

VOL. V

AUGUST 1926

NO. 9

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Margaret Widdemer | Noel Stearn

Ariel Royal | Yorozu Tsurumi

Lois Burton Moon and others

BRIEF REVIEWS

SUBSCRIPTION \$2.00 PER YEAR

SINGLE COPIES 20c

The Lyric West

Vol. V, No. 9

A Magazine Of American Verse

August, 1926

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

This edition is set from a page-by-page transcription of a scan of the issue. The transcription makes no editorial decisions; the decisions are listed in the file that produced this book. The advertising is not reproduced.

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

CONTENTS

<u>Message</u>	<i>Margaret Widdemer</i>	245
<u>Four and a Picnic</u>	<i>Portia Martin</i>	246
<u>Unto the Hills</u>	<i>Doris Clute</i>	249
<u>The Workman</u>	<i>Beulah May</i>	251
<u>Poets—A Symposium</u>		
<u>The Poet</u>	<i>Robert Haven Schauffler</i>	252
<u>My Songs</u>	<i>Louis Ginsberg</i>	252
<u>Query</u>	<i>Noel Stearn</i>	253
<u>Weaving</u>	<i>Winifred Gray Stewart</i>	253
<u>Dramatic Poet</u>	<i>Chard Powers Smith</i>	254
<u>At Emerald Bay</u>	<i>Clinton Scollard</i>	255
<u>At Figueroa</u>	<i>Anna Catherine Markham</i>	255
<u>Scherzo</u>	<i>Joan D. Prosper</i>	256
<u>Cinquain</u>	<i>Ruth Clay Price</i>	256
<u>When —</u>	<i>Ariel Royal</i>	257
<u>The Ghost</u>	<i>Hugh W. Ramsaur</i>	257
<u>A Woman on the Shore</u>	<i>Mildred Fowler Field</i>	259
<u>Burnt Offering</u>	<i>Katherine D. Kendig</i>	259
<u>The Army of Occupation</u>	<i>Alberta Bancroft</i>	260
<u>Thirteenth Labor</u>	<i>Jacques Le Clercq</i>	261
<u>Out of the West</u>	<i>Neeta Marquis</i>	262
<u>Translations of Original Japanese</u>		
<u>Tanka</u>	<i>Yoroze Tsurumi</i>	263
<u>Alabaster</u>	<i>Raymond Kresensky</i>	264
<u>Silences</u>	<i>Ethel Brodt Wilson</i>	264
<u>Our Younger Singers</u>		
<u>Sea Song</u>	<i>Julia Clara Birk</i>	265
<u>Youth</u>	<i>Grace E. Reeves</i>	265
<u>The Artistry of the Stanza, IX</u>	<i>A. G.</i>	266
<u>Brief Reviews</u>	<i>Lois Burton Moon</i>	272

The Lyric West
Editors: Mr. and Mrs. Allison Gaw

Yearly Subscription \$2.00 Single Copies, 20 Cents

Published Monthly, Except June and August, by the Editors
3551 University Avenue, Los Angeles, California

All Rights Reserved

All manuscripts should be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope. Otherwise The Lyric West cannot be responsible for their return

Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1925, at the Post Office at Los Angeles, California, under Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1926, Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw.

Among Our Contributors

Joan D. Prosper was the winner of the Sarah Bixby Smith prize for the best lyric in THE LYRIC WEST for 1925.

Anna Catherine Markham is the secretary of the Poetry Society of America. She is the wife of Edwin Markham.

Chard Powers Smith is the author of a volume of poems *Along the Wind*, published by the Yale University Press in 1925.

Yorozu Tsurumi contributes English translations of a series of his own Japanese *tanka*. Although no attempt is made to preserve the *tanka* form in the English version, they well illustrate the Japanese art of delicate pictorial contrast and elusive suggestiveness that so many English experimenters in the *tanka* form fail to attain.

Margaret Widdemer, Clinton Scollard, Robert Haven Schauffler and Jacques Le Clercq are names well known to all readers of poetry. Brief accounts of each of these authors have appeared in recent issues of THE LYRIC WEST.

Of the twenty-two contributors in this issue one comes to us from the Belgian Congo, West Africa, one from Connecticut, eight from California, one from Illinois, one from Iowa, two from New Jersey, six from New York, one from Texas and one from Washington.

Margaret Widdemer

Message

(I. L. H.)

I would have brought you lilac-winds from Spring
And ivoried satin pillows for your sleep,
But all I gave was such a little thing,
One laughing hour to keep;

Now all is yours, Heaven's crystal-heighted joys
And all its gladnesses you scarcely dared
Dream would be given for earth's sweet colored toys
Your meekness never shared —

Oh, now you know that saints may laugh above!
You, who remembered such small gifts long after,
Remember, passed from love to All of Love,
That once I brought you laughter.

Portia Martin

Four and a Picnic

*What are they thinking, these three,
as we start for a picnic?*

*Are they of the wind
as I?*

*Are they marsh-Mary's-gold?
Are they scent of crab-apple blossom?*

*What are they thinking, these three,
as we walk together in springtime?*

We come to a bridge.
I wait
and let them pass over.
I am a willow tree
and the joy that enfolds it.
My heart to the heart of all trees is caught
and the song of their sap thrills within me.

*What are they thinking, these three,
who urge me to hurry?*

We come to pasture bars,
a pasture green to our feet
and white with a riot of fruit trees.
Petals fall,

and I follow,
wild and lone on the wind,
white and frail, and forgotten,
for honey has sated the bee
and pistils grow heavy with autumn.

*What are they thinking, these three,
who untangle my hair from the branches?*

We climb a leaf-budded hill,
coral and mauve and gray, golden and green in the
 sunlight.
We gather wood for a fire.
We unpack our baskets.

*What are they thinking, these three,
as we busy ourselves, as we chatter?*

The sun descends in a shower
that catches the color of cloud-drift
lashing the new moon's white
with orange and crimson and silver,
racing into the dusk
along a swift arch of rainbow.

*Do they think of the rainbow, these three,
their lives curve upward to meet it?*

Our fire brands the dark
as the first cave-fire
with the mark of Man and his Woman.

Our fire brands the dark
as the fire in the earth,
as the fire in the sun,
with the mark of Eternal Becoming.

*What are they thinking, these three,
who share in the piling of branches?*

Roll logs on the fire,
drive the dark on itself,
bid it surround us!
I am the defiance of flame,
and the black night-whisper of were-wolves!

*What are they thinking, these three,
as we gaze on the fire and say nothing?*

Rain falls again, heavily now.
Can the fire no longer withstand it?
Come, we must go to the town
and roofs where the rain may not enter.
Come, we must go to the town.
Beat out the last gleam.
Leave our moment to darkness.

*What are they thinking, these three,
as we grope down the trail, as we stumble?*

Pause on the bridge
and hear raindrops fall on the river!
Quivering-clear they fall,

worlds seeking worlds in tumultuous mingling of
currents
white-swirled against rocks,
impelled by desire of the ocean;
clouds that shall rise to the sun
and follow the wind-ways of morning.

*What are they thinking, these three,
who listen to rain fall on water?*

Life is thronging the sedge.
Life lies on lily-pads bedded.
Frog-voices sing
of all loves that have been
and all springtimes;
of Love that has been
and is
and shall be
and now is beginning.

*What are they thinking, these three?
What to them are the frog-voices singing?*

Good-night, my friends of the rain,
my own lighted room now receives me,
a roof where rain may not come,
a room you are never to enter.

*What are they thinking, these three,
each alone now the picnic is over?*

Doris Clute

Unto the Hills

When you're weary of exploring city pleasures — find
them boring,

As you test them ever over, one by one —

Won't you slide into a touring car and come to the
enduring

Hills with me, where they are lying in the sun?

(Oh! to you I know they're only just the Foothills,
brown and lonely.

But perhaps you'll see their beauty when I've done.)

Notice, over on the right there, standing out against
the light there

Mighty mounds of reddish earth, like mammoth
graves?

Do you know, I have a notion once upon a time the
ocean

Wore those undulating ridges with its waves?

And the valleys just beneath them — did the vanished
seas bequeath them

Dead sea-horses, monstrous star-fish, coral caves?

Now we're coming to Sonora, — seems a pity to explore
a

Forty-niner haunt of history in a car.

(Oh! I know that what you're thinking is of eating and
of drinking

In a place that's just as other places are.)
Come! a horse apiece I'll find us, and Today will fall
 behind us
With their hoof-prints on a road that takes us far.

Do you see this street that's curving to the hill-top and
 then swerving
Past the church? Well, where we're riding once had
 trees
Casting grateful shade in weather when the burden of
 a feather
Seemed too much — in summers hotter far than these.
Then no ice man called tri-weekly, and the patient
 women meekly
Bent their shoulders to the burden — and their knees.

Right into that past we're riding, to the days when,
 nothing hiding,
All the towns were "open wide" and mad for gain.
And the miners, good and "bad men," shot the streets
 up and were glad when
"Gloomy Dan" or "Irish Mike" said, "Come again."
"Set 'em up, boys," was the slogan, were it Tony, Jack,
 or Hogan
Who was pouring out the hard-earned "dust" like rain.

Ah, the road is getting rougher! were you half as good a
 bluffer
As your guide, you'd know we're back in "forty-nine"
In the golden days. And can it really be, those plinths
 of granite

Were denuded and left naked in a line?
See, though mute they add their story to that tale of
 stress and glory
With our forbears for its heroes — yours and mine.

Yes! They washed away that soil by a superhuman toil
While their fevered, dizzy fingers groped for gold.
Those were desperate days and daring when the greed
 for wealth was tearing
At all hearts, and making even love seem cold.
Think upon it! Forty thousand left their desks, and
 ships, and ploughs and
Came to mine in California of old!

What is left? —We pause in wonder, and a distant roll
 of thunder
Seems to answer, echoing from hill to hill.
Only stones —in awesome piles, showing gaunt and
 bare for miles,
Monuments to human passions, human will.
“Only stones,” I hear you saying, out of lips unused to
 praying,
But your voice can hold a little reverence still.

Let us turn our sober faces from these rock-bescattered
 spaces
And our eyes can rest on common farm and shed.
Funny . . . how the road seems mostly peopled with the
 grey and ghostly
Folk of former days! Such notions in my head!

. . . Look a moment at the view, man, — ever old and
ever new, man!
Shall I dream of those brown Foothills when I'm dead?

Beulah May

The Workman

Who was the artist sculptured all the nave?
The goats and maidens dancing on the frieze,
The rounded barrel and Diogenes,
The fluted moulding in the architrave?
Did he toss back his hair, and was he grave,
Intent upon his work, and when the breeze
Came ruffling in with talk of ships and seas,
Did he look up and whistle off a stave,
And as the light was fading, put away
His tools, and with a shout plunge in the street
And cross the Arno yellow with the flood,
Stopping to watch a juggler, or a treat
Of puppets in a booth, glad to delay,
Knowing his work was done and it was good?

Poets — A Symposium

Issue p. 252 · Scan p. 12

Robert Haven Schauffler

The Poet

Haunting the fringe of the forest, the trailing arbutus
hovers

Half in the world, half in the shadowy wood,
Timidly peering from under a dead leaf hood
At the highway's pageant of paupers and princes and
lackeys and lovers,
Sharing the peace of the dark and the fragrance and
mystery there
With the lustre and glory of life in the sunlit air.

Louis Ginsberg

My Songs

When you signal to your worms,
Death, as soon you must,
Do you think you'll turn my life
To mouthfuls of dust?

Never fear! — for when your worms
At their work begin,
They will stuff in them defeat;
They will gnaw chagrin!

Scatter all you want my bones,
Furious at me;
Never think to dig to my
Immortality! —

In my singing I am safe:
When your gnawing starts,
I shall live on other lips
And dream in other hearts!

Noel Stearn

Query

Why should I be writhing
With dim continual pain
Just to put a cloak of words
On the wind and rain?

Why should I be brooding
And writing little lays —
I who have been living them
All my days?

But you who live in houses,
You might never know
But what the winds were winds, and did
Nothing else but blow!

Winifred Gray Stewart

Weaving

I have spun a fine thread
Like the song of birds;
I've woven me a pattern
Of clear colored words.

Swift went the shuttle
Like a swallow's wing;
Gold, brown and scarlet,
An autumn-tinted thing.

Now I have a warm scarf
Of scarlet, brown and gold,
To wear about my tired heart,
And cheer me when I'm old.

Chard Powers Smith

Dramatic Poet

Ride by, moon shadows, ride, ride, ride
To the star and the darkened door
And the star-white cypress where you glide
And pass and are no more.
The blue-lit meadows rise beside
And the silver road before.

Behind the forest the moon is low
And horsemen ride between.
Unseen as time they go and go,
As swift as wings unseen.
And I watch their purple shadows flow
On the meadow's blue moon-sheen.

I am the watcher by the way,
And I ride with one and one
Through the milk-green glades of love and play
Till they reach the door unknown,
The while I watch beside the way
In my glow-worm light alone.

I ride with men through love and pain
Like the wind in the midnight trees:
But they ride to die, and I remain,
Who am all and none of these;
And once in a wraith of moonlit rain

Myself went by on the breeze.

While the shadows love and move and glide

In the purple caravan

Where all men ride, I ride beside

All men and am no man.

Ride by, moon shadows, ride, ride, ride,

Who have been and are not — still I ride

Who have never been and am.

Clinton Scollard

At Emerald Bay

(Lake Tahoe)

At Emerald Bay the sheer cliffs drown
In spaces lucent fathoms down;
In chrysoberyl, chrysolite
Waters they plunge from sight.

And from a ledge where fir-trees braid
There leaps a coiling white cascade;
It seems like frozen foam in air
Caught, and suspended there.

A dream by day, by night a dream —
Sunbeam or moonbeam or starbeam;
Pure beauty here exalted is
In apotheosis.

Anna Catherine Markham

At Figueroa

Incredibly, in the dawn,
Where palms of Figueroa throng
Against a sky of poppy stain —
Irrefutable, audacious, positive,
I heard my mocking-bird's old song
Out of the days so long withdrawn.
It came defying grief, defying wrong,
Abjuring all the loss and pain,
Telling of love that life would give;
And suddenly, all the years were gone,
And every thing was possible again.

Joan D. Prosper

Scherzo

I walk across your chamber floor;
My thoughts are dressed in silver shoon,
You'll find them spilled from door to door
 Like petals of the moon,
And think them only shining of the moon,
Yet, oh, my lover, follow — follow soon!

When you shall come on musing feet,
I'll hide your window ledge behind,
And laugh to see our footprints meet,
 Like any laughing wind.
You'll hear no more than whisper of the wind,
Because you are so sweetly, strangely blind.

I would not wish you keener sight,
For I must lean above your bed,
And through the still, dream-slippered night
 My scarf of yearning shed;
The misty cobweb of my star-thoughts shed,
And pillow on a breast of song your head.

Issue p. 256 · Scan p. 16

Ruth Clay Price

Cinquain

Rhythm

Of soil and seed;

Crescendo of flower and fruit;

Diminuendo of leaves: coda

Of dust.

Ariel Royal

When —

When I at last come forth — emerge
From out the dark sea-caverns
Of my drab-gray inhibitions,
Then shall I rise full-souled to birth
And as a sea-nymph floats upon the surging waves
Of the deep turbulent ocean —
Snow-limbed, full-bosomed,
Flame-haired, Beatrice-eyed —
And laughs to see (first glorious dazzling sight!)
Zeus laughing down at her
From blazing skies of undreamed deeps of blueness;
And feels the fresh stinging sweetness
Of the salt sea's tonic kiss
Wrapping her round and round;
Then, turning her face up to the vagrant touches
Of the craving winds, floats softly, passionately,
At rest complete,
Wrapped in the all-encompassing embrace of Ocean; —
So shall I give myself
To the ocean-wide, ocean-deep surge and urge of your
 love,
In that hour when I emerge
From out the dark sea-caverns
Of my drab-gray inhibitions.

Issue p. 257 · Scan p. 17

Hugh W. Ramsaur

The Ghost

Across unending fields of golden wheat
Rising and falling in a languid tide,
I saw the Summer pass on hurrying feet;
Only the shadows knew that she had died.

Mildred Fowler Field

A Woman on the Shore

I. High Tide: Morning

Press against my body,
Cover me with blue
Blue out of nothingness —
Lifting . . . lifting!

Turn my eyes to turquoise,
Make my voice
A gull of lapis-lazuli
In crusted sky-silver.

Lay me deeper than deep
In cobalt,
After the blurred amethyst
Of a far sail.

II. On the Dunes: Ebb

The dunes remember —
Folded, undulate along the shore:
Ivory lifted into softened bronze, far-off.

The tide sucks whitely out,
Leaving a long, wet mirror in the beach;
It wavers mother-of-pearl; dim opal
Under the sky.

The dunes remember greenly now
Soft fingers of the seaweed at their breasts
And mouths that were.
The dunes remember branches —
Not the old tortuous, twisted water oak
Grown black with reaching for the sun —
But rose and delicate coral on their brows.

The dunes remember
Tons and tons of tossing malachite.

Katharine D. Kendig

Burnt Offering

At Your Request

I have burned my love as an offering
At the altar of our friendship.
You may meet me now
At that austere altar
Without fear of seeing the leaping flames.
Even the sacrificial candles
Have guttered out,
The incense pots are empty,
And I have swept the untidy heap of ashes
Into my heart.

You Came

The altar stood severe as you had asked.
Then —
Your sudden look kindled the half-burned candles
Into dancing points of gold.
The perfume of your presence filled
The incense pots with fragrance.
The ashes whirled phoenix-like from their hiding place
Into militant fire.
And you yourself brought crystal vessels
Filled with brilliant flowers —

Ah, my dear!
The ornaments of love are beautiful
On friendship's altar.

Alberta Bancroft

The Army of Occupation

The mad one and the bad one,
They live again in me,
The spendthrift and the miser
And the preacher, *pardie* —
A lively, hateful company
As ever you did see.

But there is one of them, alas!
Who never passed my way.
She never came avisiting —
Not even once avisiting —
Much less would she stay.

There is a legend she refused
Two dozen men and more.
No member of the family
Had known the like before.
And two young men blew out their brains
The day she wed to cross the Plains.

The mad one and the bad one
Are pleasant company.
The spendthrift makes life glorious.
I'm grateful as can be
That the miser acts as balance-wheel
And saves my life for me.

And of course I must be reasonable,
And naturally I see
The other would not feel at home
In such a company.

But still, she might have paused just once
As she swept on her way
To gossip for a moment,
Even if she would not stay. —
She would have been more useful
Than the preacher any day.

It is a bitter, bitter thing
To know that I must be
A roadhouse to the stuffy hordes
That make my ancestry,
And cannot choose from out that host
The ones that I have need of most.

Jacques Le Clercq

Thirteenth Labor

Dare I daunt desires
That storm my heart?
Can I leash the will
Quavering my body?
Shall I put out
This singing flame?

*Weave, O Furies,
Nets of steel
To juggle the waves;
Enmesh the moon,
Your nervous fingers
Turned downward.*

Neeta Marquis

Out of the West

August in the Foothills

These fallow days that move serenely by,
Like amber circlets on a golden chain —
Still, passionless, of utter clarity,
Fragrant with tarweed sunning on the plain —

Come to the tired heart as poppied balm
To eyelids worn with waking, and convey
The spirit into nether deeps of calm,
Where no to-morrow is, nor yesterday.

Beauty

They tell me winds of England stir
Through drifts of glowing daffodils;
That flowers of flame and lavender
Paint beauty on Italian hills.

I long to cull the warm delight
Of every golden poet-land —
To sate my vision with the sight,
And touch the treasure with my hand.

And yet, if alien fields appear
More lovely than the ones I see,
Beholding them too bright and near,
How should I bear the ecstasy?

Yorozu Tsurumi

Translations of Original Japanese Tanka

Autumn

The hills dressed in autumn fire
Burn crimson.
A curved leaf flutters —
Falling.

Night-Wind

Long thin fingers reach
To caress
A falling plum petal
Under an April moon.

Smoke

Soft blue curves
Melt
Into the lily-scented air
Where a linnet sings.

Dagger

Her voice —
When anger darts from
Red eyes.

Kiss

A frail white blossom
Fallen lightly
On soft spring grass
At twilight —
When a peacock preens.

Raymond Kresensky

Alabaster

From rough stone we are carved.
Chisels dig into the flesh
And hammers beat our bones.
Let old winds blow
The powdered stone away.

Then the white soul shall stand,
An alabaster god
Against a purple sky . . .
Chiselings at its feet
And maul and hammer on the floor,
Because the Great Hand is through.

Senility will veil
This god with silver gossamer;
Eternity will unveil it.

Ethel Brodt Wilson

Silences

The bare trees
Hush the solitudes
Where mountains billow
Northward endlessly,
Eternally in blue.

They weave gray filigrees
And lovely wordless mysteries
Of breathless lilac-hue —
Loud-voiced silences
Of God.

Our Younger Singers

Issue p. 265 · Scan p. 25

Julia Clara Birk

Sea Song

Along the sea lies the Western sun;
Bright, red — dying in glory,
While over the dunes the mist-winds run,
Singing the age-old story.

A story of death and a tale of woe;
Men, men — under the vastness;
And the sun sinks down as the men will go,
Into the ocean fastness.

(Long Beach Polytechnic High School.)

Grace E. Reeves

Youth

Oh youth! Thou spirit old as thou art young,
In whose bright hands the whole wide world is clasped,
Hast thou the secrets of the ages grasped
That thou shouldst hear sweet songs that none has
sung?

Oh youth! What unseen glamour lights thy way?
What dream of life, and love, and victor's crown?
Thou seest not the lily turned to brown,
But glorious in its shining white array.

Oh youth! who ever holds inviolate
Thy castles; airy, fairy though they be —
Hold to thy dreams, thy songs, thy loves; oh, see
The vision of a new world! On! Create!

(Pasadena Junior College, Pasadena, California.)

The Artistry of the Stanza

IX.

Some Atmospheric Values in the Great Quatrains

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Or woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-linéd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

This beautiful old Elizabethan Arcadian pastoral deservedly holds a place in every general anthology of English lyrics. Its popularity is due, first, to its theme of pastoral courtship; and next, to its wealth of choicely phrased and lovely details found in combination nowhere outside of Arcady. Its structure is felicitously natural, yet strikingly effective. Sounding the keynote of invitation clearly and firmly in the opening line, it passes smoothly through a scene of natural beauty filled with human and animal life, and thence through the list of the lover's gifts, in their suggestions of beauty strong in their appeal to the feminine heart. It then completes the circle back to what appears to be a concluding repetition of the opening invitation. But the appeal is not yet strong enough for a real conclusion, and the last stanza mounts again for a single couplet into the domain of graceful human sportiveness against a background of spring beauty at its height, the appeal baited with a suggestion of personal compliment to the loved one; and then repeats the invitation with just sufficient variation to avoid monotony. Truly, an artful shepherd for all his simplicity! He thoroughly understands the rhetorical principles of clarity, unity, coherence, opening and closing emphasis, and variety that give ease and effectiveness to all good speech, as well as the subtle persuasiveness of indirect compliment. His verse form, too, is excellent. He apparently knows instinctively the fundamental principle that the rhyme emphasis of a line is in proportion to its nearness to the line with which it rhymes, growing less as the answering line is more distant. At all events, his couplets (*aabb*) peal out in

absolutely regular emphatic tintinnabulation, and the smooth iambic tetrameter metre gives a tranquil flow in perfect harmony with the calm loveliness of Arcadian existence. During the first two stanzas the impression is that the stanza is a unified four-line combination; but the unity is one of the sentence, not of the stanza. The real metrical unit of the poem is the couplet, as appears in all the succeeding stanzas. These couplets can freely group themselves in any number, lines 9 to 18 containing five in succession, all equally related. For the purpose of the poet the ununified melodious fluidity of the *aabb* quatrain with which he began proved an advantage, breaking up freely without disturbing the regular musical chime of the underlying couplet with its simple pastoral naïveté.

Of a very different mood is W. E. Henley's stern *Invictus*.
Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

This mood demands a form very different from the easy fluent couplet bells of *The Passionate Shepherd*, and the instinct of the poet has led him unerringly aright. In the *abab* form the music of the stanza is far less than in the *aabb* of the *Shepherd*, the rhymes being twice the distance apart. This would have been equally true if the poet had chosen the facile *abcb*, the first resort of the jingling amateur. But that would have been fatal to the mood of the poem. In the *abab* of the *Invictus* the hard beset soul struggles on through quatrains that will give it no rest. Through the first two lines of each stanza the metrical task is set in the announcement of the *ab* sequence, which having been stated, the third line must answer perfectly to the first an even eight syllables later, and at the end of another eight the fourth line must answer the summons of the second, the task not being completed until the last word of the final line has been spoken, immediately after which a new task looms up ahead. Artistically, as morally, the mood is one of indomitability. There are no imperfect rhymes like the Shepherd's *love* and *prove*, no wrestings of the pronunciation as in his *sing* and *morning*. In *Invictus* the rhymes are never less than perfect, and the even lines (in a quatrain always more important than the odd ones) always end in a pause that brings the perfection out with insistent emphasis down to the final grim reiteration,
I am the captain of my soul.

To see how fatal to the poem it would have been to write it in the form chosen for *The Passionate Shepherd* one has only to read the second stanza, first as it is, and then thus:

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
My head is bloody but unbowed.

No word is altered, but the stanza loses all its stern dignity and sinks into mere metrical nambypambyism. There are few cases where this not uncommon stanza so exactly fits the mood as it does here; but in any case the rhyme music is lowered (although effective management of the tone color may give the rhymes the loveliness of alternate chimes), and always the stanza is highly unified by the rhyme, inducing in the poem a tendency to move in four-line units logical as well as metrical.

Turn next to a famous example of a third quatrain form, *In Memoriam*. This *abba* stanza is peculiar in that it reaches its highest rhyme emphasis in the middle, the third line answering to the second, while the fourth responds to the more distant first. A sequence of such stanzas therefore proceeds with a somewhat fan-like movement of rhyme emphasis, closing, opening, closing, opening. By this feature the terminal emphasis of the stanza is reduced. The *abab* quatrain of *Invictus* is, in its terminal emphasis, self-sufficient; the *abba* of *In Memoriam* constantly leaves one with a sense of something wanting, of expectation not quite met, that harmonizes with a mood of wistful yearning. Further, Dr. Hiram J. Corson many years ago suggested another secret of the expressiveness of the form when, referring to this same reduction of final emphasis, he wrote, "The stanza is thus admirably adapted to that sweet continuity of flow, free from abrupt checks, demanded by the spiritualized sorrow which it bears along." Both of these qualities are to be found in the twelfth section of the poem, where Tennyson, awaiting the arrival of the ship that is

bringing the body of his dead friend to England, pictures his soul as darting birdlike out over the seas to meet it:

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
 Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: "Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?"
 And circle moaning in the air:
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

To test the inadequacy of the *Invictus* stanza for this effect, read the fourth of these stanzas reversing the order of the third and fourth lines. The sense remains practically the same; the spirit has gone.

Finally, the so-called Omar Khayyám stanza will illustrate the last of the well known rhyme orders. I have never met a good illustration of its use in iambic tetrameter (from which metre all the preceding examples have been chosen), but in the graver iambic pentameter of Fitzgerald's translation of the sad Persian beauty-worshipper its dominant traits are clear. Its *aaba* rhyme sequence follows one of the most effective of musical forms, that found in *Blue Bells of Scotland* and the air *Martyn*, familiar in connection with the hymn, *Jesus, Lover of my Soul*, to cite only two well known examples. The musical basic principle is that of Theme, repetition of Theme, Relief Variant, return to Theme. So in the stanza the first line announces the basic rhyme, the second line answers it and fixes it in the memory, the third line sounds a melodious departure from it, and the fourth delicately rounds back to it with a graceful conclusiveness.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:

The bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

Aside from its music it impresses the listener with its perfect unity (the best known of the *Rubáiyát* are like so many exquisitely rounded globules of bitter honey) and by the striking adaptedness of the final line to epigrammatic point as it strikes the rhyme bell.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,

Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

These are the stanzaic qualities that render the bitterness of the poet's thought more poignant and at the same time, by the beauty of their artistry, add to the present loveliness which is his only consolation and refuge.

We have thus studied the leading rhyme orders in isometric quatrains through some of their supreme examples. Other rhyme orders there are, each probably susceptible of application under very special conditions; but probably also (although in art any such prediction is highly dangerous) none of these others will ever prove widely usable. The *aaaa* order tends to over-great monotony. The *abaa* lacks the initial preparation of the Omar Khayyám stanza, and centres the rhyme emphasis rather clumsily at the end. The *aaab* is generally unsatisfactory unless the *b* is answered at the end of the next quatrain (as in Campbell's *Hohenlinden*), in which case the combination becomes an eight-line stanza. The *abac*, preparing the ear for rhyme by the first and third lines and needlessly disappointing it at the end, is generally predestined to failure. The *abbb* may have possibilities that one would like to see developed more than has generally been the case in the past. Space forbids illustration of these points; but the statements invite contradiction, experiment, and research, all of which the writer will welcome.

In our next issue "to fresh fields and pastures new."

A. G.

Brief Reviews

The Collected Poems of H. D. (Boni and Liveright) are inimitable as quiet, effortless poetry, the native precision or natural exactness of which makes its most definitive quality. All the poems are intensely substantive in effect, as if all syntax were of one order, a single coördinated form for the expression of objects innately active. The songs swing through the imagination as nouns of an enraptured vigor, still pictures of a very vibrant life. Achilles running in armor with the wind strapped to his ankles, Ajax completing the circle of ships, closing the great arc with his twelve golden cups flowing at the feast of Pelios, sapphire seas washing the Grecian islands with color like that of the intensest clarity of light—the hue of fine clear thought,—Thetis slipping beneath an island like the gleam of deep rare amber when the sun reaches it through glittering water, Adonis personifying the golden way of death, still white Helen hated as an enchantress by all of Greece—these are moments of the sheerest poetry, each a perfectly carved white figure against a blue ground, each a perfectly described figurine.

Honey Out of the Rock, by Babette Deutsch (Appleton and Co.) shows, as one would expect from its title, poems saturated in atmosphere. One, of a park that is “winterplucked,” has force and sculptural symmetry. Another speaks tonally of the passing of autumn into winter, austere and cold as the beauty of that seasonal death. *Lithuanian Autumn* is as much painting as poetry, a cross-roads for the two arts. Her work has all of it a certain poetry of composition. She is especially successful in catching moments of change, of transfer of one time into another, where the evanescent mood is half shadowed from behind and half from before. Perhaps the search for diversity comes from inner urge, as in *The Soul* (after Herakleitos)

Go thou
Her changing roads.
Know all her provinces.
Yet to her far frontiers thou wilt
Not come.

H. Thompson Rich in *I Come Singing* (Vinal) writes a volume checker-boarded with irregularities of accomplishment. The weakness is irrelevancy; the strength quite vividly that of realism and personal charm. The author does not sing well in the first person, sounding usually unforgivably egotistical because so hopelessly unhesitant. Yet two of the best poems, *To a Mocking Bird* and *A Prelude*, are written in the singular first. His work is temperamentally buoyant all through, but lacking in poise except for the first section called *Moods*. Some poems are colorful; the collection untrimmed by half.

Lilith by George Sterling (Macmillan) is finer dramatic poetry than any American has hitherto published. Genuinely inspired and quite perfectly enunciated, the lines are tapestried with rarely beautiful color and form. Their texture is like *Peer Gynt*, their sound a solemn orchestration of the pipes of Pan. Dreiser in his own vocabulary gives it brilliant high praise. *Lilith* wants no superlatives, deserving rather admiration most cordial and humble.

Princess Royal by Georgia Fraser (Vinal) is very welcome as an attempt at long narrative verse, the hedge rows being so full at all seasons of everything else. Although here finished in such atrocious versification as to make one wish continually for lines printed frankly as prose, the Pocahontas theme does maintain a certain definite narrative interest and shows some pleasing touches in the comparison of the ways of white and red men:

“We pray our gods for victory, and praise
Them when we get it.”

“And what you call the Milky Way is but
The Red Man’s bridge across the spirit world,
Across the land of shades.”

The tale *is* a fit subject for imaginative treatment in verse. Wherefore this unskilled version *is* an addition in substance to early American historical legend, though not in form to American poetry early or late.

Charles Hanson Towne’s *Selected Poems* (Appleton) containing *Manhattan*, *A Song in April*, *An Easter Canticle*, *A Ballad of the Circus*, together with some very interesting reactions to Endymion and the skylark of Shelley, is such a collection of verses as one would expect from Mr. Towne — the fine, restrained work of genuine feeling and cultured fabric, emotion and idea presented with perfect good taste.

Caravan by Witter Bynner (Knopf), going now into its second edition, contains some exquisitely sympathetic lines, as well as some most cryptic wondering irony. Stimulating and charming throughout, there is nothing so amusing as *Pallor*, a most artistic concern with the early duskiness of the race, or so finely pictorial as the primitive rhythm in *A Dance for Rain*.

Lois Burton Moon