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Editorial Comment

The Servian Epic — Imagisme — A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste

Notes and Announcements

543 Cass Street, Chicago

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THE SILENT HOUSE

David. [Re-reading a letter.] How may a letter bring such darkness down—
With this: “She dallied with your love too long!”
And this: “It is the word of all the town:
“Corinna has no soul, for all her song!”

Martha. [Entering with flowers.] O sir, I bring you flaming bergamot,
And early asters, for your window-sill.
And where I found them? Now you’ll guess it not.
I visited the garden on the hill,
And gathered till my arms could hold no more.

David. The garden of the little silent house!

Martha. The city lured her from her viny door.
But see, the flowers have stayed!

David. They seem to drowse
And dream of one they lost, a paler-blown.
How fares the house upon the hill?

Martha. The blinds
Are fast of late, and all are intergrown

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With weedy havoc tossed by searching winds.

David. How somber suddenly the sky! A shower
Is in the air.

Martha. I'll light the lamps.

David. Not yet.
Leave me the beauty of the twilit hour.

Martha. Hear the wind rising! How the moorings fret!

More than a shower is on its way through space.
I would not be aboard of yonder barque.

[She goes out.]

David. Corinna! Now may I recall her face.

It is my light to think by in the dark.

Yes, all my years of study, all the will
Tenacious to achieve, the tempered strife,
The victories attained through patient skill,
Lie at the door of one dear human life.

And yet . . . the letter . . .

Often have I read

How love relumes the flowers and the trees.

True! For my world is newly garmented:

Rewards seem slight, and slighter penalties.

Daily companionship is more and more.

To make one little good more viable,

To lift one load, is worth the heart's outpour.

And she—she has made all things wonderful.

And yet . . . the letter . . .

O to break a spell

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The Silent House

Wherein the stars are crumbling unto dust!
There never was a hope—I know it well,
And struggle on, and love because I must.
Never a hope? Shall ever any scheme,
Her silence, or alarm of written word,
Or voiced asseveration, shake my dream?
She loves me! By love's anguish, I have heard!
We two from our soul-towers across a vale
Are calling each to each, alert, aware.
Shall one of us one day the other hail,
And no reply be borne upon the air?
Corinna, come to light my heart's dim place!
O come to me, Belovèd and Besought,
O'er grief, o'er gladness,—even o'er death apace,—
For I could greet your phantom, so it brought
Love's own reality!

A song of hers
Seems striving hither, a faint villanelle
Half smothered by the gale's mad roisterers.
She used to sing it in the bracken dell.
Here is the rain against the window beating
In heavy drops that presage wilder storm.
The lake is lost within a lurid sheeting;
The house upon the hill has changed its form.
The melancholy pine-trees weep in rocking.
And what's that clamor at the outer door?
Martha! O Martha! Somebody is knocking! [Calling.]
Martha. [Re-entering.] You hear the rills that down
the gutters roar.
David. And are you deaf? The door—go open it!
This is no night to leave a man outside!
Martha. [Muttering and going toward the door.] And
is it I am growing deaf a bit,
And blind a bit, with other ill-betide!
Well, I can see to thread a needle still,
And I can hear the ticking of the clock,
And I can fetch a basket from the mill.
But hallow me if ever I heard knock!
[She throws the door open. David starts up
and rushes forward with outstretched arms.]
David. Corinna! You, Corinna! Drenched and cold!
At last, at last! But how in all the rain!
Martha!

[Martha stands motionless, unseeing.]
Good Martha, you are growing old!
Draw fast the shades—shut out the hurricane.
Here, take the dripping cloak from out the room;
Bring cordial from the purple damson pressed,
And light the lamps, the candles—fire the gloom.
Why stand you gaping? See you not the guest?

Martha. I opened wide the door unto the storm.
But never heard I step upon the sill.
All the black night let in no living form.
I see no guest. Look hard as e’er I will,
I see none here but you and my poor self.
The Silent House

David. The room that was my mother's room prepare. Spread out warm garments on the oaken shelf—Her gown, the little shawl she used to wear.

[Martha, wide-eyed, bewildered, lights the lamps and candles and goes out, raising her hands.]

Corinna. The moments I may tarry fade and press. Something impelled me hither, some clear flame. They said I had no soul! O David, yes,
They said I had no soul! And so I came.
I have been singing, singing, all the way,
O, singing ever since the darkness grew
And I grew chill and followed the small ray.
Lean close, and let my longing rest in you!

David. Dear balm of light, I never thought to win
From out the pallid hours for ever throbbing!
How did you know the sorrow I was in?

Corinna. A flock of leaves came sobbing, sobbing, sobbing.

David. O, now I hold you fast, my love, my own,
My festival upleaping from an ember!
But, timid child, how could you come alone
Across the pathless woods?

Corinna. Do you remember?—Over the summer lake one starry, stilly,
Sweet night, when you and I were drifting, dear,
I frightened at the shadow of a lily!
It is all strange, but now I have no fear.

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POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

David. Your eyes are weary, drooping. Sleep, then, sleep.
Corinna. I must go over to the silent house.
David. The dwelling stands forsaken up the steep, With never beast nor human to arouse!
Corinna. Soon will the windows gleam with many lamps.

Hark!—heavy wheels are toiling to the north.
David. I will go with you where the darkness ramps.
Corinna. Strong arms are in the storm to bear me forth.
David. Not in these garments dripping as the trees! Not in these clinging shadows!

Corinna. Ah, good-night!
Dear love, dear love, I must go forth in these. Tomorrow you shall see me all in white.

Agnes Lee
THE ORACLE

(To the New Telescope on Mt. Wilson)

Of old sat one at Delphi brooding o’er
The fretful earth;—ironically wise,
Veiling her prescience in dark replies,
She shaped the fates of men with mystic lore.
The oracle is silent now. No more
Fate parts the cloud that round omniscience lies.
But thou, O Seer, dost tease our wild surmise
With portents passing all the wealth of yore.
For thou shalt spell the very thoughts of God!
Before thy boundless vision, world on world
Shall multiply in glit’ring sequence far;
And all the little ways which men have trod
Shall be as nothing by His star-dust whirled
Into the making of a single star.

A GARGOYLE ON NOTRE DAME

With angel’s wings and brutish-human form,
Weathered with centuries of sun and storm,
He crouches yonder on the gallery wall,
Monstrous, superb, indifferent, cynical:
And all the pulse of Paris cannot stir
Her one immutable philosopher.

Edmund Kemper Broadus
SANTA BARBARA BEACH

Now while the sunset offers,
   Shall we not take our own:
The gems, the blazing coffers,
   The seas, the shores, the throne?

The sky-ships, radiant-masted,
   Move out, bear low our way.
Oh, Life was dark while it lasted,
   Now for enduring day.

Now with the world far under,
   To draw up drowning men
And show them lands of wonder
   Where they may build again.

There earthly sorrow falters,
   There longing has its wage;
There gleam the ivory altars
   Of our lost pilgrimage.

—Swift flame—then shipwrecks only
   Beach in the ruined light;
Above them reach up lonely
   The headlands of the night.

A hurt bird cries and flutters
   Her dabbled breast of brown;
The western wall unshutters
   To fling one last rose down.
Maternity

A rose, a wild light after—
And life calls through the years,
"Who dreams my fountains' laughter
Shall feed my wells with tears."

Ridgely Torrence

MATERNITY

One wept, whose only babe was dead,
New-born ten years ago.
"Weep not; he is in bliss," they said.
She answered, "Even so.

"Ten years ago was born in pain
A child, not now forlorn;
But oh, ten years ago in vain
A mother, a mother was born."

Alice Meynell
PROFITS

Yes, stars were with me formerly.
(I also knew the wind and sea;
And hill-tops had my feet by heart.
Their shagged heights would sting and start
When I came leaping on their backs.
I knew the earth's queer crooked cracks,
Where hidden waters weave a low
And druid chant of joy and woe.)
But stars were with me most of all.
I heard them flame and break and fall.
Their excellent array, their free
Encounter with Eternity,
I learned. And it was good to know
That where God walked, I too might go.
Now, all these things are passed. For I
Grow very old and glad to die.
What did they profit me, say you,
These distant bloodless things I knew?
Profit? What profit hath the sea
Of her deep-throated threnody?
What profit hath the sun, who stands
Staring on space with idle hands?
And what should God Himself acquire
From all the aeons' blood and fire?
My profit is as theirs: to be
Made proof against mortality:

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Poems: Fannie Stearns Davis

To know that I have companied
With all that shines and lives, amid
So much the years sift through their hands,
Most mortal, windy, worthless sands.
This day I have great peace. With me
Shall stars abide eternally!

TWO SONGS OF CONN THE FOOL

MOON FOLLY

I will go up the mountain after the Moon:
She is caught in a dead fir-tree.
Like a great pale apple of silver and pearl,
Like a great pale apple is she.
I will leap and will clasp her in quick cold hands
And carry her home in my sack.
I will set her down safe on the oaken bench
That stands at the chimney-back.
And then I will sit by the fire all night,
And sit by the fire all day.
I will gnaw at the Moon to my heart's delight,
Till I gnaw her slowly away.

And while I grow mad with the Moon's cold taste,
The World may beat on my door,
Crying "Come out!" and crying "Make haste!
And give us the Moon once more!"
But I will not answer them ever at all;

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I will laugh, as I count and hide
The great black beautiful seeds of the Moon
In a flower-pot deep and wide.
Then I will lie down and go fast asleep,
Drunken with flame and aswoon.
But the seeds will sprout, and the seeds will leap:
The subtle swift seeds of the Moon.

And some day, all of the world that beats
And cries at my door, shall see
A thousand moon-leaves sprout from my thatch
On a marvellous white Moon-tree!
Then each shall have moons to his heart's desire:
Apples of silver and pearl:
Apples of orange and copper fire,
Setting his five wits aswirl.
And then they will thank me, who mock me now:
"Wanting the Moon is he!"
Oh, I'm off to the mountain after the Moon,
Ere she falls from the dead fir-tree!

WARNING

You must do nothing false
Or cruel-lipped or low;
For I am Conn the Fool,
And Conn the Fool will know.
Poems: Fannie Stearns Davis

I went by the door
    When Patrick Joyce looked out.
He did not wish for me
    Or any one about.
He thought I did not see
    The fat bag in his hand.
But Conn heard clinking gold,
    And Conn could understand.
I went by the door
    Where Michael Kane lay dead.
I saw his Mary tie
    A red shawl round her head.
I saw a dark man lean
    Across her garden-wall.
They did not know that Conn
    Walked by at late dusk-fall.
You must not scold or lie,
    Or hate or steal or kill,
For I shall tell the wind
    That leaps along the hill;
And he will tell the stars
    That sing and never lie;
And they will shout your sin
    In God’s face, bye and bye.
And God will not forget,
    For all He loves you so.—
He made me Conn the Fool,
    And bade me always know!

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STORM DANCE

The water came up with a roar,
The water came up to me.
There was a wave with tusks of a boar,
And he gnashed his tusks on me.
I leaned, I leapt, and was free.
He snarled and struggled and fled.
Foaming and blind he turned to the sea,
And his brothers trampled him dead.

The water came up with a shriek,
The water came up to me.
There was a wave with a woman’s cheek,
And she shuddered and clung to me.
I crouched, I cast her away.
She cursed me and swooned and died.
Her green hair tangled like sea-weed lay
Tossed out on the tearing tide.

Challenge and chase me, Storm!
Harry and hate me, Wave!
Wild as the wind is my heart, but warm,
Sudden and merry and brave.
For the water comes up with a shout,
The water comes up to me.
And oh, but I laugh, laugh out!
And the great gulls laugh, and the sea!

Fannie Stearns Davis
DIRGE FOR A DEAD ADMIRAL

What woman but would be
Rid of thy mastery,
Thou bully of the sea?

No more the gray sea's breast
Need answer thy behest;
No more thy sullen gun
Shall greet the risen sun,
Where the great dreadnaughts ride
The breast of thy cold bride;
Thou hast fulfilled thy fate:
Need trade no more with hate!

Nay, but I celebrate
Thy long-to-be-lorn mate,
Thy mistress and her state,
Thy lady sea's lorn state.
She hath her empery
Not only over thee
But o'er our misery.

Hark, doth she mourn for thee?

Nay, what hath she of grief?
She knoweth not the leaf
That on her bosom falls,
Thou last of admirals!

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Under the winter moon
She singeth that fierce tune,
Her immemorial rune;
Knoweth not, late or soon,
Careth not
Any jot
For her withholden boon
To all thy spirit's pleas
For infinite surcease!

If, on this winter night,
O thou great admiral
That in thy sombre pall
Liest upon the land,
Thy soul should take his flight
And leave the frozen sand,
And yearn above the surge,
Think'st thou that any dirge,
Grief inarticulate
From thy bereaved mate,
Would answer to thy soul
Where the waste waters roll?

Nay, thou hast need of none!
Thy long love-watch is done!

[ 188 ]
Poems: Samuel McCoy

SPRING-SONG

Early some morning in May-time
I shall awaken
When the breeze blowing in at the window
Shall bathe me
With the delicate scents
Of the blossoms of apples,
Filling my room with their coolness
And beauty and fragrance—
As of old, as of old,
When your spirit dwelt with me,
My heart shall be pure
As the heart that you gave me.

A SWEETHEART: THOMPSON STREET

Queen of all streets, Fifth Avenue
  Stretches her slender limbs
From the great Arch of Triumph, on,—
  On, where the distance dims
The splendors of her jewelled robes,
  Her granite draperies;
The magic, sunset-smitten walls
  That veil her marble knees;
For ninety squares she lies a queen,
  Superb, bare, unashamed,
Yielding her beauty scornfully
  To worshippers unnamed.
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But at her feet her sister glows,
   A daughter of the South:
Squalid, immeasurably mean,—
   But oh! her hot, sweet mouth!
My Thompson Street! a Tuscan girl,
   Hot with life’s wildest blood;
Her black shawl on her black, black
   hair,
Her brown feet stained with mud;
A scarlet blossom at her lips,
   A new babe at her breast;
A singer at a wine-shop door,
   (Her lover unconfessed).
Listen! a hurdy-gurdy plays—
   Now alien melodies:
She smiles, she cannot quite forget
   The mother over-seas.
But she no less is mine alone,
   Mine, mine! . . . Who may I be?
Have I betrayed her from her home?
   I am called Liberty!

THE OFF-SHORE WIND

The skies are sown with stars tonight,
   The sea is sown with light,
The hollows of the heaving floor
Gleam deep with light once more,
The racing ebb-tide flashes past
And seeks the vacant vast,
A wind steals from a world asleep
And walks the restless deep.
It walks the deep in ecstasy,
It lives! and loves to free
Its spirit to the silent night,
And breathes deep in delight;
Above the sea that knows no coast,
Beneath the starry host,
The wind walks like the souls of men
Who walk with God again.
The souls of men who walk with God!
With faith's firm sandals shod,
A lambent passion, body-free,
Fain for eternity!
O spirit born of human sighs,
Set loose 'twixt sea and skies,
Be thou an Angel of mankind,
Thou night-unfettered wind!
Bear thou the dreams of weary earth,
Bear thou Tomorrow's birth,
Take all our longings up to Him
Until His stars grow dim;
A moving anchorage of prayer,
Thou cool and healing air,
Heading off-shore till shoreless dawn
Breaks fair and night is gone.

Samuel McCoy
 Moving through the dew, moving through the dew,
Ere I waken in the city — Life, thy dawn makes all things new!
And up a fir-clad glen, far from all the haunts of men,
Up a glen among the mountains, oh my feet are wings again!

Moving through the dew, moving through the dew,
O mountains of my boyhood, I come again to you,
By the little path I know, with the sea far below,
And above, the great cloud-galleons with their sails of rose and snow;

As of old, when all was young, and the earth a song unsung
And the heather through the crimson dawn its Eden incense flung
From the mountain-heights of joy, for a careless-hearted boy,
And the lavrocks rose like fountain sprays of bliss that ne’er could cloy,

From their little beds of bloom, from the golden gorse and broom,
With a song to God the Giver, o'er that waste of wild perfume;  
Blowing from height to height, in a glory of great light,  
While the cottage-clustered valleys held the lilac last of night,  

So, when dawn is in the skies, in a dream, a dream, I rise,  
And I follow my lost boyhood to the heights of Paradise.  
Life, thy dawn makes all things new! Hills of Youth, I come to you,  
Moving through the dew, moving through the dew.  

II  
Moving through the dew, moving through the dew,  
Floats a brother's face to meet me! Is it you? Is it you?  
For the night I leave behind keeps these dazzled eyes still blind!  
But oh, the little hill-flowers, their scent is wise and kind;  

And I shall not lose the way from the darkness to the day,  
While dust can cling as their scent clings to memory for aye;  
And the least link in the chain can recall the whole again,  
And heaven at last resume its far-flung harvests, grain by grain.

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To the hill-flowers clings my dust, and tho' eyeless Death may thrust
All else into the darkness, in their heaven I put my trust;
And a dawn shall bid me climb to the little spread of thyme
Where first I heard the ripple of the fountain-heads of rhyme.

And a fir-wood that I know, from dawn to sunset-glow,
Shall whisper to a lonely sea, that swings far, far below.
Death, thy dawn makes all things new. Hills of Youth,
I come to you,
Moving through the dew, moving through the dew.

*Alfred Noyes*
EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE SERVIAN EPIC

POETRY as the inspiration of the Balkan war was the theme of a recent talk given by Madame Slavko Grouitch before the Friday Club in Chicago, and elsewhere, during her brief sojourn in her native country. Madame Grouitch was a student at the American School of Archaeology in Athens when she married the young Servian diplomat who now represents his nation in London.

According to the speaker, the Servian national songs have kept alive the heroic spirit of the people during more than four centuries of Turkish oppression. Through them each generation of the illiterate peasantry has fought once more the ancient wars, and followed once more the ancient leaders even to the final tragedy of the battle of Kossovo, where in 1377 they made their last brave stand against the Mohammedan invader. Whenever a few people assemble for a festival, some local bard, perhaps an old shepherd or soldier, a blind beggar or reformed brigand, will chant the old songs to the monotonous music of the gusle, while the people dance the Kolo.

"There are thousands of songs in the Servian epic," says Mme. Grouitch, "and each has many variants [ 195 ]"
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

according to whether it is sung in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Servia, Bulgaria or Macedonia; for all these political divisions are peopled by the Servian race descended from the heroes whose deeds are the theme of such unwearied narration. The bard is called the Guslar from his one-stringed instrument, whose melancholy cadence — a sighing-forth of sound — affects the emotions and increases the pathos of the words. For the story is usually sad, even when it proclaims the triumph of great deeds."

These songs invariably begin:
Once it was so; now it is told.

And they as invariably end:
From me the song; from God health to you.

A number of poems were read from Mme. Mijatovitch’s rather uninspired translation of the Kossovo series, published in London in 1881. Extreme simplicity and vividness characterize the old epic, which follows the hopeless struggle of the noble Czar Lazar against the foe without, and suspicions, dissensions, blunders, even treacheries, within. Certain characters stand out with the uncompromising exactness of some biblical story: the Czar himself; his over-zealous Vojvode; Milosh Obilich, whose murder of Sultan Murad precipitated the disaster; and certain haughty and passionate women, like the Empress Militza and her two daughters. Also “Marko, the King’s son,” whose half-mythical figure is of the race of Achilles.

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“There was one thing,” said Mme. Grouitch, “which the Turk could not take away from the Serb—the heavenly gift of poetry; that continued to dwell hidden in the breast of the southern Slav. His body was enslaved, but his soul was not; his physical life was oppressed, but his spiritual being remained free. In the eighteenth century Europe re-discovered the Servian national poetry, and became conscious that the race survived as well as its ideals. Then Serb and Bulgar again appeared in current history, and began to retrace the ancient boundaries.

“All the conferences of all the powers can never diminish the hopes, nor eclipse the glory of the Serb race in the minds of the Balkan peoples; because the Guslar, who is their supreme national leader, is forever telling them of that glory, and urging them to concerted action against all outside foes. It was the Guslar who led the Montenegrin Serbs from one heroic victory to another, so that ‘their war annals,’ as Gladstone said, ‘are more glorious than those of all the rest of the world.’ It was the Guslar who inspired Kara George and his heroic band of Servian peasants to keep up their battle until free Servia was born.

“Amid the roar of cannon at Lule Burgas and Monastir, I could hear the mighty voice of the Guslar reminding Serb and Bulgar that their fight was for ‘the honored cross and golden liberty.’ And they obeyed because it was the voice of their nation. It is this irre-
sistible national spirit which leads their armies, and beside it the spirit of German training behind the Turk is a lifeless shadow. The Ottoman power in Europe is in ruins now, a wreck in the path of a national earthquake which the Guslar has prophesied for five hundred years. The Guslar has done his duty, and he stands today in a blaze of glory at the head of the united and victorious nations of the Balkans."

The speaker told of an impressive ceremony at the Servian legation in London. Young Servians, recalled home for military service last autumn, met there on the eve of departure. Wine being served, the minister and his young patriots rose with lifted glasses, and chanted the ancient summons of Czar Lazar to his people:

Whoever born of Serbian blood or kin  
Comes not to fight the Turk on Kossovo,  
To him be never son or daughter born,  
No child to heir his lands or bear his name!  
For him no grape grow red, no corn grow white;  
In his hands nothing prosper!  
May he live  
Alone, unloved! and die unmourned, alone!

H. M.

IMAGISME*

Some curiosity has been aroused concerning Imagisme, and as I was unable to find anything definite about it in print, I sought out an imagiste, with intent to discover

*Editor's Note—In response to many requests for information regarding Imagism and the Imagistes, we publish this note by Mr. Flint, supplementing it with further exemplification by Mr. Pound. It will be seen from these that Imagism is not necessarily associated with Hellenic subjects, or with vers libre as a prescribed form.
whether the group itself knew anything about the "movement." I gleaned these facts.

The *imagistes* admitted that they were contemporaries of the Post Impressionists and the Futurists; but they had nothing in common with these schools. They had not published a manifesto. They were not a revolutionary school; their only endeavor was to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time,—in Sappho, Catullus, Villon. They seemed to be absolutely intolerant of all poetry that was not written in such endeavor, ignorance of the best tradition forming no excuse. They had a few rules, drawn up for their own satisfaction only, and they had not published them. They were:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

By these standards they judged all poetry, and found most of it wanting. They held also a certain 'Doctrine of the Image,' which they had not committed to writing; they said that it did not concern the public, and would provoke useless discussion.

The devices whereby they persuaded approaching poetasters to attend their instruction were:

1. They showed him his own thought already
splendidly expressed in some classic (and the school
musters altogether a most formidable erudition).

2. They re-wrote his verses before his eyes, using
about ten words to his fifty.

Even their opponents admit of them—ruefully—
“At least they do keep bad poets from writing!”

I found among them an earnestness that is amazing
to one accustomed to the usual London air of poetic
dilettantism. They consider that Art is all science, all
religion, philosophy and metaphysic. It is true that
snobisme may be urged against them; but it is at least
snobisme in its most dynamic form, with a great deal of
sound sense and energy behind it; and they are stricter
with themselves than with any outsider.

F. S. Flint

A FEW DON’TS BY AN IMAGISTE

An “Image” is that which presents an intellectual
and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the
term “complex” rather in the technical sense employed
by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we
might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a “complex” instantane­
ously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that
sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that
A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste

sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

All this, however, some may consider open to debate. The immediate necessity is to tabulate a LIST OF DON'T’s for those beginning to write verses. But I can not put all of them into Mosaic negative.

To begin with, consider the three rules recorded by Mr. Flint, not as dogma—never consider anything as dogma—but as the result of long contemplation, which, even if it is some one else's contemplation, may be worth consideration.

Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work. Consider the discrepancies between the actual writing of the Greek poets and dramatists, and the theories of the Graeco-Roman grammarians, concocted to explain their metres.

LANGUAGE

Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.

Don’t use such an expression as “dim lands of peace.” It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol.

Go in fear of abstractions. Don’t retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don’t think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when
you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.

What the expert is tired of today the public will be tired of tomorrow.

Don't imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music.

Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.

Don't allow "influence" to mean merely that you mop up the particular decorative vocabulary of some one or two poets whom you happen to admire. A Turkish war correspondent was recently caught red-handed babbling in his dispatches of "dove-gray" hills, or else it was "pearl-pale," I can not remember.

Use either no ornament or good ornament.

RHYTHM AND RHYME

Let the candidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e. g., Saxon charms,
Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare—if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadence. Let him dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values, syllables long and short, stressed and unstressed, into vowels and consonants.

It is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert.

Let the neophyte know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic, as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiae of his craft. No time is too great to give to these matters or to any one of them, even if the artist seldom have need of them.

Don’t imagine that a thing will "go" in verse just because it’s too dull to go in prose.

Don’t be "viewy"—leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophic essays. Don’t be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it.

When Shakespeare talks of the "Dawn in russet mantle clad" he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents.

Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap.
The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has discovered something. He begins by learning what has been discovered already. He goes from that point onward. He does not bank on being a charming fellow personally. He does not expect his friends to applaud the results of his freshman class work. Freshmen in poetry are unfortunately not confined to a definite and recognizable class room. They are "all over the shop." Is it any wonder "the public is indifferent to poetry?"

Don't chop your stuff into separate iambs. Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. Let the beginning of the next line catch the rise of the rhythm wave, unless you want a definite longish pause.

In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no others.

Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. It is improbable that, at the start, you will be able to get a rhythm-structure strong enough to affect them very much, though you may fall a victim to all sorts of false stopping due to line ends and caesurae.

The musician can rely on pitch and the volume of the orchestra. You can not. The term harmony is misapplied to poetry; it refers to simultaneous sounds of
different pitch. There is, however, in the best verse a sort of residue of sound which remains in the ear of the hearer and acts more or less as an organ-base. A rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure; it need not be bizarre or curious, but it must be well used if used at all.

Vide further Vildrac and Duhamel's notes on rhyme in "Technique Poétique."

That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative eye of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take it in the original.

Consider the definiteness of Dante's presentation, as compared with Milton's rhetoric. Read as much of Wordsworth as does not seem too unutterably dull.

If you want the gist of the matter go to Sappho, Catullus, Villon, Heine when he is in the vein, Gautier when he is not too frigid; or, if you have not the tongues, seek out the leisurely Chaucer. Good prose will do you no harm, and there is good discipline to be had by trying to write it.

Translation is likewise good training, if you find that your original matter "wobbles" when you try to rewrite it. The meaning of the poem to be translated can not "wobble."

If you are using a symmetrical form, don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuums with slush.
Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another. This is usually only the result of being too lazy to find the exact word. To this clause there are possibly exceptions.

The first three simple proscriptions* will throw out nine-tenths of all the bad poetry now accepted as standard and classic; and will prevent you from many a crime of production.

"... Mais d'abord il faut être un poète," as MM. Duhamel and Vildrac have said at the end of their little book, "Notes sur la Technique Poétique"; but in an American one takes that at least for granted, otherwise why does one get born upon that august continent!

Ezra Pound

NOTES

Agnes Lee (Mrs. Otto Freer) who has lived much in Boston, but is now a resident of Chicago, is known as the author of various books of poetry, the most representative, perhaps, being The Border of the Lake, published about two years ago by Sherman, French & Co. She has translated Gautier's Emaux et Camees into English poetry; and has contributed to the magazines. Her long poem, The Asphodel, which appeared in The North American Review several years ago, attracted wide attention.

Mr. Edmund Kemper Broadus is a member of the faculty of the University of Alberta, Canada.

*Noted by Mr. Flint.
Notes

Miss Fannie Stearns Davis is a young American who has written many songs and lyrics, a collection of which is to be published this spring. She was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but now lives in the East.

Mrs. Meynell, who is the wife of Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, editor of one of the leading English Catholic reviews, hardly needs an introduction in America, where her exquisite art is well known. Her small volumes of essays—*The Rhythm of Life, The Color of Life, The Children*, etc., and her *Poems* are published by The John Lane Company.

Mr. Ridgely Torrence is the author of *El Dorado, A Tragedy, Abelard and Eloise*, a poetic drama, and *Rituals for The Events of Life*. He contributes infrequently to the magazines, several of his longer poems having never been republished. He lives in New York.

Mr. Samuel McCoy was born, thirty-one years ago, at Burlington, Iowa. He now lives at Indianapolis, and devotes himself wholly to literary work. He was educated at Princeton, and from 1906 to 1908 was associate editor of *The Reader*. A collection of Mr. McCoy’s poems will be issued in book form this year by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Mr. Alfred Noyes, a young English poet, is a well known contributor to English and American magazines, and has published many books of poetry. *The Loom of Years; The Flower of Old Japan; Poems; The Forest of*
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Wild Thyme; Drake, English An Epic; Forty Singing Seamen, and The Enchanted Island are among the titles of his published works; and a new volume, The Tales of the Mermaid Tavern, is to be published this spring by the Frederick A. Stokes Co.

Early numbers of Poetry will contain poems by John G. Neihardt, Ezra Pound, Harriet Monroe, William Carlos Williams, Allen Upward, and others.
BOOKS RECEIVED

Songs of a Syrian Lover, by Clinton Scollard. Elkin Mathews.
Annates of Song, by George M. P. Baird. Privately Printed.
The Summons of the King, A Play, by Philip Becker Goetz. The MacDowell Press.

Drake, An English Epic, by Alfred Noyes. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Sherwood, or Robin Hood and the Three Kings, A Play in Five Acts, by Alfred Noyes. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
The Enchanted Island and Other Poems, by Alfred Noyes. Frederick A Stokes Co.

In Vivid Gardens, by Marguerite Wilkin’son. Sherman, French & Co.

Sappho, And the Island of Lesbos, by Mary Mills Patrick. Houghton Mifflin Co.


Two Legends, A Souvenir of Sodus Bay, by Mrs. B. C. Rude. Privately Printed.


Paroles devant la Vie, par Alexandre Mercereau. E. Figuière


PERIODICALS

The Wild Hawk, Hervey White. The Maverick Press, Woodstock, N. Y.
The Bibelot, Thos. B. Mosher, Portland, Maine.
The Idler, Robert J. Shores, New York City.
The Century, New York City.
The Forum, New York City.
The Conservator, Horace Traubel, Philadelphia.
The Nation, New York City.
The Literary Digest, New York City.
Current Opinion, New York City.
The International, New York City.
The Dial, Chicago.
The Survey, New York City.
The Nation, New York City.

Mercure de France, 26 Rue de Condé, Paris.
L’Effort Libre, Galerie Vildrac, 11 Rue de Seine, Paris.

Les Poètes, E. Basset, 3 Rue Dante, Paris. (This number devoted to poems selected from the work of Nicolas Beauduin, Paroxyste.)

L’Ile Sonnante, 21 Rue Rousselet, Paris.
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