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NO. 1

The
LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Mary Brent Whiteside | Ethel Brooks Stillwell

Alberta Bancroft | Helene Mullins

L. B. M. and others

BRIEF REVIEWS

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The Lyric West

Vol. VI, No. 1

A Magazine Of American Verse

October, 1926

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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The Lyric West

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Some Contributors in This Issue

The seven-hundredth anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi has brought forth many tributes to that gentle spirit from the poets. Dr. Mary Brent Whiteside, whose *Troubadour of God* opens this sixth volume of THE LYRIC WEST, is a frequent contributor to these pages.

Lillian White Spencer sends two versions of St. Francis' exquisite *Canticle to the Sun*,— the first literal, and the second a rhymed version that, while not following the free Italian form, nevertheless reflects the quaint piety of the famous original. Mrs. Spencer won the Charles Granger Blanden prize for the best poem in blank verse in THE LYRIC WEST for 1925.

William van Wyck, of Paris, France, is the author of two volumes of verse, *Jessica's Book* and *Florentines*. His latest work, *Savonarola, A Dramatic Biography*, is just off the press.

John Russell McCarthy has appeared in *Scribner's*, *The Forum*, *The Literary Review*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and numerous poetry magazines. He is the author of a volume of prose, *These Waiting Hills*, and three volumes of verse, *Out-of-Doors*, *Gods and Devils*, and *For the Morning*.

A trio of California women appearing in this issue whose poetry has been the subject of much favorable comment recently are Beulah May, Ethel Brooks Stillwell and Alberta Bancroft.

Of the twenty-two contributors to this issue one comes to us from Paris, France, two from New York, one from Maryland, one from Washington, D. C., one from Georgia, one from Ohio, one from Illinois, one from Colorado, one from the State of Washington, three from Oregon, and nine from California.

Mary Brent Whiteside

The Troubadour of God

St. Francis of Assisi, 1182–1226

In sculptured pride among the Umbrian hills
 Stands San Francesco that contains his clay,
As though the marble sainthood of him fills
 These painted transepts of a later day.
Do they forget the troubadour of God.
 Whose creed was song, his altar lamp a star,
What time a glorious mendicant, he trod
 That path of love, where thorns and visions are?

O little brother of the singing heart,
 Giotto has painted you for men to see
Haloed in gold, who loved a holier art
 In every flower of your Italy!
While larks of Umbria keep your shining words
 To these your younger brothers that are birds.

Lilian White Spencer and Louis Cavallara

The *Cantico del Sole* of Francesco D'Assisi

(Literal Translation)

Most High, Almighty, good Lord!

Thine are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all
blessings.

To Thee alone, Most High, are they becoming,
And no man is worthy of mentioning Thee.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
Especially our brother the Sun,
Who journeys and gives light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
Of Thee, Most High, he bears witness.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for our sister the Moon, and
the stars
In the sky. Thou madest them luminous and precious
and beautiful.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for our brother the Wind,
And for the air, and cloudy and serene and any
weather,
Through whom to Thy creatures Thou givest support.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for our sister the Water,
Who is very useful and humble and precious and
chaste.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for our brother the Fire,
Through whom Thou givest us light at night;
And he is beautiful and pleasant and robust and
strong.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for our mother the Earth,
Who sustains and governs us
And produces divers fruits with colored flowers and
grass.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for those who forgive for
Thy love
And bear sickness and evils;
Blessed are those who will endure in peace,
Why by Thee, Most High, will be crowned.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, for sister our Corporeal
Death,
From whom, no living man can escape.
Blessed are those who will find themselves in Thy
holiest will,
For the Second Death will do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord, and thank and serve Him
with great humility!

Lilian White Spencer

Canticle of the Sun

Most High, Good, Mighty Lord,
Blessings and praises we
Unto Thy name accord,
Who speak unworthily.

Praise for the journeying one,
Light's apotheosis,
Our radiant Brother Sun;
Symbol of Thee he is!

Praises, Lord, for the boon,
Precious and luminous,
Of beautiful Stars and Moon,
That are sisters to us!

Lord, unto Thee we give,
For bright and cloudy days
And air whereby we live
And Brother Wind, our praise!

For our chaste sister—she
Who is so useful, Lord —
Dear lowly Water, be
Eternally adored!

Our praises, Lord, aspire

For strong and beauteous
And pleasant Brother Fire,
Who lights the dark for us!

Praise for our Mother Earth,
Who keeps us with her powers
And brings to sweet-hued birth
The fruits and grass and flowers!

Praise for the pardoners
Who bear ills for Thy love
And, sainted sufferers,
Are crowned by Thee above!

Praises for Body's Death!
Though none from her can flee—
Who to Thy will yield breath,
Unharm'd abide with Thee.

O Lord to Thee be praise
Forever! Let us bless
And serve Thee all our days
In humble thankfulness.

Joan Dareth Prosper

A Portrait

She wears remembrance softly, and a trace —
Dusk-violet, rose-ivory — of slim
Warm-eyed Madonnas in a cloistered place
Lingers about her, beautiful and dim.

Today she spoke . . . and I saw Dante pass.
Deep-shadowed were the gardens where he trod,
Sweet-petaled with spent roses lay the grass,
And it was dawn . . . and Giotto talked with God.

There has been singing on the hills today,
And Botticelli walked with me apart,
Speaking of things we knew . . . and on the way
To Florence, like a lily at her heart,

We saw the tower of Santa Croce, far,
Dream-lifted to the sky. Then evening spread
A whitened road beneath a wistful star . . .
And I was glad . . . and followed where it led.

I think I had been beauty-starved before
I heard her voice, and in a tone's caress
Came suddenly upon the open door
Of a too-long-forgotten loveliness.

Joan Dareth Prosper

The Model to a Statue of Herself

The limb, the lip, the breast,
Shadow for shadow, line for speaking line, . . .
I wonder if he knew that he expressed
In the mute likeness of the carved whole,
Too much of that which should be only mine,
My soul!

Beulah May

The Procession of the Four Kings

There are four kings, four stately kings, who come
Deploying past my window, they and all
Their retinue of knight and seneschal
With fanfarade of clarinet and drum.
Morning, a youth, high-souled and venturesome,
And Noon, the soldier, clanging to a brawl,
Evening from some old gray Escorial,
And Night, the sleepy lord of opium.

All through the changes of the year they pass,
Whipped by the wind with flying autumn leaves
Or powdered by the clinging Yule-tide snow.
Their horses' hooves sink now in tender grass
Or splash the mud upon their iron greaves. —
I catch my breath with wonder as they go.

Grace Frye

Life's Shoes

Listen, cobbler! Can these shoes of mine
Be mended so to look like new?
'Tis true
They've had abuse and, lacking shine,
Must hesitate to try the steep incline
Or dance with others on life's stage.
But then. . . . I know a patch or two
From you
Would soon give back youth's heritage
To my old ugly shoes of age.

What! you say, "Too worn to mend?"

Oh God, be kind to me,
For I must wear them to the end!

Ethel Brooks Stillwell

To a Blind Baby

Too pale, too patient, pitifully gay,
 Poor rose-leaf, blown beyond the gates of hope,
 What stern white Justice cast your horoscope?
What bitter debt of cosmos must you pay?
Poor pleading eyes that find the world so gray,
 Poor useless unlit stars of heliotrope,
 Frail waxen hands — how terribly they grope
Among our heartstrings, day on dreadful day!

God's pity! How can right be served in this?
 To what strange good such tragedy be turned?
 Pain, loss, death, sorrow — all are justified,
But what far future, what unearthly bliss,
 Can recompense for fires that have not burned,
 For eyes that have not seen, for light denied?

Irene Stewart

Mallards

There, high,
A sharp wedge
Parting the sky,
The mallards fly.

Their lonely calls
Disturb earth's edge —
Then close sky-walls,
And silence falls.

Gareth Emerson

The Hermit of Crescent Bay

As we went out Topango way —
 A grey day dawning —
Deep-draped in fogs the canyons lay,
Cloud banks bounded Crescent Bay,
Fish-scented was the dank salt spray
 In the chill gray dawning.

As we went down Topango way —
 A grey day dawning —
The mewing gulls swirled swift away,
Gaunt pelicans asearch for prey
In level flight patrolled the bay
 In the chill grey dawning.

As we went down Topango way —
 A grey day dawning —
A crimson glow burned through the grey,
My gay heart flamed to greet the day,
But his a burned-out cinder lay
 Through the ashen dawning.

For years since, out Topango way —
 A grey day dawning —
The great waves stole his love away.

Now vainly, in the flying spray,
He sees her lovely wraith at play
 Each cool grey dawning.

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Eleanor M. Titus

Blossoms

The plum tree is blossoming
In this quiet rain,
And little white butterflies
Are resting on all
Her dark branches.

John Russell McCarthy

Midway

Here gibbers the furtive-eyed ape. —
Out of what monstrous loins is he descended?
What hideous reptile scraping what flooded shore,
Inexorably procreating,
Whirled on life's storm through ages
Into this ape?

Awful — incredible — is the way of life!

And I —
Providing, imagining, loving, procreating —
How solemn and terrifying
That even I
Whirl midway on the storm that rises,
Rises, rises, rises to the glory of God!

Out of my loins what climbing cycle of life
Shall struggle to what pinnacle?

What airy being,
In the fullness of ages,
Shall look on me in stone and say,
“There, my son, is the funny-face
Who stands halfway between you and the amoeba!”

Tonio

Moon Dance

Like moths tracing little rapid shadows
Her raiment fluttered to the floor.
With ivory-tinted skin that scattered lambent flame in
the gloom,
She danced in the moonbeams awhile
And was gone.

Alberta Bancroft

Our Neighbors

I. The Harper: His Prologue

My father was a mortal;
My mother was a fay,
Who made a spell to spell me,
To bind me and compel me
And bended down to tell me
Before she went away.

“You shall have the eyes for seeing,”
I can hear my mother say;
“You shall have the eyes for seeing
In the night and in the day
Whatever thing may cross your path,
Be that thing what it may.”

And so I see the Faerie Folk
Trooping on your roads,
Peering at your windows,
Pointing at your loads,
Pausing at your table
And, be it day or night,
Watching, sniffing, fingering
And chuckling in delight.
And all the while you others there
See nothing, nothing anywhere.

“You shall stand upon the boundary hills,”
I hear my mother say —
I can see her bent above me,
So softly, sweetly gay,
All loveliness and laughter,
Before she went away —
“You shall stand upon the boundary hills
And looking down shall see
Two countries spread below you,
Where only one could be
If mortal eyes were looking
On crag and copse and lea.”

And so I see the Faerie Lands
That you will never know,
Close-set beside your boundaries
Spreading out below:
Your castles on the one side;
The other looking down
Upon the Faerie Valleys
And the towers of Faerie Town.

“And each land shall becharm you,”
I can hear my mother say,
Before she left my father’s house
And laughed and went away;
“And each land shall becharm you,
Each land there spread below,
And you shall be at home in each,
Singing as you go;

And none shall know those lands so well,
And none shall love them so.”

’Twas thus that spoke my mother —
My mother was a fay,
Who made that spell to spell me,
To bind me and compel me,
And bended down to tell me
Before she went away.

And so I am a harper
Who harps in countries two,
In Faerie Town I harp them tales
Of what the mortals do;
And they stand crowded all agape
And half believe it true.

And here I’ll sing you little songs
Of what the Faeries say.

So gather close and listen —
Believe it if you may. . . .
My father was a mortal;
My mother was a fay.

II. Incident

A Bit-of-an-Elf came flippiting down
From where she lived in Faerie Town.
She was bored in the Lands of Faerie,
And she wanted to work in a dairy.

The Guard at the Border lowered his spear.
“No Elf or Goblin crosses here.
Witches and Will-o’-the-Wisps go through.
This Pass is not for the likes of you.
Go back to the Town of Faerie:
You are much too pert and airy.”

The Bit-of-an-Elf was young and slim,
And she frowned a dreadful frown at him:
“The Mortal Lands are wide and fair
With cows and goats at pasture there.
That this is true I surely know,
For the Will-o’-the-Wisps have told me so.
I am bored in the Lands of Faerie
And I want to work in a dairy.”

Said the Guard, “What is this tale you’re told?
Your hair as it happens is much too gold;
Your voice too sweet and your lips too red
And your eyes too dark,” is what he said.
“The mortal lands are not for you:
It wouldn’t be safe to let you through!
You go and dance in your Faerie Ring
By the light of the moon. That is just the thing!”
The Guard was big and burly

And his voice was rough and surly.

The Bit-of-an-Elf was young and slim,
And she cocked a perky nose at him:
“The Mortal Lands are wide and fair,
With people always working there. —
I could turn my lips from red to blue
If it happened that color appealed to you,
And make my eyes all light and queer;
But it isn’t worth while. Put *up* that spear!
I am *bored* in the Lands of Faerie.”

And — she went to work in a dairy.

III. Harvest Law

You may cheat the state of its taxes,
You may cheat the church of its due;
But the law of the haycocks — that you must obey.
For love of the shy-foot Beeder Folk
Who share your land with you,
You cannot gather your harvest and away.

You must leave one cock
Piled firm and high,
Not too far, and not too nigh
To the edge of the field,
All smoothed with care
For the Beeder Folk to find it there;
And put a pitcher of milk beside,
That the Beeder Folk be satisfied.
And at the end of day
You must softly go away.

Then with the moth-winged dusk they come,
One and one, and one and one,
Slipping out from the gorse and trees
And bramble thickets and rockeries
While the dusk yet holds its lemon ring —
The Beeder Folk to their harvesting.

And there in the dusk, when they once begin,
Stalk by stalk they gather it in,
The haycock, waiting smooth and fair
For the Beeder Folk to claim it there.
And in their fingers, eerie-strange,

The stalks of the haycock change and change
To golden sickles and golden crowns
And silver shoes and shining gowns
(Stalk by stalk as the night wears on
And the lemon ring of the dusk is gone)
And glimmering pitchers to gather dew
And veils with moonbeams hanging through
And combs and chains
And girdles and rings
And double sets of gossamer wings
And flutes
And harps with singing strings —
Stalk by stalk until only three
Are left of the haycock company;
And the three last stalks they change for you
To blessings for the long year through:

A blessing for your roof;
A blessing for your floor;
And the last one, the largest,
A blessing for your door;
And never was there blessing made
That equalled these before.

You may cheat the state of its taxes;
You may cheat the church of its due;
But the law of the haycocks — that you must obey.
For fear of the shy-foot Beeder Folk
Who share your land with you
You cannot gather your harvest as you may,
And carry it away.

IV. A Voice Heard at Dusk by a River

“Goblin ferry! Goblin ferry! Safest of the clan!
Swifter is my Goblin craft than any ship of man.
Will you cross the river, or would you rather be
Gliding with the current and making for the sea?
Goblin lights are bobbing on every billow crest;
Goblin lights are winking all adown the west;
Goblin voices calling from the harbor and the key
Hail the Goblin trading folk coming home from sea.
Who shall know the treasure their hundred packets
store?
Who shall see the trading folk staggering to shore?
Who shall find their treasure vaults, or who can ever be
Near the Goblin craft as they come swooping home
from sea?
Goblin ferry! Goblin ferry! Shall I pass you by?
Would you see the trading folk, or do you heed the cry?
Better trust the ferryman: it is the night to be
Speeding down the river and making for the sea.”

V. Responsibility

The Elder Tree stood in the Farmer's yard:
He shaded the trough by day;
But at night he drew up his every root
And walked away.

Round the house and round the house
And twice around the stable.
He looked in all the windows,
As well as he was able.
The Elder Tree saw with affright
The Farmer was not home that night.

He made off briskly down the road —
He knew which road to take —
It was apparent that the night
Was very wide awake:
The Will-o'-the-Wisps in numbers
He scarce had seen before
Were crowding down from all the hills
From sedges and from water rills
To reach the alehouse door.
Their lanterns glimmered in the dark;
They were all ready for a lark.
They closed in round the alehouse where
The Farmers all were gathered there —
And when those men were through
They knew what they would do.
For Will-o'-the-Wisps lead men astray
At night upon their way.
But Elder Trees have guarded man

Since trees and people first began.

The Elder Tree walked quickly:
He feared he might be late.
He was distinctly out of breath
When he had reached the gate.

He saw another Elder Tree
Beside that alehouse door.
The two saluted stiffly:
They had met there before,
Each bent that *his* man anyway
Should not be lost or led astray.

* * *

And isn't it a pity? —
Those Farmers never knew
Who saw them safely home again,
Past ditch and bog and river, when
Their evening was through.

B. Y. Williams

In the Province of Shantung

Six captured robber-bandits in the Province of
Shantung

Were marched through old Tsinan to be a warning to
the young.

Six swordsmen stood with six keen swords uplifted. At
a sound

The bright blades fell — six bandit heads went
tumbling to the ground;

Six piles of freshly-sprinkled earth with red blood
soaking through

Were left there in the city square for slanting eye to
view;

Six headless bodies, cold and stark, from poles of
bamboo swung

To show the fate of robbers in the Province of
Shantung;

Six heads in wire cages to their native towns were sent
That would-be bandits might observe and fear the
punishment;

Six final piercing trumpet-calls the summer breeze
outran —

Then all again was quiet in the streets of old Tsinan.

* * *

The Yellow River tells no secrets even to the seas,
And age-old China speaks no word of all her mysteries,

But sometimes at the evening hour, when temple bells
are rung

I think I hear the wailing of six women of Shantung!

Mavis Clare Barnett

Wife of the Pioneer

So they had come to one more last frontier
 With four horizons where the yellow grain
 Would surge like golden seas in sun again,
Shadowed with quail or wind, and she could hear
The limitless sound of wheat for one more year.
 She said to him she hoped they might remain
 And he had kissed her, saying that this plain
Was rich as any, though she had her fear.

In the unpainted house she watched for spring,
 She and her unborn child, and watched him, too.
 He walked the horizons restlessly, she knew,
Polished his gun and dreamed of wandering.
 One morning in May he kissed her and was gone,
 And the next day she bore his son, alone.

Joseph Upper

Wrecks

They tell strange tales of sinking ships at sea —
How with gay banners rippling on the wind
And brave bands playing, suddenly they find
Their proud decks washed by the immensity
Of death, and know they are forever free
From doubtful courses, or the fears that bind
Small craft to their dull moorings, or the blind
Buoy-lights that smile at ugly treachery.

Could I meet death with such a bright disguise
That you, beholding me pass netherward,
Should feel your heart contract with swift surprise,
Or the still depths of your indifference stirred
By pity — Then, I think that I might be,
Like those lost ships, rich food for history.

William van Wyck

To J. D. V. W.

Lady, thou wouldst not lack the wonder-fire
Had I the glowing words that poets say —
Throbbing all-limpid from a lyric lyre
That hath immortalized a yesterday.

But my poor rhymes have none of that old ease
Which Petrarch brought to Laura with his pen;
That swept an Abelard toward Heloise
Until he was the sorriest of men.

Gone is the art that made a Dante turn
Words into suns; by which Rossetti wrought
In filigree, to make all lovers yearn
To put Love's golden nuggets into thought.

My verses falter forth on leaden feet.
Al that I sing is, that I love thee, Sweet.

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Ethel Romig Fuller

On the Market

Housewives crowd from stall to stall,
Appraising vegetables in fall.

Do they but think of ways to use
Such gorgeous things in soups and stews?

Oh, I can see a palm, a parrot,
In a green and yellow carrot,

And a summer all compressed
In a ripe tomato's breast.

Helene Mullins

Ode to Thalia

Not with bold jests do any go and stand
Before Melpomene; nor do they seize
The pearls from Clio's hair, nor lift a hand
To rob Erato of her mysteries.
But, you O Thalia! wise and gracious Queen!
Too long your beauty has been servant to
Ruffian and clown and knave and libertine
They, so unfit to tie your silver shoe,
Have stripped you of your garments, and have laid
A shameful cloak upon your loveliness,
Have knelt to you, and mockingly have prayed,
And bruised your shoulder with a rude caress.

Oh, turn and come with me who love you well!
Whose heart but for your healing herbs would long
Ago have ceased to beat! and I will tell
You day by day, in endless wreaths of song,
How beautiful you are; and you will show
Me all the glittering shrines where men bow down
To silent gods, and where vain lilies grow,
And where a mongrel wears a borrowed crown.
Be my companion down the dreadful ways
Where Death conceals his traps among the flowers,
And I shall weave quaint garlands for your praise,
And you shall be my Queen for many hours
Before my day is done; and when I face

The cave where Death prepares my final bed,
Let you turn back into the market-place,
With all my fragrant garlands on your head.

Alice Carter Cook

The Flight Through the Desert

A Drama in Miniature

Scene: The Desert. *The red headlights of a transcontinental train appear on the desert rim. Directly behind rises the full moon, white, ghastly and sinister. A solitary observer in the observation car constitutes the audience.*

Like the criminal, Cain,
The fire-eyed train
O'er the limitless desert flies —
And see! on his trail,
Grim, ghastly, and pale,
The merciless sleuth of the skies!

With shivering shrieks
The victim bespeaks
Some respite, but none shall he find.
On, on, through the night
Goes the desperate flight —
The Ghost-Moon, unswerving, behind!

Maud E. Uschold

Inhibitions

In half obscurity they glowered,
Like fearsome beasts
Guarding the deep, dark sepulchre
That was his soul.
By one swift lance of light
Impaled,
They were revealed
As skittering mice
Raising the very devil
Among the bones.

Our Younger Singers

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Juanita Turner

Painter

He knows the new moon, fragile as a leaf —
Pale as a dream;
He knows bright buds pressed thick against the earth,
and the brief
Glory of a rose; the gleam

Of young trees in an April rain.
And to each wild and lovely thing he gives
New magic from that misty lane
Of beauty where he lives.

But sometimes, when the night is still, he'll wake
And start; then he'll confess —
His eyes like death —the melancholy ache
Of loveliness.

(San Rafael High School, San Francisco).

Kenneth L. Collins

Fulfilled

I could not die in April
 When Pan plays, thrilled.
Why, every bud would bleed and die,
 A dream unfulfilled!
But let me die in Autumn,
 When Indian summer goes,
A flaming gold leaf in the wind,
 A painted purple rose.

(High School of Commerce, Portland, Oregon).

The Artistry of the Stanza

XI

Stanzaic Climax

Balance and Variety, we have already said, are two important creative art principles that, in harmonious conflict, give birth to a multitude of stanzaic forms. A third such principle is Climax, or the tendency in an art form to intensify its effects as the form approaches its conclusion.

One of the most important methods of obtaining Climax rhyme emphasis at the end. Now, rhyme emphasis may be heightened in various ways, First, it is always increased in proportion as the rhyming words are brought closer together. A stanza that concludes with a rhymed couplet therefore has structurally a somewhat high degree of climax. Byron uses such a form for his stirring *Isles of Greece*.

The isles of Greece! The isles of Greece!

Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,

Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:

Their place of birth alone was mute
To sounds which echo farther west
Than your sire's "Islands of the Blest."

The mountains look on Marathon —

And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persian's grave,
I could not dream myself a slave. *Etc.*

(*a₄ babcc*)

Such a couplet-capped stanza is also the *ottava rima*,
employed by Byron in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

Now pillowed cheek to cheek in loving sleep,

Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,

For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep.

And Haidée's sweet lips murmured like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirred with her dreams, as rose-leaves with the air.

She dreamed of being alone on the sea-shore,

Chained to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar

Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour

Until she sobbed for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high —
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

(*a₅ bababcc*)

Again, rhyme emphasis is increased by additional
sonorousness in the rhyme words. Note the conclusive effect of
the heavy vowels ending the last two lines of this stanza from
the same poem.

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say
In nameless print that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
 My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, — all that springs from the great
 Whole
Who hath produced, and will recall the soul.

Rhyme emphasis also increases when the rhyme is
dissyllabic or trisyllabic — a method by which, in *Don Juan*,
the trenchant satirist produces some of his most biting effects,
pointed by ingeniously daring choice of rhyme words:

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
 The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigor,
 Are good manure for their more bare biography;
Wordsworth's last quarto. by the way, is bigger
 Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy, frowsy poem called the "Excursion,"
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intellect;
But Worthworth's poem, and his followers, like
 Joanna Southcote's Shiloh and her sect,
Are things that in this century don't strike
 The public mind, — so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

Again, in some stanzas structural use for climactic effect is made of successive rhyming lines. Thus, in *The Affliction of Margaret* Wordsworth employs the unusual seven-line rhyme order, *ababccc*:

Where art thou, my beloved son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been forevermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,

What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less. *Etc.*

Here, however, the form is over-emphatic for the subject matter, and farther, is too highly insistent for monotonous repetition through eleven successive stanzas.

Much better than this, but illustrating the same principle of climax through massed rhymes, is the varying music of that miracle of graceful swaying beauty, Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters*. In stanza I of the *Choric Songs* the exquisitely modulated music begins.

There is sweet music here that softer fails
Than petals of blown roses on the grass,
Or night dew on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream that long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

(*a₅b₅a₅b₅c₅c₅c₅d₃d₄d₅d₆*)

Note how the stanza begins on the diversified music of an interlacing quatrain; how it then intensifies into a triplet, the last of the three lines mounting from pentameter into an iambic hexamter; and how, like a cresting wave, it culminates in four lines all rhyming on *deep*, that climb successively from trimeter through tetrameter and pentameter to a long drowsy alexandrine.

And again watch the artful effects in stanza VII of the same poem.

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly —
 With half-dropped eye-lid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill —
 To hear the dewey echoes calling
 From cave to cave through the thick twinéd vine —
 To watch the emerald-colored water falling,
 Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

(*a₅a₅b₃a₄a₅b₄c₄d₅c₅d₅d₆d₆*)

See how through the first six lines, balanced but not quite accurately, the music flows sinuously on, and how after four more lines of interlacing rhymes the concluding alexandrine couplet continues and powerfully reinforces the *d* rhymes, thus by the group of four *d*'s, three of them in final close succession, obtaining an intensity not achieved even by the four *a*'s earlier in the stanza.

And so the poem mounts to its exquisite flowing conclusion in stanza VIII, which begins on the metrical key note of a pentameter couplet, but immediately climbs into an uninterrupted series of no less than nine successive triplets,

while at the same time the emotion of the speakers will no longer be confined within lines of three, four, five, and six beats, but soon passes into groups of seven pulsations, not infrequently soaring for special effects even into the longest possible smoothly gliding line, the majestic octameter,

The Lotus blooms, below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow
Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge
was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
hurled

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curled

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight, and famine, plague and earthquake, rearing
deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
and praying hands.

But these are not all the secrets of stanzaic climax — of which more anon.

A. G.

Prize Announcement

The editors announce a prize of fifty dollars to be given for the best narrative poem or the best dramatic monologue appearing in Volume VI of THE LYRIC WEST.

For the type of dramatic monologue desired see Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *My Last Duchess*, and *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's*; also Patterson Green's *The Artist Receives Notice of a Bequest* in THE LYRIC WEST, October, 1925, and Beatrice Harmon's *Two in a Seaside Garden*, in THE LYRIC WEST, February, 1926.

The judges for the Ben Field Prize and the Sarah Bixby Smith Prize will be announced next month.

Brief Reviews

What's O'Clock (Houghton Mifflin Co.), winner of the Pulitzer award for poetry, is intensely interesting of course because Amy Lowell wrote it, and further for the fact that she did not live to wholly chaperone its publication. One wonders which poems she would have excluded. Surely many that are merely statement, or that jerk and startle with ill-reined polyphonics, do not in taste belong with those others that are greatly rhythmic and thoughtful. She had, nearly always, entire success with her little verses frailly cast as shadows of the East, her land of the rising sun and her best influence in poetic composition. Even the lovely long poems have that same texture of the shadow of a miniature thing but then seen obliquely. But the *John Keats* study, her last important work, contains in its execution more of the spirit of poetry than all the verse volumes in group.

Amory Hare in her *The Olympians and Other Poems* (Dorrance) writes a rather golden friendly book, sympathetic to the whole world of nature. *Gifts* and *Sewing*, *Chanticleer* and *Cockcrow* are among the gayest of the happy poems. *June* is lovely; so, too, are *Window Boxes* and *Echo* — and *Hills*, the fascinating result of doing a bit of Greek mythology after the manner of Corot. The whole is sincere winsome accomplishment.

A. B. Shreffin's *Blind Men* (Vinal) belongs to the lighter poetic vein. The author has a sense of humor more whimsical than riotous, and sings, often somewhat fragmentarily, as if to a journalistic accompaniment, a great deal of his work being obviously occasional. Nevertheless, one is delighted with his lines to poets and umbrella-borrowers, bookworms and candy-cake philosophers. And though it would be falsely generous to call him an American Milne, one can admit being cheerily confronted with the child poems that might almost

have been written for an American Christopher Robin — whom, indeed, the melting pot must have rendered a more obstreperous child, if satire is not league beyond the facts in *The Rebel Triumph* and *Spanked*. Shiffrin grips firmly the virtues of the middle path — level-headedness, humor, and an ability once in a while to write clean, quiet phrases that hit the mark. He is a shadowy third after Christopher Morley and Don Marquis.

Les Fleurs du Mal (Henry Holt), the *Complete Poems of Charles Baudelaire* in a translation by Louis Piaget Shanks, comprise an important study for comparative literature. With very few exceptions, the poems are acidly exotic, egotistical, and defiant, not beautiful at the core, although purple-veiled with aesthetic “chiffonism.” A most energetic display of the materials and stylistic art of decadence, they read themselves like maggots into the brain.

L. B. M.