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NO. 5

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Beulah May | Marvin Luter Hill

E. G. Dexter | Walter Evans Kidd

Pauline Barrington and others

COMMENT

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The Lyric West

Vol. III, No. 5

A Magazine Of Verse

September, 1923

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Autumn Number

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Beulah May

The Canyon Trail

Matilijas and chollas bloom
Along the winding canyon trail.
And from the foothills startled rise
In whirring flocks the mountain quail.

On grassy flats the live oaks stand
By sprawling white limbed sycamores,
And tearing at its clayey banks,
The dusky wild arroyo roars.

Mojave winds with scorching breath
Spring fiercely at the ancient trees,
And summer morns the fog sweeps up
Bearing salt kisses from the seas.

Oh, rugged little canyon trail,
Climbing forever toward the sky;
The stars at night hang lanthorns out
To guide you to infinity.

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth

The Dance

The dancer bends
Sowing symbolic seeds across the bare boards of the
stage;
His eagle feathers sway from side to side.
(Far, far off the hot sun is beating down upon the red
mesas
Vibrating with heat
At their feet in the dry wash the women have broken
the earth
And are planting seeds.
Their right arms sweep outwards in a slow monotonous
motion,
Their shadows are purple on the red earth,
And the buzzards alone move across the blue width of
the sky.)

The dancer dances faster and faster
He is whirling and leaping,
He is reeling, the feathers of his head-dress sweep
across his face from side to side
As the heads of Indian corn sweep in the frenzy of a
storm.
(Far, far away in the pueblos on the mesas the priests
are gathered
Singing and stamping and shaking their rattles,

Calling upon the fork-winged blue birds to intercede for
 them,
Begging the thundering locusts to carry their message,
Invoking the he-gods who stand upon the rain-bows
Arched high above the rain-clouds
Far away the priests are praying.)

The dancer is still,
Kneeling, head flung back,
Arms outstretched.

(Far, far off over the mesas the storm is gathering
The heavy clouds press down upon the flat summits,
The trees by the washes tremble with eagerness,
Upon the house-tops the people wait.
There is no sound in the oppressive silence;
No movement but the movement of the slow black
 clouds
Across the blue of the sky.

Then like a serpent, the lightning darts from the
 caverns of darkness,
With a crackling of thunder,
And upon the mesas
Slowly, slowly,
The first drops fall.)

May Williams Ward

Song of the Plains

(Song of Solomon 3:10)

The pillars thereof are silver—

Are they firm enough in their place,
The wavering pillars of mist and mirage
The arches of heaven to brace?

The bottom thereof is golden—

Cloth of gold is the wheat;
Crinkled with beaded grains, it spreads
In a broad unbroken sheet.

The covering of it is purple—

No other color could be
Kingly enough for the royal sky
In its round immensity.

And the midst thereof is paved with love,

Smoke rises the sun to greet
From a hundred home-fires built by love
In the midst of the sage and wheat.

May Williams Ward

Upon Reading Sandburg's "Limited"

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Annihilation—
Annihilation of my past, of my personality, of my very
name,
Now that I am going west for a new start at the end of
my prison sentence,"
So I just said "Omaha."

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Heaven on earth
Through the gate of satisfied desire
When I marry Mary tomorrow,"
So I just said "Omaha."

"Where are you going?" said a man on the train.
I couldn't say "To Hell
With the soul of the dirty profiteer for whose killing the
bomb in my bag is intended,"
So I just said "Omaha."

Charlotte W. Thurston

The Living Presence

A moon, new-born, lifts wondering eyes
Where far in the east keep the white-stoled stars
 Their solemn trysting with black-stoled pines,
Or watches down by the pasture bars
 The little white stars of the blackberry vines.

Flashing her diamond-dusted horns
Astarte ablaze in the west outflames
 Across the cordon line of the pines;
While soft, slow-footed, the darkness frames
 The little white stars of the blackberry vines.

Little white feet of the moon race down.
I whisper a name by the pasture bars.
 The dim dusk darkens under the pines;
But listening there are your great white stars,
 And your little white stars of the blackberry vines.

G. W. Dresbach

Storm-Rain Songs

I. IN THE CLIFFS

Great friendliness I find in cliffs that break
This sudden chilled drive of the rain,
And sense of sure surroundings that can take
The buffeting of storm and yet remain
Just as they were before.
And here I wonder that men seek cliffs less
To find men more—
Betrayed, but wistful in their friendliness,
Left out in rains, chilled to the heart's hurt core. . . .

O rock that shelters me and lets me share
A place in you, you cannot feel as men—
But is it more to feel and not to care
What fugitives reel in the storm again?
How many shelters they had come to trust
Were doors slammed shut in the first cloud of dust!

II. IN THE CEDARS

There's no wild crying out against the storm.
Only the sadness that was here before
Speaks more insistently. These boughs once warm
In sunlight now lift but a little more
In their dark sway against the flash of rain.
Beneath the boughs the twisted trunks are dry.
Below the trunks roots deep in rock may strain
But little more now wilder winds go by.

I huddle near the trunk. . . . A little bough
Hurled down in storm blows in against my hand.
Perhaps you would not care to understand
Why I take pains to bury it, and how,
Near roots that fed it, draining from the ground
The juice of life where little juice is found
Here on this hill that faces desert land.

III. WITH LITTLE WILLOWS

In the first gusts of wind the willows turned
To dancers mad with change from quietness
Of sun and haze across the flats that burned.
Their mood was more my own than I could guess.
But soon their rhythm turned into distress
Of frantic gestures as the storm swooped down.
Rain shot through them a flight of silver arrows
And drove away a few last chattering sparrows.
And, drenched with them, I followed with a frown—
As one who suffers new indignities
Because so often lovely things he sees
Grow pitiful in sudden circumstance,
And there's no time to wait till it goes by.
Who cannot see himself, in winds of Chance,
A grotesque, flopping arms against the sky!

Julia Johnson Davis

Songs of a Little Boy

The baby sings a little song,
And yet no words has he.
So sings a plaintive mourning dove,
So sings a linden tree,

So sings a hidden, trickling stream,
So sing the bees in May.
So sing all sweet and lovely things,
And yet no words have they.

Julia Johnson Davis

Return

Whose voice is sobbing in the rain?

I know—

It is but one of my old selves,

Dead long ago.

Dead long ago, and now come back

To me.

I did not know that earth could hold

Such poignancy!

Thos. V. Calkins

A Southwestern Day Cycle

A greying in the east;
A lighting in the sky;
The mountain peaks in silhouette,
The sough of trees, dew touched and wet,
The grey bat flitting by.

A flaming band of light;
Deep crimson on the plain;
A breaking in the leafy glades;
A lifting of the gloomy shades;
The larks' lay upward trills.

Dawn!

Slow sweep of wind along
The mesas' barren breast;
The horizons in heat waves dance,
The horny toad in sleepy trance—
Mirages with their jest.

Dust devils spin and whirl—
Black buzzards soar and sweep—
The sun a quenchless deadly blaze—
A long trail winding through the haze—
A silence thick and deep.

Noon!

The whip-poor-wills' lament;
Soft rustlings in the grass.

The coyotes' long, mournful wail—
The bashful moon, with cloudy veil—
A cloud embattled pass.

The camp fire embers die,
Or burst in fitful gleam.
A ghostly tent amidst the trees—
Low whispers on the shifting breeze—
The music of a stream.

Night!

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

The Sunset Hills

(The story is taken from “American Myths and
Legends”)

Leelinaw is full of strangest learning,
She the old chief's daughter fair and good
Who at night, when stars alone are burning,
Walks in the spirit wood.

Leelinaw plaits hair for birds a-nesting,
With its favourite root the rabbit feeds;
Often for the squirrel goes a-questing—
Of each one knows the needs.

Leelinaw has ears all sounds to capture,
And her dream-eyes, gazing steadily,
Even look beyond, in their strange rapture,
The far Vermilion Sea.*

To the long range of the Sunset Mountains.—
She will tell you fairer to the eyes
Are the birds and flowers and sunny fountains
Seen in that paradise.

Often is the chief's heart filled with sorrow,
For the pukwujinninee,** they say,
Evil spells have cast, and on some morrow

He fears she'll slip away.

Childhood ever with her seems to tarry;
But 'tis sixteen years since she was born,
And the time has come for her to marry—
The Moon of the Green Corn.

So they deck her out in gorgeous raiment,
Scarlet feathers in her hair are tied;
Proud is a young hunter as the claimant
Of such a wondrous bride.

Leelinaw begs respite for an hour,
Just to wander by herself once more
Through the forest, and a favourite flower
Pluck by the river's shore. . . .

Leelinaw was never seen thereafter—
But a fisherman was heard to say,
That the pukujinninee, with laughter,
Wove a bright pine tree spray

Through the girl's hair, plucking out each feather—
In his hand he showed some scarlet quills—
So he knew that she and they together
Went to the Sunset Hills.

*The Gulf of California. **Indian fairies.

Marvin Luter Hill

To Madeleine

The rose-leaf heart of childhood keeps your dreams
Soft-folded as the moth's gold powdered wings,
And cool as stars are your imaginings—
Moon-misted ice flowers on fresh mountain streams.
And Love more beautiful than morning seems—
Morning, with dewy fingers christening
The bending buds upon the bough of spring.

And shall I take you, Weaver of tapestries
Fragile as spider's web, and set you here
In this old heart that has known many a tear
And many a bout with life? Whose memories
Troop in, like ghosts, their frosty hands and eyes
Chilling new-comers! Would you pay so dear
For this poor shrine that is more like a bier?

Three Poems

SHADOW

All orange-red the moon blew up,
The sky was deep as sorrow
With never a star to light the cup
Brimmed by the dark-foamed morrow.

—O Shadow by the dull canal
There where the trees are gleaming,
Why have you left the carnival
Of youth and broken dreaming?

Was it a word from out the night
That whispered of an ending
Too surely waiting at the height
Of song?—and that impending

Despondency of crumbled stars
And hands of tired groping
At doors of dust with rusted bars
And fear and futile hoping

Against the iron pulse of time?
—O deep the sky as sorrow
When on the wind a broken chime
Pealed in the darkling morrow.

But never a word the shadow spoke
 There where the gloom was sleeping:
I saw him lift his frouzy cloak
 And go with stifled weeping.

And only crickets answered me
 And stretched my heartstrings tauter,
And the moon lifted silently,
 And blood stood on the water. . . .

QUESTION

I too have stood in fields of snow
And seen the host of grey ones go

With music withered on each lip
And age upon them like a whip.

And since then I've found none more kind
Than are the serpents of the wind;

And since then found no hand more warm
Than the cold clutching of the storm;

And since then found no dream more sure
Than dew upon a bitter moor.

—O when the marble dust shall fall
Shall I have found no more at all?

THE CUP OF SAND

Two walked abroad at candlelight
But one was framed of something less
Than clay and sun, and on his face
A look of weary tenderness,

The owls were in the hills, the winds
Blew from the chambers of the moon;
It was the lonely hour of man,
It was the hour comes all too soon.

And as those two along the road
Walked quietly, the tender one
Reached forth a something whiter than
The flame-white eagles of the sun.

And O, I saw them from the wood,
And saw the offer and the face
Of him who waved the thing aside
And trembled at the proffered grace.

And O, I saw the shining gift
Fall noiseless to the road, but then
I hid my eyes, and one alone
Was there when I could look again,

And he a fugitive with fear
In every backward glance he gave,
And where the tender one had gone

Was hidden as it were the grave.

o

What wonder I who found the Cup
That tears had formed of gleaming sand
Went homeward as a man who walks
With weeping ghosts on either hand?

What wonder that I fashion songs
Against the hour that surely comes
With women wailing in the dust
Of broken swords and ancient drums?

The Cup of Peace, it is a cup
That few have strength to lift and hold.
. . . The wind is autumn on my hair;
Life is a tale too often told.

Dorothy E. Collins

To the Lover of Any Girl

She is a moth of evening,
 She is mad with moon-desire,
Not blinded by your candle
 Nor your household fire.

And you must close her shining eyes
 And lull her into rest
Or child of yours shall never
 Lie laughing on her breast.

Ames Peterson

Autumn

The green wood swept to the sea,
The green hill rose to the sky;
The gray witch stood by her spring on the hill
And would not let me by.

I turned to the right, I turned to the left,
I strove to pass her by;
But ever I turned and came back to her side,
Slave to the spell in her eye.

Over the hill I could hear Her weeping,
Her tears like autumn rain;
“It has a price,” said the gray witch, softly,
“An hour with Her again.”

The gray woods sweep to the sea,
Where the white gulls circle and cry;
But I have forgotten whose tears were falling,
Under an autumn sky.

I Will Be Still

I will be still as a quiet pool
In a sequestered, dark place,
Still as a pool's breast holding a star
Like a lovely face. . . .

You need not know—only let me stay—
Still as water beneath a quiet tree. . . .
Only let my dim eyes hold your face—
Grant this to me.

Let me be near you, I will not ask
You to remember I am near;
I will be still, nor even whisper
Your name, my dear. . . .

Neeta Marquis

April Dusk

We walked among the hills at twilight time,
Beneath the woven oaks' contented gloom.
The ruddy hue of sunset flared and sank
Like fitful Romany-fires beyond the trees.
The air was soft with April flowerings
And scents from canyon-crannies coolly dressed
With moss and maidenhair—O April dusk!
O still road, shadowy with lovely dreams!

Our pathway turned, and there at once the shade
Was lighted with a radiance from the ground.
Beneath the oaks, quite crowding out the grass,
Climbing in legions up the gradual hill,
The milky bloom of shooting-stars appeared.
We caught our breath with rapture. On our knees
We bent to touch the flowers and sing for joy.
My heartbeats quickened with a glorious rush,
As if a lover long since parted from
Had suddenly come back and clasped my hand,
And I began to love him in return!

Words cannot tell the sweetness of the sight.
The tender blossoms on their slim smooth stems—
Called “sera picos” in the Spanish tongue,
“Wild cyclamen” by those who are exact—
Grew thick as snow against the dusky ground.

Their pale silk petals tinged with lavender
Centered in piquant gypsy-visages
Of velvet brown. The perfume they gave forth
Was like the potent essence of the Spring.

Now, other Springs have dawned and waned again;
Yet, when I wish, I need but close my eyes,
And that soft vision floats before my view.
There lies the fragrant stretch of canyon-gloom
Quick with the tender growing things I love,
The mystery and happy hush of dusk,
The sunset fire in distant ruddy gleams,
And, suddenly, that sea of shooting-stars
Like moonlit waters running everywhere:
A fairy-opalescence in the dark.
It is as if the shimmering Pleiades
And all their sisters of the upper space
Had come to earth to rest a little while,
And spread themselves beneath the woven oaks.

E. Richard Shipp

True Harmony

Through the Pines tonight, soft as an Angel's breath,
the wind
sings a sleepy lullaby;
In the high, wide skies
a slim Moon wanders idly
and a thousand Torch-bearers
trail behind
The sound of running Water,
swift, hurrying, comes through the dark;
In the intense Forest Harmony,
in the deep Musical Silence,
every Instrument is in Tune,
there are no False Notes,
there is no Jazz.

E. Richard Shipp

The Abandoned House

On the grey desert rim it stands,
 A woeful, bleaching skeleton.
Its dead eyes stare across the sands
 That shimmer in the burning sun.

The rusty hinges groan and whine
 When breezes swing the sagging doors.
Sand, dust-white and alkaline,
 Lies in blown drifts along the floors.

A tragedy of Life lies hid
 Behind the weather-beaten walls,
For Happiness, by God forbid,
 Died here. The loneliness appals.

Elizabeth Davie

Summer Sketches of Southern California

I

THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER

The river is dead.
His corpse lies twisted
And ghostly white
Under gray willows
Under the silent yellow trumpets
Of the San Juan tree.
A buzzard lays black shadow wreaths
On him . . .
Frightened foxes leave quick tracks
Across his breast:
And in the night
Owls mourn.
The river is dead.

II

SOLEDAD

The moon stood white
In the noon-blue sky
 Still and alone,
And gray in a river's sandy bed
A heron stood in a stagnant pool
 Moody and sad.
And those two talked in a silent way
Over the yellow quiet hills
 Through the speechless day.

III

WINDS IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

We open the wind-shield
A mob rides suddenly
Against my face
And past it . . .
Hot hands tug at my nostrils
And tear at the lobes of my ears:
Strong fingers
Comb roughly through my hair
And rumple my eyelids:
I feel the burning pricks
Of invisible sand darts
And a scorching breath
Against my flesh
As the valley winds
Rage by.

IV

A CARRION MOON

At noon the moon walked
Faint and tired,
Weary of her long way to go
Across the sea:
A buzzard soared out from the hills
And eyed her halting faint and low
Hunggrily.
And, starved, he dreamed of a carrion moon
As he cast his weird black
Shadow net
Above the sea.

V

A MISTY MORNING AT LA JOLLA

The day has come back from China way
With a ragged petticoat
They stole her lovely dress away
And the sun-brooch at her throat.

Her eyes stare so dull-wise
And she's livid as gray clay
What dragging grief on her mouth lies?
What cruel folk met she China way?

E. G. Dexter

Summer Shower

Bare breasts of woman fashioned into hills,
Storied by mortals, deified,
Rising like islands in the tide
Where the wind-drift distills
Beyond the oceantide,
Thence inland while time wills.
Inland, across the Strait

Carquinez, stands Diablo in black hate,
Bound for milleniums, unblest,
Reprieveless, views each breast
Round as its mate,
Scarfed in fine vapors, and a dark unrest
Fills his dark bosom. "Wait."

Days overwarm
For fruit or bloom
Augur the gathering storm;
And still the virgin womb
Slumbers inviolate
Secure against Diablo and his hate,
Diablo, who would plot to kill.
For now, upriding from the south,
A rival comes with kisses on his mouth
And breath that bears the quickening scent
Of rain on drouth.

Diablo, seeing, plots again to kill.
The veering winds half harken to his will
When lo, the hill! the hill!
Caught in embraces that will not relent.
In sudden mad delight
The two are quickly hidden from all sight,
And while they mate
In sweet oblivion, too elate
For all the curses of Diablo's hate
To loosen or undo,
The Storm,
Long hovering with her form,
Awakes her through and through.
Where is Diablo's hate?
To wondrous new designs now consecrate
The breasts again are visioned in the sun.
The Storm has gone.

Harry Noyes Pratt

The Wood of Tara

(A tale of the Irish Sidhe folk)

I heard a tiny hammering as of wee bells a-clamoring,
From out the Wood of Tara.
And it was just at summer dusk;
The moon was but a withered husk
Above the Wood of Tara.

I crept soft-footed down the lane, where puddles
lingered from the rain,
And there by Wood of Tara,
I saw an elfin forge a-glow,
And sparks from elfin bellows blow
A-down the Wood of Tara.

An elfin smith on anvil beat; he forged wee shoes for
his horse's feet
Close by the Wood of Tara.
He forged the shoes and put them on,
He leaped to the saddle, away and gone!
Into the Wood of Tara.

The tired stars were glimmering where dim the road
was shimmering
By silent Wood of Tara.

The night had grown so still, so still;
The moon had dropped into the hill,
 Beneath the Wood of Tara.

Annice Calland

Songs of the Desert

THE DESERT WOMAN

I have met the Desert Woman, she is swart,
unconquered,
In the cool white night I met her on her mesas bare and
brown,
In the circlet of her mountains where was room for vast
infinities,
Under jeweled skies she wore as would a queen her
crown.
All about me grew the greasewoods and the big black
zahuaros,
Seas of powdery sagebrush, brown mesquite and yuccas
gleaming white;
While the full moon rose in splendor silvered broken
buttes and mesas,
Shone in glamour till the big barbaric palms were
dripping light.
Vast, mysterious the silence of the night filled full of
wonder;
Strange influences breathed about me as a damp wind
softly blows;
On the land fell an enchantment that was vague yet
strong and luring
And it drew me willing neophyte to what end no man
knows.

Then the dawn came up like lightning on the far
snow-crested mountains
Filling canons and arroyos with a golden whirling mist,
And the dry hard buttes grew filmy like gauze veils of
many colors
Topaz, violet and saffron, mauve and lilac, amethyst.
All about were strange illusions, lavish were the
pictures painted
Lakes that rippled in the wind and broke upon a
shining shore,
High green hills and grassy valleys beckoned in their
magic beauty
And a forest non-existent cast cool shadows on its floor.

Here I met the Desert Woman in the heart of her great
spaces,
Where in awful stillness, Sphinx-like she reigns
magical withal
I was sick and worn and weary and she touched my
brow with healing
Then I loved the Desert Woman and shall love her
above all.

Eda Lou Walton

Fuchsias

Like silent music
Waiting to be played,
Showers of scarlet notes
Frozen and stayed
From splintering,
The red, the white-and-red,
The purple of your tones
Like tiny stones
Better at melody;
Until again
God's perfect fingers rain
Your trills,
Arpeggios
Like myriad-colored rills
Breaking thin ice,
And with precision nice,
Strike from your bell-sweet
Fragile gongs,
Cool, treble angel-songs,
Then shatter all your
Shooting stars of sound
Against His voice
Raised in hymn profound.

Frances Beebe

The First Death (A Fragment)

Eve: "Jehovah! Cain!
Ah. Abel, little son,
What is this strangeness
That has fallen upon thee?
Speak to me!
And so much of this sweet
Red blood upon the ground
What ails him, Cain?
I have a queer desire to think
Upon the day when first he came.
Do you remember, dear,
How small he was,
And how his fingers curled?
He loved to play
Among the flowers
With dreaming eyes,
Drawing his pets
From all the woodland aisles,
Singing quaint serenades to stars.
How still he keeps!
See, there his altar smoulders,—
Stir him, Cain!
What ails thee, Abel dear,
Thy cheeks too white are grown.
Colorless, too, the day,
Now that I note,

Although the sun shines on!
There comes a thought
I do not dare to think,
Some doubt of mine own power
TO BE!
Jehovah! Cain!
How sharp the feeling grows!”

Virgil Geddes

Singers of Song

He was a singer of songs, and he left me
Standing one night in the stillness;
And he told me when we parted
I never would understand,

Every day or so
There springs from the thicket of magpies
The thrummers of threnody;
Balancing on their fingertips
Their threadbare chatter of jays,
Calling themselves a magician,
An artist, or some such name.

While here on the level prairie
The soft sweet music of silence. . . .

They are forgetting,
O God, they are forgetting the meaning
Of it all.

Graham Du Bois

The Silent Dining Room

The room is silent since you went away,
And yet the very silence sings of you.
In ways my halting songs can never do.
The solitude is eloquent to say
A million charming things I left unsaid—
How vibrant is the chair you tenanted,
How flower-like your little face could be
When like the flutter of a white dove's wings
Your hands moved o'er the tea-tray things
And made a blessing of a cup of tea;
And when you spoke I seemed to hear the breeze
Of summer dawns among the apple-trees,
Whose blossoms hide a choir of singing birds—
Far sweeter was the magic fragrance of your words.

Miriam Allen deFord

Lady of Morning

Aurelia, lady of morning, you lie on my soul like the
dew;
And all my swift-answering spirit is refreshed and
exalted anew.
Ah, blessed be ever, Aurelia, the dawn-glory over your
head,
And the soothing and thirst-quenching balsam of
healing and comfort you shed!
You are one with the stars of the morning: you come
from the youth of the world;
And you sped with the light-footed planet, all misty
and mother-of-pearled!
I have drunk of the breezes of sunrise, to see you but
cross in my way;
And the path you have left of your footprints must
blossom forever as May.
I feel on my brow in your passing the mystical fingers
of rain:—
God give me good grace of Aurelia, that I may know
springtime again!

Jean Paine

Youth

I am strong, grown ready for life.

I want all of life.

There is such a trifling space in which I may choose
And so long a one in which I must accept.

I am young and entitled to happiness.

I will be happy now though I trample on a thousand
others

For too soon I also shall be trampled upon.

In a panic lest I overlook some treasure,

Which I may not find another day,

I snatch at everything—

And weep at what I catch.

Blue Morning

The moon folds up the fragile
Patterns of rare old stars
And gathers up her frail white flame
From roofs and tall ship-spars.

From cliff to sea, from pine to fern
Blue-laced sunshadows pass
While red-veined crocus-petals burn
Deep in the dew-breathed grass.

The wide-spread cherry trees lift high
Their clouds of scented white
So that the blossom-hearts may bring
Ripe fruit in summer-light.

Out of the dark, blue morning comes;
Out of deep silence, song,
And from my heart of winter-pain,
Spring-beauty summer-long.

Edith Boyden Holway

The Onlooker

The twilight falls and day is nearly done,
The street lights shine out brightly one by one,
While I, lone watcher in the wings, once more
Look on, as homing folk go past my door.
As clanging cars discharge their human freight,
Impatient passengers who scarce can wait,
Too well I know, of all that throng I see,
Not one of them is coming home to me.

A sad spectator with an aching heart,
Watching the play wherein I have no part,
'Til play and players vanish from my sight
And then—I draw the shade, turn on the light.
Again there comes that rush of blinding tears,
Those pent up memories of happier years,
When through the dusk my eager eyes could see
Those whom I loved, come safely home to me.

Roberta Lynn

Glacier Point

We had risen betimes, that we might breakfast quickly
And thus get off soon on our two-day hike.
Next me sat a man who with his wife
And three other women made, so it turned out,
A party bound, like us, for Glacier Point.
This man was but a feather-weight—and yet
The quantity of oatmeal, toast and eggs,
Bacon, sausage, applesauce and cheese,
Coffee, omelet, hot cakes—syrup too—
That he could stow away beneath his belt,
Made of his meal a gastronomic feat.
We got a late start after all—a telegram.
But when we finally passed them on the trail,
We found the little man had gone ahead
And partly hid behind a clump of brush
Was stuffing down a box of lunch he'd brought.
Later from the hotel porch at Glacier
I heard his wife implore him, beg him, please
To join some bit of eloquence to hers,
And say the Valley was incomparable, superb!
But any thrill of ecstasy he felt
For the wonderland that Nature spread about him
Was peevishly eclipsed by his response,
Which conveyed the sober information
That if luncheon weren't served pretty soon
He'd die.

That afternoon he walked down to the look-out
With his wife. And though she came back awed,
To think she'd peeped out over that great depth,
He mentioned sourly 'twas three thousand feet
His bag of bananas had gone hurtling through.
At dinner his stout neighbor showed good judgment
In declining buttered beets and fricasee,
So what with these and various other dishes,
Contributed by members of his party,
The little man made out a fair-sized meal.
Then later, when goodnights were going round,
I heard him call to an attendant, "Miss . . ."
She laughed, "Oh, I can guess what's in your mind,
You want to know what time the sun comes up."
"No, no!" he mumbled. "That ain't it at all.
This sunrise stuff and all this Nature bunk
May go for some. . . . But tell me, Miss,
What time a feller can get breakfast here?"

Gilbert Harry Doane

To a Roman Tear-Bottle, Found Near Tyre

On fragile glass, that once contained the grief
Of Roman matrons weeping at the pyre,
Which burned without the walls of far-famed Tyre,
No living hand could work this strange motif
Of iridescent colour in relief,—
No human mind could ever dare aspire
To mix cerulean blue with flame of fire,
Or silver gold in blend beyond belief.

For each hot scalding tear that fell into
This phial, earth and all the elements,
In warm and unreluctant sympathy,
Have left pure beauty in a varied hue,—
A silent tribute to the vain laments
For those who passed into eternity.

Elizabeth La Dow

Language

The brook, pouring around boulders
And over speckled pebbles,
Gurgles its story;
And tree bends to tree
In sympathetic communion,
According to their kind,
The tragedy of yon giant red-wood,
In whose blasted top once nested eagles,
Were mine, would I but listen;
Even tho no wind bestir the leaves,
And perfect stillness lies about,
There is an eloquence in trees.
So, through all nature,
Varied tho her language,
God speaks and speaks of Life!

Finis

It is over, the little Hour;
There it lies, with dusty wings,
By a close-shut passion-flower
Whose heart holds a bee that stings!

It is over, the little Hour;
Dead with the death of the Day;
I put it with passion-flower
And imprisoned bee away.

But I know that some day, my Hour,
I will laugh at your shriveled wing,
And bee of the passion-flower,
Then powerless to fright or sting!

H. Thompson Rich

Beauty

I

Hands, you've known its wonder;
Lips, you've known its thrill,—
Heart of mine, be silent;
Soul of mine, be still.

But oh, my heart is sateless
My soul it knows no rest,—
Forever and forever
I hunger and I quest.

II

I have gone seeking Beauty
Across the earth's wide face;
But I have never found it,
For long, in any place.

And so I wander, singing,
To silence my despair—
That Beauty's so illusive
And so unearthly fair.

Comment—Black Armour

(Conducted by Pauline Barrington)

By Elinor Wylie.

George H. Doran Company. New York.

There was a long ride ahead of me. I settled myself in my corner and opened the black and silver covers of Mrs. Wylie's second book of poems, *Black Armour*. Poem after poem singing evenly, rhymed and metered, I read, until reaching the end of the book and my ride simultaneously. I had traveled far into a land of a

“ . . . cool and laughing mind, renewed
From covert sources like a spring's,
Is potent to translate the mood
Of all distraught and twisted things.”

I went on my way with a mysterious feeling of moonlight and silver, soft shadows hiding the unknown. If the car coming to a stand-still, had not jerked me back, I might have got it; however, it did stop and the “distraught and twisted things” were left undiscovered in the shadows. I held the small book close.

The poems *Lucifer Sings in Secret*, *Sequence* and *Peregrine* are admirably written, except in the latter, which is the history of a free lance, a Villon; the psychology of the last two lines, is bad; one who is a “good hater” must be a “good lover.” Love and hate are opposite poles of the same degree. One wishes, perhaps, there were not such uniformity of rhythm and metre, not so much sameness in the smooth flowing lines. This is an interesting Self-Portrait—

A lens of crystal whose transparence calms
Queer stars to clarity, and disentangles
Fox-fires to form austere refracted angles;
A texture polished on the horny palms

Of vast equivocal creatures, beast or human;
A flint, a substance finer-grained than snow,
Graved with the Graces in intaglio
To set sarcastic vigil on the woman.

This for the mind, and for the little rest
A hollow scooped to blackness in the breast,
The simulacrum of a cloud, a feather:
Instead of stone instead of sculptured strength,
This soul, this vanity, blown hither and thither
By trivial breath, over the whole world's length.

Elinor Wylie builds adventures with words, entangling and disentangling them; adventures that we feel vaguely, but which she sees clearly with her eyes shut. These are not great poems. All through the book run keen and lovely lines, poignant and vigorous. It is a pleasure to meet her in the magazines and reviews. Her book is a distinguished addition to the literature of today. She is one of the group of lyricists: Sara Teasdale, Edna Vincent Millay and Alice Meynell. Though she is absolutely unlike Marianne Moore in method or style, there is the same illusive quality beyond a world of dull routine.

Elixirs might escape;
But now, compact as stone,
My hand preserves a shape
Too utterly its own.

—*Pauline Barrington.*

Notes

The Lyric West is forced out of the market for new material until after October on account of over supply. The material on hand will be published as rapidly as possible. Hereafter the Lyric West will not pay for accepted manuscripts except in a group of prizes to be announced in the October issue. These prizes will be varied and offer a wide opportunity to many contributors.