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The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Mary Brent Whiteside | Lucia Clark Markham

Gertrude Callaghan | Mildred Plew Merryman

Marion Ethel Hamilton and others

THE ALIEN

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The Lyric West

Vol. III, No. 12

A Magazine Of Verse

April, 1924

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Mary Brent Whiteside

The Minor Poets

We are the patient servitors of art,
Whom the high arbiters of beauty signed and sealed;
Tracing some shining curve, some fragile part
Of loveliness, upon the brow, to be revealed
Immortal, whole,
At last, to a God-reaching soul.

For this, we sing and love and wait!
Again, some glorious and passionate
New master; victor of pain; greater than doubt,
Shall pour such gold as Sappho's, when she came
Singing her very heart out;
Or Shelley's spirit of wind and flame.

In some too lonely hour, while we keep
The lamps upon the altar, through the night
The table spread;
Our eyes that may not slumber, may not sleep,
Shall see a light;
Our ears shall quicken to a master's tread.

And he shall see what we have seen through glass;
The kindled beauty shall leap pure and whole,
Written in living pigments of the soul—
Gold words across the arches of a room,
That saw our singing shadows pass,

In wistful notes of violet through the gloom.

It may be that our altar lights are dim,
And only poor marsh lilies strew his path,
But each heart giveth what it hath.
Had we not sung, the master's lips were dumb.
Had not our toil made straight his way for him,
How could the master come?

Winifred Davidson

Four Songs for Two Young Lovers

(To be sung at night upon a winding road.)

TEARS SHALL WET

Night's thresholds tears shall wet
And lost words down dark roads of Memory run,
But do not you forget
To dream back lilies lighted at the sun.

White tapers that you set
On Life's bright sills with burning shall be done;
Still, do not you forget
These white love-lilies turning to the sun.

NEVER SHALL BLOOM

Never shall bloom a redder rose
Nor rose more sweet
Than this thy lover's hand bestows
Today, *Petite*.

Never shall you know sweeter kiss
Nor kiss more fleet
Than the first kiss of love, than this . . .
Be quick, *Petite*.

CROUCHING CLOSE

Crouching close to the eaves
 This old tree-rose, waiting,
Has spoken of new leaves
 And of shy birds mating.

Near the gate by the wall
 A still white flame burning;
A frightened, quick-hushed call
 To you returning.

ROSE-RED

Let scarlet sage turn garden dust,
 Let cardinal geraniums
Put out their fires; no carmine thrust
 Of cannas dye the dusk . . . he comes!

Let ruby tulips droop. Tired birds
 Strew crimson feathers to the South.
Flammule-like lifts to his young words
 The red, red rose of her young mouth.

Harry Noyes Pratt

A Blackbird Calling

I heard a blackbird in the dawn,
In April weather;
Three silver notes, then he was gone—
But, all together,
From throbbing throats the answer came,
A radiant, silver burst of flame,
With blackbirds flying.

I heard a blackbird just at dusk,
In April calling.
The moon was high, a golden husk
With star-grain falling
Swift down the sky. And on the stream
I caught the last faint, ruddy gleam
Of sunset, dying.

Ethel Romig Fuller

Remembered Things

Remembered things are like bits of music,
 Aprils starred with daffodils,
Wild violets spread in a tufted quilt,
 A lake set in green-gold hills.

Pear trees coifed in white like Breton maids,
 The witchery of a moon-sweet hour,
Candles burning Christmas Eve,
 The fragile beauty of a flower.

Remembered things are like bits of music,
 Not all songs have a glad refrain—
The day my mother's soul departed
 Was grey with rain.

Ralph Parker Bishop

Amaryllis

While the sun was walking down behind the trees on
long, golden stilts,
Amaryllis were bending to the music of the wind,
flinging fragrance—
Pink flowers shaped from singing color,
The ends of their petals curved in half-folded waves.
Dragonflies were darting in sudden movement through
the last split light of the sun that was falling
through the trees, making a tangle of shadows and
gold,
Where Amaryllis were swaying, holding their thoughts
deep in their hearts—
Pink Amaryllis.

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Medora C. Addison

The End

If one can weep above a broken dream,
Be sure love is not dead—
Pity the man whose dream lies in the dust
Yet has no tears to shed.

Medora C. Addison

After

After the shower,

Arc of the rainbow gleaming;

After the noon-day,

Cool of the evening dew;

After the thunder,

Stars in the silence dreaming;

After the darkness,

YOU!

Hazel Hall

The Ravelling Tune

She sews the morning hours away,
She sews away the noon;
She sews as glittering seasons pass—
June, October, June.
And as her needle runs she sings
A little ravelling tune—
She sings a ravelling tune.

She sings with words as light as breath
And soft as April rain,
And of the song she sings none hears
More than the thin refrain—
The ravelling refrain:
*O some may sew for love's own sake,
And some must sew for pain.*

Below the world of life moves by
As life must ever move—
Must ever, ever move,
Yet still her needle runs and still
The sun wheels by above.
*O some must live for sorrow's sake
And some may live for love.*

The seams she does not sew today
Another day will borrow,

And as her flashing needle runs
Today, and so tomorrow—
Tomorrow and tomorrow,
She sings a little ravelling tune:
For love or else for sorrow.

Eternal Remembrance

For I had kissed
The flaming lips
Of joy

And buoyant
As a dreaming thought,
That wings its breathless way
Above the sky,
I scale the countless stairs
Of space,
To poise myself
Upon the brink
Of a trembling star
Close to my soul,
I crush
The maddening memory
Of joy's flaming lips,
And into the yawning void
Beneath my feet,
I hurl myself,
To eternal remembrance.

Belle Turnbull

Colorado Easter

Mountains in midst, cloud-thatched;
Brown foothill slope, snow-patched;
Between grey scrub-oak trees
Small, furred anemones,—
Flushed, lilac, washen blue—
God, did You ever do
A lovelier deed than dress
Pasque-flowers in hopefulness?

Lucia Clark Markham

Back to the Hills

From the grim streets and the marts of men
I shall go back to the hills again,
Out of my prison with quickening breath,
Swept on the billowing wings of death.

I shall go back to the hills again,
Shod with the starlight, robed with the rain,
Hand in hand with the vagrant breeze,
Welcomed and warmed by the faithful trees.

Less than a midge in the sun-ray, I,
More than the joy in the bluebird's cry,
Tresses lost on the dusk's dark wing,
Lips in the wildflowers' blossoming.

To hide in the pool that the shadows fill
And dance with the sprite of the April rill,
Shriven with snows, dew-cleansed from stain,
I shall go back to the hills again.

Winifred M. Heath

On Going to Town

I must take with me dreams of quiet places,
Of silent hills and open wind-swept plains;
Remembering the stars and high cloud spaces,
The April sunshine and the summer rains.

These must I have as I walk city street,
Where Life goes shrieking on her harried way—
Earth music singing with a quiet beat
Through all the noises of the raucous day.

Ruth Aughiltree

Discovery

All the long day they hunted for their sheep,
All the long night through their uneasy sleep
They strained to catch the faintest little call
Where no call was, save wind and waterfall
 Sounding and singing through their dreams till
 dawn.

Trackless the waste by which they climbed, a place
Where never footfall could have left its trace,
Yet still they climbed, still searching, searching on,
For their lost flock had passed that way and gone
 Up to the heights above the Mesa wall.

The faintest tinkle of a tiny bell,
The faintest crying—tokens these that tell
Of some small lamb fallen beside the trail.
Around the cliff they pushed, they could not fail
 To find at last those wandering sheep they sought.

The sun had set. Far in the velvet sky
Hung low the evening star. Water fell close by,
And once again they heard the little bell; around
The last long corner peered in hope, and found
 Not sheep—but palaces enchanted, tower on tower.

Ellen Coit Elliott

The Beggar

She runs from door to door—
“Oh, give me a bit of cloud,
A striped squirrel I can pat,
A curly feather for my hat,
A softness for my shroud!”
(Surly folks and gay
Give her frowns and smiling.)
“And a rabbit’s foot, and ever and all
I’ll globe them into a big, bright ball
For your most dear beguiling.”

She blows a kiss to the moon!
She will pay her way and more,
She says, if you will let her sing.
(She has a monkey on a string
Begging at your front door.)
“I crave to sing to you;
But if you are cold and sigh
It curdles up my singing blood,
My crystal brook runs dry.”

We have no clouds to spare,
This glaring, torrid weather;
(Frowns and smiles and charms are cheap,
But if I find it I shall keep
That frisky, curly feather.)

Pack her off with a dime,
I've seen her here before.
Tell her it's a scandalous thing
To lead a monkey on a string
Up to our honorable door!

Elizabeth Colter

Choice

Last week I talked to a sailor,
Who was young and wild and strong;
(Or, rather, he talked and I listened,)
For an hour, perhaps—not long.
And Jens, whom I'd promised to marry
But an hour or two before—
Jens, who has lived all his stunted life
On a leaf-enshrouded shore,
Jens passed at a little distance,
And I knew that he frowned at me;
But I sat very still, and I listened,
While the sailor talked of the sea.

He used strange words that I do not know—
But I saw brown feet on alien sand;
His eyes were hot with the lure of quest—
And he said I could not understand—
But I saw wide spaces and flying spume,
And ships in the lone black nights;
I saw with a poignance almost pain
The passing of dim green lights:
I heard the wail of following gulls,
I felt the whip of the cold white fog,
And I saw a man in a dripping slicker
Bending over a log—

But I shall marry Jens, you know,
And live in a prairie town,
Where never a fog-horn blares in the morning,
And never a ship goes down—
Goes down to the sea with her singing crew,
With her anchors up, with her sails unfurled,
Where never a woman waits like stone
For a man on the rim of the world.
And he asked me, Jens, I mean, of course,
What the sailor said to me,
And what was the thing he talked about,
And I answered—"poetry." . . .

Mary Carolyn Davies

The Night Is Kind

We are so far, who need to be
So very near.
Does the night bring you thoughts of me
My dear, my dear?

Though every day the parting sea
And lands appear,
The night is kind with dreams, and we
Are near, are near!
The night is kind,
My dear.

Power Dalton

Finite

I did not question anything
As I went through the sun,
I watched the light wind crackle
And the grass run;

Thin shadows huddled in my path
When the dark came down—
I found myself a stranger
In my own town.

Power Dalton

Circle

A decade is a whiff of smoke,
Distance is the same:
The breath of a carnation wind,
The low cry of a name,

May take me in a shattering flash
Many miles away,
Into a blur of candlelight
Where white hands lay.

George Sterling

To Charles Warren Stoddard

Do you roam on whiter beaches? Do you gaze on bluer
skies?

Does your spirit drink of ecstasy or rest,
Where from dim and holy valleys an immortal music
sighs,

In the island farthest westward of the Islands of the
Blest?

Is it made forever twilight in those groves of love and
sleep?

Are the winds from off the ocean great or low?
Do you walk with old companions by the foam-line of
the deep?
Are the stars that burn above you those you loved so
long ago?

Are their bosoms white or golden? Have they sapphire
gaze or brown—

They the maidens whom you dreamed of in your
youth?
Do they braid the rose and jasmine for a lover's
trembling crown?
Do their songs upon the moonlight fill the heart
with fairer truth?

Is the sunset everlasting, or do sunsets bloom and fade,

In that immemorial garden of the skies?
Do you slumber in the shadows of the lonest, highest
glade,
Where the anthem of the ocean finds the silence
where it dies?

May your dreams be hushed in starlight, if your soul
abide in sleep,
Where the palm-trees stand in paradisal rest,
And the only music 'round you be the sorrow of the
deep,
In the island farthest westward of the Islands of the
Blest!

Rolfe Humphries

Whence Cometh My Help

You are all tenderness, oh gentle hills!
I know you do not love me. You are free
Both from hot passion yearning till it kills
And sickly sentiment. But you are kind
With comfort when the evening shadows creep
To little hollows for a place to sleep,
Leaving the weariness of day behind
As the day passes. Then the dew of night
Steal down and bring grey wisps of fog that rest
Like floating veils of tulle across the breast
Of some cool virgin. And there is no light
Except a gentle radiance that fills
You with all tenderness, oh placid hills!

Gertrude Callaghan

A Gift

I have no golden gift to offer you
 Of high illusion or of wonderment;
And neither have I memory-laden rue
 Or somber hours in forgetting spent.
A simple gift I bring yet chaste and rare,
 A gift that has the graying years defied
And only grown more radiant and fair
 Since that far day when slim illusion died.

I bring no costliness as others do.
 I come with empty hand but oh, my heart
Is overflowing with a gift for you
 That with no other I would share a part;
A treasure I have guarded safe and long—
Undying love veiled in this passing song!

Edith D. Osborne

A Pagan's Rosary

On green moss I kneel, on the forest floor,
Telling my beads o'er and o'er;
A bud, a blossom, a leaf from the tree—
The beads in a Pagan's rosary.

The heart of the wildwood is my church,
The green boughs my confessional
Willow and elm and silver birch—
Blue vapor my Cathedral wall.

There in the forest under the sky,
We worship together, the wind and I—
The wind and the rain and the sun's gold fire
With the birds in the branches for a choir.
And the young oak leaves tender and pale
Are the quiet nuns at the altar rail.

Morning sun and evening star!
How beautiful the beads are
A bud, a blossom, a leaf from the tree,
To make a Pagan's rosary.

First flush of dawn across the hill
Finds my cathedral rapt and still,
Blue vapors threading the aisles at noon,
Black shadows twining under the moon.

White and gold, white and gold—
Now the beads are all told;
Pink and green, silver sheen—
With copper and amber strung between
A bud—a blossom—a leaf from the tree—
These are the beads in my rosary.

Charmian von Wiegand

Wind Prints of a Dancer

I

Once I think
In some far midnight
In the green gloom of the forest
You awoke and met with Pierrot
Weeping by a fountain,—
You who had laughed into his eyes
And danced in the sunlight of a formal garden
To the tune of his taut heart-strings,—
You met with Pierrot by a silent fountain
Sobbing, with one white sleeve across his face,
And the taut strings, snapped and silent. . . .

Since that far midnight
There is a haunting fear
In the laughter of your sensitive feet.

II

Of crystal are your smiles,
Shining and clear
As glass cups set radiantly
Against the sunset.
You speak
And your words
Are little steel hammers,
Shattering the iridescent silence
With the brittle sound of broken glass.

III

There is something light
About you,
Light and frivolous
As scarlet maple leaves
Fluttering on the trees.
There is something gay in you,
Which is afraid,
Lightly nervous,
Trembling in your laughter—
Like October leaves,
Which dance before the wind
Hysterically,
Knowing they soon must lie
Crumbled and brown and numb
Beneath November snow.

IV

You shake gusts of laughter
From your lips
Like golden coins,
And they fall upon the pavement
Of my heart with a hollow, mournful clink.
Now I know you for what you are:
A counterfeiter of joy,
For underneath the golden clatter
Of these false coins
I have heard the sharp bronze ring of pain!

William Ellwell Onions

The Harpist

When her white fingers swept
The chords, there woke the rustling
Of winds beneath the trees.

When her fingers moved, there crept
A vision in my heart of tumbling seas,
And I heard the call of dying Spring,
And the soft soothing sound
Of Beauty touching everything.

The dreams of dead and deathless men
Moved in the dreary world again—
Babylon arose, and marching Rome, and then
Cities arose before me, glamorous—
Marble in Italy, sun-warmed walls in Spain—
As her fingers shook the strings
And flooded me with the warm golden rain.

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Saidee Gerard Ruthrauff

There's a Sound of Singing

There's a sound of singing in the eucalyptus trees—
As though the spirit of the sea were imprisoned in their
branches—
As though the heart of the ocean were pulsing through
their leaves.

Grace Clementine Howes

An Old Man of the Trails

Beneath the night
The open plain
Stretches wide and wide,
The cold stars
High overhead
All there is of cheer.
Across the plain
My dog and I
Trudge lonely side by side,
No voice that hails,
No window lit
For us as we draw near.

See now, out yonder,
Kind and gay,
A sudden yellow spark
Twinkles like
A dropped star
Caught in the prairie grass.
Some homestead wife
That waits her man,
Lights up her little house—
The dark shuts down,
The chill winds cry
And tremble as we pass.
The world is wider than the plain

And full of human folk,
Of shacks, and tents, and towers. And I?
Am freer than a king!—
But the wide world holds
No little house,
No light, no warm, kind eyes
To give my tired
Dog and me
Comfort and welcoming.

Harriette G. Smith

The Siren

The city holds her throat against the dawn,
And the moon-washed whiteness of her breasts.
On her eyelids, the shadows are soft
As the dream caresses of dead lovers.

Her hair is the mist over old rose gardens.
Do her lips smile?
I shall go mad with loving her,
I, who hated her but yesterday for her ugliness,
Her raucus brazen voice, for the grime upon her
forehead,
And the filth that clung to her skirts.

Loretta Roche

Moment

The green vines climbing on the wall
Are like their own shadows,
They have no color in the darkness.

As you pass
You touch them carelessly with your fingers—
And there is a quick unfolding of white petals
As the leaves gleam
Under the sudden light of fireflies.

Harvey D. Cheney

The Sweet Smell of Lumber

Give me the sweet smell of lumber,
On the tar-laden air of the quay,
Where schooners, deck-laden, in slumber,
Are walled from the roll of the sea,
And the balm of the forest is fragrant,
Winging the air of the bay—
Elusive and subtly vagrant,
From flying the deeper-sea spray.

Mildred Plew Merryman

On Windy Nights

On windy nights old houses come alive
And knock their bones together in the gloom.
They snicker in the darkness and revive
Like skeletons that time can never tomb.

You hear them softly breathing in the room;
They feel along the murk with fingers five—
On windy nights old houses come alive
And knock their bones together in the gloom.

What deviltries their cunning can contrive
‘While hearts are tripping double at the loom!
Like witches that the wind will seek to wive
They quake and creak and titter at their doom.
On windy nights old houses come alive
And knock their bones together in the gloom.

Ethel Marjorie Knapp

I Die a Hundred Deaths

I die a hundred deaths. I love and lose
A hope, a flower,
A little singing bird,
Faith in one who proves faithless to his word,
And life grows dark and bitter in that hour.
I die a hundred deaths.
What, after this, will be what men call death?

I know a hundred births. Each time I find
A new, sweet, happy thing.
A little child at play in the sun,
A glow in the sky when the day is done,
In the midst of the winter some token of spring,
The flash of a cardinal on the wing,
A sudden touch of a kindly hand,
Silence with one who can understand,
Forgetful of old pain,
Then I am born again.
I know a hundred births.

Wheaton Hale Brewer

Sea-Thought

When the white gulls are fast asleep,
And the bay breathes, restless and deep;
When Alcatraz' one cylops eye
Circles the tapestry of the sky;
I see the clipper ships sail in
Where the white-fanged breakers grin:
I see the phantom ships of sail
Go beating out against the gale.

Broad, oily swells that tilt the stars:
Old, forgotten, whining tunes
Played by the trades on back-hauled spars,
Recalling nights when other moons
Shone down with white vacuity
Upon an unknown, chartless sea:
The cool sussurous at the bow
Of ghostly water wakes me now;—
Yet I still dream in reverie
The cruises of last century.

Where jungle pathways twist and turn;
Where brooding forests lie;
Where high, aloof volcanoes burn
Against unmeasured sky,
My dream goes drifting down the sea
Upon the ships that used to be.

Huge whales steer, spouting, to the ice:
Red-decked, the sealers scud.
And pirate sampans, scows of rice,
Flash past on memory's flood.

Oh, in some dim, time-hidden day
I was a sailor, or a crew,
That sailed all seas, and in the spray
Learned all the things the ocean knew.
I was the masts, the spars, the sails;
I was the waves, the sea—; a Fate
That hovered over endless gales—
The Spirit of the Golden Gate.

Leslie-Leigh du Cros

Homecoming

I came back to the little house,
I, who had been so long away.
(Three whole nights and a day you know
Is a fearful time when one loves so!)
Something there seemed to rise and stir
Before I opened the gate;
It thrilled like wind in the cherry boughs,
And I could hardly wait—
And I thought, “ ’Tis the charm of her!”

Forth from the doorway leaped the glow
Of firelight, shadowing on the floor;
There came a cry—a sobbing laugh—
The candles wavered in the draught—
Poppies against the curtain’s blue
Went to my head like wine,
And my heart cried unto her heart, “You know
You are mine, mine, mine,
And life is only the lips of you!”

Grace Wallace

Like Three Gold Temples

Three stars, “like three gold temples in the sky,”
You said, shone as we came back from our walk:
“Yes, no doubt,” I agreed, “children on high
Run in, touch little palms, kneel, pray and talk;
Then run out eagerly into the sun
To find blue butterflies on yellow flowers.
No doubt they, too, feel day is but begun
When night re-opens her gold-gleaming bowers:
Nor should I be surprised in school they learned
Strange things would give earth-children wonderment
That star-folk apprehend great truths, up-churned
From the strong milk of knowledge’s ferment. . . .

Ah, but my child, I fear I speak of things
Which may seem dull to you—you that have
wings!”

A. Evelyn Newman

Mountains Are Best for Heartbreak

The sea harks back to every little hurt
That made the prelude to the final crashing
dissonance,
Wherewith the house of life was shattered.
The music of the sea fills in the nooks and crannies of
the ruins,
Playing like wind among the broken arches.
Its little crawling waves pick up the severed heart
chords,
Running along them like ghost fingers,
Bringing forth a requiem supreme
In power of grief to devastate the soul.

The prairies are too vast
And void of any object large enough
To take away the aching emptiness
Of distance infinite between the earth and sky.
Oh, sickness of the soul that looks on these
And sees no gateway out where no walls stand!

And so for heartbreak mountains are the best.
Their dark impregnability speaks not of quiet
When every nerve and throbbing pulse of pain
Cry out for action.
They sing no dirge of shattered dreams
That echoes and re-echoes through the house of life.

But rather by their ice-furrowed and lightning-rivened
visage
They tell of conflict as the acid test of strength.

Howard McKinley Corning

Transformation

The poplars hold yellow torches
Against the door of sunset;
Night enters,
From some blackened casement
A gusty wind
Blows their glowing sparks
Across the sky.

The poplars hold back sockets
to the night.

M. Doris Hutchins

To the Soul of a Dancer

She'll dance with the wind along the street
To the shops that shod her restless feet
And those which furnished her gauze and lace
Or things to smear on her pretty face.

She'll float to the flow'rs whose thick perfume
Always flooded her dressing room,
And drift with each tender mocking song
That can draw her light gay ghost along.

Perhaps for footlights she will use
The stars to gleam on her satin shoes:
But she was not made for Heav'n or Hell
This little one loved the Earth too well!

Mary Louise Rankin

The Nun

I never hear your laughter,
I never hear your tears,
As quiet as a spirit
You walk through the years.

But once in the dawning,
And once in the night,
I heard a stir of star-beams
Breaking into light.

Their crystalline echo
Shimmers in your prayer
Till the breath of God is moving,—
Strangely,—everywhere.

I never hear your laughter,
I never hear your tears,
As quiet as a spirit
You walk through the yeras.

Marion Ethel Hamilton

The Alien

The red and yellow of this Spanish garden,
Stabs me, with its hot, exotic cry;
And the pallid lilies 'round the playing fountain,
Are not more alien and forlorn than I.

For my heart is far across an ocean,
Where an English springtime softly calls;
Here, banana leaves, with listless motion,
Cast strange shadows on adobe walls.

I am smothered by the hot breath of the desert
And I gasp for cooling summer rain;
Let me dream of hawthorn hedges, and a cottage,
In some lilac-scented, English lane.

Prize Awards

The Lyric West has great pleasure in announcing the awards for the prizes offered for poems published in its pages during the year, April 1923-1924. The judges, William Griffith, Editor of Current Opinion, and Miss Jessie B. Rittenhouse, noted poet and critic, have given most generously of their time and thought in making these awards. The Lyric West takes this opportunity to thank them publicly for their willing service.

The awards are as follows:

A prize of one hundred dollars for the best narrative poem is given to George Sterling for his poem, "The Flight," appearing in the June, 1923 issue.

George Sterling

The Flight

'T was night when I hurried
From out her ancient house,
With the slim girl, the shy girl,
Who fainted for a mouse.

Troubadour was I,
And proud o' blood was she.....
Were we seen and overtaken,
Swords had crossed in me.

Dark were the towers behind us,
And dark the hills ahead;
Morning seemed long a-coming,
The night that we fled.

It found us half-spent,
And far had we to go.
I was glad of our weariness,
She leaned upon me so.

We took no breathing-space
Upon our upward path:
From the blue plain below us
I felt her father's wrath.

And fast were we winning

To the refuge far and high,
When Ralph du Mont came down the road,
With sword upon his thigh.

“Ha! cursed thief!”
And “Ha! thou hawk!” cried he.
“Dost think to seek thy nest,
With quarry such as she?”

Down from his stallion
He swept like a flame;
Like a flame from the scabbard
His long sword came.

The blade that I wore
Snapped on his own.
Prone on the greensward
I felt myself thrown.

I felt his great hands
Close on my throat . . .
Far away and farther, farther,
The world began to float. . . .

The world went out in mist,
And I knew that I had died
And the last sound I heard
Was a far voice that cried.

Long I lay, who knew not
How long I had lain. . . .

Sound by sound and touch by touch
The world came back again,

Her hair was dark about me,
And my head was in her lap.
Soft she wept who saved our love
From so sore mishap,

I lifted up my head,
Struck by a sudden fear.
His own sword in his throat,
Ralph du Mont lay near.

She who had thrust it there,
Quietly she cried:
It was the only sound I heard
Upon the green hillside. . . .

With my kinsmen of the mountains
I have built a fair house,
For the shy girl, the brave girl,
Who fainted for a mouse.

A prize of one hundred dollars for the poem most original and fresh in subject matter and treatment is given to "Song of the Long River" (Number 2 of Swiya's Songs) by Constance Lindsay Skinner in the April, 1923 issue.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Song of the Long River

All day my songs
Sang beside the River,
Sang on my lips like my lover's kiss.
I asked no more.
“Tell me, how long, how long is the River
That flows on and on yet stays forever,
Bearing my songs Oh whither, whither?”

I said only:
“When the starry wampum is offered,
When the twilight smoke signals
That the Woman, Swiya, camps beneath the willows;
And her tent of willows,
Red spring willows,
Is open—is open—open!
Will he come, the Man of Arrows,
Like a white hawk skimming
Down the circling path of waters,
Down the tide
Of the silver singing River,
That winds, and, winding, beckons,
Like a low-hung girdle round the hills?”

I said only:
“Come! When the day is darkening,
Come, Swift and Wounding One, to my lips,

Where the two crimson wings,
The wings of my flying Songs, are folded.
The flesh of my songs is sweeter, O Wounding One,
Than wild turkeys:
Softer than feathers is Swiya's breast, swelling with
love.

Moor thy white canoe
By the running River
Till lily-picker Dawn shall pluck it
From the black-tipped clustering bull-rushes of night.
Leave the shallower tide
Of the silver singing River, for the deeper flowing;
Leap to the still-winged silence of thy mate!"

*When the starry wampum is offered,
When the twilight smoke signals
That the Woman, Swiya, camps beneath the willows;
And her tent of willows,
Red spring willows,
Is open—is open—open!—*

A prize of fifty dollars for the best lyric is given to Margaret Widdemer for her poem, "Hill Sunset," in the April, 1923 issue.

Margaret Widdemer

Hill Sunset

Leaning against the quiet western doorway
In the sweet wind
Here in rose-light your griefs are nearly out of mind:
Forget a while, for it is in your power,
All you have borne, and all you still shall miss:
What matter? There's no hour but this the present
 hour
And there is peace in this:

Here things seem nearly found that you may never
 find,
Things nearly seen that most may never see
By these bright steady hills that make their age old
 promise
Of rest and certainty:

The changing sunset burns to violet . . .
While boughs arch black across, clearcut and beautiful
How can you not forget?
For still while Beauty lives, the world is light to bear,
And crippled dreams stand, straight and lovely in the
 silence,
And if a thing is dreamed, surely the dream may be
Alive somewhere!

A prize of fifty dollars for the best poem by a western writer is
given to Dorothy Pinckney Pillsbury for her poem, "Camp

Fires,” in the October 1923 issue.

Dorothy Pinckney Pillsbury

Camp Fires

ON A LONELY HEADLAND

The sun like a Chinese lantern falls into the darkling
sea;

The winds pick up their grey mist-shawls and drop
them down on me.

I build a fire of drift-wood to press the loneliness back;
On my face are the fog's wet fingers and her scarf of
smothering black.

A drift-wood fire is a gossiping crone
In a mantle and hood of blue.

Her fingers twitch and her white lips drone
Tales of ships that voyage alone
With limp, still sails and never a crew.

The tide sucks under the sleek, wet rocks, the sea gulls
stir and cry;

I have a troubled feeling that someone passes by,
Someone who sees my lonely fire, who longs to stop and
stare

But keeps reluctant foot steps on through the darkness
there.

IN THE HIGH SIERRAS

I make my pillow of bundled fern, my bed of silver fir
Close by a dancing, capering fire of fragrant juniper.
Snow on the peaks and moon on the snow and stars
 hung on the pines;
A swaying of water over a cliff in wind-blown fragile
 lines.

A juniper fire is a balladist gay
In a quaint and crimson gown.
He puffs out his cheeks and his rollicking lay
Takes me back to a merrier day
When minstrels went strumming through forest and
 town.

A deer looks over a wild rose bush with fire-charmed,
 tranquil eyes;
Shadows droop their lovely plumes where smokey
 tamarcks rise.
Never a foot fall, never a breath, but someone climbs
 the trail,
Slowly with wistful, backward glance and a wordless,
 silent hail.

IN THE DESERT

When I scoop out a little hollow, when I make my bed
in the sand

It is just like lying down to rest in a great, warm,
hollow hand.

A scanty fire of withered twigs and the black wastes
marching by;

And Joshua trees with gaunt, stiff arms propping the
starsagged sky.

A grease wood fire is an ancient sage

In a tattered saffron cloak

Wrinkled with time and bent with age

Reading a yellow parchment page

And muttering of weary wandering folk.

Sometimes I think that every star is a camp fire's
friendly gleam

Where endless trails wind in and out and wanderers
rest and dream.

And the ones who pass with silent feet when they see
my lonely light

Are just the ghosts of wanderers who bless a neophyte.

A prize of fifty dollars for the best poem by a new writer is
given to Nora B. Cunningham for her poem, "The Wind," in
the October 1923 issue.

Nora B. Cunningham

The Wind

You wondered what made me shake—

Dearest, it was not you!

You opened a door in my mind

And a wind blew through. . . .

A glorious north-west gale,

Steady and strong and clear;

Bright from a breaking sky,

Driving the clouds of fear.

Breath of the brave dead blown

Back from their Happy West;

Song of the souls unknown

Giving to life their best. . . .

Too long had the doors been shut,

Fearing the raging storm;

Too long had I stayed within,

Drowsy and dull and warm. . . .

You wondered what made me shake—

Dearest, it was not you!

You opened a door in my mind

And a wind blew through. . . .

A prize of fifty dollars for the best sonnet is given to Hildegard Flanner for her sonnet, "The Flowers of Apollo," in the March 1924 issue.

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.

Honorable Mention is given to the following poems: “I Kissed My Love Today,” by Margaret Adelaide Wilson; “Loss,” by Elliott C. Lincoln; “The Dance,” by Elizabeth J. Coatsworth; “Summer Sketches of Southern California,” by Elizabeth Davie; “Before the Great Adventure,” by Robert Haven Schauffler; “La Naive,” by Dorothy Page.

Notes

With this April issue The Lyric West will discontinue publication. It has completed its third year and each year has seen it increase the number of its friends, maintain a higher standard of poetry and introduce new names to the audience of poetry lovers. Our list of subscribers and contributors extends to every state in our Union and to most of the countries of Europe, and one of the pleasantest memories of our three years of intensive effort is that of the delightful letters received from far away places, and the delightful acquaintances begun in this way and ripening into lasting friendships.

The Lyric West was started with the purpose of helping to develop the poetry of the West. We feel that we have attained that object, at least in part, and would gladly carry on but the strain involved has made it unwise. Therefore, it seems better to bring it to a close now, when it has served the cause of poetry faithfully for three years.

All subscribers who wish their subscription money returned, and all contributors who wish to receive back their manuscripts now in our possession, please communicate with the editor during the month of April.

We wish to correct an error in the November, 1923 issue. The poem called "My Heart's a Rift of Song," is wrongly ascribed to Aurania Rouveyrol. The poem was written by Gertrude Robison Ross. Owing to the fact that she did not sign her name to it and that she has been absent from home for some time, the mistake occurred.