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NO. 7

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Peggy Reid | John Richard Moreland

William van Wyck | William H. Anderson

L. B. M. and others

IN BRIEF REVIEW

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The Lyric West

Vol. VI, No. 7

A Magazine Of American Verse

April, 1927

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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The Lyric West

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Among Our Contributors

Mary Carolyn Davies is the author of *Drums in our Street* (poems), *Youth Riding* (lyrics), *The Slave with Two Faces* (play), *A Little Freckled Person* (child verse), *The Husband Test* (novel), and *The Skyline Trail*. A native of Oregon, she has been made a member of the Blackfeet Indian tribe and given the name "Pawtuxie," Pinewoman.

William van Wyck, at present living in Paris, France, is the author of *Florentines*, a series of poetic interpretations of historical characters, and *Savonarola*, a poeto-dramatic biography. His latest volumes, *Fire, Sleet, and Candlelight* and *Two Gentlemen of the Renaissance*, are now in press.

John Richard Moreland is the founder and former editor of *The Lyric*, a poetry magazine now published by The Poets Club of Norfolk, Virginia. He is the author of a volume of verse, *Red Poppies in the Wheat*.

Alice Rogers Hager, Child Welfare writer for the U. S. Department of Labor, won first and third place in the 1926 poetry contest of the Washington, D. C., chapter, League of American Penwomen. She is also author of the first Washington "Cherry Blossom" Pageant, presented this month.

William H. Anderson is a prominent attorney in Los Angeles.

Alberta Bancroft, Sydney King Russell, Porter Myron Chaffee, and Joan Dareth Prosper are all known to readers of THE LYRIC WEST and have been noted before in this column.

Of the twenty-two contributors this month one comes from Massachusetts, one from New York, two from Washington, D. C., one from Virginia, one from South Carolina, one from Alabama, one from Texas, one from Arkansas, one from Michigan, one from Washington, one from Oregon, nine from California, and one from Paris, France.

Peggy Reid

Crucifixion

The winds have crucified a tree
 Against a steel-gray sky,
A solitary, naked tree
 With three lone leaves held high.

The winds have nailed an oaken tree
 Upon a cross of air,
A poor, neglected, friendless tree
 With head and shoulders bare.

The west wind thrust a slender lance
 Within the sturdy side,
And one lone star came forth to see
 An oak tree crucified.

The cruel winds have crucified
 A shielding Saviour tree —
A common, daily witnessed scene
 On a Modern Calvary.

Alice Rogers Hager

The Hands of Kilian the Harper

Out of the crags of Erin
Went forth in elder days,
With Irish harp at shoulder
And gay lips tuned to praise,
The minstrels, the harpers,
Holding a world at gaze.

Up hollow and up hillside,
By briar road and fen,
Through the clipped farms of Gallia
And southward, five and ten,
They braved the way with music,
Old gallant Ireland's men.

Till blue waves of the Midi
Broke into scudding foam,
And suns went down in ocean
Under an amber dome,
Still southward, the minstrels
Came through at last to Rome.

The minstrels, the harpers,
Swept over Rome like fire,
And Kilian was the youngest
Of that far-wandering choir,
With dreams upon his eyelids

And dream-chords in his lyre.

His marvelous white fingers,
His rapt and flashing hands,
Wove tapestries of magic,
High tales of pagan bands
Alight with red of battle
On strange and dangerous sands.

* * *

One morning very early,
Passing a little wood
Where larks called to each other
Guarding a nested brood,
Kilian with idle fancy
Marked where a temple stood,

And lured by idle fancy
Stole in to find its name,
And there beheld a Vestal
Tending her sacred flame —
May Ireland's gods protect you
Who out of Ireland came!

Morning is on her tresses
And morning in her eyes,
And her sweet slender body
The morning in disguise —
Kilian implores his harp-strings
To win him Paradise!

And such a song he sang her
That all the wood grew still,
The flame upon the altar,
The scared faun at the rill —
Even the south wind faltered,
Swaying to Kilian's will.

He drew her spirit, singing,
The sacred fire forgot —
For Love cried out in laughter,
And Love remembered not.
What mortals vows could hold her,
By an immortal sought?

Morning was made for springtime,
And springtime claimed its own;
The parched earth called the raindrop,
The song its overtone —
White Hands that wove this magic
Love's very self were grown!

No longer will the clamor
Of crowded Roman street
Tune Kilian's harp to music
When other bards compete.
Silence and love's low cadence
Are for all time complete.

* * *

Rome sets a price on Vestals,

A price both hard and high.
Kilian, the April-hearted,
Son of wild wind and sky,
Kilian, the Irish harper,
Is carried forth to die.

“Too easy is the sentence!”
Rome rises up to say.
“He would go on forever,
Harping to gods at play,
Stealing Apollo’s chorals. —
There is a better way.

“The traitorous hands of Kilian
That shamed us with this woe
Shall prisoned be in marble
Ere his lashed spirit go.
Bring us a cunning sculptor,
And set the fire aglow!”

But Kilian stands before them
And laughs for all to hear.
“Fools, think ye son of Ireland
Was ever born to fear?
The torment’s for a moment —
Love will not shed a tear!

“Aye, bring your master carver,
For only he alone
Can set the flexing muscle
Eternally in stone.

Then Harp shall keep its Harper,
And ghostly Bride her Own!”

* * *

Kilian sleeps unavengéd;
The Vestal’s heart is dust;
The shades that feared the minstrel
Are from Olympus thrust,
Slayer and sculptor vanished,
And slayer’s sword-blade rust.

But in the Roman cloisters
With jewels from many lands,
Praying a God Unknown,
To touch again the strands
Of his loved harp are yearning
Kilian the Harper’s Hands.*

*The reference to the Roman Cloisters is to the Praying Hands of the Vatican, which are etched by Duerer, and which are connected with the legend of Kilian.

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Louise Crenshaw Ray

Rose Jar

Wake not

The sleepers here!

Rose-petal memories

Are wiser left unstirred . . . asleep . . .

Forgot

Alberta Bancroft

Lines to a Statue

First you were a portrait. —
Some Roman father living far from Rome
First had you carved
In likeness to his daughter
And placed you in his garden,
Where you stood, backed by the olive trees —
Or were they ilexes? —
All sweetly luminous at dusk,
Dull gleaming in the moonlight,
Blinding white by day.
And walking in that garden he would see you there,
And from the *loggia* where he lay he would look out at
you,
Content that you should be.

And there came a war —

This spot is nought but woods,
All tangled valley richly overgrown.
Yet — is it nought but woods?
The mighty men draw back
Who overswept a land
Swept over by barbarian hordes
And left forgotten centuries before.
Here, broken pillars on the ground —
And here, immeshed in vines, a marble urn —

More pillars —
Yes! a temple half-collapsed, be sure!
“This spot is holy ground!”
They whisper one to other, all aghast.
And here — oh, horror, that this thing should be! —
A goddess, all but buried —
You, the statue

The men, all of a tremble, cut you free
And reverently rebuild the little temple
(*Loggia* of another day)
And set you in the midst.

They bring you offerings —
A slave or two perhaps —
For when it comes to gods,
And one is all on fire
To settle in the newly conquered land,
One must propitiate the gods of that rich land,
Or nought avails.

For many years you reigned in that small temple,
A powerful goddess strong to guard the crops,
Defense against the pirates and the plague.

And there came a war —
Needs must when new religion is at stake.

They found you, those new monks
Who had so much to say of a new god,
Amid the vines that hid the last collapse

Of your small temple,
And they took you up.
Somewhat they changed you —
They had need of haste to hold the people.
“This is the Mother of the New Great God
Of whom we speak to you,” they said.
“Behold her here, a refuge for your need.”

And now in this old church you stand,
Your little Roman curls half clipped away,
A golden crown pressed tight about your head
That was not meant for crowns,
A mantle all of blue (it was so white before!)
Upon your shoulders —
Sovereign lady, Mother of Our Lord.
And candles burn before you night and day;
And pilgrimage is made in mighty numbers
To your shrine.

And there will come a war —

Charles Ballard

The Frogs

In Eden's paths walked Elohim
At the day's ending.
Pleasing to Him
Voices of beasts and songs of birds ascending.

Shining fish leaping in the jeweled spray
At the waterfall,
Toil-weary bees and ants, on their last homeward way,
Creatures with wings
Or fur, and creeping things —
He blessed them all.

Then suddenly there broke from the wood's dark rim
Wild, jeering laughter,
And quickly after
Came railing sprites, mocking this world of Elohim,
Heedless of peace and Eden's evening hymn,

Quickly He turned,
And laid on them His dread decree:
"Revile and mock no more!"
The stern words burned
To their heart's core.

The agony to be
That instant knew they, seeing each lithe form sinking

To squat, fantastic shape of pygmy size,
Wide-mouthed, with goggle eyes
That mocked no longer; hands a sylph might prize
Grown spatulate, to tiny webbed feet shrinking.

Yet — for the wretches once wove beauty's spell —
In lustrous colour still they lived and moved;
And — lest they forget the glory whence, but now, they
 fell —
He left with them the gift of song they loved.

In Eden's paths walked Elohim,
As the day ended.
Day's music, with the light, grew dim;
Night songs to Heaven ascended,
And with these a new strain blended —
A sad little silver chorus from the wood's rim!

Lucie Kellogg

Purification

In the dark green
Of my Japanese garden,
In the light green,
In the sunny green,
In the light
And in the shade,
Millions of thoughts
Lie resting.
They are resting
In a tremulous emotion,
Gentle and tender
As a sigh.
Millions of thoughts
Are here,
Resting
Like sleeping fairies. —
In the dark green,
In the light green,
In the sun
And in the shade,
They are being
Purified.

John Richard Moreland

The Unreturning

Her yellow bird still wakes me with its singing;
Her books, dust-covered, miss her daily touch;
Each morning the bright sun, his gold fire flinging,
Brightens the treasures that she loved so much.
But where is she? Upon a dawn-kissed hill
Within the sombre silence of the loam,
She who loved birds and books and flowers and
home —
Does she remember still?

Her room reveals the deftness of her finger
In curtained casement and in pictured wall,
While in a nook where she so loved to linger
Are half-made garments . . . delicate and small.
Spring comes again, and every flowering tree
Is white with bloom — red tulips race
About her silent sleeping place
But where is she?

I wear mirth's mask to hide my heart-keen sadness
Lest I should weary men with grief too deep
For one who was the fount of all my gladness,
For one so fair and young, who fell asleep.
O dark-eyed sleeper on the wind-blown hill,

Waiting within the silence and the loam,
You who loved life and laughter, song and home
How can you lie so still?

I have no memory of your face —
But sometimes at night,
In the soft wind of a dream,
I see the wings of a scarlet butterfly
Fluttering on a lily.

Porter Myron Chaffee

Eileen Peck

I Shall Come Home Again

When gleaming light gives wing to brooding darkness
When rainbow follows close upon the rain,
When singing breezes follow plaintive wind-cry,
I shall come home to you again.

For I was one who loved the warmth and laughter,
The lilting music, dancing, and the light,
The crooning waves that lull the sands in summer,
The starry loveliness of night.

And you shall hear the rustle of my garments,
And you shall sense the beating of my heart,
And all the days between shall be as one day,
The days that we have been apart.

Then watch for me in summer, in the shadows,
When moonlight wraps her arms about this land;
For I shall come and press my lips to your lips,
And walk with you, and touch your hand.

Helen F. Smith

Rocket

Not of the flesh,
For at the touch of hands
I lose you;
Not of the mind,
For groping there I fall.
But once —
Wide the waste waters heaved about me,
I felt the keel shiver on the bars;
Then on a look you flung a signal,
And God! the dark was riven with a shower of stars.

Joan Dareth Prosper

Velvet Sleeves

The Stage Hand Speaks.

Nadine was as cute a chorus girl as ever screeched a
toon,
When she wasn't plugged with hashish and as crazy as
a loon.
Tough? Say, I've seen chorus girls, believe me, in my
day,
But she was the toughest baby vamp that ever come
my way.
Still, she'd a friendly way with her, and a sort o'
laughin' glance
That made a hit with the bunch in front, and gosh! how
that kid could dance!
So the boss, he stood for her hop-head tricks, because
he plainly seen
When the boys in the front row stamped and yelled,
what they meant was — *more Nadine*.

Well, she was a wild little tyke for sure, and her morals
was a joke,
But she had one queer habit that, by George! she never
broke.
Twice a week, as sure as fate, I'd find her in the wings
With a trunk-top fer a table, and paper and ink and
things,

And when I'd start to razzin' her, she'd speak up cool
and calm:
"Git t' hell out o' here, you bum, I'm writin' home to
Mom."

She said once, kinda wistful like, "My Ma, she still
believes
I'm playin' Shakespeare parts, dolled up in a train and
velvet sleeves;
And I got to kid her along, you see, cause jazz . . and
booze . . and snow,
And all what comes to a chorus girl, is things my Ma
don't know."

And what become of the kid, Nadine? Well, it was
about the same
As what you'd expect of a youngster that was playin'
that devil's game;
The cops come in back stage one night, and she hadn't
a ghost of a show,
For the stuff was on her . . stolen, too, . . and all she
could do was go.
But she was a smart one, was Nadine, and they wasn't
lookin' for
A scared little chorus girl to *dare* flop dead on the black
old floor.

Now maybe it's right the way it is, and maybe she
chose the best,
But we miss her down at the old show-shop, and the
chorus has lost its zest,

One thing I couldn't get out of my head for a while —
I'd hear her say,
"Got to write home tonight or bust, 'cause this is Mom's
letter day."
And so I wrote, and told as how Nadine had died for
art,
A-studyin' and a-workin' to perfect her Shakespeare
part,
And how if only she'd been strong she would have lived
to set
Broadway ablaze when she come out a-playin' Juliet.
I done the best I could, by God! And if her Ma still
grieves,
At least she thinks the kid died straight — in a train
and velvet sleeves.

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Anne M. Robinson

April and May

April is a laundress
Mixing silver suds
To rinse the lacy dance-frocks
Of multicolored buds.
May Day is the nurse-maid
Who looks the blossoms over
And ties their little bonnets
On the buttercup and clover.

William van Wyck

Magdalene

O Lord, my sin I would transcend,
For I am weary of the fray
Without beginning, without end —
Tomorrow just as yesterday.
One glowing moment bid me stay.
Master, I find the pathway hard,
I, who am anybody's prey. —
Look, with my wage I bring Thee nard!

I fain would serve, but who will send
For such as I? Ah, well-a-day!
I am for dregs. My love I lend,
Too naked, Lord, in scarlet gay.
These fetid rags, a mean array,
Are symbol of my soul's regard.
I, who am anybody's pay —
Look, with my wage I bring Thee nard!

I am the bride of all who spend.
Ah, what a sorry interplay
To love those who will condescend
To me, a satyr's holiday!
At red of dawn I am away
To hide me. I am life's discard.
I, who am of the night's display —
Look, with my wage I bring Thee nard!

L'Envoi

O Treader of the Wormwood Way,
Grant me one flame of hope to guard
That will my dule and teen allay!
Look, with my wage I bring Thee nard!

I Have Seen

I have seen
Moonlight and yellow leaves
 Flooding a pathway
After the first rain. —
I could have worshipped there
 Upon my knees!

I have seen
A misty plum-tree
Down a lonely rocky waterway
 At evening
When long shadows stay. —
I was strangely stirred
With loneliness and longing.

I have seen the sunrise burn
Each long gray needle of the pines
 Above my head,
And creep beneath gray olive trees
 Upon the hill,
Flaming them to gold and red —
Blue-crested jays within the spell
 Of golden light —
 And swallows turn
Their blazoned breasts against the blue
 In joyous flight.

So may our Lord
Have seen these too —
Sunrise and birds and olive trees
 Upon a hill —
One morning in Gethsemane.

Harold Wesley Melvin

Plow Horses March into the Sunset

These are the patient ones of earth, the dumb,
Heavy of tread and thick of shoulder, slow.
All day they dragged the bright plow-share across
The field; and now from purple shadows start
The last ascent into the gold of sunset.
How powerfully they move! How great they loom
Against the sky! Greater than warrior's mount,
They move irresistibly against the light!
The great limbs limned with flame, the heads are
tossed
Against an aureole of fire!

Harold Wesley Melvin

Bronze Brook

The alders and the birches and the willow trees
Dropped leaves upon the brook all day; and now
This golden hour before calm twilight's blue
The brook has lost its motion, turned to gold
And bronze, a sculptured piece, all beaten metal.
The bronze and gold leaves now are twisted lilies
Upon a brook of richest tapestry.
No stir of wind is here, only the pour
Of sunlight, the flight of amber arrows slim
Into the statuary of this nook!
O world of restless change, forgive my tears!
My heart, to beauty slave, would hold forever
Sacrosanct this brook of bronze and gold!

Kirby Etter

April at the Grand Canyon

The wind-people wail in the depths of the forest,
In sorrow and wrath at the coming of spring,
And rush through the boughs of the spruce and the
cedar,
And gnash at the cliffs where the scrag pine trees
cling.

Now into the Canyon the snowflakes are falling
Gently in folds like a gossamer veil,
Dipping and whirling and hiding the mesas,
While deep in the forest the wind-people wail.

And there in the Canyon the mist-gods are dancing
The last time, and graceful they sway to the sighs
Of the wind, on dim ridges and thin rosy spires; —
And in fright from the chasm a wild bluebird flies!

Mary Carolyn Davies

Prayer of a White Blackbird

White blackbirds are unhappier,
And always were,
Than blackbirds who, like all the rest,
Are black of wing and black of breast.

God, who builds blackbirds black or white
As suits your whimsical delight,
If only you had (see, I lack
Dullness) but thought to make me black!

Perhaps, though, you find some delight
In seeing black ones peck the white?

Henri Faust

Whistles

There's a nostalgic sound that whistles make,
For all that factory whistles are a din
That cruelly prizes dreaming eyes awake;
There have been times in April twilights when
The sound of whistles telling six o'clock
Across the quiet air was all a slow
Reverberant murmur, tugging at the lock
My years have placed upon their nameless woe.

And I have started in the deep of night
At the whistling of freight trains passing through,
Seized with a mad impatience that their flight
Had left me somehow changed — without a clue
To the sudden nostalgias that derange
With wildest longings for a home less strange.

William H. Anderson

The Lyric West

When first the West glowed on man's surging throng,
A stalwart giant eager for the best
With mighty growing pains of vast unrest,
It sang an epic of growth-yearning song.
Then as the swarming settlers burst the thong
That once had bound its hopes within its breast,
Its realized ambitions were expressed
In odes Pindaric as it swept along.
Now it has calmed at last into its own,
Crowned with the laurels of achieved success,
To the full fruits of its fruition grown,
Blessed with the blessed privilege to bless;
And life's sweet music welling from its breast
Marks it, immortal, as the Lyric West!

Porter Myron Chaffee

Dialogue

You whose lashes are like the lace eaves of a phantom
pagoda, be not unkind.

— *The moon has made pools of gold of the
milk-white rifts of the desert.*

. . . . You whose body is a temple of tremulous ivory,
there is much I would say to you.

— *The moon is a lantern in a tangle of palms.*

. . . . You whose lips are as crimson as the petals of an
impassioned lotus-flower who keeps a tryst with her
lover, a lock of the moon, hear you my words.

— *The moon is a trembling white maiden gliding
over the threshold of her lover's door.*

. . . . As to a shrine of red coral in a desert over which
the moon has spread the skin of a white panther,
would I bring my soul to yours in a kiss.

— *A kiss is the key to the realm of a strange
dream, and by its alchemy our souls shall
become two moths and batter their wings against
a flame of scarlet.*

Goldsmith Kittle

Portrait

You have twisted and lapped your cornhusk
So that the grains cannot be seen. —
No matter! — The silken tassel,
Every shred of it,
Is vibrant.

Sydney King Russell

Old King Jazz

Old King Jazz had come to rest,
And they laid him away where the laying was best;
They planted him deep in a six-foot hole,
And they prayed for the peace of his jazz-mad soul.

While the band played the Blues, the *Beale Street*
Blues,
The saxophones sobbed out the sorrow-spreading news,
The bass drum boomed and the clarinets cried
King Jazz had turned up his toes and died.

The band played *It Ain't Gonna Rain No More*;
Fiddler went to sleep and began to snore;
Cello woke him up with a “*Zum zum zum* —
Old King Jazz gone to Kingdom Come!”

The band played *Where Do we Go From Here?*
Everyone listened with never a tear,
And someone whispered, “What a day he has
For a trip to heaven!” — meaning old King Jazz.

Old King Jazz came down to rest,
For he'd wandered east and he'd wandered west;
Tired of his pipe and tired of his bowl,
Peace, all peace, to his jazz-torn soul!

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Goldsmith Kittle

Painted Desert

Fine-ground, mist-like rock

Lit by flitting fairies'

Pastel-chimneyed lanterns.

Our Younger Singers

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Seth Jehiel Felt

Spring in Spain

The yellow greenness of the Spanish spring
Seems to be new again before my sight,
Because I long for where the ivies cling
On crumbled castles or on dim old trees,
And where the air is redolent at noon
With salty rumors of the Spanish seas.
And there is night, and there are dreams of you
Beneath a star-streaked, far-flung Spanish sky.
I long — oh, how I long to live again
Only one spring in Spain, and then to die!

(Polytechnic High School, Long Beach, California.)

Katherine Wall

Velvet

The down of a butterfly's
Gold-flecked wing,
The magical carpet
Of moss in spring,
The brow of a little girl,
Coral-pink, white,
The cloak of a fairy queen
Dancing at night —
These are velvet.

(Freshman Class, South-West State Teachers College, Texas)

The Artistry of the Stanza

XV.

Gradation

Gradation, as the term is employed in the various arts, may be broadly defined as a smooth passage from one effect to another through one or more intermediate steps, each of which partakes to a certain extent of the separate natures of what precedes and of what follows it and therefore affords a harmonious transition from one to the other. Thus, in nature the rainbow shades from red to yellow through an intermediate orange that is a mixture of the two, and from yellow to blue through a similarly intermediate green — effects that the painter must follow in his treatment of the phenomenon and in the analogous case of the ground-tones of a sky at sunset. So, too, the musical composer passes from one key to another somewhat distantly related, through a series of intervening “modulations”, each chord having some close harmonic relation with the chord immediately preceding and another with the chord following, and serving as a tonal bridge between them. The artistic function of Gradation is to beget smoothness, as opposed to that of Contrast, which aims at effects that are striking and possibly even powerful to the extent of violence. The technique of Gradation is therefore, by its very nature, self-effacing, and tends to elude the attention of the observer, depending as it often does in practice upon innumerable slight insertions, omissions, transpositions, and adjustments that give subtlety, shading, and depth in the various artistic media. Nevertheless, it is in this same delicate gradation that lurks the secret of that exalted art which is so skilfully self-concealed that it reflects, though sensitively, yet with an appearance of absolute naturalness, every *nuance* of its subject. “Why, you have done nothing on the statue since I

was here a month ago!" said a visitor at the studio of a celebrated sculptor. "Nothing?" exclaimed the sculptor. "I have worked on nothing else — deepening a line here, mellowing a curve there" "But," said the visitor, "these are mere trifles." "Yet," answered his host, "these trifles make perfection, and *perfection is no trifle*."

In relation to the stanza we must here, as ever, distinguish between thought and form. Gradation in thought is determined by the general principles of rhetoric. Gradation in stanzaic form, with which we are here concerned, on the other hand either delicately responds to and re-enforces the suggestions of the thought and its basic emotions, or is primarily dependent upon the principles of musical esthetics.

In any art, gradation is demanded in a number of directions. The organist, for instance, will graduate his effects as to pitch, as in the key-modulations above referred to; and as to volume, by opening and closing his swell-box; and as to tone-color, little by little adding new stops to his "mixture" of diapasons, violins, flutes and the like; and as to *tempo*, increasing or decreasing the speed of his playing. So, too, stanzaic effects may undergo gradation in several different respects. Of these probably the most important is *progressive increase or decrease of line-length*. Of this Crashaw's *Wishes to His Supposed Mistress* affords what the present writer feels is a not wholly admirable example.

Whoe'er she be —

That not impossible She

That shall command my heart and me;

Where'er she lie,

Lock'd up from mortal eye

In shady leaves of destiny;

Till that ripe birth
Of studied Fate stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth;

Till that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine;

Meet you her, my Wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye call'd my absent kisses. *Etc.*

$(a_2 a_3 a_4)$

Here I feel (*de gustibus* — !), first, that the stanza is too brief for this rapid threefold shift of metrical form, thirty-eight times repeated, to be musically effective; and second, that there is no apparent relation between its odd jerkiness and either the thought or the mood that it aims to express. The merits of the poem lie elsewhere than in its stanzaic qualities.

In general, such transition through line-lengths produces the best musical effect if (1) it advances, not through individual lines, but through line-groups, so that repetition accustoms the ear to the new length before a third is introduced; or if (2) it proceeds in line-lengths that are multiples of the length of the shortest line involved. If, in addition, (3) the shift has thought-interpretive values, so much the better. A beautiful illustration of all three of these principles occurs in the opening of Act II of *A Midsummer-night's Dream*, when Shakespeare first introduces the fairy atmosphere. Up to that point in the play the poetic passages have been in the customary dramatic iambic pentameter. Then —

Enter a FAIRY at one door and ROBIN GOODFELLOW [PUCK] at another.

Robin. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fairy. Over hill, over dale,

Thorough bush, thorough brier,

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander everywhere,

Swifter than the moon's sphere;

And I serve the fairy Queen,

To dew her orbs upon the green.

The cowslips tall her pensioners be;

In their gold coats spots you see;

Those be rubies, fairy favours,

In those freckles live their savours.

I must go seek some dewdrop here

And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone.

Our Queen and all her elves come here anon.

Robin. The King doth keep his revels here tonight;

Take heed the Queen come not within his
sight; *etc.*

Here Puck opens in the pentameter as usual, but not in the dramatic iambic, but in the more lyrical trochaic. The fairy rambler, in metre perfectly responsive to the thought, answers in four buoyant anapestic dimeters, the shortness of the lines being marked by emphatic alternating rhyme. The movement suggests that the little creature who has fluttered in has not yet come to rest. Then, the line-length doubling, the speech passes smoothly into eight lines of tetrameter couplets,

generally lightly trochaic, with the trochaic lilt especially marked by double rhymes in the last two. The next line creeps through a trochaic initial foot into an iambic tetrameter, and the following, completing the couplet, steals up into the full iambic pentameter. The lyrically-atmosphered fairy opening has thus been exquisitely modulated back into the standard dramatic metrical ground-tone, in which the business of the scene then continues to its end.

Browning's *My Star* is another happy illustration of the same process, and affords also an opportunity of pointing out the further significant fact that an increase in emotional power not infrequently motivates an increase in line-length, and that this sometimes finds expression in an increase of the number of syllables in the feet even where the number of feet remains constant.

All that I know

Of a certain star

Is, it can throw

(Like the angled spar)

Now a dart of red,

Now a dart of blue;

Till my friends have said

They would fain see, too,

My star that dartles the red and the blue!

Then it stops like a bird; like a flower hangs furl'd:

They must solace themselves with the Saturn above
it;

What matter to me if their star is a world?

Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

(a₂b₂a₂b₂c₂d₂c₂d₂d₄e₄f₄e₄f₄)

We have here, first, a quick scintillant series of eight dimeters of mixed iambs and anapests, with an average of less than five syllables to the line and unmistakably pointed by rapidly alternating masculine rhymes. This clearly mirrors the quick light-dartings described. At line 9 the movement expands into a link-line, similarly constructed but of double the length, and rhyme-linked back to the dominant rhymes in the quatrain preceding. Then, leaving behind the idea of the light, the poem passes into a triumphant insistence on the especially intimate relations between the poet and the loved object (usually considered as a symbol of Mrs. Browning), and the movement correspondingly swells into a trisyllabic quatrain of anapestic tetrameters that even overflow into double endings in the dominant rhyme positions, the number of syllables in the line ranging from eleven to thirteen. That this swell to trisyllabic feet is due to increase in the underlying emotion could not, of course, be certainly demonstrated from the single case above, but it can be abundantly paralleled by other clear cases, some of which we shall consider later.

We shall close by quoting a part of J. L. O'Sullivan's translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Djinns*, in which the phenomenal use of the artistic device of graduated line-length affords a beautifully clear illustration of the principle involved, although it far transcends the limits of the individual stanza. Note that the basic rhyme scheme, *ababcccb*, remains constant throughout, but that the metrical form is slowly modified as the dramatic situation advances.

Town, tower,
Shore, deep
Where lower
Cliffs steep;
Waves gray,

Where play
Winds gay —
All sleep.

Hark! a sound,
Far and slight,
Breathes around
On the night:
High and higher,
Nigh and nigher,
Like a fire
Roaring bright.

Now on 'tis sweeping
With rattling beat,
Like dwarf imp leaping
In gallop fleet:
He flies, he prances,
In frolic fancies,
On wave-crest dances
With pattering feet.

Hark, the rising swell
With each nearer burst!
Like the toll of bell
Of a convent cursed;
Like the billowy roar
On a storm-lashed shore —
Now hushed, now once more
Maddening to its worst.

O God! the deadly sound
Of the Djinns' fearful cry!
Quick, 'neath the spiral round
Of the deep staircase fly!
See, see our lamplight fade!
And of the balustrade
Mounts, mounts the circling shade
Up to the ceiling high!

'Tis the Djinns' wild streaming swarm
Whistling in their tempest flight;
Snap the tall yews 'neath the storm,
Like a pine-flame crackling bright.
Swift and heavy, lo! their crowd
Through the heavens rushing loud,
Like a livid thunder-cloud
With its bolt of fiery night!

Ha! they are on us, close without!
Shut tight the shelter where we lie!
With hideous din the monster rout,
Dragon and vampire, fill the sky!
The loosened rafter overhead
Trembles and bends like quivering reed;
Shakes the old door with shuddering dread,
As from its rusty hinge 'twould fly!

Wild cries of hell! voices that howl and shriek!
The horrid swarm before the tempest tossed —
O Heaven! — descends my lowly roof to seek:
Bends the strong wall before the furious host.

Totters the house, as though, like dry leaf shorn,
From autumn bough and on the mad blast borne,
Up from its deep foundations it were torn
To join the stormy whirl! All — all is lost!

The latter half of the poem, describing the retreat of the eerie assailants, follows an equally well marked *diminuendo* and finally ends with the monometer lines:

Hark! hist!

Around

I list!

The bounds

Of space

All trace

Efface

Of sound.

A. G.

In Brief Review

Several rather interesting little books have recently come from the Vinal Press. Three of the authors at least are known to the readers of THE LYRIC WEST.

Mrs. Annice Calland's book, *Voodoo*, is well titled. The poems are impressionistic and colorful with an undercurrent of mysticism, earthy and spirit-like by turns. *The Griffé Girl*, *On the Pecos*, *The Ghost Sea*, and *Defeat, In the Desert*, and *Plowing* are characteristic indices. The author's work is interesting; it has reality and understanding.

Intensely lyric and reflective of many moods and atmospheres of nature are the poems of Mary Sinton Leitch in *The Unrisen Morrow*, which is a book of haunting beauty and very personal joy of life, an attitude that is punctuated with sorrow as well.

"As in one drop of April rain appears
The whole world's laughter shimmering through tears."

Mrs. Jamie Sexton Holme's *Star Gatherer* is like some of its phrases, "small silver words of the whispering rain" and "the silver veils of April rain". Written out of intimate personal experience, the music and color of her words have an evanescent, shimmering quality as light as the hummingbird's touch, and as quickly vanishing. Such singing is native accompaniment to the lyre.

Quite unlike any of these is *From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water and other Songs for Music*, by Nelle Richmond Eberhardt. Every reader will recognize those songs set to music by Charles Wakefield Cadman. The author's introduction describes minutely the craft of song composition, stressing the importance of vowel sounds and variation in the melodic patterns. It is in fact an *A B C* of structural

requirements for the lyricist to follow. The *Other Verse*, as the author demarcs her literary poems from her songs, is of negligible interest, since the songs display so much more spirit and so much greater finish, and are of their kind so entirely excellent in craftsmanship.

L. B. M.

Prize Announcement

The editors take pleasure in announcing that after the appearance of the last number of Volume VI in the coming September, in addition to the EDITORS' PRIZE of Fifty Dollars for the best Narrative or Monologic Poem that has appeared in the volume, there will also be awarded the BEN FIELD PRIZE of Fifty Dollars for the best Lyric Poem published in Volume VI, the term lyric being defined as including all poems not eligible to consideration in connection with the prize first mentioned.

Some Places Where the Lyric West May Be Purchased

BOSTON:

Smith and McCance, 5 Ashburton Street.

Marjorie Knapp Book Shop, 110 Mt. Vernon Street.

NEW YORK CITY:

Brentano's, Fifth Avenue and 27th Street.

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