy sail!
Spread is the spray like a peacock tail!*

Two times four times three—

*Sinks the sun through the froth and fire,
Pricked to the heart by a pinnacled spire;
Flaked are the fagots, cold the pyre.*

Two times four times three—

*Waves begin their sobbing croon;
Night, the reaper, up the dune
Swings a silent, sickle moon.*

Ledger, ledger, let me be;
Past my window winds the sea!

Mary Sinton Leitch

Moods

I

The ocean hurls itself against the jagged cliffs
In splendid fury, in wild grandeur of abandonment
To the sheer joy of on-slaught,
Swirling in hissing pools of turbulent retreat,
Then gathering tumultuous strength for the crested
charge.
My heart leaps up; my spirit rides exultant on the
exulting waves;
My blood pounds with the sea pounding against the
crag.

II

The ocean lies azure, translucent,
With a calm that reaches forth to illimitable horizons,
With a stillness transcending the stillness of the stars.
My heart is hushed in the vast quietude,
My being is utterly possessed by the un-utterable peace
of the sea.

Mary Sinton Leitch

The Old Men

At the edge of Point Graymalkin the pines stand—
Old men dark against the sky.
They fling out withered arms knotted and gnarled,
Threatening the river with frantic gestures,
Impotent, grotesque,
Daring it to trespass on their woods.
The water, all un-heeding, rises . . . and falls,
And the arms wave in triumph
For the old men believe the river slunk away.
In fear of them.

Dorothy S. Collins

Night Song

The harbor lights gleam on the sea,
The long black wharves run deep
From the dim walls of the old city
 Into the sea of sleep.
Silence sits in the doors of the city
 Watching the shadows creep,
For all the folk in this ancient city
 Are drowned in the tides of sleep.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Sea Cliff

Still on this seaward cliff
The mists and the rains fall
In endless weeping for an endless sorrow—
The ancient sorrow of the sea.
He glooms upon the land
And loves, as a destroyer loves
Her offered fair white bosoms
And her far-flung beckoning hands.
He creeps about her knees
Rises, circles her, girds her,
Where she sits in the sun and wind,
In the rain and the stars,
Yielding him slowly the sands of her life,
Till the years of the earth be told
And the sea o'erwhelm her.
(Sometimes—when the wind is still
And the dark day makes no moan,
Or the night comes quietly
Without sound of stars,
I hear the rain
Weep for the age-long woe of the world
That it must die.)
On the cliffs, high over my nest,
Is a garden of trees
That the storm-winds tend.
The head of the cliff is crowned with leaves

And the face of the cliff is fluttered with leaves,
For the joyless harvest of autumn
Lies there unbound and ungathered,
In the silence of earth and sea and sky
I hear the rain—
The sodden beat of the rain—
On the trees above my nest:
“Death, Death, Death, Death?”
On the leaves above my nest
“Death, Death, Death,” over me!
O joy-life that never came to Joy’s fulfilment,
Beaten into a sterile sod
By the ceaseless fall of tears:

O mating heart and lifting soul of me, creative one,
Beaten, beaten, into the earth!
Is there a sun? shines it at all
Up there in the far, far blue
Where he roams winged with stars,
The Unafraid and Free?
The sun and the stars and the free blue—
Gone from me like a dream denied:
For I am dead of woe,
Dead in this tomb, which is black with rains—
And under the dark the dumb sea crawls.

William Ellwell Onions

Thwarted

Gnarled in a smothered tangle of ivory foam
The half-drowned sailor lay,
And rolled along the washing sands,
When under the smile of the breaking day
The seas smoothed down their shattering crests
And the waves ceased beating their green breasts.

With a long sweep, one wave caught at the slopping
man,
Bore him ashore, and laughing, backward ran—
And the warming sands took him unhurt,
And he lay there stirring until the curt
Command of the half-defeated wind
Woke him, and drove him to his sorrowing kind.

Up from the seething sounds that ran along the shore,
The stupid mariner crawled until his hand
Broke through the tangled, brazen leaves and found a
land
Dim and misty, with valleys crowded close
With thatched cottages. He was half-mad, and morose
Over his finding and his eye
Ran along the valley's rim to the dirty sky.

He was there again !—
Chance unthinkable

Had garnered the thread ends well,
And sent him still against
The fate it had long before coincided !

Henrietta C. Barr

Immortality

My heart is like a cavern by the sea,
Wherein, both night and day, reverberates
Orchestral music, played by wind and wave,
The movements many toned and unsurpassed,
Of the great ocean's mighty symphony.
For though the harmonies I loved are now
Forever hushed, my heart will not forget;
It's hudden chambers still are resonant,
Defying time and death, send back the song,
Responding as the cavern to the sea;
And thus remembered music never dies,
But echoes and re-echoes endlessly.

Gordon Malherbe Hillman

Sea Winds

Strew the room with roses—
That may not compare
With the scent of spindrift
And salt upon the air.

Line the steps with lilacs—
They shall never be
Sweet with the stinging sweetness
That blows from off the sea.

Deck the halls with daisies—
And yet you cannot know
The scent of bitter sea winds
Where bleak tides ebb and flow.

Norma Miller

The Sea Is Like a Nun

The sea is like a nun tonight
Who paces softly, softly to and fro
Between dark, solemn colonnades
But never loiters in their stony shades
And murmurs prayers monotonous and low.

Josephine van Dolzen Pease

Sunsets

Whenever the sun has set over the lake,
I have hoped it might be the Lord
Come at last in Glory.

(If the day may burn at evening
In rainbow flame,
Be destroyed in living fire
Before my eyes at evening,
Why may not the Lord come then
Tomorrow or today?
Who shall call any wonder
More splendid than ten million sunsets?)

Whenever the sun has set over the lake,
I have prayed it might then be the Lord
At last, in Glory.

I have seen sky and sea take fire
From the burning day. Why then may not the Lord
Come in Glory at last?

(Red Flames, orange, yellow;
If a living day be burned at evening
It shall blossom in rainbow fire.
Thin blue points, purple, green;
A day a-flame shall set fire to Heaven.

Who shall then
Call any wonder wonderful,
Seeing earth scorched by ten million sunsets?)

I have seen sky and sea take fire
From the burning day. I have prayed it might be
At last the Lord in Glory.

Esther Yarnell

“I Have Climbed the Dark Hills”

I have climbed the dark hills where they kneel
 To the sea,—at the farthest bend.
I have made my wish on the earliest star.
 I have searched for the rainbow’s end.

“Lend me your boat, O fisher boy,”
 I said, “with its sails unfurled —
For I would see what there is to see
 Out at the edge of the world.”

Then you came with a laugh in your eyes,
 Pooh-poohing my silly schemes ;—
And then you were gone, and with you went,—
 Every thing, it seems.

I have lost my zest for climbing hills,
 My faith in the rainbow’s bar.
Some things are too cold for a woman’s dreams,
 Some places are too far.

Neeta Marquis

An Old Garden by the Sea

(Sutro Heights, San Francisco.)

It seems the garden of a dream,
Closed from the world with muffling vine,
Veiled to the bold sky's bluest gleam
With mournful cypress tree and pine.

Swart ivy creeps along the grass,
Starred with sparse daisies coldly-white,
Or, in the somber shadows' mass,
Hydrangeas form pale pools of light.

Chaste marble forms of gods and maids,
With laughing lip and rounded limb,
Start from the gloom of ancient glades;
But all are old and stained and dim.

Fair women's faces, pure as flowers,
Gaze dumbly down each dusky aisle
With sad, sweet looks, as if the hours
Had passed long since when they could smile.

The strong sea hammers on the shore,
But walls of cypress interpose
To hide its flash and dull its roar,
Its throb alone invades this close.

No fragrances, of Occident
Or royal East, are here save one—
The immemorial, aching scent
Of cypress-branches steeped in sun.

The garden is an old, old heart,
Where lovely memories may bide,
But passion find its only part
In echoes from the vast sea's tide.

Agnes Louise Dean

Long Nook

(A Sea Road in Truro)

Two ribbons of white sand in a grassy road;
A hushed road, feeling its way to the sea
Through curved openings of the hills.
The sky is narrow,
Brilliant,
Noon-blue.
Only once, by the long roadside,
A dwelling.
Over its gray eaves, a clambering rose vine;
In the dooryard, a mauve-spired garden of foxgloves
Motionless in the heat.
Sheltered, sudden;
An accent against the loneliness.
Beyond,
The low trees hump their shoulders at our approach,
For we follow the endless wind,
Blowing through the valley's trumpet,
Forever seeking the sea.

Eleanor Preston Watkins

North Wind

Green as jade the ocean,
Scarred with flecks of white,
 In tumultuous motion
 Fleeing in commotion
From the North Wind's might.

Shoulders bent and crouching,
White waves rush to land
 From the North Wind's lashing,
 Stumbling, falling, crashing,
On the beaten sand.

Sea-gulls ride the North Wind
Like the wraiths of storm.
 Weltering wastes of waters
 Hail them Sea-King's daughters,
Mutations multiform.

In the wake of the North Wind
The combing breakers come,
 Chrysoprase where the sun shines through,
 Hyacinth in twilight blue,
And amethystine foam.

The satire of the North Wind
Cuts me to the bone,

But the wildness of his singing,
The largess he is flinging,
The ecstasy he's bringing,
For all his hurts atone.
 The shouting singing North Wind,
 The boisterous boyish North Wind,
 The reckless laughing North Wind,
 I sing his praise alone!

Harry Noyes Pratt

The Embarcadero

Great ships that nose to the rough gray landing
 As cattle nose to the pasture gate;
Great bows that bend and bulge, outstanding
 Above the tangle where cargoes wait.

Bold ships from the shores of far, dim oceans,
 Formosa strait to Bristol town;
Their bows have swayed to the rhythmic motions
 Of waves that wet them, keel and crown.

Gray ships that have swung down far, wide spaces,
 Malayan isles to the Hebrides—
Fair ships that have known the wide far places
 Of starry skies and the starlit seas.

Serene and aloof from the noisy clamour
 They dream of the kiss of the wind-borne foam;
Of the thrust and swing as the wild seas hammer—
 They dream of the seas that shall bear them home.

Harold Vinal

Distances

Above the tide-wet rocks a swirl of birds

Move across great distances of light,
A gust of beauty blown, like a wind
Into the vaporous net of the night.

Their plaint drifts earthward, though their wings are
still

A web of futile flame that falls with grey
And wierd insistance on the gleaming dunes—
Thus does all beauty sob itself away.

We watch their stricken flight into the dark
Above the shifting and star-moving sea;
Thus will I pass motionless from you—
Like a flight of snowy birds, you will go from me.

Cavan Lyttyl

Farewell at Twilight to San Francisco Bay

Dusk, dim and smoky,
Four-square riggers alight,
Bloodless gray-silvered waters
Heaving, rising, falling, quieting with the night.
A slash in the blue-gray stencilled hills
On the orange skyline, and the horizon's silhouette is
severed
Where the Golden Gate is opened, leading to the
windswept sea,
Near by spent waves are lapping, lapping, close
To the rail's dull silver bars, where the water and the
landstones meet.
Swaying, slipping into darkness glides a train upon its
way.

Gray-green bay grass, a side wall,
Then bushes, a cliff and an outlined tree.
Leaving, leaving the Golden gate,
The drawn in breath of the Pacific, making this inland
sea.
A flash of light on Alcatraz,
Massed slits of light on Angel's base,
The palest tints of mauve to dawn o'er all;
Brooding, brooding, hazy tints on murky hills
And water valleys ever restless with the tide.

A purple saffron sunset cuts beyond the cloud Line
shore.

Flash and flash on Alcatraz,
Slower, dimmer, flashes Mile Rock Light
Standing there without the Gateway,
Guarding, flashing, through the Orient's Front Door.
Dimmer, dimmer grow the shadows, twilight meets the
coming night,
One long peak within the distance, gathers, clutches to
its shrine

Orient, Mystery, Freedom, Silence; towering o'er the
wondrous bay.
Seeps and seeps the Western Spirit in the inmost heart
set free,
Drawing, drawing ever backward in its restless urge of
longing,
Till the wanderlust shall bring me, back in peace, in
peace to stay.

Ethel D. Turner

Boats in the Mist

Boats in the mist, upon a twilight sea,
Faint, faint as dreams that hover languorously
Along the tide of sleep. Fragile and fair!
White butterflies that leave the paths of air
To poise entranced. A touch, a tender sigh
Might scatter them like foam, so light they lie
At anchor. So might drowsy lilies rest,
Unstirred by wind or wave, on Lethe's breast.

Boats in the mist, vague as the soul of Man;
Still, still as though becalmed since Time began.
Was it with freight from some far spirit shore
You once embarked? How bravely then you bore
Down the eternal stream! Adventuring
Where never keel had plowed, nor gull had wing,
Your prows ripped boldly in the new-sprung breeze
The jade and crystal of the virgin seas.

Boats in the mist, beneath a pallid sky,
Awake out of your sleep of death, for I
Would sail with you. I'd tramp the seas beyond
The pearl rim of the world, a vagabond
Seeking all unknown realms. Oh, come with me
All ye who dare to dream! Ye Glad! Ye Free!
To that far land where visions still exist,
We'll head our course and sail—into the mist.

Yetta Kay Stoddard

Point Loma Breezes

Our South breeze is an actress, who skips with
practised grace;
This West's a coyish lassy, who dreams beside the sea;
The East's a flirt, a fliskmahoy, a flippant brazen-face;
And our North's a giant dancing, a gay gray giant
dancing,
A defiant giant dancing—
Dancing frenziedly.

It's joy to watch the South breeze trip down Gill's field
of grass;
I thrill to have this West breeze whispering love to me;
But one still more diverting than the East up Gage's
Pass
Is our foggy cold one jazzing, our groggy bold one
jazzing,
Our frampold flogging North breeze
Jazzing shamelessly.

Roy T. Thompson

Boy in the Surf

Lithe and young,
Slender, lithe,
Down the broad sand running,
Into the broidered lave of receding waves,
Lifting his toes like a dancer, prettily,
All unawares,
Leaping over spent waves of foam which come up the
 low beach lazily,
With head thrown back to the winds
Like a dreamed-of faun in the unfettered morn of
 creation,
Fresh and eager and light,
Runs my swimmer far into the surf,—
My sandpiper
Mingling with sunshine and surf.

Rolfe Humphries

Evening on Tahoe

There's been a forest fire somewhere to-day
And now at evening all the lake is grey
Merging with hazy sky, whose mystery
Veiling the northern mountains, makes a sea
That reaches into the distance far and dim;
The sky is starless, but around the rim
Clusters of little lights blink clear and bright
(Diamonds that flash and sparkle best by night.)
My old boat chugs along. A fleck of spray
Dampens my face. And still the night, gray, gray
Haunts me with the suggestion of the view.
Past vision, wistful with distance. . . . I wish that you...
I cut the motor off, and drift, and lean
Over the side. Soft paths of red and green
Waver across the water. It's very still.
Inland, a sounding stream pours down the hill
To quiet in the lake, and peace at the last.
Oh, peace, and quiet, and—loneliness coming fast!
Pity that beauty always must be so lonely ;—
Perhaps,—Yet, always, I love beauty. Only,—
It was hot to-day, but now the air has gone
Quite chilly,
I'll land, and get my sweater on.

Rolfe Humphries

A Sad Little Lyric for Vacation

There will be places, all-too-many places

That I shall never go near;

Days won't be so bad, but dusk and the evenings—

Oh, my dear!

If all of a sudden beauty is dreadful and lonely,

Change is the only permanent thing, we know;

I shall get bravely over it, only, only—

Now, I don't want to go.

Ellen Morrill Mills

Sea Shells

The shells that pattern the sea-shore seem so
wonderful to me——
Little deserted dwellings of the creatures of the sea!

This dweller went in motley-brown was the roof he
bore,
But he stole the hues of the sunset for the arch of his
humble door!
Here was an artist bolder, down where the palm-fronds
wave;
With streakings of gold and crimson he made his
mansion brave,
Then fluted and carved the portal till it looked like a
fairy shrine
Set up to some lesser sea-god. With wonders of rare
design
They wrought, these things of the sea-depths; aye, and
they wrought right well.
They lived and they builded—and perished. What
nation has more to tell ?
They lived and they left—I am grateful !—these gems
for my treasure-store
These porcelain and coralline castles that shelter their
own no more.

The shells that pattern the sea-shore seem so
wonderful to me—
Little deserted dwellings of the creatures of the sea!

Frances Wetmore Gross

Bits of Sand

I stretch myself full length, in warm dry sand,
While endless swishing waves foam out to me,
Across the sky a white winged seagull sails,
Then swerving seaward, dips into the sea.

Warm salt wind, I close my eyes content,
The curving sky bends down to cover me,
I am a bit of drifting yellow sand,
While thoughts spread out their wings and skim the
sea,

Anna Porter

On the Dunes

Sand and sea.

Oh to ride on the mounting wind,

Flinging the mists behind,

Free as the gulls are free!

Weighted—held to the land.

Seeing before, behind,

Only (because of the mists that blind)

Sea and sand.

Restless gull,

Answer why

You are not content as I

To drop inert on the ridgy dune?

In azure June,

Just doing nothing is not dull.

—Comrade gull!

Dorothy Pinckney Pillsbury

Voices

I make my bed of sea-grass stiff;
I pile it high on the rocky shore.
My little fire falters against the cliff
And night steals in through an apple-green door.
Lonely the ocean, lonely the sky
With the light from a fishing boat glimmering by,
And a few dim stars that flash and sway
Like riding-lights in the sky's calm bay.

And often in the fog-wet night
I wake and hear strange voices sing.
I lie and listen with delight
To golden notes that soar and swing.

Many a mile I'd walk and walk
Just to wake at night when the grey mists stalk,
Just to hear that mystic, rapturous song
Like a cloud of melody floating along.

Robert Whitaker

The Soul's Summer

There is a summer drowsiness of soul;
A languor of the spirit's atmosphere;
A breathless quietude that is not fear;
A stillness that is more than self control.

As when one broods, high on some piney knoll,
The soothing trill of insects in his ear,
Seeing the surf-crest which he cannot hear
Where far away the long, slow billows roll.

Hours are there when it is enough to be:
To know no will, no eagerness of hope,
No least desire with outward things to cope;
But just to sense the far-sweep of life's sea:
To stretch full length on the up-reaching slope
Self all surrendered to infinity.

Mynhart J. Boissevain

Adagio

Tranquil is this hour of Evening,
While clouds slip silently over the sky
And soon pass into the dark of the on-coming Night,
Like birds homeward bound
Soon lost in the depths of the forest.

This is the time
When flowers their petals close soft
Like the eyes of small children
Touched by the Finger of Sleep,
While they drift through a land where the dreams are
 pearl laden.

The Star of the Hour is like the soul of a woman,—
A celestial song awaiting a singer
That stands on the gold-paven steps of the Moon
To strike the first chords on his Harp silver made.

Grace Clementine Howes

The Stairway

Step—by—step,
Imperially gracious
As the gesture of a monarch,
Blue lines long-flowing,
Descend the plateaus—
Step—by—step,
From the white, silvered peaks
To the green, far-flung plains:
Step—by—step,
Like a stairway of the gods.

Glowing at dawn
As though from Aurora's passing,
At noon hung with royal velvets
Of blues, greens, and purples,
At evening new flowering
With hues magically changing
Step—by—step—
Spread as for a pageant
And a progress from Olympus.

Under the moon's crescent
I have seen white arms glimmering,
And the flash of silver arrows—
Does Diane, alighting
To look on her dreaming shepherd,

Kneel, amid the hush of stars,
To kiss fair Endymion?

Have the old gods returned,
Where step—by—step,
Skyward and earthward
Flows the blue stairway?

Neal Gallatin

Pipes o' Sky

All day across the sky

I have my pipes
That play to me
Symphonies in smoke.

Stately grey measures
Playing at masquerade.
Thin violet mists
Rushing upward
To fade beneath the sun.
Strange blues,
Hushed and afraid,
That hover near the earth.
Sparks of gold
Glinting through
As dusk
Blurs the white tones over.
Symphonies of phantom thoughts
That steal into the sky
Leaving memories
To haunt me.

Nora B. Cunningham

Surely I May Come Back

Surely I may come back to earth a while

After the sleep of death has claimed me long,
To glimpse again a baby's fleeting smile
Or hear a meadow-lark pour out its song.

Or when a laughing wind from out the west

Romps over prairies greening in the spring—
O surely then my body could not rest,
But must rise up and laugh and run and sing!

M. P. C.

Through the Cajon Pass

(Summer-time)

My heart went out to meet it—
The gray land!
All aromatic with the scent of sage and tar;
Swathed in dun coverings of softest brown
Shot through with yellow gleams;
Subtle of hue, as dreams are made.
Under the canopy of tender blue
Resting—until the light touch of the rain,
Wakes it to one brief, poignant loveliness of flowers—
Its winter spring—
Glad with Hope's meaning, fleeting as Youth's smile,

Through stony valley of the Pass
Fain my feet followed. . . .
What have they done to her, my land of dreams?
Land, where the lights and shadows played,
Soft from the mountain top to plain,
Save for the oaks' close drawn deep-tinted shade.

Behold, the shoulders of the gentle hills
Weighed down with monstrous growth
Of alien trees!
Upon the plain below—a changeless green,
Eating like vitriol into gold of sun and harvest.
Everywhere a smothering of flowers,

Sating the senses with their perfumed breath;
Or heavy with the scent of their decay—
One long debauch of flowers.
No winter and no spring!
All seasons lost in one wide, flaunting,
Ill-matched rioting of bloom.

Like woman of great Babylon, she seems
Decked out with spoil
With tags and trinkets from a hundred lands;
From Sussex and from Italy, from Tokio and Tabriz;
With changeless, painted bloom;
The gold-bought body there—
The lovely spirit gone.

The Heavens Declare His Glory

When afternoons grow long and late
God unlocks His Golden Gate
And through its far flung leaves I see
His beatific company.
Their robes, magnificent and wide,
Fill all the sky from side to side
With manifold and mobile hues—
Crimsons, purples, greens and blues.

While they in pleasure take the air
Of God's sky meadows; plucking there
The first blown stars that, pale and dim,
Open upon the evening's rim.
Exulting, joyously they sing
The glory of their heavenly King!
Blest songs unheard—I only see
The bright, prismatic symphony.

Virgil Geddes

Summer Movement

Heat on a summer afternoon
Is a wavering, sticky web;
And people walk from houses,
Caught in a net of fetid strings,
In a half-wakeful, helpless nightmare.
A suburban park is littered
With many lovers on the grass,
And young hearts strum a monody
In softly frightful tones.

And thus in stupid ease
I slouch on a bench
And grin at the languid
Scrawls on the grass.

Grace Atherton Dennen

The Riding of Peaceful Henry

I am the son of the wind and the plain,
Long and lean and tawny of hide.
Steer and stallion have known my will.
One horse there was that I did not ride.

Spring in the country of the sky
And the great shan khive, the Indian feast,
Games and races and feats of strength—
The bucks came herding from west and east.
Booths and trinkets, glitter and dust,
Crowds who jostled their way along,
In from the ranches, in from the range,
A shouting, hilarious, holiday throng;
Every man of them brought his girl
And I brought mine, brown, wilful Sue—
Eyes as deep as the midnight sky,
Hair like clouds when the sun shines through,
Lips like the scarlet pomgranate flower,
Never a ranger of them all
But envied and stared and pressed us close
Little cattle that crowd at the evening call.

For she was queen of the Ninety Mile
And I as proud as a crested hill.
I meant to dazzle her eyes and heart
And tame her wilfulness to my will,

We followed the lure of the glittering booths,
I gave her all of my pay to spend
Like a comet's trail on a windy night
We swept the shan khive from end to end.

The fun grew furious and fast.
Now they were bringing the horses out.
And up from the crowded, clamorous place,
Beating the heights, rolled shout on shout.
Out came the horses, twenty or more,

Nostrils aquiver—eager to run.
Lean and hardy and nimble-hoofed—
But the clamor and shouting were all for one.
There like a star in the midst he stood,
Black as the night, with his lines of wonder,
Mighty shoulders, sinews of steel,
Proud neck lifted and arched with thunder.
Peaceful Henry was what they called him.
Him—this marvel of grace and fire,
No man had ridden, no man could ride him.
Buck or rangeman, son or sire.
Every year from the range they brought him
With a bag of gold to his saddle tied,
Much good gold for the one who'd win it,
But no man rode him, no man could ride.

“Peaceful Henry” they hailed him madly.
“Here's your horse, boys, come and try.
Five thousand cash for a trip to heaven,
Five thousand gold for a chance to die.”

Brown Sue's eyes went aflame with light.
Her lips sought mine, for the world to see,
"Ride him!" she said, "for this kiss—and win
The gold—and Peaceful Henry—and me!"
The fire of her eyes scorched through my veins,
I went clear mad with her sudden kiss—
Moon-dazed and mad with the glorious stake.
It was life to win, it was death to miss—
I seized the saddle, amid their shouts,
The bit, the bridle—I cinched him fast—
He whirled, he struggled, he lashed, he reared—
Missed by a foot—I was up at last!

I clawed and clung like a demon rider.
Steer and stallion had known my will.
I gripped his ribs with knees of iron,
Gripped him tighter and tighter still.
Here I was astride of a comet,
The earth was turned to thunder and flame.
I cursed my folly, I cursed the Wonder
And knew his wildness too great to tame.
Then, at the worst, while my straining heart

Was bursting my ribs—I felt it come.
The sudden slack of his mighty muscles,
His proud neck drooping—it struck me dumb.
He was mine! I had conquered him—mine to ride—
The marvel, with limbs of steel and fire!
From the grace of his head to the flow of his tail
He was mine to ride at my heart's desire!

Mine—and the girl—and the gold—then why
Should my fool throat ache and my eyes grow dim,
And the beat of my madly racing heart
Turn heavy and sick at the thought of him?
Proud and tameless one, there he faltered.
His free born breath was a sobbing wheeze,
Nothing so sad as his drooping shoulders
And the sag of his muscles beneath my knees.

Break him—the bold and beautiful,
Shod with freedom across the range;
Break him—I knew how a heart can sicken,
Strain at life's halter, droop and change.
Hobbled and staked and bitted and bridled,
All that was flame in him turned to clay.
Once, not twice does God make perfection
That men may break it and throw it away.

No one guessed but the Wonder and I.
Just for a second my knees went slack.
—The stars shot downward and—well, that's all—
I opened my eyes in the grass on my back.

The girl? She went with a better man—
The gold? It's waiting each year to be won.
Peaceful Henry? He gallops the heights
Where they reach the straightest up to the sun.
And I am the son of the wind and the plain,

Long and lean and tawny of hide.
Steer and stallion have known my will,
One horse there was that I did not ride.

William Stanley Braithwaite

Eyes

Very innocent, or very wise
I cannot tell by your eyes;
Through your hair and your mouth
Escape the secrets of your youth;
And another golden token
Tells me—the music unbroken
Of your body. But, innocent or wise,
I cannot tell by your eyes!

If you are wise, I cannot tell:
If so, your beauty's foul as hell;
If you are innocent, I know
Your beauty is as pure as snow.
Through your hair and your mouth
Breaks the wizardry of youth—
But very innocent or very wise
I cannot tell by your eyes!

William Stanley Braithwaite

The Hanging House

When the bright, golden dawn
Breaks upon the silence,
I shall be away from here,
Shadowing your presence.

I saw a pine tree
By a hanging house—
And my dreams went spattering
Half a hundred boughs.

Well, it's but a minute,
Brief as foam,
When we take to travelling home!

And could we make arrival
In the hanging house,
We'd gather up the spattered dreams
From the golden boughs!

Wright Field

Lilac-Time

You—and the lilacs against your breast,
And your face half-turned to the amber west,
 Time cannot steal from me.
Over your face the turf has grown
'Twixt you and my heart's un-ceasing moan
 At the shores of Memory;
Your voice—little tricks of way and speech
Float further and further beyond my reach,
 Forgotten, with all the rest:
Then—A breath of lilacs on amber air,
And you with the sunset on your hair,
 And the lilacs against your breast!

Wright Field

The Maple Sings

I am a mother—hush, can't you sense the thrilling
Through every limb, held out to guard my treasures?

Note you not something new about my singing—
Something that croons and lulls in dreamy measures?

Deep in my heart you'll find the cradle swinging—
Little downy babies cuddled up together
Mine it is to sway them into gentle dreaming;
Mine it is to guard them from wind and rainy weather!

If you're sitting quiet at my feet to listen,
You will learn the secret I've yielded to no other;
In the robin's brown nest, after weeks of waiting,
Is the stir of life and love—the Maple is a mother!

Dorothy Haddox

Wistaria

I

Under the wistaria
Spilling blossoms on the grass,
In her purple kimono
I have seen the lady pass.

She has other lovers—I
Am forgotten; though for me
She once kept a single tryst,
Now she passes happily

Under the wistaria
Like the blossoms on the grass
In her purple kimono.
I shall wait here till she pass

As in cherry blossom time
Hand her verses, watch her weep
Into her long purple sleeve
For the tryst she dare not keep.

Under the wistaria
Watch her drift down on the grass
In her purple kimono,
I shall wait here till she pass.

II

VERSES

Thine eyebrows are the crescent moon
Soft as dusk thine eyes and hair
Telling nothing; languorous
Mysteries are hidden there.

Curved red petals make thy mouth
Sweet as flowers after rain,
Fine and frail and fair art thou
Like a rare old porcelain.

And thy heart of porcelain
Brittle, cold and smooth like thee.
Thinkest thou not my narrow blade
Can pierce that fine frailty?

M. Doris Hutchins

The Yucca

Grey seas of sage-brush, crisp and dry,
Hard wastes of barren alkali,
A parched earth and a brazen sky.

Guarded by spears against retreat,
Slim green wands stand amidst the heat
Bearing white banners weirdly sweet.

Banners of gleaming soundless bells,
Stirred when the sea beneath them swells,
Sighing at things the hot wind tells.

And each breath passing through them drips
Wax petals with faint purple tips,
Like tired eyelids or cold lips.

They lie and shrivel on the plain,
And as the sea receives the rain,
The desert holds them: dust again!

Carrie Woodward Stryker

Gardens

A garden is a gladsome thing
In the Spring.

Freshly turned, the mellow earth
Ripens into eager birth,
As the sheaves
Of groping leaves
Press their dainty lances through,
Where the sunshine comes to woo.

Budding life with nature thrilling,
All its covenants fulfilling
In the Spring.

But a summer garden glowing,
Rich with blossoms overflowing
Every part;
By the fullness of its living,
By the gladness of its giving,
Satisfies, and helps to cure
The doubting heart.

Comment

SLABS OF THE SUNBURNT WEST

By Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace and Company. Recently it has been noted by the critics that there is an apparent decline in the stock of vers libre..... The floodtide of experiment and innovation, they point out, has reached its zenith and that now those who were foremost in the poetic revolution are turning their inspiration to the older form and reinvesting them with a new life. They have come to the realization that all art must have a certain restraint and form to be most effective. The critics also note a few exceptions to this new tendency. And among the latter is Carl Sandburg, the idol of Chicago coffee-shops. With the appearance of "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," his newest collection, one is impressed by the individuality and power of his contribution to contemporary literature. Carl Sandburg looms above any petty discussions of verse forms and fashions and although his poems are in the freest manner yet they are filled with the tragedy and beauty of life.

Unlike Masters, who failed to produce another work like "Spoon River," Sandburg remains himself and shows no signs of any letting up on his inspiration. And so in this latest book we find the Chicago poet writing longer poems with a broader aspect but yet retaining his gift for delicateness in a group of shorter ones. The opening poem in the book, "The Windy City," is an epic pageant of Chicago, her far-seeing dreams and granite practicalness. Here is a typical passage:

"Go to it and remember this city fished from its depths a text: 'independent as a hog on ice.'"

Venice is a dream of soft waters, Vienna and Bagdad recollections of dark spears and wild turbans; Paris is a

thought in Monet gray on scabbards, fabrics, facades;
London is a fact in a fog filled with moaning of
transatlantic whistles; Berlin sits amid scrubbed
quadrangles and torn arithmetics and testaments;
Moscow brandishes a flag and repeats a dance figure of a
man who walks like a bear.

Chicago fished from its depths a text: Independent as a
hog on ice.

Innumerable facets of the great smoky city lying at the foot
of Lake Michigan are here revealed in incisive phrases and
colorful word-combinations that are the definite idiom of
Sandburg.

This long impressive poem is truly the cry of a vast
industrial city awakening to a realization of its grandeur as
well as crudity, a city crying:

“Pity us when we shackle and kill each other
And believe at first we understand
And later say we wonder why.”

In “Slabs of the Sunburnt West,” another of the longer
poems and which gives the title to the book, we encounter the
march of civilization westward, the overland passenger train
riding into a desert night filled with the ghosts of early
pioneers. It is a vigorous presentation of the restlessness of
man and of his final ending:

“March on, processions.

Tie your hat to the saddle and ride,

O Rider.

Let your ponies drag their navals in the sand.

Go hungry; leave your bones in the desert sand.

When the desert takes you the wind is clean.

The winds say so on a noisy night.”

Besides its deeper import, this poem is filled with the color and breathless space of our western deserts and canyons.

The rest of the book is filled with shorter things in which Sandburg reveals his underlying tenderness and poetic delicacy. This volume is definitely the voice of present-day America.

—*John Drury.*

HYMEN.

By H. D. London: The Egoist Press. H. D. is like the swift wind blowing the skirts of the Victory of Samothrace: she is like the youth in the Hermes of Praxiteles: she is like an intaglio cut deep in an old sapphire, whose blue is one with the dancing spirit of the slim figure. A poet, who takes his craftsmanship seriously, should not fail to study "Hymen", this pamphlet, done so exquisitely in blue and white. H. D.'s name is Hilda Doolittle. She is an American and the wife of Richard Aldington, the English poet. H. D. is an imagist and has appeared in many anthologies during the last few years. "Hymen" is her second book of verse, it is as perfect a whole and as unique as any one of her poems, which possess a stark Greek beauty.

The title of the book is taken from the Masque, "Hymen". It is a swallow-song of joy:

"Between the hollows
Of the little hills
The spring spills blue—
Turquoise, sapphire, lapis-lazuli
On a brown cloth outspread."

Then this bit from "Circe":
It was easy enough—
a thought called them
from the sharp edges of the earth;
they prayed for a touch,
they cried for a sight of my face,
they entreated me
till in pity
I turned each to his own self."

Some of us have been struck dumb by what we have seen; others have written about beauty who have never looked into her face; but there are those who have seen and written it down for us to read—H. D. is one of the last. She has seen beauty, the ecstasy of it has pierced and wounded her—she has given it to us in this small book.

“The whole white world is ours
and the world, purple with rose-bays,
bays, bush on bush,
group, thicket, hedge and tree,
dark islands in a sea
of grey-green olive or wild white olive,
cut with the sudden cypress shafts,
in clusters, two or three,
or with one slender, single cypress-tree.

—*Pauline Barrington.*

Books Received

In *Colors of the West*, by Glenn Ward Dresbach; Henry Holt Co. A fine, strong group of western poems, notably sincere in feeling, reflecting the wide spaces, the noble scenery, the vital problems of the great West which has been his life-long home. The volume is a worthy achievement and will add to Mr. Dresbach's growing reputation as a poet.

Musical Musings, by Elizabeth McCabe Gilmore. A collection of delightful song lyrics, many of them already set to music. One of the most appealing of these lyrics is the following:

CALL ME SWEETHEART

When days seem to darken with shadows
Of clouds one can scarcely define,
My thoughts drift to roaming the meadows
With you where it's ever sunshine.
The light in your loved eyes expresses
"Life, dear, is love only in part;
Then, live for Love's tender caresses—
Live, love, and call me Sweetheart."

Call me Sweetheart in Love's springtime—
Forget not to love me in June.
Roses are rarer in Autumn—
Still sweeter their winter perfume.

I know, then, the clouds are my fairies
That gather to tell me 'tis true
In haunting the wild woods and prairies

They never have found one like you.
The joy of your sweet consolation—
Sunshine to my life you impart;
Your love, dear, is my inspiration—
Live, love, and call me Sweetheart.

We wish to correct an error in the printing of the poem called *The Return*, by Ethel Brooks Stillwell in the *June Lyric West*. The error occurs in the third line of the verse next to the last. The correct verse should read—

“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—who that knew could ever
know her?
Love did this to Carmencita. Does she, then, remember
love ?”

The *Lyric West* is out of the market for manuscript until after September 15.