

VOL. VII

OCTOBER 1927

NO. 1

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Mary Carolyn Davies | M. Kraft

Lucia Trent | Lillah A. Ashley

L. B. M. and others

BRIEF REVIEWS

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The Lyric West

Vol. VII, No. 1

A Magazine Of American Verse

October, 1927

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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The Lyric West

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Among Our Contributors

Mazie V. Caruthers has published three volumes of verse, *When I was a Child*, *The Legend of the Holy Thorn*, and *Songs out of Sadness*. She has also contributed short stories and translations from the French to many of the standard magazines.

Mary J. Elmendorf has contributed to the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Independent*, the *Woman's Home Companion*, the *Commonweal*, and to many poetry journals.

Lucia Trent is the author of a volume of verse, *Dawn Stars*, and is one of the editors of *Contemporary Verse*.

Rachel Marshall Terrell, in addition to her verse, has contributed short stories to the *Pictorial Review*, the *Smart Set*, the *Blue Book*, the organs of the Doubleday, Page Syndicate, and many other of the fiction magazines.

Maud Uschold is engaged in newspaper work.

Beulah May is a sculptor as well as a poet.

John Russell McCarthy, Harold Wesley Melvin, J. Corson Miller, Mary Carolyn Davies, William van Wyck, and Alberta Bancroft are well known to readers of poetry and have been previously noted in this column.

Of the twenty-six contributors in this issue one comes from Massachusetts, two from Connecticut, two from New York, one from New Jersey, one from Pennsylvania, two from Illinois, two from Kansas, twelve from California, two from Oregon, and one from Paris, France.

Mary Carolyn Davies

Mother Autumn

Autumn lays on the world her gracious hand,
Her quiet hand that gives us peace and rest,
That stills the mounting fever of the land —
We are released from pleasure and its zest,
We are made one with lovely quietness
Beneath the Autumn's staid and slow caress.

Oh, Autumn, give your quietness to us;
Let us cease playing for a little space.
The world is very young and clamorous,
But there is age and pity in your face.
Now we may lay aside the labored smile,
Relax and close our eyes and dream awhile.

Spring is our sweetheart, with cool scented hands;
Winter's a comrade, bold and true and tried;
And Summer is a wife, with her demands
On time and patience never satisfied.
None but a mother owns the keys to Rest.
Autumn, dear mother, hold us to your breast!

Mary J. Elmendorf

Kind David Lay Dying

His rich days rounded
Like ripe figs in a jeweled basket,
King David lay dying.

Motionless he lay as an eagle
Spent with flying.
Upon his tired features
Lingered no light.

With hands the hue of goats' milk,
Abishag, the virgin Shunamite,
Smoothed his brow,
Her comely face unstained by grief,
Her fancy, like a loosened leaf,
Drifting into warm remembrance
Of absent Adonijah's eyes.

Bathsheba, pale as the heavy silk
Of her garments, beat upon her breast.
“Ah, David,” she implored,
“To see you smile —
Only to see you smile again, dear lord. . .”

King David neither heard
Nor stirred.

Benaiah, captain of the guards,
Excellent in wisdom as in valor,
Bowed low before the royal bed.
“Your servant, lord,” he said,
“Brings tidings of great good.
The outstretched hand
Of Israel’s God is blessing the land.
The enemies of the Lord’s anointed
Are cut down by the swift sword
And swallowed up of Sheol.
Joab bides the kingly will,
Abithar as well.
Glory rests, my lord,
On Israel.”

Fainter came Benaiah’s call
To David’s closing ear
Than a feather’s fall.

Then Zadok lifted up his voice,
Zadok the priest,
Magnificent in vestments of blue and scarlet
And twined linen embroidered with pomegranates of
gold.
“O gracious king, rejoice!
Nathan at the altar prays,
Blessing the Lord God of Israel for His benefits.
O mighty king, behold!
Upon every hill
The vineyards are tender with grapes,

The flocks and herds are big with young,
And the trees are heavy with promised fruits,
Their branches like banners,
Their flowing roots
Like rivers of stone.”

Kind David with lowered lids
Lay mute and cold.

And then young Solomon, but newly crowned,
Comely in colorful robes,
Entered the chamber and knelt beside the bed.
Bending low, he whispered into the kingly ear
So softly that none but the king could hear.
And gently upon the silken covering
Above the quiet breast he laid
A shepherd’s sling.

Kind David’s thin hands groped.
His fumbling fingers closed
Around the simple thing.
His dimming eyes went wide. . .
He looked full upon Solomon
But he saw not his son
Kneeling at his side. . .

In a vision stark and swift
He saw beyond the palace wall
The green Vale of Elah and the face of Saul;
He saw beyond the Vale of Elah
The low brown hills round Bethlehem

And Jesse's hoary head
And a dark-eyed lad with an upward look;
He saw still sheep and still skies
And smooth round stones
Under the silver singing waters
Of a little brook.
King David smiled. . . and closed his eyes.

Harriet Caie

Treasure

Prisoned in Autumn's amber

The earth lies.

Misty-gold the meadows,

And the skies

Temper blue with silver.

Scented days —

Like old wine in cups of

Chrysoprase.

Trees drip jeweled bounty —

Topaz, sard.

Fearing lest one pilfer,

Hills stand guard.

A Dance by Ruth St. Denis

I shall walk at night by the silent waters of dream
where the dew falls unceasingly from the dusky
trees,
To kneel before the heavy-lidded flowers who fold their
white petals and pray to the moon,
And grow slowly cold, so cold that an asp crawling
across my feet shall scorch and burn.

And then suck the blood of a sleeping man until my
body becomes one flame.

I shall go and live among the cats, pillowed against
hairy flanks while their tremendous purrs trouble
the jungle.

Within a ruined temple that a banyan hath in its folds,
I shall sit among the gods, age after age without
movement, until I am crusted with mould like
tarnished bronze.

Here a worshipper shall come with offerings, and I
shall take fire and blaze like a taper in the wind,
until flesh and bone shall fall into ash, and I shall go
free.

Maud E. Uschold

Lacquer Twilight

Dusk is the hour as time walks

Diurnally new;

Ripe orange ovals on steel stalks,

Blooming in blue.

Indigo ingots of evening,

Spark following spark,

Fly from the mystical anvil —

Stars in the dark.

J. Corson Miller

Wild Honey

So like wild honey her heart, her words would come
As rich as rain of blue delirium
Trees drink at dawn; the level ebb and flow
Of moon-trapped tides her speech could never know,
For thought in her was hush, grown thundersome
With joy of morning-fields, where daisies grow . . .

I do not miss her face; but when the bees
Emerge at morn, like ghostly argosies,
Her words of clear, wild honey crowd the air —
Those words which earth now hears not anywhere;
And, though I speak, my tongue of speech is dumb —
My eyes go blind, drinking delirium
Of dancing trees at dawn; there is a glow
Of beaten gold against the honey-flow
Of words I hear — shall always hear, I know,
Until my last hour swarms and life's last tides, ebbing,
go.

Whitley Gray

Safarai

Doric columns, peacocks, golden bulls,
alabaster towers,
Gleaming Mysteries of Moons,
cry out for utterance —

You are the Little White Bird,
flitting among philosophies,
bruising your wings.

O Buddha,
lend me power
to charm this Little White Bird.

M. Kraft

The Mole

Obscure to me,
O little earth-wise mole,
The purpose of your blindness.
And I ask,
“Why sightless,
Then to dwell
Where the curious and beautiful
Roots of grass are thrust?”

Never to see
Their intricate patternings;
Nor see the little
Gold-legged dragon centipede;
Nor eye of mouse,
Nor beetle’s wing,
Nor brown lacquer of pupa
Sheltering a folded dream.

And not to see Spring
Startle seed and bulb
Into an ecstasy of blossomed song!

Only do you surmise
With sensitive pulse
The multiform mysterious life
That hides no subtlety

From velvet probing in the dark.

You are to Earth

The eternal child of her bosom —

A soft and soundless whispered word

That she says,

And keeps to herself.

John Russell McCarthy

Conversation

“Look!” thunders the Lord God,
Spreading a wing like a million Milky Ways,
“Look! I have given you glory of nights and days:
Nights like windows upon my starry garden,
Days like lenses upon your own bright home.
Look!” thunders the Lord God.

“Fool!” say we, snickering,
“Fool, you’re as dead as the ’90’s!
Your garden? Go talk to our mathematicians!
Your lenses? We can see quite as well now by night,
thank you!”

“See,” says the Lord God,
Folding His skyey wing,
“See the rivers that sing
Over your meadows and under
The good green leaves of your trees.”

“Fool!” we cry,
“Shall we sentimentalize over our slaves?
The rivers turn our wheels, they carry our burdens,
They sewer our filth to that cesspool, the sea.
Look at them yourself if you have time.”

“See,” whispers the Lord God,

Sighing,
“See, I have given you very marvelous bodies,
Living garment of flesh over intricate upright frame.
See that breast, those thighs?
A hundred million years I have adventured,
Created and destroyed,
Arriving at last at these.”

“Fool!” we shout,
Doubling skinny hands,
Posturing disused thighs,
“Fool! Our bodies are indecent,
Not to be seen!”

“Look,” breathes the Lord God,
“Look, I have given you brains,
And given you five hand-maidens
To dance before and about you
Finding beauty, bringing beauty,
Making you ready to step some day
Right through the window casements of night
Into my garden.”

“Fool!” we scream,
“Fool! Do you grow gold in your garden, then?”

Eugene Surmelian

Wheat Fields in Kansas

They spread, these fields, as brazen seas
With flaming tongues that lick the hands
Of bounteous gods.
They move and grow, they roll and flow
Like scented smoke and melodies.
They sing. They dance. They play with gods
And hug the winds,
Their bosoms full with kernels ripe.
They glow, they heave, they stir and sway
Like pregnant brides — voluptuous, fair,
And full of love for men and things —
While gods and winds
In lofty air
Caress and kiss their russet hair.

Helen Rhoda Hoopes

Milton's Daughters

Mary Milton, Deborah, Anne,
Daughters were of that great man
Who knew how heaven and earth and hell
Were carved from chaos — knew as well
The pattern of the golden chain
To draw earth up to heaven again —
Yet never knew, by sad mischance,
Love in that house in Petty France
Where three lone girls, bereft of mother,
Forlornly comforted one another.

Before you let yourself condemn,
Remember what life offered them.

Unloved, untended, and ill-bred,
Unlettered in the words they read —
Words like the choiring of the spheres
To their blind father's eager ears,
To theirs the clash of Babel's tower —
So wrought they, weary hour on hour,
Warm beauty for this cold, old man.
Rebellious Deborah, Mary, Anne!

To pilfering forced; allowed to slip
Into rude ways; companionship
That of the slovenly maid, who kept

A careless house, and ate and slept,
Until a third wife, strong and young,
Ruled all and with a hasty tongue
Set maid and daughters at their task;
Denied what hope and youth might ask; —
Ever they loved their father less.
Their hearts were dry with bitterness.

All that he taught his daughters three,
Lame Anne, and Deborah, and Mary,
Was what of earthly woe it cost
To learn how Paradise was lost.
Naught else they knew of earth, nor more
Of heaven; yet, tedious years before
Their girlhood ended, they could tell
More than their father could of hell.

Mary, Deborah, Anne, these three,
Peace to their souls eternally!

William van Wyck

Zola

He tore at life with fangs insatiate
And drank its blood unto the very lees;
And what there was of selfishness and hate,
Of sordidness and lust, of miseries
Too mortal hard to bear, he wrote with flame
In letters mountain high that all might read.
For truthfulness he lived, and put to shame
Virtue-pretending sons of Mammon's breed.
And cowardice, hypocrisy, and woe
Went wailing in an epic of the street;
And in this vicious, frenzied farrago
Nothing was gracious, nothing human-sweet.
Yet he found something in the dingy clod
To help delineate the face of God.

Samuel M. Sargent

Glimpses

I

There are two visions
Beautiful to me:
Dawn in the mountains,
Moonlight on the sea.

There is a moment
When the heart is drawn
To the soul of beauty
In a mountain dawn.

There is a magic
And a majesty
In a moon wistful
On a placid sea.

II

Mountain dew calling —
I'll be up and going,
Climbing, ever climbing,
With a mountain breeze blowing.

Moon sea calling —
I'll be up and going,
Sailing, ever sailing,
With a sea breeze blowing.

Jo Hartman

A Fisher Phaon

He whom Aphrodite gave
Youth anew, and Sappho
Love — immortalized in song,
Would he perish? Oh no!

Could he not live as he chose
If a goddess blessed him?
It must be he only dropped
Softly down to rest him,

Weary of Ægean isles,
Cypress groves and all?
. . . Or he wandered to far lands
At some Siren's call?

For our Lilith, silly bard —
Prosy lovers scorning —
Says he was the fisher lad
Who passed by this morning!

Lucia Trent

Man to Woman

This is a holy thing, this intimate
Close yielding to the clamor of your call —
This flushed abandonment of surging limbs
To rhyming cadences that rise and fall.

This is a holy thing, this intimate
High journey far from wastes of ancient grief,
Your woman body crying to the stars
A song whose jubilation is all too brief.

Mazie V. Caruthers

Marching Rocks

I know a woods (and there are many such
In my New England) gaunt and bare of trees,
Stubble for grass, sown thick with rocks and rocks!
Big ones and little ones, all gray and old —
Battalions marching in uneven rows —
And, at their head, a grim-faced boulder seems
To herd them through the years. This veteran
Bears on its rugged sides strange scars and wounds
Scratched by the giant glaciers, as they clashed
Eons ago, when first this world began.
Eternal, through the wear and tear of time,
These cohorts march and march! Endurance is
Their sign perpetual!

And you and I
Beside such ancients live our little day,
Then disappear from off the earth! — while they
Forever were, forevermore will be.
For what means time to such as rocks, whose span
Equals eternity? Their heritage
Is of the everlasting breath of God!

Ethel Crum

Yosemite

To you,
Valley of carved beauty
Cherished by sheer grey walls,
Like a flower in a huge harsh hand,
We bring tribute —
Silence!

Porter Myron Chaffee

Death Thoughts of a Pantheist

When the purple folds of death close round me
And wrap me in the cool languor
Of their *cul de sac*,
May the moon look on like the white wan face of a nun
Looking out from the dark casement of her cell.
May there be only the droning of crickets
As song for my requiem,
And a few white stars seen burning through a cypress
Will be candles and candelabrum enough for me.
And may I repose on the sands of a topaz bay;
And may the lap of the little waves,
As they creep to the shore,
Sound like the patter of the feet of virgins
Who have come to bear me away.

Autumn

Ungarmented

Save by stray wisps of red and gold,

Forlorn, ungraced,

Earth shrinks from frost and cold.

Lost in the dull

Gray distance of beclouded sky,

Like a forgetful god

The sun rides high.

With braggart, vulgar clatter

The roistering wind achieves

A pretense of dominion

Among the helpless leaves.

Katharine Allison MacLean

Lilith Laments

The Lady Lilith, sighing, combs her hair adown,
Her shining hair of which she hath renown.

Sighing she sings within her web of hair:

“Wherefore am I Lilith? Why, then, am I so fair?

“Look you, my very beauty maketh mock of me,
Queen of all known enchanters though I be,
Cunning to touch a young man’s blood to flame
With all named sorceries, with some that have no
name.

“My master is well satisfied . . . but yester-eve
He summoned me, and ‘*Madam, by your leave*
We would acquaint you of our high esteem.’
I did but hearken to his pleasance in a dream.

“Wherefore have I my beauty? To ensnare a soul,
To carry on the ancient war, the goal
For which I spread my ruthless golden mesh . . .
Flesh over spirit, age-old triumph of the flesh.

“Where then for me lies victory’s heady rapture?
Not in the creatures of such easy capture.
I think they do but make my prowess cheap.
Men look . . . and then come flocking like a lot of sheep.

“He does not yield who makes no struggle to resist . . .
I would find one of women all unkissed,
Sir Galahad, perchance. . . Saint Anthony,
Only of such as these could conquest gladden me.

“Wherefore am I Lilith? Alas, they shame my art!
Yet there was one . . . just one . . . who walked apart,
And I have known the bitterness of loss
Vanquished, humiliated, by his sign . . . a cross!”

Thus lady Lilith, sighing, combs her hair adown
Her golden hair of which she hath renown . . .
“ ‘Guard thou thy heart against her shining hair,’ ”
She sings, and looks, and weeps to see herself so fair.

Harold Wesley Melvin

To a Weaver of Words

You are a weaver of words; I am a poet.
There's the difference. In patterned gold
You draw the threads and make loveliness
That has no depth. You tap a music out
That sounds like silver shoes on Chinese bells,
I tear the countryside, the trees, the fields,
The brooks, the smoking chimneys, and all sounds
And set them in my poetry. The wind
Goes roaring through my song. The sea spins wild
Salt spume above the slosh of water bending
Down the bows that lurch through waves to port.
In the forest of my poetry the axe
Is heard that beats upon the oaks of truth.
Old men spit and lean against the barn,
Young men cheat and love and dare and dream.
And through it all I hear a music from
The chiming stars that clang their beams together.
Beyond it all, I see a glory brighter
Than the sunset fanning fires upon the hills.
Come, be a poet too! Take an axe and come.
Come with strong hands and come with stronger heart.
Leave your weaving to women. The wind waits.
The sea waits. The hills broaden to song!

Richard Shelley

A Warrior Returns Home

I stand before the painted gate of the city of Puan Mah,
But I do not knock.

I have been through the land of the Dragons.
I have looked with staring eyes at curving tips of flame
In the distant Land of Fire.

I have threaded the choked gorges of the Yang-Tse
Where bandits lurk in the thick reeds.

I have spent weeks in the bleak Land of Famine to the
far north.

I have felt the sun burning against my body
While I dreamed of water under white lilies.

The city of Puan Mah is surrounded by a high wall.
My wife will be passing tiny rice cakes to her guests,
Who will be sitting on braided mats near a plum tree.
The plum tree bends its mangled shape over the stream
in my garden.

I can hear the sound of the water —
The monotonous sound of my wife's voice —
The swish of the padded feet of a servant arranging a
screen —

A blue screen painted with a silver heron flying
flying

I remember the flash of sun on a heron's wing
As it was flying flying

I stand before the painted gate of the city of Puan Mah,
But — I do not enter.

Lillah A. Ashley

Chopin

He entered those bright citadels of sound
Where Beauty walked the terraces alone,
A fragile captive whose slim fingers wound
Silvery strings for lyres yet unknown.
His the delight to thread her gleaming mesh
Through patterns wrought of dreams — bright line on
line,
Kindling the spirit's ardor in the flesh
Of melody, weaving a web divine.

He saw the moon float slowly up the sky
When pain, unpitied, crept across the grass,
And pondered life's enigma with a sigh
Whose poignant lamentation shall not pass.
The unobliterated tears of men,
Transmuted through his magic, drip again.

Isaac Benjamin

Old Violin

Beauty must be paling in
The silence of this violin,
And song lies pallid altogether
As blossoms in a frosty weather.

Yet once the lean bow's fluted strands
Dipped plaintively like restless hands,
And to that deft necromancy
Song rose like pearly mists at sea.

Now beauty hungers for the thin
Song slumbering in this violin,
As twilight hungers round a tree
Awaiting night's soft witchery.

Rachel Marshall Terrell

Three Trees

There are three trees I know
As one knows people!
One is an alder on the hillside high.
A swashbuckler standing in an attitude is he —
Common and brawny, with his gaudy cloak
Of coarse material, gayly colored as a Lord's,
Spread out to every wanton wind.
Bronze and green and flaming yellow,
He flaunts himself and swaggers in the breeze.
And all his talk is crisp and loud
And sets one thinking of gay jaunts
And wild adventurings, *pardie!*

Another is a fir tree, proud and still —
A King that flings his sombre cloak
About his shoulders and withdraws, aloof
From all the common horde below.
No gaudy colorings for him, nor ornaments
Save fringes of fine fragrant cones
That gleam like amber in the sun,
All carved and cunningly embossed as doth befit
Adornments for a King.
The chatter of the landward breezes passes by
For he communes alone with high clean mountain airs,
And traveling clouds lean down to him,
Whispering the secrets of a parentage of snow.

And on the valley's rim another tree —
Madrona, hoyden gypsy lass,
Tossing her smooth brown limbs beneath
Her floating veil of shining green,
She laughs and dances in the sun,
Or bathes enchanted in the silver rains
That only make her seem more fair.
Kin to Daphne of Hellenic slopes
Whose gleaming limbs teased to pursuit
Apollo long and long ago,
She decks herself with scarlet berries
To catch the alder's eye, and e'en the King
Stills his deep voice betimes to hear
The young and joyous laughter of her leaves.

Alberta Bancroft

Prayer

Might I burn a little candle
In some old church and rude
To call Your great attention
To my rush of gratitude?

Might I choose some little, lonely hill
And light a bonfire there
For You to see its wisp of smoke
Uncurling in the air?

Or might I take a little ship
And launch it out to sea
With lanterns in Your honor
To shine the long night through?
This radiance here in my heart
Is not enough for me.
How, then, is it enough
To offer You?

Our Younger Singers

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Amy Houck

Silver Sewing

The slanting lines of the rain
Are silver threads.
They sew the flowers to the earth,
And weave the trees and houses together
In a misty tapestry.

The silver threads of the rain
Stitch themselves into a shining garment,
Which my heart wears gaily.

(Los Angeles High School)

Henry Ramsay

Sin

Sin is an unshaven giant
With tawny whiskers,
Who lurks in the fens of darkness.

He slips up behind the back,
Nods his bristles over the shoulder,
And chins the face.

Then, if you walk on,
He retreats.
But the sting and the smart of his visit
Remain forever.

(Arcata Union High School, Arcata, California)

The Artistry of the Stanza

A Backward Glance

In our past studies in this department we have been mainly concerned with the basic qualities that characterize the Stanza as an Art Form and that, appearing in varying proportions, account for the variant esthetic effects of the many and multiform individual stanza structures, ranging from the simplicity of the couplet to the intricate combinations appearing in, for instance, Spenser's *Prothalamion* and the free ode forms. We have seen that the bases of stanzaic form usually appear to be balanced metrical segments uniting to form symmetrical wholes and that stanzaic material swings into an unsymmetrical mould only for potent esthetic reasons, although in print this fact is often masked by mislining, either for novelty, for artistic suggestion, or for the revelation of a cross-pattern of internal rhyme. We have examined the respective effects of the climaxed and the anticlimactic types, with their respective devices for increasing or diminishing rhyme- and line-emphasis, their use of the repetend, and the like. We have analyzed the esthetic satisfaction that springs from a recognition of what may collectively be called stanzaic unity, tracing this pleasure to logical, rhetorical, and stanzaically structural sources, which latter we have resolved into such terms as those of metrical sequence, rhyme coordination, and various methods for emphasizing the beginning and the end and for securing economy of attention. We have observed the delicacies of artistic gradation in line length, in rhyme succession, and through variations of rhyme emphasis. We have explored the secrets of stanzaic variety in the matters of shift of cesural pause, rhyme contrast, contrasted line-group lengths and rhyme-groupings, and line enjambement*. And we have noted some of the rare cases of

suspension through the deferring of expected rhyme and through interposed and structural repetition of phrasing—effects that are valuable in narrative material and that may impart an almost narrative movement even to stanzas of primarily lyrical quality. And we are now in a position to realize the truth that upon these seven artistic elements—Balance, Climax and Anticlimax, Unity, Gradation, Variety, and Suspension — all stanzaic structure is founded.

**Enjambement*—a technical term indicating that the thought of one stanza runs smoothly over into the next with no higher punctuation than a comma at the point of transition.

We have thus developed a logical apparatus by which the natures and esthetic qualities of various stanzaic structures may be analyzed and evaluated. We can see, to take only some very obvious cases, that the *In Memoriam* stanza ($a_4 bba$) has a simple and very symmetrical structure in which the rhyme sequence, by its reversal, lightens also the rhyme emphasis; that its lack of climax prevents its brevity from being easily adaptable to epigram but on the other hand makes it peculiarly tend to a smooth running-on of the thought from stanzaic unit to stanzaic unit; but that when the stanza is no longer logically and grammatically end-stopt, it may be expected to lose much of what little unity it has and tend to be largely lost in the on-flowing thought sequence — wherefore Tennyson enjambs such stanzas but rarely.

On the other hand, we can understand why the Omar Khayyam form ($a_5 aba$) with its smooth balance, its powerful combination of three *a* rhymes in four lines, its insistent terminal emphasis, and its slight but clearly marked and accurately placed *b* rhyme relief, should have a strong and pleasing individuality that is especially adapted to the expression of more or less isolated conceptions frequently of the epigrammatic type, but that does not easily pass into an enjambed sequence of stanzas embodying smoothly connected

thought — wherefore in the English version of Omar it is not wholly easy to tell which passages are intended as one consecutive series and which are not.

Or again, we can study the strongly coherent and unified Shakespearean and Italian sonnet structures, each fourteen pentameter lines in length and thus approaching the limit fixed by the requirement of economy of attention, and can understand why both are adapted to the expression of dignified, even weighty, single conceptions of some little development; but on noting the differences between their respective rhyme-linkings and emphases ($a_5bbaabba\ cdc dcd$ in the Italian and $a_5bab\ cdc d\ efef\ gg$ in the Shakespearean) we apprehend clearly why the climax must appear a little past the middle in the former but at the finally capping couplet in the latter, and why it is impossible to mingle the two forms with a superior esthetic effect — why, in other words, to write a so-called sonnet such as $a_5bbaabba\ cdc d\ ee$, thus confusing the two distinct *genres*, cannot in general be anything but low grade art. We can diagnose the case of the Spenserian sonnet ($a_5bab\ bc bc\ cdc d\ ee$) and recognize the fact that its unpopularity, despite its eminent inventor, is not due solely to the fact that the poet has to find four *b* and four *c* rhymes (in which respect the Italian form is quite as difficult), but depends more upon the dragging climb to its heavy climax, which so slows its speed as to make it naturally adaptable to but few subjects and moods.

Finally, we can analyze the amazing combination of admirable qualities in the Spenserian stanza ($a_5babbc bcc_6$) and understand its great popularity among poets of the romantic cast in English literature. It has strong, even symmetry throughout its first eight lines; admirable coordination by rhymes, closely knit but stopping short of the over-continuance of the similar development in the Spenserian sonnet; graceful gradation in its rhymes by which dominant

stresses pass into subdominant positions, linking but with easy relief; a strong alexandrine climax, smoothly welded on and enforced both by close capping rhyme and additional length; admirable unity, induced by almost all of the important structural methods; and a natural variety in its rhyme arrangement, its line length, and its three-fold rhyme contrast. Further, the Spenserian stanza is composed of lines in a dignified and yet very flexible metre; its length is such as to permit a rich variety of effects of run-on and end-stopt line-combination and of great shifting of cesural pause; it is just long enough for well developed pictorial detail and yet, despite its final alexandrine, is easily woven into consecutive narrative; for striking onomatopoetic and symbolic uses its alexandrine offers very unusual opportunities, which yet leave no feeling of disappointment if they are not utilized; and the whole has a majestic ornateness of movement that stimulates the imagination to the introduction of such rich detail as is to be found in Spenser and Keats. Add finally to all these traits the consideration that its rhyming difficulties make less demand upon the ingenuity of the poet than is the case with the popular Italian sonnet — and who can doubt that the disuse of the form for the last few years is merely temporary and that English poetry must again employ what is certainly the most admirable single form that it has hitherto evolved? If the Spenserian stanza is discontinued permanently, as some believe it will be, the reason must be this: that unlike the sonnet, it is usually written, not as an isolated form, but in sequences, and that the complexity of its rhyme scheme is a serious consideration in beginning a work of some length. But such an involved difficulty, history shows, is by no means a deterrent — is rather a stimulating challenge to the artist who takes a loving pride in his work.

So much for a brief retrospect of our general course and purpose in recent articles. In future issues we shall explore

other aspects of the relation between poetic forms and the thought and mood that they enshrine.

A. G.

Notice

The editors are in need of copies of THE LYRIC WEST for October, 1923, October, 1925, and November, 1925, to complete University library files. Will persons having copies of these issues for sale kindly communicate with the editors at an early date?

In Review

After dearth and famine, if one waits long enough, always there comes plenty. Certainly the poetry producers are breaking fast after a long winter. E. A. Robinson's *Tristram* (Macmillan) deserves, and should later have, a full review in THE LYRIC WEST. It is the finest recent thing in verse. But there are many other good things, in varying degrees only less notable than this from the *biggest* name. George O'Neill's *The White Rooster* (Boni and Liveright) will perhaps come first to mind, partly because of its arresting title, yet mostly because the white cock crows against the dawn with a real poet's voice. The book is altogether lovely; it is poetry from cover to cover, spontaneous, variant, and stirring. Find a touch of Shakespearean lyric charm in O'Neill's *Garden Incident* or the peculiar and vigorous life of the beauties of the abstract in *Quicksilver* and *Research*, as well as in *Thus Put* and *A Storm of Ice*. Concrete with color and movement and experience are those exquisite pictures of the young Icarus winging his youth against the old and burning sun, of Mona Lisa robbing her own smile of all its delusion, of the Holy Virgin so "satin-eyed" before a briar-scratched world, of a snake being peeled of his glittering brittle raiment, of the twisted golden horn of the fabled unicorn, of St. George and the felled dragon. Certainly George O'Neill's last book is to be recommended without reservation.

Or turn to Humbert Wolfe's *News of the Devil* (Henry Holt) if you can thoroughly enjoy a delightful, long, satiric utterance on the appearance of temptation to such a man as Mr. Paul Arthur, editor of some twenty tabloids. It contains news of Satan down to date, and is so highly amusing, albeit sufficiently and preventively acrid, as to make the reader feel he has had, after all, not sheer joy in the reading. Would that the audience for satire were wider!

Scudder Middleton's *Upper Night* (Henry Holt) contains some whiffs of atmosphere that are exhilarant to breathe. As usual the author's work shows distinctive personality, always clear cut and never obvious, serene with a sort of fair certainty of outlook yet never gay. In quality his poems are like this one of many quotable stanzas:

This moment has no kin or fellow
With any passed or yet to be,
Secure, beyond the clocks that measure,
It keeps its own reality.

No appreciative reader can fail to laud the the reticence of the poet's mental pattern, and his choice of title which springs out of that same quietude of the upper reaches of idea.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert's *Ballads of the Singing Bowl* (Scribners) delights in a wholly different way. It is balladry come alive again in new metres and guises, but truly reminiscent of the necessary folkish qualities. Lines leap at one with weird and haunting fears; the unknown, the wild, the strange, and the horrible are there with primitive suddenness. *Two That Feasted* and *Black Kitchen* are unforgettable, as is also the opening ballad, *The Dolphin's Daughter*, which contains this echo of *Ancient Mariner* timbre:

And night grew narrow
Like a breathless room.

Still, some of the ballads are soft and delicate, like the *Ballad of a Gray Moth*:

spent
With restless winging through a night
Too large to bring a moth content.

Yet another mood, and one that very nicely balances the whole collection is a charming thing, redolent of the Cavaliers

and Herrick, entitled *Ballad for a Middle-Aged Lady*.

Two more and the present list is finished: *Astrolabe* by S. Foster Damon (Harper and Brothers) and Wilson MacDonald's *Out of the Wilderness* (Scribners). The latter is pleasingly metered in patterns harmonious with the great northern outdoors that it portrays. While it attempts no great depth of thought, it offers nothing so weak as platitude, and is merely a happy substitute to city dwellers for the gypsy trail. *Astrolabe*, on the other hand, with its sub-title of *Infinitudes and Hypocrisies*, few gypsies would take time enough off to enjoy. It is very unusual, very unlike any other poetry that one finds now or earlier. The author writes on so many subjects, unrelated except for somehow a distinction in choice which is rather easier to point out than to define. For example, *Burning Bush*, which begins

One morning in eternity,
I thought myself into a tree.
I felt my breast push with the sheen
Of leaves expanding into green;
I felt my arms like living wood
Thrill with resilience as I stood;
I felt the sap within my spine
Rise like the heart-blood of the pine.

And *Hotel Lobby*:

This tragic withering of eyes
Is due to lack of exercise;
For eyes can only be kept clean
By seeing what we call unseen;
They grow irrevocably dead
When the heart does not rule the head,
When habit, and not happiness,
— Not body, but the outward dress —

— The fact, not the intense ideal —
Are taken for the only real.
Then eyes fall from their state as stars,
And glow like nearly-gone cigars.

Is the first what Damon means by *infinitude*, and the second what he likes to have stand for *hypocrisy*? At any rate, the reader will gladly discover his mind to be literally fastened to the pages, long after the final one is turned under cover.

Two things more THE LYRIC WEST would like to call up for attention: *Where and How to Sell Manuscripts*, by Wm. B. McCourtie (*A Guide to all Literary Markets*, published by The Home Correspondence School at Springfield, Massachusetts). It is a most complete manual of information for all who have manuscripts of any kind to market. And second, Lillian White Spencer's *Pageant of Colorado*, or rather the libretto of this epic drama, the music for which was composed by Charles Wakefield Cadman. It was presented the first week in May of this year by the Denver Music Week Association. History, legend, phantasy combine to make it noteworthy.

L. B. M.