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NO. 2

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Craig Rice | Laura Bell Everett

Laura Margaret Haley | Noel Stearn

L. B. M. and others

BOOK REVIEWS

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The Lyric West

Vol. VI, No. 2

A Magazine Of American Verse

November, 1926

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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The Lyric West

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Among Our Contributors

J. Corson Miller's poem, "On a Certain Contemporaneous Poet (For G. S.)," comes with a peculiarly poignant appeal at this time when the press is announcing the tragic and untimely death of George Sterling. Mr. Sterling has been for more than two years on the Advisory Board of THE LYRIC WEST. He acted as one of the judges this year with Dr. Richard Burton and Dr. Allison Gaw for the award of the Ben Field Prize and for the Sarah Bixby Smith Prize. His letter announcing his decisions came to the editorial office of THE LYRIC WEST five days before his death. In George Sterling the world of literature has lost a brilliant figure, the state of California, one of its most valued citizens, and THE LYRIC WEST an esteemed friend.

A brief account of the work of Gertrude Farwell (Mrs. Arthur Farwell) appeared in THE LYRIC WEST for April, 1925.

Three of our contributors this month are entering the field of literature by way of journalism. Don Gordon, Margaret Skavlan, and Craig Rice are all engaged in newspaper work.

Gladys Bovard Merryfield and Geraldine Seelemire are both seniors in the University of California.

Laura Bell Everett is the author, with Elizabeth Abbey Everett, of a volume, *War Verses*, and is also represented in *West Winds*, an anthology, California Writers Club.

Of the nineteen contributors in this issue two come from New York, one from Pennsylvania, one from Ohio, one from Virginia, two from Wisconsin, one from Oklahoma, one from New Mexico, one from Washington, two from Oregon, and seven from California.

Craig Rice

Out of Purple Valleys

Out of purple valleys we have risen —
Little silent smoke-wreaths,
Echoes from hearth fires long dead,
Ghosts of small and quivering aspens,
Laughing, whispering wraiths.
We have crossed mountains,
Lingered over turbid rivers,
Caressed the lips of inscrutable oceans,
Now we know the world
And are free.

We bring out of purple valleys
Whispers of long-forgotten day-dreams,
Smiles of a dusty child
Playing alone on the hillsides,
The dark secrets of those who live alone
In silent places,
The odor of burning trees
That you will never know.

Why are you so restless?
Why do you stir when we caress your cheek —
We out of purple valleys?

Gertrude Farwell

Francesca

“His kiss was on her lips ere she was born.”

They sit — old men —
These counsellors — absorbed.
They hardly move.
Their lives are centered
On the game of war.
Shall the troops for Florence
Be moved at dawn?
How can the lame Malatesta
Tame a province?
He cannot rule
His household or his own passions.
What matter who should win? —
What matter who should lose? —
Since neither side knows love!
Tomorrow's sun
Will rise as usual,
Perhaps I shall not be here. —
Will it greatly matter, Paolo?

Outside the night is quivering — quivering!
There is a trembling and flutter of troubled wings
Under the quiet plumes of the hovering dark.
Sudden stirrings throb;
The moon has gone
Beyond earth's dwelling, following the sun.

The ageless one
Who lives within me rises,
And stretching out her singing arms,
Departs to meet her destiny under stars;
And my dreamed children, waiting incarnate life,
She folds within her all-enveloping love
And steals with them
Into the burning mystery.

I may not follow —
O! I may not follow!
Though Love is calling there
In the shadow of stars!

I sit so statelily and watch
These old men playing war.
A thousand lives,
Ten thousand miseries,
Are nothing to them.
The Game is their great truth.
The Game goes on.
They are like gods inverted,
Playing at life in the dark.
Must I then sit and watch them
Defeating Love with schemes —
Love, who could rule the world with joy
But for their ancient fears?

Is it thou, Beloved?
Thou who hast passed the window?
Thou who art mine ageless, eternal love,

Gone forth that I may learn to follow thee
With Death through Hell
Rather than hide my spirit's wings
Under dead Custom's shroud?
For one has passed
Who wears the cloak of Night about his shoulders
Whose lips are tender with returning dawns,
Whose eyes looked into mine
And all the stars
Sank deep into the fathomed, shadowed green
Of my heart's ocean —
Sank — and became still.

It is time I took my garment;
It is time for my staff and the high road;
It is time to follow my children into the dark,
Though thou be Satan
Come to tempt me in this wilderness,
Love will know truth,
Nor fear that knowing truth will not lead back to Love
And furnish chains of utter power
To bind Leviathan.

They sit absorbed —
Grey-bearded counsellors.
Lucrezia has come in with hair as gray.
They scarcely move.
What is it they are waiting?
Where is my Lord Giovanni?
What secret deed
Keeps him as if in hiding

From the sad grey light
That can but penetrate the accustomed dark
Under these war-burdened battlements
To search the weighted folds
Of all the gloom-embroidered tapestries?
There is a fluttering in Lucrezia's hands.
She pants as if old age
Had come to claim her also.
Is there no one save Paolo who knows the song of life?
O Paolo! Paolo!
I am with you in the night.
You walk no longer
Lonely under the stars.
My soul goes out to meet her destiny —
Only her mask remains,
A smile upon its mouth.

* * *

Do you not feel a cold wind, Paolo? —
A cold wind, and the house is filled
With cries and candles.
There is blood on Giovanni's brow,
And on his hands.
He tells Lucrezia that it is not his.

O Paolo! We have not been brave —
Not brave enough to listen, and follow the song.
Not Love our sin —
We have not loved enough,
We have not lost ourselves in a great love
For all whose lives touched our lives.
We have loved and died

For ourselves only;
Therefore are we driven
Out upon this wind into the dusk.
Our love confessed, the passionate flesh denied —
Turning the bright coils upward into light —
Had led to Paradise,
How clear the outer murk makes thought and
conscience!
Will the white Christ
Ever come to us here
To say, “Ye are forgiven”?
Shall we be loosed and driven on this wind
Into the flesh again?
Shall we two meet in Earth —
Shall we two come,
In some far other land some distant time,
To know the opportunity and trial,
And holding fast to God,
Renounce the Satan and receive the Christ?
Pray that it be thus with us, Paolo!

The thick dark
Is clearing slightly.
Shadows must vanish when the hidden Sun
Shall reach His noon.
If I could touch the outer world of Earth,
I would go flaming through it on a wind
As fierce with kindled warning
As we now on this
Are frozen in a grief —
Teaching all men and women of this woe,

Ah! Hell itself were Paradise, if on us
Those who are fainting for each other's arms
Yet are so bound they must not —
If on us they could look,
And learning, turn away into the dawn!
Have we not died for this?
I do not know. . .
Only I wonder —
Endlessly I wonder.
We have not vainly died,
We who loved love
More than bright life,
If this be so.

The cold wind is blowing on again.
Pity us as we pass you!
Heed our woe!
Is not Hell lighter grown a little?
Ah, Beloved, one day even Hell
Shall bloom into great stars,
As each repenting soul turns in toward God.
A dawn is trembling at our darkened gates,
Though the bleak wind still blows.
We have not died in vain —
No, not in vain —
Though there was blood on Giovanni's brow
As was on Cain's,
And all the house was filled
With candles and sad cries.
What tragedies God suffers!
Is it all for reasonable growing?

There surely is more light;
A tiny star is shining and we go toward it.

Paolo!

What white ecstasy
Shakes Hell with pain and thunder?
It is the Eternal Face!
It is the face of Christ!
Cover me, Paolo, I am afraid!

J. Corson Miller

Of a Certain Contemporaneous Poet

(For G. S.)

His words, like glittering agates, smoothly roll
Along the darkened alleys of my soul.

Sometimes he has red words that fall in showers,
And drench my life with scarlet-bleeding flowers.

His words are birds that soar on joy-spread wings,
And to their tones a forest-music clings.

Now cool with peace they are — now evening-sad —
Nostalgic, too, with winds from Almodad,

For they have eyes and lips and hands that stir
Remembrance of lost love, grown lovelier,

Through permanence of fairy-pantomime,
Where bells of boyish dreams forever chime. . . .

His words are Troubadours of ancient years,
Whom Queens have loved and ransomed with their
tears.

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Ruth Clay Price

Trail's End

Only a memory, the wind and the dew,
Only a memory, the sky's tense blue,
Only a memory, the mountains and you.

Fragrance of sage from a chance-touched spray,
Fragrance of sage unheeded all day,
Fragrance of sage at the end of the way.

Josephine Mason Steen

Yeg Yhee

In Yeg Yhee's windows, wide and clean,
Long pyramids of fruit are seen:
Oranges, grown in sunny climes;
Fair, golden grapefruit; lemons; limes;
And, flanking these on either side,
Apples that were some Eden's pride;
While well arranged with facile care
Is many a shapely, wax-like pear,
Almost too perfect to be true;
Cool amber plums, and purple too;
Mangoes, with odd unsightly spots;
And faintly flushing apricots;
Great downy peaches, rich of hue;
Currants like rubies wet with dew;
Grapes with the bloom of southern slopes,
And many-patterned cantaloupes.
Then, looming high above them all,
Yeg Yhee himself, dark, silent, tall,
With long, deft hands that serve us well,
Grave eyes whose depths no secret tell,
And mien aloof that seems to say:
"I serve you, yet am worlds away!"

More strange than Yeg Yhee's bearing seems
Is one strange fact that haunts my dreams:
Daily we buy his fragrant wares —

Oranges, apples, mangoes, pears,
Peaches, and plums, and grapefruit fine —
And though the pyramids decline
And empty spaces meet our view,
Each day the fruit is there anew;
Yet to replenish that rich store
No wagon stops at Yeg Yhee's door,
No crate or hamper enters there.
I know, for I have watched with care.
It cost me many a doubt, in sooth,
Until one day I guessed the truth.

I have known many a lovely sight:
Spring, flowering in a single night
Upon the wind-swept, western plain;
The silvery veil of first, soft rain;
Once, in far Texas years ago,
Red roses blossoming in the snow;
And fairer yet, in eastern woods
Hepaticas, shedding sombre hoods
And pirouetting in the breeze
That drifts the snow of dogwood trees.
Such sights I know, yet crave one more:
To stand, unseen, in Yeg Yhee's store
(Some midnight when, his wares all flown,
Good Yeg Yhee thinks himself alone)
Then watch the strange and lovely thing
That comes when Yeg Yhee rubs his ring.

Margaret Skavlan

The Shadow River

The Shadow River glitters with dead dreams. —
The jade and gold of some old emperor
Have lent it color, and it darkly gleams
With mystery of centuries before.

The bells sound faintly from pagoda shrines.
The laden sampans float. Ah, deep within
My heart one brilliant, hopeless image shines —
The Lotus Bud of a rich mandarin!

What matter? — I, a fisher lad, may slip
Into these depths. — My Manchu princess sees
From that far lacquered wall, — The willows dip —
I sink — her brocade rustles in the breeze.

From the Water Comes the Fire

“Earth and air and fire and water — elemental four,
Holding in quadruple balance universal store;
Each from other comes, or may come — fire from water
rise,”

Utters Mextl, Teacher-Prophet. Swift the river flies
Down the mountain-side before him. Laugh the Azetcs
all:

“Quench our torches in its quiet, light them in its fall!”

Mextl chants in tones sonorous, “Earth and air and fire
Hold us — all we have or may have, all that we desire.
Water, fire — from one the other. Sun-bred rain and
dew,

Fire from water with the brightness of the morning
new.

Weave with me the magic measures. Bind the metal
spell

Till the river lights us torches that no wind can quell.”

“Mextl, priest of wandering visions, wizard of the wild,
Not because your reverend father led us can his child
Lure us far in foolish magic, tales of madmen, fools.
We will turn against such folly, test you by the rules
Of our Priesthood, send you from us clothed in fire to
find

Water to enlave your forehead and to light the blind.”

Counsel not so fierce prevailing, he is plunged within
Rapids of the mighty river. Hear him in the din
Of the jeering, taunting scorners: "Fire from water —
light

Yet shall gleam from out the river for a holy rite."

Sinks he in the winter torrent. Did the river's voice
Echo there his words prophetic, justify his choice?

Mextl, does your franchised spirit walk the great white
ways

Where our cities bask at midnight as in noontide rays?
When the lights from countless windows flash to meet
the coming dark

Does your spirit, free, exulting, rise and sing like
skyward lark,

Sing to see your words prophetic, kindled burn — your
heart's desire —

Torches blazing from the rivers? — "*From the water
comes the fire.*"

Ethel Romig Fuller

Voices

Colors always
Tell me of
Things like youth
And death and love.

Blues are dyed
With beauty's ache,
A girl's wide eyes,
A mountain lake.

Yellows are the hues
That sing;
Green is laughter;
Lilac, spring;

Red, a tasseled
Clarion;
Pink, the scent
Of cinnamon;

And white to me
Is nothing save
A rosebud
On a tiny grave.

Lucy Hale Sturges

Puppet Moon

The full moon shining through magnolia leaves
Is like a sheltered woman who believes
Life is a costume drama of old romance.

Puppets should dance on hidden strings
Beneath this moon —
Coquettes and queens in promenade,
A satin-flounced Arcadian maid
With silk-clad shepherd in pursuit —
The while a muted viol sings
And faintly distant echoings
Suggest a fairy flute.

This is no moon to shine upon a solitary sage,
A sickle hung above the hill
May throw dim light upon a hermitage;
A disc of copper in a foggy sky,
Ill-omened as the ghoulish cry
Of witches at their smoky fire,
May breath virescence into dead desire;
But this clear moon is not for these —
It shall evoke more lyric memories.

And now the puppet laughs ring gay
Above the stately measures of the minuet,

And now the shepherds break away
To dance an elfin roundelay
Until the moon shall set.

Geraldine Seelemire

Drift

GITANA *and* ORLAN *walking beside a river in the
moonlight toward the sea.*

ORLAN. A gull, a moon, a sky,
And three silent trees.
With still water
I should have two poems.

GITANA. You are mad with the moon.

ORLAN. And you? And you?

GITANA. I? Oh, I am moon-mad too.

*[She steps into the water and tries to catch
the shadows of the willows in her
hands.*

See! I have found my willow-boats of dream
at last,

And I am riding with the current of the river
To a low cloud on the horizon.

ORLAN. My boat, like a pointed shadow,
Slips between the stars of the river,
But it cannot avoid the great, full moon.

GITANA. Orlan, you are sad.

ORLAN. Only moon-mad.

[A soft sea moan.]

* * *

ORLAN. Gitana, no black wreaths above my grave.
No tears. No name.

GITANA. Orlan! Orlan! Your eyes are strange!

ORLAN. My grave shall be
So near the sea
That a sequined wave
Shall lave my feet,
And a tattered star
Above my head
Shall hum a bar
For the sea-cool dead.

GITANA. Orlan! Orlan!
Night and the moon!
Look at the moon!
Do you love the moon?

ORLAN. If I might only hold it in my hand!
Reach for it, Gitana. . . .

*[A cloud snares the moon in its murky net,
and the sea booms like a strange, dark
bell.]*

GITANA. When I have been polishing the moon
Until it is more shining
Than the oldest and most precious sphere of
jade
Of the most ancient Chinese King,
I will hold it in my five pointed fingers,
And dip it into the clear, black liquid of the
night sky.
Then I shall enfold it in a gauze of cloud,
And drop it into the curved palm of your
hand.

[They stand on a cliff above the sea.]

ORLAN. The girl-moon is dead.

I loved the white fire of her heart too well,

And now her ashes lie here in my hand.

I shall scatter them from a dark sea-cliff. . . .

*[He throws his hands out wildly, and leaps
downward in a long curve.]*

* * *

GITANA *leans against the morning wind,*

with

her long hair like streaming light and her

white hands stretching towards the sea.

GITANA (*chanting*).

Soft drift of water on your throat,

And dim, bronze sea-weed on your eyes,

Meshing with the tangle of your hair,

Fish like frozen silver on your breast,

And submission to green quiet. . . .

*[She kneels and slowly droops upon the
rocks*

beneath her shining cloud of hair.

The sea moans.

Orpha M. Gardner

To Moselle

Did you step from out a book,
 Little Lady of the South,
With your shy surpriséd look
 And the laughter-loving mouth?
Southland glamour's in your eyes —
 Mistletoe and roses fair,
Depths and shallows like the brook,
 Nightingales — all pictured there.

We are loath to have you go —
 Dear folks are so hard to find —
But some day, I almost know,
 When we're lonely, left behind,
We shall find you hid away —
 Ah, that look of shy surprise! —
In some volume dim and gray,
 Sweet romance of southern skies.

Laura Margaret Haley

Prayer

Wild larkspur,
Golden-rod,
Purple-headed weed, and pod
Of dry milkweed,
Sky and breeze. . . .
Only, God, a road and these!

Don Gordon

The Over-Song

*And whose shall be the Western voice
And who shall sing the Western song?*

The Western sea shall sway across the world
And bear high music on her breast
To old lands basking in the sun.

And yet. . . the sea runs naked to the moon
And sells her favor for a star. . .
Shall she, the mistress of a hundred coasts,
Be given the cosmic song
To mingle with thin gossip of the night?

The Western sun shall flame across the world
And cast the song in gold
And burn it on the sky.

And yet. . . though the tents of the sun
Are pitched in the West
And there the chieftain sleeps. . . .
An Eastern woman calls him nightly from his rest.

Then shall the stately song be borne
By a nomad wandering in the dark,
Who gives his dawn for payment to the East
And stumbles West in penitence at night?

Then let the Western poets have their hour
And send them in their pride,
Like runners on the hills of Greece,
To chant the Western song.

But even while the *motif* forms
Within the dreaming soul,
The vaunting poet droops with years
And the torn and brittle voice of youth
Grows frail for a master strain.

*Then whose shall be the Western voice
And who shall sing the Western song?*

Silent under the weight of earthen lore,
The rhythmic mountains rise
And sound in dignity the Western song.

Ballads laugh unformed upon their sides,
Where phantom epics crowd the rocks,
And rude sagas lie unborn
Across their strophic heights.

Through the screaming ages of the world
The gaunt gray poems of the West
Stand in metrical solitude
While from their mute, prophetic throats
The over-song moves like a mist.

Thelma Phlegar

Maples

The utmost lovely loneliness that any fall
Hides in its sunlight is about these trees;
Now they are patient, knowing it is all
Over at last. No late melodies
Break through the motionless branches, and no bird
Comes to bring solace for a cry unheard.

Such emptiness of beauty weighs upon
The heart that knows the splendid pitiable pain
Of ochre and silver barren in the sun.
These give no fruit; they are but leaves for the rain,
And they move only at the bright drops' will,
And when the light is on them they are still,
Dear God, how still!

Romany

Where Paint Creek like a golden vein brocades a
Midwest Arcady,
Some pseudo-Greeks have reared a fane to Pleasure's
nymph, Terpsichore.
Strange music, crashing in upon the claustral peace of
vale and hill,
Burlesques the ageless antiphon of quiring frog and
whip-poor-will.
Strange lights in garish lustres search the nearer dusk
with jeweled spears
That break against a Quaker church, the shrine of
praying pioneers.

She came unbidden to their door and watched the
dancers from the town
A-swirl upon a polished floor, in fashion's trappings
heel to crown;
Drawn thither by the lure of fate, the wilding from
some lawless nest
Of hill-folk stood there separate, unmoved by sneer of
covert jest;
Bright rags, the genesis of art, lent magic to her gypsy
charm;
A white flower trembled on her heart — a silver bangle
on her arm.

Her soul thrilled to the plangent chime of siren strings
and flageolets,
Concerted in *rondaña* time with click of Spanish
castanets;
And there was only one to see the surge of passion's
primal flood,
Who knew the race of Romany and sensed the stain of
Indic blood.
Her vivid loveliness he scanned with practiced and
approving glance,
And yielding to his mood's command, he swept her
madly to the dance.

There came a flaming interlude when vibrantly she
swayed alone
Before that curious multitude, a scarlet fire-flower
tempest-blown.
Her early scorers stared entranced; macabre sound
pulsed, wave on wave:
She danced as Esmeralda danced to death-bells on the
Place de Grève.
And when in after-thrall they strayed where wanton
breezes from the south
Profaned the churchyard's holy shade, his kisses
scarred her virgin mouth.
No dagger glittered from its sheath in answer to her
quick alarm —
Incarnate fury bound, her teeth struck deep in his
restraining arm.
But they were young; the tides of Spring, moon-driven,
clamored to their flood;

His strength once graced a Saxon king; her veins ran
dark with gypsy blood.

One evening when the vesper star swung tremulant in
Autumn's dome

She went her way in paths afar, forever, from her
squalid home.

Her foster kindred did not care — they knew the habit
of her breed —

For there were many bantlings there, and many
hungry hounds to feed.

Where fate had closed love's transient dream, fast
burned to dust in Shadowland,

A white flower drifted on the stream — a bangle
glimmered in the sand.

Elizabeth Ball

From Oklahoma in Autumn

I send you the charm of the redlands
In autumn's old disguise,
With the glimmer of tawny sunlight
And the mad blue of skies.

And the quaint blue of asters
That speckle the grass and nod,
And a riot of leaves falling,
And gay goldenrod.

Now were I an Indian chieftain
In the pride of my hunting days,
I would send you a hundred ponies
And half a harvest of maize;

But I send you a dreamer's greetings
On mists that hover and rise
In the glimmer of tawny sunlight
To the mad blue of skies.

Noel Stearn

Harvest Song

In the spring comes the plow,
In the fall comes the yield,
In the time of the snow
All the wounds are healed.

If the plow cuts not deep
Then the harvest is small.
Must the fruits which we reap
Come from scars in us all?

Gladys Bovard Merryfield

After Harvest

Seared grass
Lies on the yellow dust.
Hollow stalks are vibrant
And dead.
Parched shadows kneel in supplication
To the thundering gods of rain and of winter.

Like Autumn's season,
My short life-span
Ends at the time of harvest.
My soul has sipped
The sweet nectar of its season,
But now I kneel with nature,
For the gourd is dry.

Like the supplicating shadows
My soul's thirst,
Tense,
Fluttering,
Leaps at the stroke of the Harvester
Toward the eyes of Cressida. . . .
Toward the dust of Helen. . . .

Ethel Brodt Wilson

Each Star a Flower

Stars! Suns of suns
Recorded on the page of heaven!
I die in sleep
And waken to the stars
Low about me to the horizon,
Each star a flower
Swaying on a golden stem.

Our Younger Singers

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Julia Clara Birk

Mermaid

I shall come up from out of the amethyst depths;
I shall fling back my swirling hair, and with wonder
Gaze on the sunset; my long white fingers shall catch
At the flame-slanting rays, eager to take them for
plunder.

They will elude me, darting like tongues of great fish
Around and around, sliding like daggers in glasses;
Where I shall touch, they will break into stark, empty
shadows,
And, out of reach, heap the flaked gold in rich masses.

Only the sun shall see, and shall laugh at my sorrow;
Laugh at my fruitless quest, and my futile endeavor;
Then he will go — and I shall sink through the dark
currents,
Hating the cold fish, longing for sunlight forever.

(Long Beach High School, Long Beach, California.)

Homer G. Gane

“When the Morning Stars Sang Together”

Wonderful symphony
Not composed by man,
No thin notes, no jazz.
All full notes,
Blending, deep, resonant;
The soul-song of the sky-chorus,
The Creation Hymn of the world
Joyous at being alive.

The Artistry of the Stanza

XII

Stanzaic Climax (concluded)

In our last issue we examined certain methods of intensifying the conclusion of stanzaic structures by applying various principles of rhyme emphasis. This, however, is far from exhausting the list of devices that may be employed for giving such forms a heightened final effect. A second group of such methods comprises those in which the poet instinctively grants additional length to a line at the stanza end.

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Only in the concluding line of this celebrated little poem does Wordsworth rise from easy trimeters and tetrameters to the slightly heavier pentameter, the principle of Climax here triumphing over the otherwise natural tendency toward balance between that line and the predecessor linked to it by rhyme.

This device is of very frequent occurrence in the stanzas of the various ode forms.

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
 And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
 From Helicon's harmonious springs
 A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
 The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
 Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
 Now the rich stream of music winds along
 Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
 Thro' verdant vales and Ceres' golden reign:
 Now rolling down the steep amain,
 Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
 The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

So opens Gray's Pindaric ode on *The Progress of Poesy*. It will be noticed that only in the very end of the irregular music of the strophe does the poet rise to the six-beat iambic or, as we call it, the alexandrine. Not only the other two strophes of the poem, but the three antistrophes and the three epodes as well, are similarly climaxed on a solitary alexandrine. The same is true of the nine sections of Gray's other Pindaric ode, *The Bard*. So too with each of the thirteen uniform stanzas of Collins' ode *On the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*, and the same impulse is frequently observable in his pseudo-Pindaric ode, *The Passions*. In Wordsworth's ode on the *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* five of the eleven irregular stanzas culminate on swinging lines longer than those in the mass that precede. Spenser's *Epithalamion* closes each of its twenty-three eighteen- and nineteen-line stanzas with an alexandrine repetend.

That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Milton uses the same device in both of the stanzaic forms employed in his *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. In Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters* the final alexandrine is of course typical of the group of Spenserian stanzas that open the poem, and six of the eight irregular stanzas of the following *Choric Song* rise to a similar culmination. These are merely a few prominent instances of the poet's involuntary striving after stanzaic conclusions that are amplified and massive, in keeping with the elevated thought and mood characteristic of the ode and its allied forms. The same impulse toward an orotund rounded effect is of course evident in the typical paragraph ending of prose stylists. . . .

Not infrequently it is next to the last, rather than the last, line that is thus affected. This is especially true of the "short metre" quatrain. A typical instance is to be found in Burns's *Bonnie Lesley*, which begins as follows:

O saw ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And ne'er made such anither.

Each pair of stanzas in the poem is similarly constructed with the rise to a tetrameter in the seventh line only. A more extreme case is in Thomas Campion's *Winter Nights*.

Now winter nights enlarge
The number of their hours,
And clouds their storms discharge
Upon the airy towers.

Let now the chimneys blaze
And cups o'erflow with wine;
Let well-tuned words amaze
With harmony divine,
Now yellow waxen lights
Shall wait on honey love,
While youthful revels, masques, and courtly sights
Sleep's leaden spells remove.

Here the penultimate line exceeds the others by two feet instead of one, an exception to the general rule for such climactic effects.

Sometimes this amplification of the stanzaic close is heightened by internal rhyme. Sings James Thomson,
Give a man a horse he can ride,
Give a man a boat he can sail;
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,
On sea nor shore shall fail.

An exquisite case of this rhyme-heightening in an amplified conclusion is found in Rossetti's *Sudden Light*.

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before, —
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turn'd so,
Some veil did fall, — I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?

And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our loves restore

In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

A third method of giving climax to a stanza is by the use of the refrain. Even when this is a mere *burthen* of nonsense syllables the anticipation of the recurrence of the phrase in successive verses gives it climactic force when it arrives.

I loved a lass, a fair one,

As fair as e'er was seen;
She was indeed a rare one,

Another Sheba Queen:
But, fool as then I was,
I thought she loved me too:
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

When, however, the words are of the very heart of the poem, as when Scott ends every stanza of *Lochinvar's Ride* with the name *Lochinvar* coupled with a significant adjective, then to the structural value of the repetend in the stanzaic music is added its rhetorical value for sentence climax, greatly increasing its artistic potency.

One touch to her hand, and one ward in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood
near;

So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung;
"She is won! we are gone! over bank, bush, and scaur;

They'll have fleet steeds and follow," quoth young
Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby
clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they
ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

But the poem would have to be quoted entire in order to get the value of the repetitions in their full cumulative force.

Still a fourth method of obtaining structural climax is by the use of the echo device, that is, by repeating the last phrase or line of the stanza in an additional line. A horribly effective employment of this is found throughout Browning's *The Heretic's Tragedy*. I quote especially the second stanza with its quaint, elaborate side note.

ONE SINGETH

John, Master of the Temple of God,
Falling to sin the Unknown Sin,
What he brought of Emperor Aldabrod,
He sold it to Sultan Saladin.
Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-buzzing there,
Hornet-prince of the mad wasp's hive,
And clipt of his wings in Paris square,
They bring him now to be burned alive.
*[And wanteth there grace of lute or clavicithern, ye
shall say to confirm him who singeth —*
We bring John now to be burned alive.

Much more common than this tragic use of the echo is its humorous employment, sometimes with satirical effect, as in the repetitions of the singing chorus after the stanzas of a solo “patter song” in Gilbert and Sullivan’s operas.

A variant on this device is the use of a link phrase or line before the echo. So in Burns’s *The Farewell*,
It was a’ for our rightfu’ King
We left fair Scotland’s strand;
It was a’ for our rightfu’ King
We e’er saw Irish land,
My dear —
We e’er saw Irish land.

Or again, in Campbell’s *Ye Mariners of England*,
Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!

Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Finally, the most expanded climactic device employed today is the chorus of two or more lines, intended to be sung repetitively after each stanza of a song or hymn — as in *Auld Lang Syne* and a hundred other sacred and secular lyrics. The musical and emotional effect of this is powerful when sung by a massed group, which, as the word *chorus* implies, is the primary intention. The chorus frequently develops into a separate stanzaic structure, but even then there is a strong tendency to maintain an intimate relation in thought with the original stanza out of which the new form developed. This is especially marked in instances in which the thought in a final main stanza gives a new deepened, possibly satirical, meaning to the final repetition.

A. G.

Review

Amy Lowell. A Critical Study. By Clement Wood. Vinal, 1926.

Mr. Wood sees Miss Lowell as more celebrity than either poet or critic. He allows her two good poems, *Patterns*, which he thinks imperfect at that, and *Nuit Blanche*, which is very beautiful. *Fir Flower Tablets* as a volume gets a maximum of praise in the criticism that it is a "good, workmanlike book," but "bare of the spark that is poetry." *Tendencies in American Poetry* he lauds as the first full length study of the American poetic renaissance, in the same breath deploring its "log-rolling spirit." He thinks Miss Lowell's education to have been insufficient both in extent and intent to have given her accurate, workable scholastic backgrounds, though he adds that it is very likely that she may have carelessly forgotten rudimentary grammar and word-usage. He concedes the Keats biography to be her most mature work — for the reason that in it she perfectly identifies herself with her subject. Here she makes sympathetically and painstakingly an excellent source book the while she fails to produce good criticism. Dominant, masculine, wholly self-centered, only occasionally so feminine as to be radically jealous of other women poets (except H. D.), she was not a great poet, nor hardly a poet at all. Her thought lacked depth and vital urge. All her literary work was an effort to satisfy vicariously an unsatisfied longing for love. Nevertheless, she was a genuine motor force in the whole modern movement; her influence was more potent than her production. "She popularized modern poetry."

Certainly Mr. Wood writes a very interesting book. His analyses are clear and logical and pertinent. He grows a little personal towards the end, flirting with the oppositions of bitterness and good taste. Though the shaft of his irony has already passed through Miss Lowell's evaluation of the work of H. D., he has still a scornful energy in calling up the poems

of the imagist — “her picayune Hellenic deities and demi-deities, and anemic nature appreciations.” It is a matter for general interest to note that Mr. Wood has taken occasion to review and rephrase some of the general principles of criticism, and to define very sanely underneath the explosive rhetoric the proper critical attitude. I like his demarcation of poetry from prose as he most happily calls this a matter “less of a dividing point than of a twilight zone.” However incompletely or completely the reader’s view of Amy Lowell may coincide with that of Mr. Wood, no reader can possibly find himself other than stimulated and challenged to amusement, irritation, and admiration.

L. B. M.

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