

VOL. IV

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1925

NO. 10

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Joan Dareth Prosper | Mary Carolyn Davies

George H. Dillon | Tonio

Lenore C. Schutze and others

THE JOURNEY'S END

SUBSCRIPTION \$2.00 PER YEAR

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The Lyric West

Vol. IV, No. 10

A Magazine Of Verse

August-September, 1925

Edited by Roy Towner Thompson

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Set by LyricText on 08 August 2026 at 04:47.

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The Lyric West

Editor: Roy Towner Thompson

Yearly Subscription (10 issues), \$2.00 Single Copies, 20 cents

Published Monthly by Roy Towner Thompson

3551 University Avenue, Los Angeles, California

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Entered as second-class matter, Sept. 26, 1924, at the Post Office at Los Angeles, California. Under Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1925, Roy Towner Thompson

Joan Dareth Prosper

Chanson

Come not with music, O my lover, come
On muted, twilight feet
That echo to no viol's throb, nor beat
Of any restless drum.

Bring me the gift of your repose. Afar
The dancers sway and swing,
With laughter-laden song and lifted wing.
Here, dusk and silence are.

Put your demanding love away. The tide
Of rest creeps slowly in;
Even remotest sounds are wearing thin.
This peace — how strangely wide! . . .

Yet known to me, as longed-for things are known
And tasted over-soon.
Mine is the prescience of the waning June,
The crimson rose, full blown.

Bow not with grieving, O my lover, here
Where the calm tide flows deep;
Your breath shall blow me to the brink of sleep, . .

Your lips . . . your lips! Was it a dream that stole

Between us? Let me wake
To the mad hunger of your kisses. — Break,
Rather than part, my soul!

Norma Miller

Nocturne

The ebony shell's broken,
And the dreams
Flow in a staining crimson
Where the dawn streams.
All night down the valley
Withering winds went
Stirring the haunting echoes
Of discontent.
One could fit to their moaning
Never a word,
But the rocks knew the language
And the trees heard.
Gray trees bent and they murmured
Things wind-taught,
But the rocks were impassive;
They sighed not.
When the wind goes wandering,
Who can stay
Serene and immobile,
Waiting for day?
When the sky is wind-tangled,
And the moon rides
Swift out into the shadows
Where space hides,
Who then can let wisdom
Or joy or woe

Bind chains on his body
If he would go?
When the sharp edge of the darkness
Is quick with wind,
When the long roads are deserted
When hills are kind
The night then is a Hermes
And one keeps pace
On light feet beside him
With strange grace.

Dorothy McVickar

Two Songs

YOUTH

A ship is there that waits for me;
And I must go.
Where is my cloak with scarlet thread?
And my flute to blow?

AGE

Hangs the grape purple on its vine?
And bloom the rods a maze of gold?
Well, softly then . . . A tiny fire
Before the cold.

Ernest G. Moll

The Gleaner

I am a gleaner where my dreams have run
With swift and shining sickles on before,
And silent are the lands beneath the sun
Where they will reap no more;

Yet all my days I gather broken grain
Content with little when each day is done,
For on the low horizon of the plain
Bright sickles flash the sun.

Mary Carolyn Davies

The Death of a Sun

Metallic sheen of water on the sand!
The tall sun with its hand
Laid lightly on the sea
Vaults over the great wall that marks the end
And edge of the world. Because you are my friend
I walk with you to see these marvels done.
Oh, what a strange and motley sort of play
Is this wherein we move in stately way!
What strutting actors! You, I, sand, sea, sun!

Doris L. Bradley

The Bondage-Breaker

The tavern was a weary distance;
I sought rest by the wayside
Where the grass was alive with the health
And richness of spring
And the palms flung heavy shadows.
Gray'd by the ceaseless dust of the road
Was an ancient stone.
I leaned against its rooted strength
And laid my staff on its scarred surface.
There was the road with its league on league of
winding,
Its passive content, its idle luring,
Its indifference to beggar and priest.
All the near world were travelers on that day,
For the bazaars were overflowing
With the imports of a delayed caravan.
Passer-by!
I studied the checkered stream
And wondered what men are:
The meaning of their strange and complex life, —
The significance of their death
And sorrowed for myself as an example
Of the unfathomable depth of their nescience.
And so the tired afternoon burned and passed
With shadows changing and thinning
And a breeze, light and desert-born,

Bringing deeper and sadder thoughts.
Still I leaned against the stone
While the sun slipped behind the earth.
A strange and quiet spirit laid its charm upon me.
My dreams filled my eyes and I saw unrealities, —
The earth about me,
All its softened ornaments, all its music,
The beaded glance of the stars. . . .
I was alone.
Alone with an effective and perishable picture.
The old impelling force to exist was a memory.
I was dimly aware of seeking, sometime, a far tavern. .
.
All was solved at last: indeed, there had been no
puzzle.
Even the stars that dwelt in the heavens
Were too simple to investigate!
But just when I was lifting my eyes for new dreams
I found that the spirit had changed
Inducing obedience, which is mortal slavery
To the established.
And I rose, shaking the dust from my staff. . . .

Anesthetic

She found herself not where she thought to be,
But on the shore, and high-tide coming in,
Flooding white sands with blue immensity,
Dashing on crags where other laws begin;
She just remembered going deep and deep
On rhythms full of terrorless delight
So glorious that she never cared to keep
All those she treasured and that wept her plight.

She knew herself one with the waning moon
Without the pane, now curtained for the dusk;
She trod the inner harmonies of June;
She tasted kernels which had known the husk;
She knew what anthers know in dusty gold
And what awakers lose was hers to hold. . . .

Lucy Hale Sturges

Chrysanthemums

The candles flicker in a silver sconce,
And life is casual and bland.
What matter now, if once
The moon rose over mist-hung hills,
And long blue shadows crept across the sand?
White nights will pass.
The firelight gleams
On old mahogany and Russian brass;
What matter if our dreams
Were fashioned of mirage,
Or if we lost, or if we won?
Life runs so smoothly on.
Today we sip our tea and chat,
And sprinkle cinnamon on bits of toast.
You speak a word of praise about my cat.
Is your complacency a stabler thing than mine,
Or is it, like chrysanthemums and autumn wine,
A gay, defiant boast?

George H. Dillon

Penalty

They thought that shame would make us dark and dull
And desolate; they took the tall sky
Away from us, and water, and the sigh
Of wind in a wide place — all beautiful
Things they had not loved so well as we.
They made us walls and hurried us behind;
They did not think that we could see as blind
Men see — as surely and as quietly.

Now slowly shapes and colors loom and rise:
We know the patterns of our prison, how
Cool shadows come like hands on a quiet brow:
No distant voice will take us by surprise
Nor any footfall startle us — our eyes
Have got accustomed to the darkness now.

Geraldine Seelemire

Dream Woman

She lay beneath old ruins in the moonlight,
Like the white wing of a bird,
Her long hair entangled in the lowest branches of dim
trees.

Webbing of shadow moved around her with the wind,
And a moth of silver softly brushed her lips.
Dew arose like incense from grey violets.

Out of the dark, my hand touched the white of her
body.

The weight of it lay on her throat.

She arose like a mist. Her arms were white shafts of
the moon

Only the grass where I kneel is crushed. . . .

Lew Sarett

To a Grove of Silver Birches

Good morning, lovely ladies! I've never seen
 You half so fair, — I swear;
How beautiful your gowns of apple-green
 And the ribbons in your hair!

What rapture do you await? What coming swain?
 Such rustling of petticoats!
Such wagging of heads and prinking in the rain!
 Such fluttering at your throats!

Dear winsome vestals, your flurry is no whim.
 I know your sly design:
And why the sap goes pulsing up each limb
 Sparkling as apple wine.

O ladies, trick you in your gala-best;
 For out of the ardent South,
Young April comes with a passion in his breast,
 And a kiss upon his mouth.

Paul Eldridge

Comments on Life

FU LUNG, POLITICIAN, EXPLAINS HIMSELF

The one-skinned mouse
Hangs from the teeth of the cat,
Tail outward —
The many-colored chameleon
Escapes the crooked claws
Of the bewildered eagle —
Fu Lung is wise and obedient;
He always follows
The perfect precepts
Of the Eternal Master.

TURNING THE CHEEK

Life, Lady of Whims,
Hurled stones at me;
I gathered them,
Patiently,
I soaked them long within my blood;
I rounded the sharp uneven points;
I polished and planed them
With palms that ached and trembled,
Until they dazzled and soothed
Like setting suns.
I placed them in a perfect circle
Upon a platter of heavy gold,
And bowing,
Humbly,
In the dust,
Returned them, praying:
“Madam, accept these giant rubies
For your diadem!”

Ted Olson

Crusader

There is no truce for you. You must go on,
Stumbling, sweat-blinded, desperate, and alone.
You will have husks for bread; for bed, a stone.
You will lie cowering, nuzzled by a spawn
Of slimy terrors. Dawn will follow dawn
And bring no surcease — only a challenge, blown
From taunting distances; ice at the bone;
Snow-murk, wind-smother — and the dim trail gone.

This is your destiny. Your blood and tears
Will chart the grim way upward to the pass.
Eden you seek — Arcadia. Yet who knows?
Will the dark irony of the sullen years
Show you, at last, a stench of blind morass
And the white horror of uncharted snows?

Tonio

The New Woman's Last Note

It was our day of days! O my own, why were you sad!

There in that waste tract of cactus, sand; the early
evening, the sun. . . .

Those lights, that color, there on the far dim hills, what
mad

Intelligence outspread to burn your soul — to run
Cataracts of white pain across your lagging sight!

Why were you sad? In that last hour, how could you
know

To say to me — me with my little message, my muted
cry

That lacked the hammering anvil of triumph's test —
“Go?”

You were so bleak, so strained, — in a flash everything
wide, waiting . . . You didn't try.

You might have had me and you sent me on my way.

Such a little lad to tower so! All you had,

Burnt white around the fire of youth, you brought in
black that day

And turned it so suddenly gold — why were you sad?

Summer Storm in Los Angeles

When a July storm sweeps down the blue-black
Sierras,
The trees in the park murmur together,
Surprised
And a little abashed.

They stand, looking away from the mountains,
Murmuring to each other,
Like well-bred people at an afternoon tea,
Who talk at random, politely oblivious,
When an awkward maid upsets the tea-wagon.

The pepper tree,
A luscious Spanish dowager,
Trailing oriental perfume,
Vivid in green satin,
With many antique rubies sewn in her bodice,
Rustles her fair rotundity aggrievedly.

The royal palm,
A slender, silver-gowned princess-débutante,
Bashfully digs tiny silver-shod feet into the moist
grass,
And droops shyly,
With a delicious beckoning motion of her graceful
limbs.

There is no nonsense about the English oak.
The cloudless skies of his adopted home bore him at
times,
When memories of gray Atlantic combers,
Thunderously climbing the white cliffs of Albion
Stir in his subconsciousness.
So he lifts his head challengingly to meet the rushing
wind.
He chuckles in his deep voice,
Glorying in combat.

As two surprised savage chieftains,
The sentinel palms
Stand stiffly at the gate
In their slender dark nakedness,
Shaking their tufted headdresses in bewilderment.

The flower-like foreigner,
The Japanese maple,
Crouches low, blushing a shy, bright red,
When the importunate wind woos her too roughly.
She looks toward the blue-black Sierras
Thinking in her heart of Fujiyama.

The date-palm,
Swaggering like a corpulent brigand,
A bag of gold nuggets clasped closely to his breast,
Rattles his daggers threateningly.
Yet he throws his golden nuggets all about him,
As if offering his treasures to appease

This sudden wrath of the storm gods of the mountains.

But when the July storm is over,
And the trees in the park look again on the familiar
 blue skies of California,
They preen themselves complacently,
As — not daring to look each other in the eye —
They murmur politely, “It was nothing, — an awkward
 contretemps — but diverting.”

Jennette Edwards

Fear

“Aren’t you afraid to stay alone
In a house so high on a hill?
The wind must come rattling the doors
And shaking the window’s sill.”

“No, I am not afraid.”

“Oh, peddlers and tramps roam the road
(They fill my heart with dread):
Have you not heard of these evil men
And of girls they have misled?”

“Yes, I have heard.”

Then viewing the family portraits,
My elderly visitor sighed:
“Once they dwelt here,” she rose to go,
“But all of these have died.”

A tramp knocked on my kitchen door,
I gave him a bit of bread:
“May God and Mary bless you!”
Were the evil words he said.

The wind raced round the hill and the house,
I laughed at its blustering:
Winds try to be obstreperous
When the earth is quick with spring.

Now a redbird clung to the window-pane,
He pecked with quaint delight;
He flew away, then back again
And pecked 'til I came in sight.

I read a book, I baked a cake
To help the day to pass;
But always I heard the redbird's beak
Tiptoe the window's glass.

The sun climbed over the top of a hill,
The west was a bright brocade;
Only the redbird stayed with me,
Dear God, I was afraid!

Wilson O. Clough

To One Grown Blasé

“Ça vous amuse, la vie?” you blandly ask.
But those red-lidded and hate-wrenched souls —
Those dazed and groping souls!
You yawn.

Ça vous amuse, la vie?” you ask another.
But those with dragging and sullen limbs —
Those women, pallid and drab as ashpits!
You shrug.

A silence falls.
There follows talk of beauty.
Softly swaying poplar plumes
Brushing a velvety moon;
Rose-tipped darts of dawn
Spanning a valley to ermine peaks. —
Your thoughts go astray.
You smirk.

You pat your flabby lips and smirk,
And move graciously on
To a futile papillon.
You bend a shining head;
“Ça vous amuse, la vie?”

Lenore C. Schutze

The Journey's End

Low setting now the sun shines in my eyes
And soon will come the dark; I wait content,
Repicturing all the road by which I came
Gazing on life as though outside of it;
I viewed it once, anticipating joy;
At the beginning of the trail I stood
And saw the long, long way that I should go;
Morning, with gentle breezes, fanned my face
Each tree and shrub was burgeoning with green,
Freshly with dew impearled, and all the air
Was fragrant with the odors of the spring,
I knew not stones were there to cut my feet
Nor dreamed that thorns could have such cruel goad,
That dancing lights might lure to marshy fens
And flower-bordered paths lead feet astray.
Many the travelers who have gone on,
Their names forgotten; why they laughed or cried
There's none to tell; their laughter is an echo,
Their tears — Why should one weep for anything?
Weeping is foolish, laughter is inane —
They greeted me in passing, and their words,
Exultant or despairing, then were mine.
I sent them forth, true words and false alike,
They will go ever onward through the ages.
Swift wingéd messengers took my replies
And, borne on echoes by far-going winds,

They still reverberate and will not die.
Only a pawn in this life's game was I,
Moved up and down, led on as are the blind;
Here doors were opened, there the doors were shut,
And oftentimes with puny hands I beat,
With bruised and bleeding hands on them I beat,
The while I called to heavens of adamant
That gave back scornful laughter to my prayers.
The angels came in Sorrow's blackest night
And filled the air with rustle of their pinions,
I saw the scarlet of their flame-tipped wings;
They comforted, they ministered to me.
The threads of my life's warp are gathered up
And I can trace the pattern in the woof
Finished, complete, and beautiful; I ask
No longer "Why"; I can but recognize
My plans had ruined all the well-wrought scheme;
I stand aghast remembering what I prayed.
Shall all the love and care of all the years
Cease now, when I am old, alone and weary?
That were to make the love but cruelty;
Life's sun shines low, I go into the dark,
I am content, content and unafraid.

Between Editor and Reader

We hope to be able to announce the winners of the Sarah Bixby Smith and Ben Field Prizes in our next issue. These two prizes were offered for the best lyric and best narrative poems, respectively, to appear in Vol. IV. Jessie B. Rittenhouse will act as one of the judges; we are unable to announce the other two at the present time. For the Charles Granger Blanden Prize, offered for the best blank verse poem published in the LYRIC WEST during 1925, we invite further competition.

We wish to call attention to our new policy of issuing only ten numbers during the calendar year. The June-July and August-September numbers will be combined. The subscription price will be two dollars for the ten numbers.

Since our last issue there have been many reprints of our poems in various magazines and newspapers. Paul Tanaquil's "Sea Captain" was reprinted in the *Literary Digest*; Lilian White Spencer's "Apple Tree" and Frances Wierman's "The Husband of Lady Godiva" were reprinted in the *Denver Post*; Joan Dareth Prosper's "Names" and also her "Lyric" were reprinted by the *Literary Digest*; Winifred Davidson's "*Evening Slippers*" was copied by a number of Western newspapers; Molly Anderson Haley's "Country-born" was printed in the *New York Herald-Tribune's* "Best Poems of the Month" column. These reprints we have learned of only casually; there have doubtless been many others.

Of this month's contributors, four are appearing for the first time. Miss MCVICKAR sends her poems from Paris; EARNEST G. MOLL, associate editor of the *Mesa*, writes from Colorado Springs; DORIS L. BRADLEY, of Ruth, Nevada, has recently contributed to the *Midland*; ISABEL FISKE CONANT is a frequent and well-known contributor to Eastern verse magazines.

Of the contributors who have previously appeared in our pages, these four are appearing for the first time in the current volume: JOSEPHINE VAN DOLZEN PEASE, Chicago; ETHELEAN TYSON GAW, Los Angeles; LENORE C. SCHUTZE, Los Angeles; LUCY HALE STURGES, Redlands, California. The remaining contributors have appeared so frequently, or so recently, that comment upon them seems unnecessary.

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