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NO. 11

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Richard Burton | Margaret Ely Webb

G. W. Dresbach | Katharine Howard

Pauline Barrington and others

COMMENT

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The Lyric West

Vol. III, No. 11

A Magazine Of Verse

March, 1924

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Richard Burton

Spring in the Park

This day of April ardours, a careless passer-by,
I stepped for a moment aside from the city street,
Into the Park, where winding walks
And sunning contours of earth, with the fresh earth
smell

And the gleam and glance of pools that wait a swan,
And writhen trees on rising mounds wherein
Rest the quaint Pagodas,—all make a dream
Little and dear, from far Japan;
Right in the midst of roaring, keen New York,
Roaring with trade, keen in the dollar hunt.

There I sat me down,
Glad to be free, glad to be told once more
That Beauty lives, near by, and ever calls
Lute-clear, if one will only harken and hear.

Then, as I sat and mused and drank it in,
Of a sudden, all the peering, great-eyed buildings
Lining the Park by east and west and south,
A-stare, innumerable, primly intent on business,
I saw were looking down into the Park,
Their barter quite forgotten, out of a myriad eyes,
Tranced by this little Japanese dream of Beauty,
And, lo, they spoke and said:

“O, careless passer-by,
Ours is not lust of gain nor housing of folk,
Not these alone;
Nor chaffer on 'Change as the shouldering crowds go
by.

We see you down there midst the tended ways,
The pretty shrubs and serpentining walks,
With the wood-sweet Pagodas topping the tiny hills,—
And we yearn, O, God, how we yearn
(Regarding you there, a careless passer-by,
Out of our gaunt, world-weary eyes,
Aware of the sun-soaked bliss that throbs in your
blood.)

We, too, yearn for Beauty, and in a trance
Solemn, unwinking, we gaze and gaze
Out of our sentinel eyes, and silently
Send you a brother-word this day, when spring
Moves in ecstasy and the exquisite sky
Softens the discoloured town, and binds together
Into a sacred unison earth and heaven,
And fills a heart long drained of dizzy joy. . . .
Yes, we are with you, of you, all our eyes
See only yonder little tender dream
Of rock and swan and sky and sweet snatches of
water—

Message from overseas of an artist folk
To the big, bluff splendid land, lest it forget
Beauty, nor hold her holy, meek in her shrine.”

So the buildings spoke, when I, a careless passer-by,
Stepped for a moment aside from the choked, swift
street
Into a charmed demesne of Peace and Joy,
Where city noises lessened to sounds more like
The twitter and chirp of birds:
While over all, far up, a sky of early spring
(Deep blue, swooned to a paler opaline tint)
Blossomed, and blest the hour, redeemed the town.

H. G. Smith

The Mist

The mist
Spreads out her soft hair
Over roofs,
And curls it
Around the fingers
Of old black chimneys.

She trails her draperies in the streets;
And drips her pearls
From pointed maple leaves.

H. G. Smith

The Dreamer

All this day, I have been trying
To write a poem about you, and I cannot;
Because your lips are too red;
They steal away all my thoughts and turn them into
dreams.

Because your hair is warm with living shadows,
And in your eyes, the flashes of secret thoughts
And laughter are like the dartings of little silver fishes
In brown pools.

The shadows of your lashes lie upon my heart, too.
And are like strong sleeping potions,
So that I have dreamed all day
And tonight—I shall have no poem to take to you.

Ellen Coit Elliott

Tag!

I touched my love as I ran with the wind;

“Tag!” said I.

He stood under a white-oak tree

As I flew by.

He stayed waiting under the tree

Till I should come where he might tag me;

But I turned off round Columbine Hill

And never went back. He waits there still.

“Good-bye!” said I.

Sabra Conner

The Breeze

Cloudy mass
Of maple whitened suddenly;
Gleam of rushes
By the river's edge;
Silent fall of blossom snow
In orchard ways;
Whispers from the aspen tree
Perfume trailing
O'er my window sill.

John Richard Moreland

“A Singing Wind Has Waked the Silent Hills”

A singing wind has waked the silent hills,
A tinkling rain has wooed the pallid lawn,
Fair April's lips have kissed the purple dawn
And loosed the fragrance from the daffodils.
And in the curving sky as blue as squills
Great ships of snow-white cloud move softly on
To mystic lands and suddenly—are gone—
And over all the yellow sunlight spills:

The world is old and many a gorgeous spring
Has filled Hope's Garden with its loveliest flowers,
But ah, too soon, December's winds swept by
Chill with as bitter tears as death could bring
To tinge with sadness all life's twilight hours
Till we shall greet that spring that cannot die!

Virginia Taylor McCormick

La Petite Fiancee

She is washing her linen, her bridal lingerie;
The wind blows the whiteness about; I can hear her
sing.

Her lover peeps through the hedge,—ah, Rose-Lili,
He will think, this bold Francois, he has captured
Spring.

And Easter day when you stand all white by his side,
With a snowy Normandy cap on your sleek, pale hair,
He will look from his great bronzed height on his
flower-white bride
And think he has married a blossom of the pear.

It Was a Wind

It was a wind, beloved,
Dust and swift rain—
Do you remember how the wind rang
Again, again!

Do you remember, beloved,
How the stars blew?
I was no longer my same self,
You were not you. . . .

It was a flash of moon wind,
A drowning gust
Beating us into three mounds
Of burning dust!

Margaret Adelaide Wilson

I Kissed My Love Today

I kissed my love today;
Oh, I had dreamed that kiss
Would bring me singing bliss;
How went the dream amiss?
Why, down San Juan Bautiste way
A little homeless wind and gray
Blew on my heart, and seemed to say,

“Lad, lad, give over loving!
Though she be young and fair
And kind beyond all proving,
An ache will still be there;
An ache at half possessing
What death lets no man keep
Will chill the hand’s caressing,
Trouble the lover’s sleep—
Beyond all ache for passing
Of good days that have been,
Or clouds at evening massing,
Or look your dog’s eyes in;
Deeper than ache of roving
On loneliest roads that be,
Lad, is the ache of loving—
Give over, follow me!”

I left my love today,
And down San Juan Bautiste way
I follow homeless winds and gray.

Catherine Parmenter

The First Crocus

Tiny, budding, blossoming thing,—
Close to the earth, and hovering low,
First sweet note on the flute of Spring,
Filled with the dawn and sunset glow,
Promise of sunlit days you bring,—
Tiny, budding, blossoming thing!

A sapphire-tinted, cloud-flecked sky;
Meadows lush with the warm, sweet rain;
Elm trees lifting their branches high,
Waked by the hand of Spring again.
And, dear, wee crocus, the brook near by
Mirrors for you the trees and sky!

Tiny, budding, blossoming thing,—
Winds of the southland whisper low,
Touching your cheek with the breath of Spring
Over the fields and gardens blow.
The dawn-clouds sleep while the robins sing,—
Tiny, budding, blossoming thing!

Margaret Ely Webb

The Woods Are Still

The woods are still when it rains
The mist creeps in
Breathless the dark woods wait
Till songs begin.
The song of leaves in the wind
Of wind blown rain
But I like best to hear
Silence again.
Yesterday the green wood was
In elfin mood.
Now in the mist and wet
The tall trees dream and brood.

Dorothy Renick

True Thomas

True Thomas, the rhymer, lived high on a hill,
Where bull-bats flit black 'gainst the moon,
Where, ever unlicensed, the grave whip-poor-will
Closed day with an amphibrach croon.

“Oh, it’s east of the sun, and it’s west of the moon,
And it’s down in the valley of doubt,
I’ve a tryst to keep with a woman of gold,
Her hair’s in the sunset, and centuries hold
The pain in her body, the joy in her soul;

The rose of her robe bathes the dawn in delight,
The warmth of her candles the depths of the night,
And through her cool fingers, the stars in their flight,
Blink once . . . then wink . . . and go out.”

True Thomas, the rhymer, lived high on a hill,
Where bull-bats flit black 'gainst the moon,
Where, ever unlicensed, the grave whip-poor-will
Closed day with an amphibrach croon.

Lucy H. Sturges

Cho-Cho-San

The white butterflies
Are of the world, but the grey
Is of the twilight.

Why do you fly alone,
Cho-cho-san, when the days fade?
And at night
Are you not afraid?

The world is white with mist
And rain is falling.
Will you not rest, Cho-cho-san?
Even at the temple steps
Are spider demons crawling.

The grey butterfly makes no sound,
But there is dust
On her silent wings.

Alice Fay

Voices of the Cities

The voices of the cities rise and echo through the land
Though intricate,
Articulate
To those who understand.

“No one who knows me
Can cope with my witchery,
I am a paradox, I am a mystery,
Mocking, caressing,
Cheering, depressing,
Swear at me, spurn me,
You will return to me,—
Great is my lure,
Tenements, palaces,
Tatters and laces,
I am both rich and poor,
I am both plain and fair,
Solid as rock, insubstantial as air,
Gay, cosmopolitan,
Formal, Bohemian,
I am a city
Of contrasts and dreams,
Of pity
And scorn, and extremes.”

“I am the Backbone and Strength of the nation,—

Proud am I of my vocation,
All of Trade's arteries:
Rivers and highways
Railroads and lake
Justly I claim,
I am the Pulse and the Flame,
There are no frills to me,
There are no thrills to me,
But of my product others partake,
Simple and strong I remain
And sustain."

"Here, in the warmth of the tropical sun
I dream, while the hours run
On, I am calm as the blue, southern waters,
Smiling and fair
As the laurel entwined in the soft, dusky hair
Of my indolent, Creole daughters,
Knowing so much of joy, little of sorrow,
Careless and happy, I leisurely drift toward the
morrow."

"Learned, deductive,
Well-bred, instructive,
I am the Guide and the Light,
Lofty, conservative,
Lordly, superlative,
Dominant, proud, erudite,
I am the Savant,
Elegant,
Arrogant,

Everyone bows to my hest,
Knowing I elevate,
Educate,
Cultivate,
Finding my lead manifest.”

“See where I stand and sing of my worth,—
Quite at the farthest edge of the earth,
Guarding the Golden Gate,
Watching the sun set late,—
Purple and crimson dyes
Tinting the western skies,
Tinting the waters that lap up the sands at my feet,
Here, where the East and West meet;
Sadly I
Bid good bye
To each departing day,
Seeing it pass away
Into that mystic clime,—
Realm of the Past, lost in the limitless Circuit of Time.”

George Sterling

From the Valley

Not in the sultry garden would I be,
 When gorgeous flowers in the silence flare,
And when the fragrance-burdened orange tree
 Drenches the windless air.

For here the languors of the afternoon
 Lull soul and limb, and blossoms hide the sky—
A peace in which the drowsy senses swoon,
 And dreams but wake to die.

But I would stand where woven waters leap
 And icy winds from desolation blow,
And where the morning sunlight in its sweep
 Silvers untrodden snow;

Where channeled granite towers to the cloud
 And on the cliff the falling torrents sway,
And where the song of pine and fir is loud
 And eagles take the day.

And I would gather on the mountain ledge
 A flower half the sister of the snows,
Or, in the shadow of the canyon-edge,
 The wild Sierran rose.

Elizabeth D. Preston

Trapped

The wind
Darts down the dirty, canyoned street,
A prisoner unwilling, fleet,
Pausing for breath,
Then scurrying here and there
Kicking up little puffs of dust;
Leaping on high, and baffled,
It sniffs at the area-ways and cellar doors:

A wild thing from the hills, caught
And caged in, panting and frightened,
It has but one thought,—
Escape!

Mountain Sketches

I—FATHERS

The old mountains
Are like stern fathers,
Showing occasional indulgences
To small children.

To-day
One of them
Offered me a granite handful
Of tiny, bright blue for-get-me-nots
From his sky garden,
And I accepted them shyly,
Pleased and proud of his notice.

II—SUNSET ON THE PEAKS

The old mountain mothers
Are preparing their supper,
They have lighted scarlet fagots;
They have whipped the far heights
To snowy foam,
And topped them with heavenly cherries,

Now—
Dipping, white cloud angels
Come down to sup.

III—THE CANYON TORRENT

The canyon torrent
Is an old mad woman,
Foaming at the mouth,
And tearing her long, white hair,
Bruising herself cruelly
Against harsh boulders;
Wasting her false strength.

The road—her keeper,
Walks placidly beside her,
Serenely unaffected
By her violence;
Forcibly
Taking her with him
Down to the valley asylum.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Swiya's Songs Beside Running Water

Song of the Fruitful Breast

Kitsilano, *Spirit dwelling*,
Dwelling in the waters!
Hear the song I sing beside the waters.
Running waters.
Lave my breast of darkness,
Bear away the burden,
The burden of its darkness,
Spirit dwelling.

Far—far
From between the feet of Mountain
Treading down the sky-path
Where the sod was wounded
By the arrowed star—
Come these waters, running waters,
Rippling soft and tepid
Like the hands of children,
Little creeping children
Feeling for the breast.

Kitsilano, *Spirit dwelling*!
Hear the song I sing
Of the Woman, Swiya, lonely—lonely by the waters.
From between the feet of Mountain
Treading down the sky path,

Loose the arrowed star!
Where the sod is wounded,
Flood with living waters, rippling waters—
Soft and tepid hands of children,
Little creeping children
Feeling for the breast.

Kitsilano, *Spirit dwelling*,
Dwelling in the waters, running waters!
Lave my breast of darkness,
Bear away the burden,
The burden of its darkness—
Spirit dwelling!

Sarah Bixby Smith

Bypath

I walk the short-cut over the wild land,
The joyous narrow path close pressed by life.
Here cactus calls for watchful courtesy
And silver grass
Dimples and bows as I pass.
The brush has burst into blossom,
Deer weed and sage and rhus,
Tall penstemon, blue, pink-throated,
And yarrow golden;
While on the branch of the scraggly tree
Is a bird, Japanesed on the sky.

G. W. Dresbach

Desert Morning

Up yucca-belled arroyos

There calls a trumpet wind;

The sharp bright sword of Morning

Strikes and the dark is thinned.

Where caravans of silence

Had camped and ghostly stood

Against the sky, stands only

A shining cedar wood.

I face the loud wind-trumpet

With meanings only guessed,

And to the sword that flashes

I turn once more my breast.

Here is the stir of conquest—

Before me now I trace

The distance flamed with beauty,

The desert's scarred, sad gace.

Mary Sinton Leitch

In a Railway Station

How strangely memory serves us! Here tonight
Before my hearth-fire, my own children's faces
Are seen as through the mists of vanished years,
While out of the dim past a face—a form—
I saw but once is risen to confront me
And is to me the one reality.

Beside me on a station bench one night
A woman sat of forty years—or less—
But pitifully-older in her dearth,
Aged by frustration. Life had passed her by
And, passing, breathed a blighting breath upon her,
So that a sere, dry leaf is more alive,
For that has felt the urgent sap of spring
Swift in its veins and has, in withering, burned
With bright and happy memories of fulfilment.

But she;—there was no part of that spare frame
That love could curve a hand to. Not a garden
Whose soil had been enriched by chastity
Her body was, where virgin lilies bloomed
(For love foregone may work its miracle
Of fruitfulness as well as love fulfilled);—
But no;—it was a place of barren dust
Where winter winds blew dreary, bleak and cold,
As on a house un-tenanted, un-known

To joy of laughter or to grief of tears.
A lonely thing is such virginity.

The train now drawing near us through the night
Would bring my lover to me, eager lips
Would soon be pressed upon my eager lips,
Strong arms would fold me close, beloved hands
Would set upon my brow love's sign and seal.

So, pitying her for very happiness,
I drew a little closer, yet—I thought—
Within that withered bosom tender longings
And dreams can never nest; she is content
With being hopeless who has never hoped,
With being loveless who could never love:—
Thus I sought comfort for my pity of her.

A book lay open on her lap and, reading,
She seemed unmindful of my presence near her,
Remote from all the noise of hurrying feet
Arriving and departing, the white faces
Of weary children and their fretful crying,
Of all the lives that touched a moment here
And passed.

She read Le Gallienne's "Paolo"—
"Paolo and Francesca," those great lovers!

"So did he yield him to her eager breast
"And half forgot but could not quite forget;
"No sweetest kiss could put that fear to rest." . . .

She read her thin lips moving, and her eyes
That held no mysteries of their own, were wet.

I spoke—"You leave tonight?" She did not turn.

"He drew aside the arras where they clung
"In the dim light so lovely and so young" . . .

I touched her hand. She started and the glow
Died in her eyes, the wonder from her face.
"I have lost my train," she said;—"Our hired man—
Our Jo—and Sara Gamp, our old grey mare,
Will have gone twenty miles tonight for naught."

Helene Mullins

Old Attic

My heart is a
curious place. . . .

it contains heaps
of broken things,
bits of dreams,
keepsakes of
lost loves,
photographs of
unremembered faces. . . .

My heart is a
curious place. . . .

Hildegarde Flanner

Sonnet

The flowers of Apollo that will heal
Are laid across my anger and my eyes.
O, once-beloved, where they set their seal,
I have grown merry and I shall grow wise.
But lest my merriment should flutter out
And wisdom fall in shadows and in night,
I must forget what I grow wise about,
And why I laugh must be forgotten quite.
And so my memory on whispering feet
Goes nowhere in a dim processional,
While I (with Lenten eyes) along the street
Come homeward from a dumb confessional.
I will not tell how many times I break
The flowers of Apollo for your sake.

Hildegarde Flanner

Dumb

Silence braided her fingers in my hair
And put her ankles close to mine in bed.
She hushed a silver sparrow in his song
And laid against my throat her fragile head.

“I conquered to-day,” she said, “as yesterday,
And now we two shall rest as one to-night.
A girl with silence in her arms,
(Lie quietly!) is a lovely sight.

And so I rest with silence in my arms,
Her hair across my breath when I would weep.
I cannot even force my tongue to pray
That she will leave me in my sleep.

Mary Carolyn Davies

The Lost Gift

Here lie the little gifts
 You gave to me,
Here in the tiny house
 Of Memory—
In the small waiting house
 Of Memory.

That little gift of grief
 You gave one day,
The tender word you never
Quite could say,
Are all in lavender
 Here laid away.

Each thing you tendered me
 Of joy or pain,
For tear-stained hands to touch
 Softly again;
Long in the waiting house
 Here have they lain.

One gift I've never seen,
Catches the sunlight's sheen:
Strange! Dusty and apart,
What do I find? Your heart.

Idella Purnell

Repenting

O sisters, sisters, once a man
Gave me his heart and trusted me,
I've wept tears since the world began,
And so was formed the sea.

O sisters, sisters, once the man
Gave me the love in his grave eyes—
I gouged them out and played with them,
And so were formed the skies.

O sisters, sisters, once the man
Gave me the width of his soul's worth
To walk thereon. But my small laugh-clods
Fell, and so formed the earth.

And now, O sisters, with the earth,
The broad sea and the sky,
You know the measure and the depth
Of the sorrow that is I.

Harry Noyes Pratt

The Helmsman

Gray clouds driving, and gray clouds low;
Green seas smashing their way below.
Schooner scudding the wind before—
Crash! ye combers! Smash and roar!

The helmsman clings to the tiller bar,
His seamed face set as his brown hands cling;
And the hard sails pull on the straining spar
As her wet rails plunge and her wet decks swing.

He holds her close to the driving gale,
While the cordage creaks and the tall spars yield
The foam runs deep on the schooner's rail
As the sharp prow cuts through the foaming
field.

And far ahead through the salt sea rain
He catches a gleam of a light before;
He holds her head to the straight sea lane
That brings him home to his cabin door.

Black clouds driving, and black clouds low;
White seas smashing with blow on blow;
Schooner scudding the wind before
To the light that waits in the open door.

Inland

Out where the warm waves finger the sands,
That is where I have longed to go;
Habit holds me, with clinging hands;
Shrewdish, she will not have it so!

All of my sea is held in the shell
Up on the mantel, that grandfather brought.
He was lucky! His path went far;
I've heard him talk of the Polar Star
Or the Southern Cross, when his mood was so.
Oftener, he'd just sit and smoke,
Staring into the fire-glow.
When he ended, he didn't lie
In the old grave-yard, with the rest—not he!
The ocean just took him back again;
He was glad of that, if it had to be.
If he'd only talked more! It helped a lot
The little he'd grumble, from supper to bed!
My fancy has woven a thousand strands
Out of the few gruff things he said—
Till I think I know how the tropic sands
Soften under the moonlight, How
The water chuckles, and feathers up
Under the vessel's questing prow.
I see, and I know—but no moon shall rise
For me, over countries warm and strange;

I think and I dream—but one self holds back,
Tho the other self's wild to range!

Out where the warm waves finger the sands—
That is where I have longed to go;
Habit holds me with clinging hands—
Shrewish, she will not have it so!

Charles Winship

Unification

Oh, the soft caress of the clouds overhead!
But my heart is teeming with tears unshed.

Oh, the wide, blue shout of the stalwart sea!
But my thought is a stifled misery.

Ye clouds that lean for a kind caress,
You never can touch my wretchedness.

And, sea, can I echo your strong blue shout,
From a darkened breast with hope shut out?

But a tremor of love like a thrill of the sun,
And the joy of the world and my heart are one.

Mary Brent Whiteside

Sea Rhythm

I have not loved the troubling beauty of the sea,
Though it assails my heart, perpetually.

Rather I love the tranquil hills. Serene and still
Is the enduring beauty of a hill.
There, changeless calm and quietude majestic sit,
Though cloud and wind and rain sweep over it.

The artful moon delights to sway the passionate sea;
A hill stands motionless, eternally.
Swept by lamenting winds, the wild sea cries aloud;
A hill is silent always as a cloud.

A storm torn human soul is like the troubled sea;
The hills are as I would my soul might be.
Why should my heart, that seeks the quiet of a hill,
Send through my blood the wild sea rhythm still?

Katharine Howard

By San Diego

Where pale sands curve the turquoise sea
God walks—
Rippling the sea with laughter.
This is the sand of creation,
The merriment place of God.
All sorts of darling things spring up to laugh with
Him—
The cactus spreads its prickly arms
The blue trees skyward reach—
And skeleton trees like windy breaths
Hold flowers to Him on the tips of bony fingers.—
This is the sand of creation
The merriment place of God.

C. D. Stewart

Now I Would Tell You the Things Untellable

Now I would tell you the things untellable,
The way of the wind with the clannish cedars upon a
knoll,
The way of the snug fitting waters with the form of a
girl you love,
The way of a mountain summit with a sun that's sorry
to leave,
But chiefly now I would tell you of the way of the
braggart breeze with the kites of a knock-about
beating to windward,
The way of the white-hot waters with the hull of a sloop
running free!

Windward We—thru the roll
of grey-flanks charging in the pack,
Roar—from the froth-mouthed host,
and the long fine snarl of yeast flags ribboning off to
leeward,
Leap—of the biting bows, and squeeze—in the dish of
the sail
of the Great Invisible Mob—the Wind,
of the Mad Intangible Rout—the Wind, that crowds in
a torrent of unseen shoulders past—!

The boat is a cherry pit squeezed twixt the wind and
water.

Windward We!

Helm up! And the sloop stampedes with a bulging,
fear-bent wing!

The racing air and the racing hull make calm.

Loud is the cataract beneath the bows—

Loud the Dervish-dancing wake—

and stern and heave and puff of steaming seas that
break into carpets of suds—

Enuf to wash all the shore sin of sailors away years
without end,

Running Free!

Poem or Epic, or lyric-strummed song-ballad enuf for
me,

Ballad enuf for sailors, for yachters who've sailed the
sea,

Chant enuf to be chanted,

Chant of the Sea,

My Sea!

Elliott C. Lincoln

Evening

I have ridden in the twilight
When the hills were shot with glory,
And the silent coulee slowly
Filled with shadow to the brim;
When the green-and-gold cathedral
Of the world became a jewel,
And the west, a fire-opal,
Flamed beyond the farther rim.

I have seen the glory passing
As the plumes of night swept over,
Seen the stars break out in millions
On a velvet summer sky,
Till the day-soul gave its being
To the splendid, somber darkness,
Merging softly with the night-soul
In eternal mystery.

Faith Baldwin

The Silent Singer

Poor soul! At forty—written out!” they said,
“She who wore youth, as queens should wear a crown,
With careless pride, she who was song itself,
A second Sappho, flaming, meteor-wise,
Across our sight.

Well, may God pity her,
Who bore a priceless gift in her two hands,
And let it perish.”

This they said. And she
Listened to rumour on an idle wind,
Smiling. She knew, none better, how the ear
Dulls to the sound of far celestial harps,
When little children, nearer than the stars,
Make ceaseless clamour; and full well she knew
How fingers, swift to comfort and to heal,
To bake and sew and set a home to rights,
Forget, and soon, the magic ways they had
With pen and ink, the tricks of phrase and rhyme;
And how a breast, where to a man might come
For ease, and peace, wherefrom blind, fumbling lips
Have drawn life, whereon small, helpless heads
Have leant, in slumber and in childish pain,
No more may lift, exultant, to the call
Of sterile Beauty, phantom of the night,

Hidden behind a star or caught in dew
She knows. And in her heart the great poems sing,
The Odyssey of Life. She knows and smiles
Sensing the whispered pity of her world,
And caring not at all. For she has lived
More lyrically than that dead Lesbian sang,
Nor mocked at life by cloaking it in words,
That men might marvel. She has loved—and loved,
Has given, given, given with each breath,
With hands and heart and feet in service set,
And has no need of pity, no, not she!
“Poor soul! at forty—written out!” they said.

Lucy A. Curran

The Seeding

This is my song for you, of the great Northwest in the
seed-time;

Song of the great grain fields, and the mighty engines
of farming.

This is my song for you, who know nothing of farming.

Come, then, you of the cities, and see these fields with
my vision:

Winter is gone at last from the great gray hills and the
prairies.

Gathered and piled to be burned are the ghosts of the
gaunt Russian thistle—

Sapper and parasite, the Anarchist of the grain-fields.

Now is the day of the tractor, a mighty monster of iron
Dragging its ten great shares, and turning ten mighty
furrows;

Back of the plows is the drill, and yet behind that the
drag harrow.

Plowing, seeding and packing, the giant of iron moves
onward.

Back of its massive wheels the soil springs to life and is
fertile.

Smeared with oil and black are the men who are
guiding the tractors,
Wearing their grease and grime as the badge of their
honest endeavor;
Toiling by day and by night, never ceasing. The roar of
the engines
Welcomes the rising sun, and bids it farewell at its
sinking.
And while you lie asleep, the engineer on the night
shift
Stands in the tractor cab with the darkness black all
about him,
Seeing only before him the headlight's gleam on the
furrow,
While over and through and around is the pulse of the
engine's explosions.

Shades of the tillers of soil, come look on the work they
are doing!

You whose imagination must feed upon wonders and
marvels
Gaze on these bleak, black fields, and then let your
fancy wander
Onward with me to June, when they gleam in the glory
of growing.

This is my song for you, of the great Northwest in the
seed-time

Song of the great grain-fields, and the greater song of
their planting.

This is my song for you, who are fed by their bounty.

John Curtis Underwood

Burros

The burros soak in the sun.
They shed all its color as a duck will shed rain.
They are gray and brown with black crosses on backs
and shoulders.
Shadows of the crosses they helped carry here from
Spain.

They crossed the desert on dry trails.
And their shadows went with them every foot of the
way.
They are as old as an ass that went to Egypt,
Carrying a woman and her man child; and here today.

They stand in the Plaza at Santa Fe,
Loaded down with wood that kindles living fires.
Give one sun and water and dry forage for his finding,
And a master not too hard; he has all that he desires.

The burros stand still in the sun.
Motor cars madly pass them by.
But when the last motor car rusts and is done with,
They shall be standing between rim rock and the sky.

Clark Ashton Smith

The Song of Aviol

From “The Fugitives”

Past the flown horizon’s wall,
And the flight of any wind—
Where the sunken sunsets fall,
Lies the land that Love would find.

There, among the magic palms,
They that flee the mists of sorrow,
Watch their woe, on winged balms
Borne and lost ere any morrow;

There, in vales of deathless lote,
Love is made the Dream eternal—
One with all the myrrhs that float
’Neath the halted sun hesternal.

Land that kings may not discover,
Deep within the mystic West!
Only lover comes with lover,
Through the fens where dragons nest!

They that seek it, summer-hearted,
Must outwing the winter swallow—
Far, too far in realms uncharted
For the jealous gods to follow.

Past the flown horizon's wall,
And the flight of any wind—
Where the sunken sunsets fall,
Lies the land that Love would find.

Martha Webster

Gas Well Blow-Out

They were not lost,
Those bodies overtaken, laid
In deep-gouged clay,
While Noah sailed and tossed
On floods even to Ararat; and stayed,
A time so strange and grey.
Their essences sunk down, and downward,
Through soil and shale hammered by frost,
By Time,
Even down through covered water beds; Oh,
They slipped down through thinnest crevices and
crossed
Granite-bone, down to buried inner chambers—
The gaseous essences accumulated long,—long,—low
In sand to wait the year that this one numbers,
Ready to flow.

On top of Signal Hill the Bell,
The Babb oil men went boring.

One cock-crow
A sudden gas burst out a well—!
Blew off—! Caught flame—! Rose high—
A columned glory with powerful wild roaring—!
Earth trembled— Shuddered— A hundred miles, as by,
Men saw the corruscation flame up terribly—

Thus rend the purple midnight curtain
From off the old, old sky
That Noah saw un-curtain
When the long rain went by.

Ruth E. McKee

Spring Sadness

I can bear the spring
When I stand upon the hill top,
And see her garments spread over the earth
In a cloud of green mist,
Vast and impersonal in its loveliness;
But when the little spears of grass
Struggle blindly through a crack in the sidewalk,
And are trodden to death in their tenderness
By careless passers by,
My heart aches blindly
In a grief that cannot be assuaged.

Comment

(Conducted by Pauline Barrington.)

This is the day of Anthologies. There are Anthologies of various groups who stand for various principles, and Anthologies of poetry societies; Anthologies of new verse and old verse; Anthologies of college verse and high school verse. What does it all mean? Undoubtedly that the best and most promising verse of the period is being widely circulated among the people who read poetry, and that all writers of verse, young or old, are being given an unusual opportunity to bring their work before an audience. This should prove a stimulus to real accomplishment. One of the best features of this interest in Anthologies is that it is making students of schools and colleges familiar with the best in modern poetry and rousing a desire to experiment for themselves. A very interesting collection of high school verse comes to us from Paul S. Nickerson, Master of the High School of Middleboro, Massachusetts, himself a poet of distinction. Mr. Nickerson has gathered together what Charles Wharton Stork calls, "A harvest of poems by school children." He says of it that "it is a living document of the hope which, despite all caviling, promises a better America in the coming generation."

Books Received

A Half Century of Sonnets, by Gustav Davidson. This is a collection of sonnets by Mr. Davidson which excell in music and poetic material. The book is beautifully printed on Fabriano hand made paper and furnishes an artistic setting for artistic work.

Gipsy Gold, by Charles Divine; Thomas Seltzer, New York. This is a book of lyrics as full of color as its title. They revive love of romance and "beauty who walks unchaperoned, with poems in her head." The poems have a rare and lovely music and a delightful humor.

Montana Trails, by Edna Alberta Bailey. Erskine MacDonald, Ltd., London, W. C. A book of open-air verses, filled with the love of big spaces and reflecting their freedom.

Four, a Quarterly, Los Angeles. This is the second quarterly issue of the poems of a group of four young writers, issued by themselves, who feel that in this way they have solved the publication problem of the young poet. It is a collection of verse of broad range of subject and treatment and shows promise of good things from this group in the future.

Notes

With the publication of this March issue, The Lyric West closes its prize contest for the best work appearing in its pages from April, 1923, to April, 1924.

The judges for these prizes are William Griffith, Editor of Current Opinion, and Jessie B. Rittenhouse, noted as a critic, poet and lecturer on poetry. The awards will be announced in the April issue. It is a matter of great regret to the editors that some of the material on hand could not find publication in time for these awards. However, the same prizes will be offered next year, and every accepted poem will have its chance.

Beginning with the April issue, the subscription price of The Lyric West will be \$2.50 per year, 25 cents per copy.

The competition for the American Peace Award, created by Edward W. Bok, and offering \$100,000 for the "best practicable plan by which the United States may cooperate with other nations to achieve and preserve the peace of the world," closed on November 15th at midnight. 22,165 plans were received.

This magazine is cooperating with the Committee of the Award in this matter, and we will carry a ballot upon which our readers may state whether or not they approve the winning plan in *substance*.

We commend to our readers this opportunity, perhaps the first that has been offered to the American public, to register their direct opinion upon what the relation of the United States should be to any international action looking toward the prevention of war.

The Lyric West, Los Angeles, Calif.

Do you approve the winning plan in *substance*? Yes No

Name

Address

City State

Are you a voter?

Mail promptly to

THE AMERICAN PEACE AWARD

342 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK CITY

If you wish to express a fuller opinion also, please write to the
American Peace Award