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NO. 4

*The*  
**LYRIC WEST**

*A Magazine of American Verse*



**IN THIS ISSUE**

Sara Bard Field | L. E. Behymer

Anne Zuker | Alice Carter Cook

*Lois Burton Moon and others*

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# The Lyric West

*Vol. VI, No. 4*

A Magazine Of American Verse

January, 1927

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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The Lyric West

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## Among Our Contributors

Sara Bard Field is the author of *The Vintage Festival* and *To a Poet Born on the Edge of Spring*. She has contributed to *The Nation*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The Drama*, *Equal Rights*, and *The Workers' Monthly*. She is a national worker and speaker for The National Woman's Party, headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Chard Powers Smith, whose work in THE LYRIC WEST has attracted much favorable criticism, has recently left for a year's travel in Europe.

F. Gardner Clough has published a volume *Woodstock, Proem, and Essay*, and has contributed numerous articles and art reviews to *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The New York World*.

Alice Carter Cook is the author of *Michal*, a play, and numerous short stories.

Henri Faust, in addition to his poetry, numbers farming, moving picture acting, and politics among his list of activities. He is a member of the Arkansas Legislature.

L. E. Behymer, who comes to THE LYRIC WEST for the first time in this issue, is a significant figure in the artistic life of America. He is the *impresario* for the Pacific Coast.

Dean B. Lyman has recently accepted a position on the faculty of Yale University.

Faith Baldwin, Lilian White Spencer, Leslie Wallace, Ruth Clay Price, Joseph Upper, and Alberta Bancroft have all been previously noted in this column.

Of the twenty contributors in this issue three come from New York, one from Connecticut, one from New Jersey, one from Maryland, two from Washington, D. C., one from Illinois, one from Kansas, one from Colorado, one from Arkansas, three from Oregon, and five from California.

*Sara Bard Field*

## Sum

---

Mortal is man in his similitude  
Whereby he measures every outward mien,  
Hiding, in shame, the variable mood,  
The shifting shape of his peculiar dream;  
The personal gesture without duplicate,  
The writing of the unrepeated word,  
The single etching from the point of fate,  
He barter for a likeness to the herd.

Who does not kneel above his own star-spark  
Until it flames beneath his shielding hands,  
How shall he light his pathway through the dark  
To keep his fumbling feet from sinking sands?

For all our likenesses are doomed to sod.  
The sum of all our difference is God.

*Chard Powers Smith*

## Birthright

---

I was not born to run with little men  
And play the toy-drum rattle of their laws;  
I was not born to feed the little claws  
Of women in a warm, enfolding den;  
Rise with the hours, then flutter down again  
And be survived by heather and by gorse.

The winds are up! I am high-blown upon a cry,  
Echoing down star valleys bound within my minstrelsy.

I was not born to stand upon this cliff,  
The spindrift whips of being in my face,  
And reason the unreasoned into place  
Till I have built a system staunch and stiff —  
That any wind can shatter at a whiff,  
And any builder in the night replace.

The winds are up, and I am driven helplessly. We cry  
Each other's secret back from hill to hill, the winds and  
I.

I was not born to put myself in rhyme,  
Nor born to rhyme my spirit in a love;  
Not born to any beauty less sublime  
Than these of earth are but the shadows of.  
But I was born in a twin birth with Time —

Along his flight I am the wings that move.

The winds are up. Star calls to sea, and sea to star.  
I know them. They are of me. I was made before they  
were.

When the darkness heard the luminous word  
Of the maker of things to come,  
And the spindrift hours and the planet showers  
Spun out like pinwheel spume,  
I was the pith it was quickened with  
In the welter of its womb;  
I felt the stir of my twin brother,  
And loved him, and made him room.

I am the lave of the lava wave,  
And the grey azoic sea;  
The cooling tide where the oozes slide  
To the pulse of power to be;  
In the muddied dark the spit of the spark  
Of quickening alchemy,  
The shudder of earth, and the flare to birth  
Of the phosphorous galaxy;  
Lavender arms and silver alarms,  
And the shadow swimming free.

I am the rise of goggled eyes  
On the bare Devonian land;  
I am the dare that breathed the air,  
And the footprint in the sand.  
But the surge of the sea is a memory —

I fear the sky I scanned.  
The surge of the sea is a memory  
And I look beyond the strand.

The winds are up — the wallow and the boom  
Of scaly tails and giant flies beneath the fronded  
gloom.

I am the sound of shaken ground  
And the Tyrant's taloned tread.  
The oceans sink and the mountains shrink  
In the shadow of my head  
Till, the earth my car, I ride, a star  
Glittering, orbited.  
I am the rime of the touch of time,  
And Tyrannosaurus dead.

I am the timid stir of fur,  
And the stealthy scratch of claw,  
Tracks on the plains that wave again  
In the flowering wind of thaw,  
The warmish pry of the startled eye,  
The patter of many a paw.

The winds are up, and sounds and scents are rustling  
in my brain —  
I chase a golden moth, and sleep, and chase the moth  
again.  
I tumble down the rocks, and grumble, and recall the  
pain.

I stand upon a hill against the dawn,  
A giant rippling with incarnate fire,  
Roaring the jungle full of my desire,  
Beating my breast, shouting the echoes down.  
I spend my leisure hammering on stone.  
I tell the birds and bees how mighty I have grown.

The winds are up — the whistle and the snarl  
Of the white octopus of writhing ice,  
Squeezing my forests into frozen marl,  
Freezing us into caves, watchful and wise.  
We make a fire and play,  
We look at one another, and we look away,  
And scratch our lice.

I am the creep of reason through the blood.  
I am the roar that freezes to a whine,  
The fear that makes a law and murmurs, “Mine,”  
The wind that pauses, whispering, “Evil,” “Good.”  
I lost the secret of my brother Time  
Till by the cavern door one spring I stood,  
Heard the far trumpets of the river’s flood,  
Saw the new day come reddening up behind,  
And heard strange voices calling in the wind.

The winds are up, and I am on a quest  
For something I have lost not long before —  
Something left on the old Devonian shore  
Or in the Pliocenic forest nest.  
I run from hill to hill with maddening zest,

Drink the new vista where the sycamore  
Arches horizons like a cavern door;  
But something yet is wanting to my rest. —  
Something I can't remember or forget.  
I reach the sea that hints at what is lost.  
I scale the snowpeaks where my brother crossed  
So slowly that I hear his breathing yet.  
But where he whom I loved has passed, a threat  
Tosses within me as a leaf is tossed.

I lie on a night mountain, cold and dead,  
Cold with the inward ice of nameless fear,  
Shrouded in reason that I can not shed,  
Deaf to the word I cannot will to hear.  
Then in the rill that trickles by my ear  
I hear my brother's voice:

“Be comforted.

Look up, look out at mighty you and me.  
Look at the stars we are, the rising sea  
Of light. Through how many dawns are we  
here!  
Through how many bright systems have we spread  
Out of the dim old time where we were bred!”

I lie a living seed on a mountain shelf.  
I raise my arms and see the new dawn break  
Among the stars. I call into the air,  
And hear my own voice calling everywhere.  
I see my brother there, and he is there.  
I see the world is fair, and it is fair.  
I see double — I see the stars, and I see myself —

And I see nothing that I did not make.

The winds are up, and all that I have been  
I am again: the first burst of creation;  
The Paleozoic ocean's turbulation;  
The heavy swell of Carboniferous green;  
Tyrannosaurus thundering round the pole;  
The furry lemur's beads of frightened eyes;  
The apeman bellowing flesh ecstasies;  
The poor caveman who reasoned with his soul.

And I am the maker of all I am: the mother  
And child; the wind and the singer in the wind;  
Spring of myself and of Time, my baby brother —  
I clothe him in a moment if I wish,  
For I am older, wiser than he is.  
I am the spirit, and he is the mind.

I was not born to run with little men;  
To fear, and fall from Eden, as they say;  
And feed myself, and scratch my lice again;  
And look in little eyes, and look away.  
But I was born to make a world, to play  
At naming things, to crack my fancy's whip  
And make the nebulae and fireflies skip  
My circus for me; while eternity floats  
Across the magic moment, and I stand  
Master of things that change within my hand.

I was not born to dream again the breath  
Of crawling ice. But now I think I see

The shriveling of fruit and flower and tree.  
A voice revives within me, whispering, "Death,"  
And the wind whistles back the echo — "Death."  
I dream of tigers, bears, and savage men.  
I will the charge of horn and tooth and spear.  
I whisper, "Fear", and the world answers, "Fear."  
I calculate and tremble in my den.  
I laugh, and wild creation howls my mirth.  
I send out sons to rectify the earth.  
My brother Time escapes — I lose the secret of my  
    birth.

\* \* \*

Once I heard music, like remembered loss,  
And ran to men to tell them what it said.  
But for my pains they nailed me to a cross  
And went away and left me there for dead.  
I swooned. Then the night split with a swift cry.  
I woke and stared. I had a little shape  
Inherited from any little ape,  
And wonder embers glittering in my eye. —  
Where am I now? What is this hand? And why?  
But now the winds are up, and I recall  
There is a god slumbering who did not fall.  
Once I was born. I was not born to die.

*Irene Stewart*

## Afterward

---

Down the broad walks of the sky  
Still glorious of sapphire blue,  
We shall wander, you and I,  
And find where moon-flowers grew.

We shall visit ancient stars  
Frozen into jade,  
And in their silent seminars  
Learn how life was made,

And learn how life, once made, could die,  
And just what was this death —  
Learn what wisdom could decry  
Such ecstasy as breath.

We shall explore old ruined worlds,  
And watch gold spiders spin  
Between high hills of emeralds  
Where once had dwelt the Jinn.

But on the youngest world of all  
(One with an earth-green lane)  
We shall stay an interval —  
Pretend we live again.

*Faith Baldwin*

## Porto Rico

### *I*

---

The camphor trees are burning crimson coals  
In emerald braziers. . .  
All day a mocking bird is weaving  
Divine parodies. . .  
All day the lizards flicker,  
Brown flame, across the floor. . .  
All day beyond the tall green legions  
Of amber-tasseled cane  
The river calls,  
The shallow river, rank with purple lilies. . .  
All day the sea and mountain winds are mating  
And blow across my dreams. . .  
To warn me I have found a mountain dove,  
Blue gray,  
Unmarred and dead, upon my doorstep  
In the sunlight. . .  
*Mira!* Down the white road the oxen plod toward home;  
Their flanks drip heavy scarlet from the goad;  
A naked brown boy rides  
Between the curved horns of the leader. . .  
The peon following is wearing  
A red flower behind his ear and on his mouth a song. . .  
I love it! I love it!  
The heat and the extravagance and the shadow of  
cruelty. . .

Sea winds in the palms,  
Blue air in the mango trees,  
Earth stirring in her sleep. . .  
And you —

*II*

I have never dared to tell you  
How your body seems  
Infinitely precious. . . so like to that tall palm-tree,  
Slim and straight and beautiful,  
That laughs beyond our windows. . .  
I have never dared to tell you  
How your cool breath stirs my hair  
Like the dawn wind, the trade wind, the dear wind,  
The wind of young morning  
Sea-blown across the cane. . .  
I have never dared to tell you  
That your kiss upon my mouth  
Is like the humming-bird we watched together,  
Ruby and golden fire with wings,  
Lost in the crimson heart of the hibiscus flower. . .  
Listen! the sea is less blue-burning than your eyes,  
The tropic sunlight a lesser miracle than your smile  
When at sunset you ride home to me. . .  
I hear the hoofbeats of your horse  
Go thundering through my pulses  
Long, long before I see you  
Far down the road, with all the copper sky  
In smoke and flame behind you. . .  
I know! I know!  
But we are Anglo-Saxons,  
And so. . . I have not spoken.

*Edith Mirick*

## As Once to Pan

---

So delicate is love  
I fear to grasp  
It tightly lest it turn, within my clasp,  
Like Syrinx, into wands of swaying reed,  
Which could but pipe,  
To sighing of my breath,  
As once to Pan,  
A song of love — in death.

*Lilian White Spencer*

## Far View — Mesa Verde

---

The Master paints earth's nude magnificence:  
Drawn tall and true by His creator-hand,  
Incredible pale lines of mesa stand  
On guard about four states in conference  
Pavilioned under high blue opulence  
That lifts from peaks white-furred with winter, and  
Droops, purpling, over infinite bronze sand.  
O for a voice to praise Omnipotence!

Sound chants no music great enough to dare  
Pæans to beauty of a world at tryst  
With God, and posed in hyacinthine air  
Against a shimmering sea of amethyst.—  
But hark!—A sanctus through vast quiet rings  
As Silence “Holy! Holy! Holy!” sings.

*L. E. Behymer*

## Lake Tahoe

---

O thou of restful wonder, that shalt grow  
Ever in beauty to the eye that sees  
Thee calm in sleep, or waking to the breeze,  
Or red from glories of the twilight glow,  
Or grey when all about thee lies the snow,  
Or blue within the border of green trees —  
Thy bounty of such golden memories  
Shall be my solace wheresoe'er I go!  
What time the dawn-star shall above thee shine,  
While gaunt hills guard thee from the morning chill  
Till warms the sun thy bosom with its rays,  
Then shall I dream another glimpse is mine,  
And know thy beauty to be with me still  
To greet me with its glamour all my days!

*Henri Faust*

## White Requiem

---

Here is the grey and vast sepulchral room  
Where winter tends the summer's various dead.  
Walk lightly here for reverence of bloom  
And life and death now intimately wed.

The chaplets for the summer's brow are snow;  
The last red fevers quit her broken flesh;  
Walk lightly here — the secrets of her woe  
Repose inviolate within the mesh

That winter weaves with pale decisive hands.  
Here is her crystal coffin. In her veins  
The ice has hardened like so many bands  
To fasten close the knowledge of her pain.

Out of the blue chill dusk there may arise  
A phantom or a fragrance or a light,  
And hope may burn within a dreamer's eyes,  
An apparition at the edge of white.

*F. Gardner Clough*

## To the Cactus Bloom

---

Bright red flower projecting  
From prickly-horned green body!  
You are like an honest virtue  
Born of surprise or genuine grief  
In an ill-mannered person —

You are the innocent offspring  
Come from the calloused womb —  
You are the loyalty  
Of an otherwise useless wife, —  
You are the rose-tipped breast  
Of the barren desert.

*Leslie Wallace*

## Accord

---

*High, low, the winds blow  
Over the roofs of Tokio.*

\* \* \*

San grew rice in New Japan,  
Mud and muck were the lot of San.

His fields were a terraced mountain-side,  
And they were neither long nor wide.

In Fujiyama's shadow San  
Sowed and reaped in New Japan;

And harvests came and harvests went,  
But none of them found San content.

And where the plains incline to meet  
The Rockies' foothills, Smith grew wheat.

There are four horsemen of the plains,  
And one of them, "It Never Rains;"

Hail, Low Prices, and Insect Pest —  
These the raiders who never rest.

And harvests went and harvests came,  
And none of them found Smith the same.

In the heart of San was cosmic dust;  
In the feet of Smith was *wanderlust*.

On common ground they flung the dice,  
Though one grow wheat and one grew rice.

Food and raiment and shelter and rest —  
San of the East and Smith of the West.

*High, low, the winds run  
Over the roofs of Washington.*

\* \* \*

Outside the city of Nanking  
There is a bird with a broken wing;

And veering south and flying high,  
Waterfowl in a prairie sky.

In the city of Hongkong  
In a sedan chair floats Wu Fong —

Peak-bound Number One Chinese  
Greets affluent Macaonese.

In a City of Great Names

A Croesus murmurs, "Home, James."

Unclean, undone, repellent, shunned,  
A beggar on the Canton bund

Strikes a balance with his kind  
On the East Side, "Help the Blind."

\* \* \*

*The sun comes up, the sun goes down,  
Just the same the world around.*

*Ruby Weyburn Tobias*

## The Outcast

---

“Who comes here?” cried all the seraphim.

“Who comes?” echoed the rosy cherubim,

“Rags and tatters, the devil in his eye!”

“Wist you,” said the angel, “how lovely he did lie,

“Roses for his pillow, lilies on his breast” —

“Ay, but the naughty imp loved dirt the best;

Little he knew when they closed his eyes on wile,” —

“*He* knew,” said the angel, “Who gave his lips that  
smile.”

“Streets of gold! He cluttered those on earth!

Heavenly choirs! A target for his mirth!

A nuisance alive — who wants him now he’s dead?”

“His little sister loved him, and she’s here,” the angel  
said.

“None come here, but washed in Jesus’ blood;

The village Sunday School had to turn away Bud.”

“Yet there by the church door Christ drew near —

Did you hear, O seraphs, what He said? Did you hear?

“Did you peer down into that stormy little heart?

See from that mocking eye a strange tear start?

I think,” said the angel, “since the Lord holds him dear,

We’ll somehow have to manage, now Bud is here!”

*Josephine van Dolzen Pease*

## Motif

---

Cedar, sumac, blossoming rose. . . . .

I built a hedge — a hedge.

But sorrow passed over it,

And came down in rain

On the roof of my bridal bed.

*Anne Zuker*

## The Sensitive

---

He always wanted the moon,  
That tiny sensitive one,  
And I could not give it him.  
Perhaps, playing in the meadows on the floor of  
    heaven,  
He does not reach his tiny hands upward in vain;  
Surely God will give him a little moon for a plaything.

If he had grown to manhood  
He would always have aspired to the moon.  
I should have had to sit by and watch  
While he beat out his heart against the edge of desire.  
I hope he can grow up in heaven, for there  
Surely God will crown his manhood  
With a diadem of moons and stars.

*Lucile Perry Ames*

## Miss Muffet

---

Muffet used to rock herself

In a little chair,

Used to sing a tiny song

With a funny air.

Funny air, it sings itself

On an elfin breeze;

Little chair I rock sometimes,

Down upon my knees. . .

*Dean B. Lyman, Jr.*

## Thus Theseus

---

When Theseus went into the labyrinth to destroy the Minotaur, Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, King of Crete, gave the hero a ball of cord by which he guided his return from the depths of the maze. Theseus bore the maiden away with him, a willing captive. Next, having conquered the Amazons, Theseus married Antiope, sister to the Amazonian queen, by which marriage he had a son, Hippolytus. At Antiope's death Theseus married Phædra, who later conceived a passion for Hippolytus. The latter, approached in Phædra's behalf without her knowledge, publicly denounced her, upon which humiliation she considered her strait so desperate that she hanged herself, but not until she had brought a counter-accusation of ravishment against Hippolytus. *Ergo, sic Theseus* —

Phædra! Ah, thou of the three!  
Thou, that I held beside the Ægean sea!

Out of the darkness calling,  
Dost thou not hear me? . . .  
Petals falling,  
I hear them — and the sound of the sea.  
Art thou not near me?

Beyond the hostile blue water  
Found I the frail Ariadne,  
Minos the Cretan's daughter.  
For a noose of string she had me!  
O pallid wraith of a passion,  
I was thine . . . in a fashion . . .

Ah, Phædra! Thou of the three!  
Dark petals falling beside the Ægean sea!

Antiope was my second,  
Won as the beasts are won.  
Strength against strength we reckoned,  
And she bore me a son.  
Would it had never been done!

Thou, Phædra, *thou* — of the three!  
Dost hear me calling beside the Ægean sea?

Dark were the petals, and the waters frigid;  
Deep was the fragrance, and the wine stark madness;  
Yet in those arms alone, though the lips were rigid,  
Gladness!  
Ah, Phædra! Dost thou not hear the calling?  
And I — do I not see  
Amid the petals' falling  
Some flower-sweet shadow of thee?

O fortunate noose that bound thy white throat about,  
Pressing upon thy last warm pulse as the soul went  
out!

*Ruth Clay Price*

## Dancing Girl of Utica

---

We have found your tomb by chance,  
found your dust that lived to dance.

*Centuries have circled past,  
but her sarcophagus held fast.*

Shadow of your form and face,  
outlined in your dust we trace.

*From her cheeks the color fled:  
her tomb holds rouge, three shades of red.*

Were you made for love or lust,  
you are now but blowing dust.

*Golden stars they gave to her,  
and jewels on her sepulchre.*

Clash your cymbals, red with rust,  
your last dance, the dance of dust!

*Margaret Duncan Dravo*

## Hands

---

I can remember hands almost better than faces;  
Their speech is more to be trusted than that of tongues.

The pitiful lisping  
Of women's hands indolent and futile,  
Pink-palmed, covered with jewels,  
Restless and clamoring, seeking they know not what,  
Crying aloud for fulfilment,  
Toying with feathers and fine gold chains,  
Fluttering among pillows, pink ribbons, and laces,  
Like small birds quarreling over crumbs;

And other women's hands  
That lie calm at evening,  
Adequate, at ease, unafraid,  
Like winged steeds with golden pinions folded,  
Or bronzed young warriors resting on their spears;

The suave and oily hands  
Of men who have trodden on their fellows for success,  
No fine care nor studied ease can disguise their garbled  
speech;

The hands of men who toil at heavy tasks,  
Disfigured by drudgery,  
Pulpy, powerful, hoarse-voiced,

Intimate with stone and steel,  
That tremble holding a flower;  
Black hands that know no other bent than slaving,  
That are silent, not daring to speak above a whisper;

The hands of great artists,  
Of painters, sculptors, musicians, poets,  
Creators and translators of beauty,  
Flexible, sensitive, sonorous hands,  
Full-throated, singing a glorious chant;

And beyond all these a vision  
Of firm, friendly hands unlike all others,  
Whose voice is shaken with sorrow, —  
The healing hands of Christ.

*Alice Carter Cook*

## Love at First Sight

---

Their paths crossed once.

A greeting word, a swift-spiced dance,  
A moment's vision of a star-clear soul  
(As travellers glimpse a far-off, sunlit goal)

And then they parted —  
He sailed for Salonika, she for France.

They will not meet again.  
Her ship was sunk nor left a trace. —  
And he? To France he gave his best endeavor,  
And now before his blinded sight floats ever  
Through night and day,  
Beside his life's grim wreck, her white still face.

*Joseph Upper*

## Eden

---

The gates are shut on Eden;  
The wilderness is dim  
With scornful wingéd shadows  
Of angry cherubim.

The earth is thunder-shaken;  
The sky is lightning-torn;  
The rivers run in terror  
From God's relentless scorn.

The gates are shut on Eden,  
And love without a home  
Has all the world to wander in  
And all his life to roam.

But though he boasts of freedom,  
He knows there cannot be  
Another place like Eden  
In all eternity.

*Alberta Bancroft*

## Heathen Measure

---

I do not wish to have to love  
The people that I hate.  
The effort is a waste of time  
For those who cerebrate.

I do not wish to smile their way  
Or pass them cups of tea:  
So long as I don't murder them  
That is enough for me.

Our Younger Singers

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*Josephine Miles*

## Peace

---

All night, all night the sound of waves is here —  
The rush,  
The stir of little stones the sea is taking,  
The hush  
Before another eager wave goes breaking!

There may be valleys dark and cool with silence;  
The sky  
May have the silver calm stars would be making;  
But I  
Have known tonight the peace of great waves breaking.

*(Los Angeles High School, Los Angeles, California.)*

*Juanita Turner*

## Music

---

A sea  
Sweeps over me,  
Covers me with bright jewels  
And crystal flowers,  
Lifts me  
With transparent fingers  
From the cold hard sands  
Of reality.

*(San Rafael High School, San Francisco, California.)*

## The Artistry of the Stanza

### XIV

#### *The Music of Final Subsidence and Diffusion*

In the eleventh and twelfth articles of this series we discussed Stanzaic Climax. In general, the artist instinctively seeks a heightened conclusion for an art form, and the lay mind experiences a vague sense of ineffectiveness, of futility, in the form if such heightening is not present. However, there are types of thought and of mood that demand the reverse treatment — types of which it is the genius that they should end upon a note, not of intensification, but of subsidence — not of concentration, but of diffusion. In music this type of composition is represented by the lullaby, which grows softer and softer as the child supposedly falls asleep, or by the “patrol,” which reproduces the *crescendo* effect of the approach of a military band, its *fortissimo* passing, and its *diminuendo* as it recedes and dies away in the distance. In poetic literature the lullaby is of course a well recognized minor variety of lyric, and the “patrol,” is paralleled by such a poem as Victor Hugo’s *Les Djinns*, in which the weird far-away flight of the eerie host is announced in brief *staccato* lines that gradually lengthen until the fearful demon band are sweeping above and assailing the roof of the terror-stricken listeners, and that then slowly diminish again to monometer as, baffled, the attacking legions retreat down the wind and are lost in the void. In poetry as in music this type of subject matter demands its fitting form of expression.

In verse perhaps the distinction between the two kinds of effect, the one culminative, the other *decrecendo*, is nowhere better to be observed in brief compass than in the contrast between the Shakespearean and the Italian sonnet. Let us examine a very famous specimen of each of these diverse

types.

Shakespeare, musing upon the mortality of the body and the insignificance of its claims in comparison with those of the immortal soul, in Sonnet 146 writes thus:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array,  
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?  
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?  
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?  
Then, soul, live thou upon thy body's loss,  
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;  
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;  
Within be fed, without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,  
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

Here the rhyme scheme, *abab cdcd efef gg<sub>5</sub>*, divides the poem metrically into four sections, three quatrains and a culminating couplet. The quatrains are of the standard English alternating-rhyme form. Being in no way rhyme-linked to each other, they give complete freedom for any desired cross-linking of the thought, which may be end-stopt or run-on at will, although in general the natural tendency is to end-stop the quatrain. As is the case with all stanza-capping couplets, the final two lines have heightened rhyme-emphasis. Cast in this metrical mould, the thought in the quoted sonnet runs true to the form. In lines 1-4 there is introduced the conception, interrogatively phrased, of the futility of mere bodily adornment in face of the envioning perils. In lines 5-8 this idea is expanded, with emphasis upon

the brevity of human life, with growing concreteness of diction in *lease, mansion, worms, body's end*, and with a quickened interrogation, which advances from a four-line unit to two lines, then to one and one-half lines, and finally to half a line. In the third quatrain the interrogative and negative phrasing gives way to positive adjuration: sacrifice the mortal body in order to obtain spiritual immortality. The powerful culminating couplet announces the reward of such action in a rich conceit pointed by the heightened rhyme-emphasis: the conquest of Death, the All-Conqueror, not temporarily, but permanently. The thought does not reach its extreme development until the last half-line, "there's no more dying then." Throughout the sonnet the rhyme effects are sharpened by end-stop.

For the Shakespearean sonnet this is an unusually perfect specimen of the progressive development of the thought with full utilization of the advantages presented by the form. Few subjects give opportunity for so strikingly antithetical a conclusion of such universal significance. But the most successful sonnets of this type regularly reach their thought-climax between lines 12 and 14, and employ the couplet, if not to phrase the climax, at least to re-enforce and clinch it.

The Italian type of sonnet is very different both in form-balance and thought-balance. Perhaps the most famous example to be found in English literature is Keats's *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been,  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;  
Yet never did I breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.  
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
    When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
    He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —  
    Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Here, as in all sonnets of the Italian type, the first two quatrains are not of the bold alternating-rhyme variety, but of the much subtler-musicked embracing-rhyme form. They are firmly bound by a rich rhyme repetition, *abbaabba*, into a unit, the so-called *octave*, in which the four *a*'s and the four *b*'s reach their cumulative sound-climax in the eighth line. Then follows the *sestet*, which in the quoted example takes the form *cdcdcd*, a compact rhyme-knit group, in contrast with the *octave* by reason of its alternating-rhyme scheme. This, continued through six lines only, has lessened rhyme emphasis, and is, in comparison with the strong *octave*, a minor metrical segment. There is no concluding couplet, which in the Italian sonnet is strictly *taboo*. The metrical climax of the form is therefore not at the end, as in the Shakespearean pattern, but in the eighth line, from which the *sestet* declines in lessened music. This balance about a median climax is typical of the Italian sonnet. Its *sestet*, unlike the *octave*, may vary in arrangement, being susceptible of any line-grouping of three sets of two rhymes or two sets of three rhymes, so long as there is no effect of a concluding couplet; but it will be found upon experiment that all other schemes, such as *cdecde*, are even weaker in rhyme-emphasis than the *cdcdcd* employed above. The median position of the metrical climax in the Italian sonnet is fixed.

Now observe in Keats's sonnet how admirably thought and form are adapted to each other, fitting like hand and glove.

Lines 1-4 refer to the poet's wide roving in the golden realms of poesy. Lines 5-6 narrow the field to one great poet only, "deep-brow'd Homer"; and lines 7-8 mount to a climax, the poet's first spiritual contact with Homer through the pages of "Chapman . . . loud and bold." Turning upon this phrase, the *diminuendo* of the *sestet* gives the effect of Chapman's Homer upon Keats, not directly, but through two figures, which gradually absorb interest in themselves at the expense of Chapman. The first is that of the astronomer and the "new planet," crisply phrased in lines 9-10. The second simile, the unforgettable picture of "eagle-eyed" Cortez staring at the Pacific, dies away into the allied detail of his comrades, their eyes not, as his, intensely on the object but on "each other," and continues through the still more distant yet richly connotative phrases "wild surmise" and "silent" into the merely geographical exoticism of "Darrien." With a rare subtlety, after the varying music of the *octave* has been emphasized by end-stop following the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth lines, the *diminuendo* of the *sestet* is adroitly re-enforced by the management of the dominant *d* rhymes (*ken, men, Darrien*), of which the first is heavily end-stopt, the second is run-on with emphasis on the following verb *looked*, and the third completes the tapering-off by permitting the rhyme to fall on a syllable bearing only a very faint secondary accent. Where, among art products, could a nicer gradation, a more sensitive rise and fall both of thought and of form, be discovered?

This effect of weakened stanzaic close may be accomplished by many methods and with various degrees of delicate poetic nuance. I subjoin a number of illustrations. Our analysis of the *In Memoriam* stanza (in Article IX) has already indicated that its distinctive quality is due to this peculiarity. This is still true when its melancholy droop is used after an alternating-rhyme quatrain, as in the composite *ababddc*<sub>5</sub> of

Bulwer's mournful *A Night in Italy*.

Sweet are the rosy memories of the lips

That first kissed ours, albeit they kiss no more:

Sweet is the sight of sunset-sailing ships,

Altho' they leave us on a lonely shore:

Sweet are familiar songs, tho' Music dips

Her hollow shell in Thought's forlornest wells:

And sweet, tho' sad, the sound of midnight bells

When the oped casement with the night-rain drips.

The reversal of rhymes, and consequent diminished final rhyme emphasis, of the *In Memoriam* stanza may be extended to a six-line group, as in the *abccba*<sub>4</sub> of Browning's *Meeting at Night*.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;

Three fields to cross till a farm appears;

A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch

And blue spurt of a lighted match,

And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,

Than the two hearts beating each to each!

A four-line alternating-rhyme stanza may be extended to a five-line form, making the last rhyme fall, not on the dominant (or even-line) rhyme-word, but on the odd-line or subdominant word. This occurs in Shakespeare's song, *Who is Silvia?*, where the effect is intensified by making the dominant rhymes double and the subdominant single.

Who is Silvia? what is she

That all our swains commend her?

Holy, fair, and wise is she;

The heaven such grace did lend her,

That she might admiréd be.

Or a more striking similar effect may be obtained by otherwise disposing of the intermediate *a* rhyme in line 3, as in Browning's *Dis Aliter Visum*, where there is an additional complication of internal rhyme which may be formulated thus,  $a_4 (b_3 b_1)_4 c_4 c_4 a_4$ .

Thus were a match made, sure and *fast*,

'Mid the blue weed-flowers *round* the mound

Where, issuing, we shall stand and *stay*

For one more look at baths and *bay*,

Sands, sea-gulls, and the old church *last* —

A shortened final line may, felicitously employed, aid in accomplishing the same result if carefully denuded of emphasis-creating elements. In this respect Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* forms an interesting study.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has withered from the lake,

And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

So haggard and so woe-begone?

The squirrel's granary is full,

And the harvest's done. . . . .

"I met a lady on the meads,

Full beautiful — a faery's child;

Her hair was long, her foot was light,

And her eyes were wild. . . . .

"She took me to her elfin grot,

And there she wept and sighed full sore,  
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes  
With kisses four.

“And there she lulled me asleep,  
And there I dream’d — ah! woe betide! —  
The latest dream I ever dream’d  
On the cold hill’s side.

“I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
They cried — ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci  
Hath thee in thrall!’

“I saw their starv’d lips in the gloom,  
With horrid warning gapéd wide;  
And I awoke and found me here  
On the cold hill’s side.

“And this is why I sojourn here,  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is wither’d from the lake,  
And no birds sing.”

The tale is elfin, melancholy; dreamy in mood; at the opening and closing set against a background silent, shadowy, almost a pale-gray pastelle in coloring, corresponding to the dazed condition of the narrator. The stanza,  $a_4b_4c_4b_2$ , is unemphatic, faintly musical. The first and third lines are unrhymed; the second and fourth are of unequal length, and their rhymes may be made, at need, clear, even emphatic, by tone-color or may be suppressed to the merest tinkle. At

opening, the first stanza sounds a pale rhyme-syllable, the secondary accent of *loitering*, and the *sing* that answers it is no stronger than the two words that precede. In the second stanza again the first rhyme-syllable stands under merely a secondary accent, *woe-begone*, and the word that responds is a mere assonance, *done*. The heart of the story, fearfully vivid to the narrator, has full perfect rhymes: *child, wild, zone, moan, long, song, dew, true, sore, four*. The dream that closes it answers *betide* with *hill's side*, where the first syllable has the chief stress at the expense of the second; but in the dream the warning of the Ladie's past victims rings out in strong sonorous accents, *all, thrall*. While asleep, the knight is transported to the scene of the dreary landscape of the opening, and the rhymes again become fainter, *wide, hill's side*. Finally, the poem closes palely, echoing the opening stanza in picture, in phrasing, and in lowered rhyme-music. So once more, by the most subtle of feather-weight effects, does the sensitive artist match music with mood.

"There's what we painters call our harmony.

A common grayness silvers everything —

All in a twilight."

Such is the work of "The Faultless Painter" in words as in colors.

A. G.

## Selected Poems on Woodrow Wilson

*Dean and Co., N. Y., 1926*

Some seventy-odd poems comprise this volume, all in highest tribute to America's late "happy warrior" for peace. Eulogizing the high courage of the man and his steadfastness, they show him as the pale scholar whose deeds shall live beyond the present generations' dust. They translate his seeming aloofness into brilliancy of vision, explanatory of his daring to link the welfare of his own land with that of humanity. They give the pathos of his lonely breaking years. There are poems from out of the many weaves of his life — from the South, from student and administrative university life, one even in a Lowland dialect from out of the corner of Scotland which was originally the home of the Wilson family. War incidents naturally have inspired a great many, but by far the larger number were written in February, 1924, when he who had been seeking peace had then found it. Such names as those of Katherine Lee Bates, Percy Mackaye, Virginia McCormick, Robert Underwood Johnson, and Vachel Lindsay are among the authors. Ethelean Tyson Gaw (Mrs. Allison Gaw) contributes two of the most impressive pieces, both inspired by the tragic failure of the League of Nations in the Senate. Their rhythms and allusive backgrounds have all the wide sweeping gestures of unrestrained idealism, in greater compliment to Wilson because not so much in eulogy of him as of the things he tried to do — a sounding through the immediate personal failure of the peace leader to the glory everlasting of his dream. The utter sincerity of the poems in this volume, take them all in all, has borrowed the strength of genius to fill their substance with the spirit of genuine poetry. They are to be recommended both as occasional verse and as

verse unrestricted and good.

*L. B. M.*

## Prize Announcement

We repeat our recent announcement. The editors of THE LYRIC WEST are looking for narratives and dramatic monologues or brief dramatic sketches, in verse or blank verse form, with strong human interest. We are swamped with dawn songs, flower impressions, sketches of scenery, meditations on death and love, and vague flights into the unutterably utter. We have no objection whatever to mythological or legendary material, if clearly treated; the lovely world of ancient myth most modern versifiers seem to be trying to forget ever even imaginatively existed.

The editors offer a prize of Fifty Dollars for the best narrative or dramatic material, poetically treated, published in volume VI. But to be acceptable, contributions must have strong poetic values.

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