

VOL. II

JANUARY 1923

NO. 9

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Margery Swett | John Curtis Underwood

Albert Edmund Trombly | Edna Goit Briatnall

Dorothea Moore and others

INTRODUCING IRONY

SUBSCRIPTION \$2.00 PER YEAR

SINGLE COPIES 20c

The Lyric West

Vol. II, No. 9

A Magazine Of Verse

January, 1923

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Set by LyricText on 08 August 2026 at 04:50.

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Grace Atherton Dennen, Editor and Publisher
Esther Yarnell, Associate Editor
Los Angeles Office, 1139 West 27th Street

All manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Yearly Subscriptions, \$2.00 Single Copy, 20c

Published monthly by Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 West 27th Street, Los Angeles. All Rights Reserved. Copyright, 1923, by Grace Atherton Dennen. Entered as second-class matter, May 25, 1921, at the postoffice at Los Angeles, Cal., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

The Lyric West No. IX

Margery Swett

The New Frontiers

A hundred hammers within my head
Beat out a dirge that the day was dead,
That its cohorts went down in gray defeat,
Leaving the pale west streaked with red,
The tattered banners of defeat.

“I shall not read tonight,” I said,
For the day’s death was as my death,
My body was racked, and shaken my breath,
And a hundred hammers held to their beat.

But oh, the quiet cooling of the stealthy black and
white,
The sly intriguing little words that steal oneself away,
How soon they hushed the hammers, and smoothed the
jagged light,
And sang in happy wisdom, that coaxed me out to play;
And thus it was forgotten,
The day’s end, dim and lonely,
And brightly all above me
Was spread a gypsy’s tent!
A tapestry of faces,
Sunbrowned and merry only,
Whispering of new frontiers
As over me they bent.

Oh, why take we care for the body
Or fear lest our strength be spent?

Gwynnyth J. Ritchey

Agatha

Like a white candle
Flickering in the ghostly music
Of dim cathedral aisles
Is thy love for me.
Soft as a little wild-bird's wing
Is thy sweet ivory-sandaled step.
Thy garments are like shadows
From stained casements,
Sending thy benediction
Like an aureole about me.
And yet those threads of light
Strung pendant-wise, like silver filaments,
Send forth but little hope to me.

Paula Revere

The Minuet

The minuet, of stately grace,
Sweet Nancy, quaint in silks and lace,
Tripped daintily with courtly beau,
In those rare days of long ago,
When life moved at a statelier pace.

Ah! could I, for a little space,
The intervening years efface,
And step with Nan in soft moon-glow,
The minuet.

Alas! The mad'ning, modern race
For pleasure is a hectic chase:
A passion-pulsing thing, and low,
Whose hot breath scorches and breeds woe—
Not so danced Nan with smiling face,
The minuet.

Joseph Andrew Galahad

Promise

Oh—I shall walk these streets when you are dust!
And I shall still be ore when you are rust!
For only he who breaks the faith shall die
And moulder with his body bye and bye.

While he who keeps the faith shall come again,
And tread the earth among the sons of men:

Shall see old faces in new walks and say,
“I knew him somewhere, in some other day.”

Shall see old walls, old marbles, standing yet—
And think, “I knew these things, but I forget.”

Shall do some penance for a worn out sin,
And know that once more clean he can begin:

Shall reap some fine reward for some old deed,
And go with steady feet to sow good seed:

Shall know with every life a clearer light,
And shape his Destiny beyond the night.

It is the law. And all the laws are just.
Oh—I shall walk these streets when you are dust!

Ted Olson

Conservative

You who are ever eager to be going
Abreast the wind, from dawn to further dawn,
Reaching impetuous hands to each tomorrow,
 Intolerant of twilights that are gone,
Be not impatient if I sometimes linger,
 Stealing a truant's grace from the new day,
To warm my hands awhile above old fires
 Before I quench the embers, and turn away.

John Curtis Underwood

The Last Divide

High brown sky lines plumed with pinyons
Growing green against the blue,
I have climbed the world to find you.
And my heart harks back to you.

High white snow peaks off to eastward
With your veils that shrink and shift,
And your trails that draw me to you
Past each last lost shadow drift.

High white clouds that make the mountains
Lower ranges of the sky,
Where the snow goes I shall follow.
I shall climb you when I die.

Brown arroyos rolling downward,
Ghosts of rivers drowned in sand,
Like the lives of barren women,
And old wounds that eat the land;

Rolling roads that lure me onward
Past the ends of night and day;
Brown as gypsies, stark as hunger,
Old as age, as gaunt and gray:

You are veins of life that lift me

With an impulse long denied
To a verge beyond all vistas
Where lost atoms still divide.

Graying heart beats, go on singing
To that summit, since we must,
Where the light in me leaps upward:
And the dust is lost in dust.

John Curtis Underwood

The Critic

I have seen desert trackers, silent, magical,
Following their trail where all signs failed for us others
Picking it up here and there, casting wide circles;
Coming back again and again to the purpose possessing
 them
Stooping, creeping; suddenly seeing their way and
 racing on.

I am a tracker of truth and beauty, today
Toiling through a desert where many men
Stare at mirages or turn back; I may not.
I cannot look from some hill top at the way we came,
Pointing to traditions outgrown; I must go on.

I know that truth walks this way; I feel where beauty's
 flying feet
Have left faint traces as she passed; men follow me,
Watchers unseen in lines converging to where
I point to a footprint by a hidden spring, I lift high
A flower from a tall yucca; she trod on it as it fell; she
 has started
Out past the last drying water hole to a land of full
 rivers and tall trees;
Near or far I cannot tell you.
But tomorrow someone who was watching me shall
 come close and hold her fast.

Beatrice Stevens

My Love

My love is like a quiet star
In whose deep heart warm greetings are;
Or like a lily, fragile, fair,
Against the sable stole of prayer.
Like, yet not like, for bloom and star
So poor in charm beside her are
That wistfully they kiss her face
And beg a wing-brush of its grace.

Snow Longley

THE DYING FAVORITE SPEAKS

Close the curtain! The light strikes on my eyes.
God's wounds! To lie here just a mass of flesh,
And putrid flesh at that, while the slow sap
Of poison trickles through my veins. He said
White lead would eat into the very bones,
That doctor, but I laughed him down. When youth
And love decree, let science spare his breath.

What is the day? The calendar is there.
You cannot see? Nor I, yet the white glare
Of daylight penetrates the bandages.
The first of May? My birthday! I remember
The festal dances, songs and merry rout,
And always I was named the revellers' queen.
I had no need then of display. My face
Was "as the face of Spring herself,
 flower-flushed,"—

Those were his words before I grew to age.
He said, "Why paint the lily?" and I laughed
And called him Solomon, a foolish jest!

Better Solomon that doctor who comes here
To gaze upon my wasting face and nod
And write my case down in his mouldy books.
When his bones crumble, who will read his books?
At least my face was read, its message conned,

My heart's blood drained, before I came to this.
And yet, I wish it were some other cause.
Were it the pestilence or leprosy,
Or any foul disease, they could but say,
"The hand of God hath rested on her sin;"
So fear of God were mingled with their scorn.
But now, "Her own hand visited the blow,
She laid th' enamel, touched the color there,
Made of herself a work of art, but set"—
Thank God they must say that!—"but set
In nature's perfect pattern."

When my robe
Of art fell from me, and my cheek was pure
As infant's skin, new-bathed, and all my hair
Hung round my face, a golden tabernacle,
My little waiting-maid dropped on her knees—
I know the night, 'twas when he kissed me first—
And asked Heaven's pardon lest she worship me.
A foolish child! The crowd too in the streets!
They did stare! 'Twas not vanity implored
The King to lend a bodyguard, but la!
Their stares were greater when I walked so screened.

The King! The King! For him I rot and die.
It was to keep my beauty in his eyes
I put it on, this deadly gnawing veil;
For women early fade at court. Yet now,
As I lie here, I would not change my state
With her, his queen, whose dull, unblemished face
Never was kissed as mine was. Yes, I know
She is the mother of his child, his wife,

Shares all his honors, wears the robes of state;
But deep within this heart, whose beat is slow,
I wore a day his gift, the rose of love.

Oh, Mother Mary, pressing to your breast
The milk-white lilies of annunciation,
Was your gift more than mine? To woman's heart
The one beloved is master, sovereign, god.
God help me! What do I say? 'Tis blasphemy,
From me who am so near the courts of Heaven,
Nearer the fires of Hell; the judgment-seat
For me perchance the only Heavenward glimpse.
I see God's robe, white, stainless, drawn before
His awful face. My dim eyes cannot pierce
The pitying countenance of Christ. And she,
Mother of God! A woman understands
A woman's sins though she is spotless too.
I cannot find her in the dark, I grope.
Her gentle fingers are across my arm.
Her breast sustains me.—

What is that? Who comes?

One word from him would bring me back from Heaven,
Tiptoe with expectation of his love.
Nourishment! Doctor! Oh, the weary round!
Yes, I will sip the broth. The taste is sweet
As anything that earth is like to bring.
But not that man! He shall not see my face!
Not till the Day of Judgment, if God's hand
Shall in His mercy clothe these naked bones
With incorruption, shall man's eyes see that.
Yes, he may feel my pulse. The curtain there,

A narrow slit to let my hand slip through.
I will not see the priest! I'll die unshrived
And dare God's wrath in Heaven as on earth,
For all your mouthing talk. My words are harsh.
It is the pain that speaks so, not my heart;
And I—I cannot still its utterance more.

My birthday! Twenty-seven! Not so old!
No messenger has come? Nor never will!
Too late! Repentance—love—forgiveness—
She is a woman too, the queen—too late
For happiness, surcease of pain—just peace!
God rest my soul and free me from the toils
Of mortal sin and give my body peace.
God! Christ! Pitying Mary! Hear my cry!

Elizabeth K. McGowen

The Deserted House

New Year's Eve! The stars stoop lower
To trail their sparkling mirth
O'er your wistful silence—whisp'ring
"Peace on Earth!"
From your hearth's mute, placid slumber
No answering smoke may rise,
Telling of a fire that cheering,
Lights, and dies.

New Year's Eve! Your very silence
Sure, sweet responses sing;
Tenderly the old sounds ling'ring
*Round you cling.

Echoes of an ancient carol's
Old, chanted music, wild,
And the long-gone, ringing laughter
Of a child.

H. Thompson Rich

To Earth's Great Dreamers

Dreamers of all great dreams over the earth,
Throughout all time, wherever you may be
On any star, yours is the Victory:
You are the Masters, greater than all mirth
For lightening earth's cares and giving worth
For worth received,—a higher destiny
Now holds you, and these faltering words from me
Are less than echoes of your vast re-birth.

But still I address myself to you, in praise
Of your great pity in giving dust its ears,
Of your great mercy in giving clay its eyes,—
For this you shall be hallowed all the days
That men walk over the paths of the world, and tears
For your sake fall as sweet rain from the skies.

Albert Edmund Trombly

End of the Year

End of the year: I must square my accounts.
Debits by hundredweight, credits an ounce.

Nothing remains when the reckoning ends—
Nothing? Hold on. . . . here's a balance of friends.

Thought they were legion, they sifted to few.
Gold every one, so the handful will do.

Prosperous year, when, to cancel the rest,
Scratched in the margin is: "Old friends are best!"

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Sycamores in Winter

(Written in Garvanga Arroyo, Los Angeles, California)

Still with an ancient calm
Their branches duskward spread—
Holy in such serenity
As stand the sculptured dead:

Out of th' arroyo's dark
The steadfast sycamores
Lift to the lone ascendant star
That keeps God's shining doors.

Marx C. Sabel

Punishment

How is it that you still remain

A goad, a taunt to me?

Is it because I was so vain

Of my own liberty?

And did you know that while we played

Together I was free,

That only when you left you made

A prisoner of me?

Marx G. Sabel

Remembering

I have forgotten your wondering eyes,
Your dim hair, your hands,
And even that sweet echo of surprise
Inhabiting your voice.

I have forgotten your quaint subtlety
Of movement, of rest;
All things I meant to keep in memory
I have forgotten.

Yet somehow there is something even yet
Remembering you
Which I can never in any wise forget!

Hugo Folliard

Contemporary Literature

CARL SANDBURG

There is something strange in words:
Grove—grope—
And I see a man
Gasp
And step forward.

GALSWORTHY

Dark ferreter of life,—
Assuming nothing, denying nothing.

Pitying, ghost-like camera,
Arnold Genthe, photographer of damned souls. . . .

CONRAD

The subtlest thought of hidden souls
Flashes facet after facet
From a welter of exotic trappings,

And dim motives
Deep under pain and sorrow and misunderstanding
Shine clear with each deliberate stroke.

Thru all a mystic mood of sadness,
Vast as the flowing steppe
And changeless as sea-wind,
Broods like the luckless bird.

And black-robed fate hangs up black tapestries,
While swiftly streaming thru a jagged rent,
Bejeweled and bubbling,
Dance myriad colored points of light.

Robert Alden Sanborn

The Children and Thomas

The strange man said he doubted
But all they knew he was not happy
As they were,
So they hovered about
Knowing he did not want them.
They even lay down beside him
And pulled his hands,
He did not seem to care.

At last he said, "My name is Thomas,
I am thirsty;
See, let go my hands,
I drink,
And still I thirst."

"Well," one said, "you did not drink it all.
If you drink and drink you will not drink it all.
Can you be as thirsty as the brook is long?

"I was as thirsty," Thomas said,
"As my life was long,
And I am still as thirsty
And my life is longer.
I am thirsty with doubt,
Doubt is a salty thing," he said.

“Once I drank from the ocean,” one said,
“And it was thirsty water.
The salt lay on my tongue a long, long time,
But I grew older than the taste,

Next morning my tongue was fresh again.
Was it from the ocean you drank too?”

The branches over Thomas’ head
Turned all their silver faces to the sun
And laughed;
But Thomas did not laugh.

He thought:
“Perhaps I ought not to have told them
Who are so young
And have so long to keep their memories.
I loved him but I doubted him,
He offered me to drink of living water,
If I had drunk then from his hands
I should not be so thirsty now.”

“We know,” said one,
“Where the brook is round and still,
And a willow root makes a hill by the smooth water,
The fish go there to sleep,
And ferns lean over that shadow them,
And as the sun walks on, the shadows of the ferns walk
too,
And the fish run out with a tingle of brass and silver

Where the ripples are fast
Or drop out of sight to their red sand bed.
We will make a quill of birch for you
And bring you water from that place
Where another strange man came to tell the fish,
And after that the shadows did not frighten them.
Shall we bring to you that water?"

They did not wait for his answer
But rose and went up the bank
And were hidden by the trees.
Thomas alone shrank into his cloak—
Into his years of tedious memories,
And his thoughts were long and devious
As the roots of the oak he sat beneath.

And they were vain, his thoughts,
As the patter of rain on a dead face,
And he fell to listening,
For now there were voices coming down the water—
One that he knew well.

"So Thomas said he doubted," said the voice,
"But you know not what doubt is,
And you are glad because you see
What he saw, doubting that he saw."

A man came down the brook
Stepping from ripple to ripple edge,
And on the wrinkled stream
Faint silver footprints went afloat.

“Men are not fish,” the voice discoursed,
“Why then do they swim like fish?
Why do they not walk everywhere,
On water as on land?
Is it because they are afraid
Of water glazing their thin lips
And sealing their breath in bubbles
That ride but a moment on the gentlest air?
But you are not afraid
Because you know that where love goes
Your feet can follow.”

Doubt is a salty thing, and Thomas thirstily
Drank of what he saw,
The man he loved swaying as merrily,
The ripples rose and fell beneath his feet.
And children scurried down the bank
And ran to their friend upon the water
Thronging the brook like pink lily buds
About a lotus tall.

Now as the gay procession passed
Out of his sight beyond a bend
Thomas too went out upon the water,
Stepping from one silver footprint to the next,
Doubting no more that where they went with him
He could go too.

Edna Goit Briatnall

Deathless

“Love Is Dead!”

And swift before me—I saw prancing—
Endless years—in mocking Bacchanalia—
Swinging perfumed censers
Spilling their priceless odors
On barren wastes—
Waving their naked arms—
Crushing the grapes in wasted hands
And letting the wine of Life
Ooze through their bony fingers.
Tossing bright colored balls
Into the air—
Dashing on—unheeding—
Nor seeing that they broke and splattered
Vivid bits of crimson, gold and blood-dipped purple!
Joys of Life!
Rising and falling—
Empty!
Splattering bits of vividness—
Cold and shining!
Prancing Years!
Blowing discordantly on flatted pipes—
Shaking their stringy locks
And smiling vacantly with yellowed teeth—
Mocking! Mocking!

“Love Is Dead!”

And yet—his heart flutters!

Wait!—Was it his heart—

Or only my hand that trembled

When you looked at me?

Grace Atherton Dennen

The End of the Feud

The winter of great snows. It came
Out of the north on silent feet,
And every sentient, living thing
Fled to some safe, secure retreat.
So Orlan to the clearing came
And brought his daughter, Angeleme.
After long years he saw again
The cabins at the mountain's foot,
The deep-gashed, stern, tormented land
Where his own life had taken root:
His slow steps led him to the place,
The last man of his hunted race.

Then from their doors they hurried out,
Those who had known him long ago—
“Orlan! and here! What brings you back?”
He spread a knotted hand—“The snow—
It fills the earth—it fills the air—
Caught so, we would have died out there.”
“But here—” “Then Andros lives?” “Not so.
Your bullet found him—But his son,
Young Andros, always waits for you.
He never sleeps without his gun.”
Old Orlan heaved a broken sigh.
“Even the beast crawls home to die.
Ten years of lonely mountain trails,

And now your hands—your friendly speech.”
Their growing numbers circled him,
A nod, a muttered word from each,
Hubbub of voices—and then one
Shattering them all—young Andros’ gun.

So his doom found him, and he fell.
The crowd held breath—then with a roar
They turned on Andros where he stood
And dragged him, struggling, from his door
To Orlan’s side. They thought him dead.
But now he stirred and raised his head.

“Boys, no more blood. The thing is done.
His life is mine—I claim—I claim—
And there must be a better way.
Where is my daughter, Angeleme?
What I have told her she has done.
Now she shall marry Andros’ son.”

They stared in dumb bewilderment,
Then rising murmurs swept the crowd
And roused his failing sense again,
Again he spoke, his voice rang loud:
“Andros, your life is mine to claim,
And you shall marry Angeleme.
Boys, you will see it through?” “We will!
And if the fellow balks”—The place
Filled with a hush, a mystery,
And quiet fell on Orlan’s face.
One spoke at last and raised his head.

“Bring parson here. Stand by,” he said.

So on this patch of blood-stained snow
Made redder in the setting sun,
Young Andros and dead Orlan’s girl
Answered the words that made them one.
Scowling and black, he turned away.
“Get to my cabin, girl, and stay!”
He crossed the square to the public house.
They followed him in dumb surmise,
These hours he panted to forget,
Round-bosomed Sue, her lips, her eyes—
“Fill up,” he said—Again, “Fill up!”
Forgetfulness was in the cup.

The girl—what should one say of her at length?
She had just done what she was told to do,
Harsh task that chained her youth and mocked her
 strength,
Old things to be made new.
She visioned the utmost that her father meant.
No child of her’s must ever wait to kill.
The smoking fires of hate to be choked and spent,
No further blood to spill.
But she had learned the patience of wide spaces,
The strength of rivers running to the sea,
And always, as her feet trod distant places,
Dream of a home to be.
She knew the way that led up to the goal,
She knew that she could give all she must give,
She knew that Andros’ young, untutored soul

Would wake now and live—
And here was home, and the great sky above.
Here were long days, benignant, healing, kind
Here was white peace and the beckoning arms of love,
New ways to find—

When after bitter hours Andros came stumbling
Across his threshold to his scarce seen bride
His dark face set, his frozen fingers fumbling
About the gun at his side,
He saw a cabin warmed and swept and garnished,
A place of cheer, a lighted, wholesome place,
Where he alone stood soiled and stained and tarnished,
And looked for the first time into her face.

Thus, on the winter of great snows
Slowly the New Year's sun arose.

Grace Atherton Dennen

I Hope That I Remember

They gave us shore leave for a while today
A score of us came up here to the city
And found the opera, Madame Butterfly.
So I learned the tale of Cho-Cho San—
They tell me that the singing was a marvel.
I do not know—I only saw her face—
I saw them break her heart—I watched her die.
I had not known before how women love,
I had not known with what a holy thing
A man plays fast and loose.
I hope that I remember.

I hope that I shall see her as she lay
All white and crushed and lovely, like a flower,
And feel the fire that raged up in my heart
And feel the tears that crept into my eyes—
I hope that I remember.

I hope that I remember how he stood,
That officer who wore the uniform
I now am wearing.
And how some woman murmured low behind me
“Shame—shame that he should be American!”
I hope that I remember.

We sailors make a hundred different ports,

All gay for us—and there are many girls
Odd, foreign girls, with foreign looks and graces,
A man must know the urge of primal passions
When he is taught to kill.
I hope that I remember Butterfly—
I hope that I remember.

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Charles J. Quirk

The Southern Cross

Upon the altar of the Night it rose,
Uplifted by God's unseen epic hand,
As though to tell all earth, ere its repose,
Love's benediction falls on sea and land.

Issue p. 21 · Scan p. 23

Charles J. Quirk

Grand Coteau Louisiana

The kindly beauty of the place,
That was my gift each day,
I did not know, nor understand,
Until . . . I went away.

Charles J. Quirk

Daybreak in the City

The silence o'er the city hung so deep,
It seemed as though great Death himself, delayed
By weariness, his debt to Nature paid,
And lay amid the sleepers, fast asleep.

Comment

(Conducted by Pauline Barrington)

Like a snake which, with its tail in its mouth, forms an eternal circle, so the years curve one into the other, without ending or beginning. The first of January, which comes at a given interval, is as evident as the snake's head is noticeable from the rest of him. We feel here is a beginning, the first day; we feel a newness, as though we were starting something, and as we feel it so strongly, perhaps it is a fact; anyway, we stop for a breath to look forward and glance back. We have been living through an aftermath of world war, and new birth of poetry, we are still in the midst of the enthralling experience of psychoanalysis. With the help of the latter, we have discovered just about what we are and the mess of things in general. Repressions have been walked out and given the air. This year's verse is full of discoveries of self written by the romantic realists. There is a ready market for verse in all the magazines and free verse is seen even in the most conservative. The new forms are everywhere and when the old forms are used, the contents must be new. Many poets are writing, publishing books of their own verse and collecting anthologies seems to be on the increase. The Dial has given its prize this year to T. S. Elliott for his *The Waste Land*. Carl Sandburg and D. H. Lawrence have both had distinguished books this year that stand out from the rest. Mr. Ruskin said something about if there were no more books of poetry written, we have had enough; but Mr. Ruskin might have stopped writing himself at times and no one been the sorrier; if it were not for one thing, which that very talented but caustic man overlooked: that the poet derives a relief-satisfaction-pleasure-pain sensation beyond words, when his own volume of poems is placed in his hands neatly printed and covered gaily for all the world to see.

Why should the poet forego this! If 99% of them fail and are forgotten, they are forming the leaf mould that is nurturing the future literature of America. They are creating the audiences, without which there can be no great artists.

—*Pauline Barrington.*

A Note on Modern Music and Poetry

There has been quite a bit of agitation recently in regard to the closer relationship between our modern "free verse" poets and composers. It is claimed that our contemporary composers have neglected the word material which the poets of today offer and, instead, choose to create musical settings to tawdry and sentimental ballads and lyrics of second rate writers. The question is therefore asked: Is the modern realistic "vers libre" adaptable to a musical arrangement? With the appearance of "Free Verse Songs," a group of musical settings to certain contemporary poems, composed by Rupert Hughes, the discussion receives added zest. Here is a well-printed folio of songs from the house of G. Schirmer, a folio containing poems by such leading figures in the poetry movement as Amy Lowell, Carl Sandburg and Adelaide Hughes, wife of the composer. One other poet appears—John Drury, an unknown youth resident in Chicago. He is a very young writer of exceptional promise but who is hampered in his creative abilities by the daily grind of a book clerk in Chicago's Loop. His poems have had fugitive appearance in various literary magazines. In the *Lyric West* (A Los Angeles poetry magazine) for July, 1921, appeared one of Drury's free verse lyrics entitled "Evening in the West," a verse which touched the imagination of Rupert Hughes and which he later set to music. On the suggestion of the composer, the title was changed to "The Ivory Moment." In making deductions from "Free Verse Songs," one is led to certain dubious thoughts about the adaptability of modern poetry to music. It is certain that Mr. Hughes has accomplished the almost impossible in giving these poems a musical setting; in fact, his music shows far more imagination and feeling than can be extracted from some of the poems themselves. They are arranged for low or medium voice with piano accompaniment. It will, however, take a very remarkable artist to do them justice, for the

intervals and phrases are difficult for even an experienced singer and it is a question as to whether they are actually singable in the accepted sense of the term.

Drury's poem has a touch of exquisitely delicate imagery. It is worth quoting:

THE IVORY MOMENT

The frail moon settles
Like a curved shining sword,
Slowly, inevitably,
Into the staring western sky
And the sunset bleeds red.
And I said:
O that I had fingers delicate enough
To carve a poem
Out of this exquisite ivory moment
Of evening beauty.

The music rises to real poetic heights. It is conceived in the ultra-modern manner, resembling the work of Debussy. What is said of Drury's poem equally holds true of Adelaide Hughes' "Beholden," the music of which beautifully carries out the theme of the verse. In the case of Carl Sandburg, his "Bricklayer Love" is surly and ugly in the rendering. It is repulsive as the subject which it presents. One admits, though, that it is quite extraordinarily expressed but nevertheless carries its peculiar distaste. This is the poem presented:

BRICKLAYER LOVE

I thought of killing myself because
 I am only a bricklayer and you a woman who loves
 the man who runs a drug-store.
I don't care like I used to;
I lay bricks straighter than I used to,
And I sing slower: mm—handling the trowel
 afternoons.
When the sun is in my eyes, and the ladders are shaky,
 and the mortar boards go wrong,
I think of you, you.

There is a big touch of drama in Sandburg's "The Prayer of Steel." Let us hope that only great singers attempt it. "Falling Leaves," by Amy Lowell, carries with it an atmosphere cleverly descriptive of the rather barren poem. Carl Sandburg's "Lost" is also included in the group.

Which brings one to the question: Should these be called "poems?" Are they not rather poetic bits of prose? The modern free verse writers seem to love splashing in
in
muddy waters and while that practice may be true to life,
common to mankind, and expressive of modern realism, is it greater art to be crude and elemental in forms of

composition and thought, than to have the refinement of suggestion and imagination that comes with education, experience and culture? It is certainly conceded that fine prose

expresses emotions in a more natural and realistic manner than poetry, especially poetry of the old rhyming style—but is there not a happy medium? Must we forego the charm of rhythmic flow, the delight of lyric utterances, the ennobling of the imagination and sentiment, just to be modern and up-to-date? Is it not a curious anomaly that civic and municipal “betterment” clubs are trying to banish the cruel, the ugly, the dirty and the sordid from our daily lives, and our artists are dragging them back to be glorified in music and verse? Is beauty going to die a horrid lingering death and vanish entirely from the world of art?

—*Madame Sturkow-Ryder.*

Editor’s Note: Mme. Sturkow-Ryder is a well-known musician of Chicago.

Introducing Irony

By Maxwell Bodenheim.

(Boni & Liveright)

An apocryphal poet having discovered that he was being got by the beast of popularity cried out with moans that therefore he must die. Whereat another real poet at once proffered him the window of his seventeenth story room from which to take his flight, assuring him that there were cobble stones below and a typewriter handy upon which would scrupulously be taken down his last words—and an epitaph as follows: “Great—paused brooding on my window sill—For one eternal moment ere he leapt.” This is the appropriate and wholesome way to deal with sham poets—especially those with windy pretensions. And it takes a little pretension to entitle one’s book, *Introducing Irony*. There is some fear that the wise may ask for it and not find.

Some names however carry their implications with them. What other but mordant could be a Sacheraville Sitwell, or a Maxwell Bodenheim?

Though irony is perhaps not a common Anglo-Saxon trait, it has always blossomed among the English, and though rare, stout and authentic. The group that have published *THE WHEEL* for several seasons, are all adepts at it in poetry, and there are Aldous Huxleys and

Max Beerbohms in exquisite and mannered prose.

Mr. Bodenheim has a rather exciting command over both prose and verse. His thoughts clothe themselves brilliantly and easily in colored words—strange, bitter to the taste, and with great beauty as well.

Not so much as jewels, as stones still in the matrix

making a heavy, deep mosaic over which one's thought walks, becoming fully ironical in the act.

Naturally intensely quotable because occurring as
bits
of drama.

“Alvin Spar in middle age
Had the face that Aristotle
May have had—a large austerity
Disputing the bloom of well selected emotions.

or

Two figures on a subway platform
Pieced together by an old complaint.”
Perhaps the prose is even more typical than the
verse.

Here are two very characteristic quotations from it.

From *Insanity*—

“I have lost my friendship with gutters. They quarrel with bits of orange peel and pins. Patiently they wait for the red rain that men give them every two hundred years.”

And this from *Psychic Phenomena*—

“His small brown mustache had a candidly misplaced air as it touched the thin bacchanale of his lips. It was a mourner at the feast.”

These little ripped out stones show what the whole resembles. It is not a book for everybody—but a book for the few who know beauty.

—Dorothea Moore.

The Prize Poems of the Year

The Lyric West has much pleasure in announcing the prize winning poems for the year 1922. The prize of one hundred dollars for the best long poem or group of poems, is, by the request of the judges, divided between "A Singer Says Good-Bye," by Margery Swett in the issue of February, 1922; and "A Desert Suite," by Isaac Jenkinson Frazee in the issue of October, 1922. The prize of fifty dollars for the best lyric is awarded to "The Painter," by Claribel Weeks Avery in the issue of October, 1922. Some of the most distinctive stanzas of "A Singer Says Good-Bye" are as follows:

PATIENCE

Patience a little longer, strength to bear and wait,
Youth is the worst of all your storms and youth will
 soon be over,
Leaving the scent of clover,
The road and the broken gate.
The furies put hot hands upon your dreams,
And blow you toward tumultuous caverns of the night,
Your dreams are charred, your feet are torn,
But morning will be pale and white.
Better the trembling morn,
Wait through the night.

Wait through the night, for the peace, the dewy clover,
No day will be as bright as those that now are over,
But there will be the good, straight road,
And Youth will soon be over.

. . . .

Go back to the seas of faces, the haggard, toil-worn
faces, the kindly worried faces that pour on by.
Go back to the crowded places and learn to love the
faces, to sin, and be redeemed by sin before you die.
Yet make a song to Perdita, to her the first of all your
loves,
And tell her not to come with you, however hard you
cry,
You yet may need a faith in God,
In goodness savioured up in her,
In beauty that is beauty still,
Before you die.

From "A Desert Suite," one of the most striking passages is this:

II

*Desert Sunrise**

Upon a prayer-rug of wond'rous dyes,
Let down from out the opalescent skies
By Kitshi Manido,
The sachem hills obeisance make
In prostrations low,
Then leap and run
Along the shimmering horizon,
Lifting aloft their jewelled spears,
As lo! behold!
In blazonry of gold
The Sun-Chief Day appears.

(*NOTE: From Carrizo Creek, on the western edge of the Colorado desert is frequently seen the sunrise mirage of what is locally termed “The Sun Worshippers”—when the distant desert peaks seem to rise, and fall, and run along the horizon.)

The lyric, “The Painter,” we quote in full:

Claribel Weeks Avery

The Painter

He was a wizard of the brush
And loved the warmest dyes,
To paint the redness of the rose
The blueness of the skies.

Will he not miss the tints of earth—
Green gems and flaming coals—
Amid the white fire of the stars
On the white way of souls?

Margery Swett is business manager for Poetry, a Magazine of Verse, and has her home in Chicago. We are publishing a poem of hers, "The New Frontiers," which appears in this issue, and we have others in store for our readers. Isaac Jenkinson Frazee is the father of Helen Frazee-Bower, who is widely represented in current magazines for her fine poetry. Mr. Frazee lives near San Diego in Southern California. Mrs. Claribel Weeks Avery lives in Rumney, New Hampshire. Her work has appeared in The Lyric West and others of the poetry magazines. The Committee also wished that honorable mention should be given to the following poems: "Spinster Songs," by Virginia Lyne Tunstall, in the September

issue; "The Ravens," by Elizabeth Coatsworth in the October number; "Stanza," by Ina Coolbrith, and "Passing—Passing," by Joseph Anslander, both in the November number. The winners of last year's prize of one hundred dollars were Constance Lindsay Skinner for her poem, "The Song of David Before Saul," and Neeta Marquis for her poem, "The Alien."

Books Received

The Waggon and the Star, by Mary Sinton Leitch, B. J. Brimmer Co., Boston, Mass. This is a delightful first volume of poems by the gifted daughter of the late Charlton T. Lewis, editor of the New York Evening Post, and sister of Professor Charlton M. Lewis of Yale University. Mrs. Leitch has gathered in this volume poems of a wide range of subjects, rich in human interest and beautiful for poetic and emotional expression. There is in them the sincerity of a warm and generous nature which thinks deeply and is sympathetic to a rare degree. It is, indeed, what Professor William Lyon Phelps has so aptly named it, "an important contribution to contemporary verse."

Frescoes by Jay G. Sigmund. B. J. Brimmer Co., Boston, Mass. A collection of poems, some humorous and whimsical, others with depth of feeling and uplifting thought. It is a delightful and promising first volume of a man who is rapidly gaining recognition among readers and lovers of poetry.

For Eager Lovers, by Genevieve Taggard. Thomas Seltzer, New York. Young though she is, Genevieve Taggard has already won an enviable and enduring place among the new poets of America. Her new book of poems, For Eager Lovers, strengthens and confirms her growing reputation. They are a selection of poems written during the last ten years and published in the leading poetry magazines of the country. They are filled with power and beauty and the knowledge of life born of deep experiences. Miss Taggard's many friends and admirers will greet her book with delight.