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ON HEAVEN

To V., who asked for a plan for a working Heaven.

I.

THAT day the sunlight lay on the farms,  
On the morrow the bitter frost that there was!  
That night my young love lay in my arms,  
The morrow how bitter it was!

And because she is very tall and quaint  
And golden, like a quattrocento saint,  
I desire to write about Heaven;  
To tell you the shape and the ways of it,  
And the joys and the toil and the maze of it,  
For these there must be in Heaven,  
Even in Heaven!  
For God is a good man, God is a kind man,
And God's a good brother, and God is no blind man,
And God is our father.

I will tell you how this thing began:
How I waited in a little town near Lyons many years,
And yet knew nothing of passing time, or of her tears,
But, for nine slow years, lounged away at my table in the
shadowy sunlit square
Where the small cafés are.

The Place is small and shaded by great planes,
Over a rather human monument
Set up to Louis Dixhuit in the year
Eighteen fourteen; a funny thing with dolphins
About a pyramid of green-dripped, sordid stone.
But the enormous, monumental planes
Shade it all in, and in the flecks of sun
Sit market women. There's a paper shop
Painted all blue, a shipping agency,
Three or four cafés; dank, dark colonnades
Of an eighteen-forty Mairie. I'd no wish
To wait for her where it was picturesque,
Or ancient or historic, or to love
Over well any place in the land before she came
And loved it too. I didn't even go
To Lyons for the opera; Arles for the bulls,
Or Avignon for glimpses of the Rhone.
Not even to Beaucaire! I sat about
On Heaven

And played long games of dominoes with the maire,  
Or passing commis-voyageurs. And so  
I sat and watched the trams come in, and read  
The *Libre Parole* and sipped the thin, fresh wine  
They call Piquette, and got to know the people,  
The kind, southern people.

Until, when the years were over, she came in her swift  
red car,  
Shooting out past a tram; and she slowed and stopped and  
lighted absently down,  
A little dazed, in the heart of the town;  
And nodded imperceptibly.  
With a sideways look at me.

So our days here began.

And the wrinkled old woman who keeps the café,  
And the man  
Who sells the *Libre Parole*,  
And the sleepy gendarme,  
And the fat facteur who delivers letters only in the shady,  
Pleasanter kind of streets;  
And the boy I often gave a penny,  
And the maire himself, and the little girl who loves toffee  
And me because I have given her many sweets;  
And the one-eyed, droll  
Bookseller of the rue Grand de Provence,—
Chancing to be going home to bed,
Smiled with their kindly, fresh benevolence,
Because they knew I had waited for a lady
Who should come in a swift, red, English car,
To the square where the little cafés are.
And the old, old woman touched me on the wrist
With a wrinkled finger,
And said: "Why do you linger?—
Too many kisses can never be kissed!
And comfort her—nobody here will think harm—
Take her instantly to your arm!
It is a little strange, you know, to your dear,
To be dead!"

But one is English,
Though one be never so much of a ghost;
And if most of your life have been spent in the craze to relinquish
What you want most,
You will go on relinquishing,
You will go on vanquishing
Human longings, even
In Heaven.

God! You will have forgotten what the rest of the world is on fire for—
The madness of desire for the long and quiet embrace,
The coming nearer of a tear-wet face;
On Heaven

Forgotten the desire to slake
The thirst, and the long, slow ache,
And to interlace
Lash with lash, lip with lip, limb with limb, and the fingers
of the hand with the hand
And . . .

You will have forgotten . . . .
But they will all awake;
Aye, all of them shall awaken
In this dear place.
And all that then we took
Of all that we might have taken,
Was that one embracing look,
Coursing over features, over limbs, between eyes, a making
sure, and a long sigh,
Having the tranquillity
Of trees unshaken,
And the softness of sweet tears,
And the clearness of a clear brook
To wash away past years.
(For that too is the quality of Heaven,
That you are conscious always of great pain
Only when it is over
And shall not come again.
Thank God, thank God, it shall not come again,
Though your eyes be never so wet with the tears
Of many years!)

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II

And so she stood a moment by the door
Of the long, red car. Royally she stepped down,
Settling on one long foot and leaning back
Amongst her russet furs. And she looked round . . .
Of course it must be strange to come from England
Straight into Heaven. You must take it in,
Slowly, for a long instant, with some fear . . .
Now that affiche, in orange, on the kiosque:
“Seven Spanish bulls will fight on Sunday next
At Arles, in the arena” . . . Well, it’s strange
Till you get used to our ways. And, on the Mairie,
The untidy poster telling of the concours
De vers de soie, of silkworms. The cocoons
Pile, yellow, all across the little Places
Of ninety townships in the environs
Of Lyons, the city famous for silks.
What if she’s pale? It must be more than strange,
After these years, to come out here from England
To a strange place, to the stretched-out arms of me,
A man never fully known, only divined,
Loved, guessed at, pledged to, in your Sussex mud,
Amongst the frost-bound farms by the yeasty sea.
Oh, the long look; the long, long searching look!
And how my heart beat!

Well, you see, in England
She had a husband. And four families—
On Heaven

His, hers, mine, and another woman’s too—
Would have gone crazy. And, with all the rest,
Eight parents, and the children, seven aunts
And sixteen uncles and a grandmother.
There were, besides, our names, a few real friends,
And the decencies of life. A monstrous heap!
They made a monstrous heap. I’ve lain awake
Whole aching nights to tot the figures up!
Heap after heaps, of complications, griefs,
Worries, tongue-clackings, nonsenses and shame
For not making good. You see the coil there was!
And the poor strained fibres of our tortured brains,
And the voice that called from depth in her to depth
In me . . . my God, in the dreadful nights,
Through the roar of the great black winds, through the
sound of the sea!
Oh agony! Agony! From out my breast
It called whilst the dark house slept, the stairheads creaked;
From within my breast it screamed and made no sound;
And wailed . . . And made no sound.
And howled like the damned. . . No sound! No sound!
Only the roar of the wind, the sound of the sea,
The tick of the clock. . .
And our two voices, noiseless through the dark.
O God! O God!

(That night my young love lay in my arms. . . .

There was a bitter frost lay on the farms

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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

In England, by the shiver
And the crawling of the tide;
By the broken silver of the English Channel,
Beneath the aged moon that watched alone—
Poor, dreary, lonely old moon to have to watch alone,
Over the dreary beaches mantled with ancient foam
Like shrunken flannel;
The moon, an intent, pale face, looking down
Over the English Channel.
But soft and warm She lay in the crook of my arm,
And came to no harm since we had come quietly home
Even to Heaven;
Which is situate in a little old town
Not very far from the side of the Rhone,
That mighty river
That is, just there by the Crau, in the lower reaches,
Far wider than the Channel.)

But, in the market place of the other little town,
Where the Rhone is a narrower, greener affair,
When she had looked at me, she beckoned with her long
white hand,
A little languidly, since it is a strain, if a blessed strain, to
have just died.
And, going back again,
Into the long, red, English racing car,
Made room for me amongst the furs at her side.
And we moved away from the kind looks of the kindly
people

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On Heaven

Into the wine of the hurrying air.
And very soon even the tall gray steeple
Of Lyons cathedral behind us grew little and far
And then was no more there... And, thank God, we had nothing any more to think of,
And thank God, we had nothing any more to talk of;
Unless, as it chanced, the flashing silver stalk of the pampas
Growing down to the brink of the Rhone,
On the lawn of a little chateau, giving onto the river.
And we were alone, alone, alone... At last alone.

The poplars on the hill-crests go marching rank on rank,
And far away to the left, like a pyramid, marches the
ghost of Mont Blanc.
There are vines and vines and vines, all down to the river
bank.
There will be a castle here,
And an abbey there;
And huge quarries and a long white farm,
With long thatched barns and a long wine shed,
As we ran alone, all down the Rhone.

And that day there was no puncturing of the tires to fear;
And no trouble at all with the engine and gear;
Smoothly and softly we ran between the great poplar alley
All down the valley of the Rhone.
For the dear, good God knew how we needed rest and to
be alone.
But, on other days, just as you must have perfect shadows
to make perfect Rembrandts,
He shall afflict us with little lets and hindrances of His own
Devising—just to let us be glad that we are dead. . .
Just for remembrance.

III

Hard by the castle of God in the Alpilles,
In the eternal stone of the Alpilles,
There's this little old town, walled round by the old, gray
gardens. . .
There were never such olives as grow in the gardens of
God,
The green-gray trees, the wardens of agony
And failure of gods.
Of hatred and faith, of truth, of treachery
They whisper; they whisper that none of the living prevail;
They whirl in the great mistral over the white, dry sods,
Like hair blown back from white foreheads in the enormous
gale
Up to the castle walls of God. . . .

But, in the town that's our home,
Once you are past the wall,
Amongst the trunks of the planes,
Though they roar never so mightily overhead in the day,
All this tumult is quieted down, and all
The windows stand open because of the heat of the night
That shall come.
And, from each little window, shines in the twilight a light,
And, beneath the eternal planes
With the huge, gnarled trunks that were aged and gray
At the creation of Time,
The Chinese lanthorns, hung out at the doors of hotels,
Shimmering in the dusk, here on an orange tree, there on a
sweet-scented lime,
There on a golden inscription: "Hotel of the Three Holy
Bells,"
Or "Hotel Sublime," or "Inn of the Real Good Will."
And, yes, it is very warm and still,
And all the world is a-foot after the heat of the day,
In the cool of the even in Heaven. . . .
And it is here that I have brought my dear to pay her all
that I owed her,
Amidst this crowd, with the soft voices, the soft footfalls,
the rejoicing laughter.
And after the twilight there falls such a warm, soft dark­ness,
And there will come stealing under the planes a drowsy odor,
Compounded all of cyclamen, of oranges, of rosemary and bay,
To take the remembrance of the toil of the day away.

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POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

So we sat at a little table, under an immense plane,
And we remembered again
The blisters and foment
And terrible harassments of the tired brain,
The cold and the frost and the pain,
As if we were looking at a picture and saying: “This is true!
Why this is a truly painted
Rendering of that street where—you remember? — I fainted.”
And we remembered again
Tranquilly, our poor few tranquil moments,
The falling of the sunlight through the panes,
The flutter forever in the chimney of the quiet flame,
The mutter of our two poor tortured voices, always a-whisper
And the endless nights when I would cry out, running through all the gamut of misery, even to a lisp, her name;
And we remembered our kisses, nine, maybe, or eleven—
If you count two that I gave and she did not give again.

And always the crowd drifted by in the cool of the even,
And we saw the faces of friends,
And the faces of those to whom one day we must make amends,
Smiling in welcome.
And I said: “On another day—
And such a day may well come soon—
On Heaven

We will play dominoes with Dick and Evelyn and Frances
For a whole afternoon.
And, in the time to come, Genée
Shall dance for us, fluttering over the ground as the sunlight dances.”
And *Arlésiennes* with the beautiful faces went by us,
And gypsies and Spanish shepherds, noiseless in sandals of straw, sauntered nigh us,
Wearing slouch hats and old sheep-skins, and casting admiring glances
From dark, foreign eyes at my dear...
(And ah, it is Heaven alone, to have her alone and so near!)
So all this world rejoices
In the cool of the even
In Heaven...

And, when the cool of the even was fully there,
Came a great ha-ha of voices.
Many children run together, and all laugh and rejoice and call,
Hurrying with little arms flying, and little feet flying, and little hurrying haunches,
From the door of a stable,
Where, in an *olla podrida*, they had been playing at the *corrida*
With the black Spanish bull, whose nature
Is patience with children. And so, through the gaps in the branches

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Of jasmine on our screen beneath the planes,
We saw, coming down from the road that leads to the
olives and Alpilles,
A man of great stature,
In a great cloak,
With a great stride,
And a little joke
For all and sundry, coming down with a hound at his side.
And he stood at the cross-roads, passing the time of day
In a great, kind voice, the voice of a man-and-a-half!—
With a great laugh, and a great clap on the back,
For a fellow in black—a priest I should say,
Or may be a lover,
Wearing black for his mistress’s mood.
“A little toothache,” we could hear him say; “but that’s so
good
When it gives over.” So he passed from sight
In the soft twilight, into the soft night,
In the soft riot and tumult of the crowd.

And a magpie flew down, laughing, holding up his beak to
us.
And I said: “That was God! Presently, when he has
walked through the town
And the night has settled down,
So that you may not be afraid,
In the darkness, he will come to our table and speak to us.”
On Heaven

And past us many saints went walking in a company—
The kindly, thoughtful saints, devising and laughing and talking,
And smiling at us with their pleasant solicitude.
And because the thick of the crowd followed to the one side God,
Or to the other the saints, we sat in solitude.
And quietly, quietly walking, there came before us a woman—
That woman that no man on earth or in Heaven
May not divinely love and prize above
All other women; even above love.
That woman, even she, came walking quietly,
And quietly stood by the table before us,
So near that we could almost hear her breathing.
In the distance the saints went singing all in chorus,
And our Lord went by on the other side of the street,
Holding a little boy,
Taking him to pick the musk-roses that open at dusk,
For wreathing the statue of Jove,
Left on the Alpilles above
By the Romans; since Jove,
Even Jove,
Must not want for his quota of honor and love;
But round about him there must be,
With all its tender jollity,
The laughter of children in Heaven,
Making merry with roses in Heaven.
Yet never he looked at us, knowing that would be such joy
As must be over-great for hearts that needed quiet;
Such a riot and tumult of joy as quiet hearts are not able
To taste to the full. And then that woman, standing by
our table,
So near that we could mark her quiet breathing,
And the tranquil rise and fall of her breast beneath the
woolen cloak,
And the tender, lovely and mild, dear eyes that looked at
my dear—
That woman spoke, in her soft, clear, certain tone:
"It is so very good to have borne a son;
It is sad that you have no child!"

There went by an old man carrying many carven gourds,
And, as if it gave her the thought of a pilgrimage,
"To Lourdes,"
She said, "is not so very far; go there tomorrow,
And there shall come much joy and little sorrow
With the coming of a son very slender and straight and up­
right,
With a clear glance, and fair cheeks red and white
With our suns of France,
And a sweet voice, very courteous and truthful;
Surely, you shall rejoice!"
And, as she went, looking back over her shoulder, with eyes
so sweet, so clear and so ruthless,
"Go there," she said, "when you have quietly slept,
On Heaven

And kneel you down upon the green grass sod,
And ask then for your child; my word shall be kept.
For these are the dear, pretty angels of God,
And of them there cannot be too many.”

And so I said to my dear one: “That is our Lady!”
And my dear one sat in the shadows; very softly she wept:—
Such joy is in Heaven,
In the cool of the even,
After the burden and toil of the days,
After the heat and haze
In the vine-hills; or in the shady
Whispering groves in high passes up in the Alpilles,
Guarding the castle of God.

And I went on talking towards her unseen face:
(Ah God, the peace, to know that she was there!)
“So it is, so it goes, in this beloved place,
There shall be never a grief but passes; no, not any;
There shall be such bright light and no blindness;
There shall be so little awe and so much loving-kindness;
There shall be a little longing and enough care,
There shall be a little labor and enough of toil
To bring back the lost flavor of our human coil;
Not enough to taint it;
And all that we desire shall prove as fair as we can paint it.”

[91]
For, though that may be the very hardest trick of all
God set himself, who fashioned this goodly hall,
Thus he has made Heaven;
Even Heaven.

For God is a very clever mechanician;
And if he made this proud and goodly ship of the world,
From the maintop to the hull,
Do you think he could not finish it to the full,
With a flag and all,
And make it sail, tall and brave,
On the waters, beyond the grave?
It should cost but very little rhetoric
To explain for you that last, fine, conjuring trick;
Nor does God need to be a very great magician
To give to each man after his heart,
Who knows very well what each man has in his heart:
To let you pass your life in a night-club where they dance,
If that is your idea of heaven; if you will, in the South of France;
If you will, on the turbulent sea; if you will, in the peace of the night;
Where you will; how you will;
Or in the long death of a kiss, that may never pall:
He would be a very little God if he could not do all this,
And he is still
The great God of all.
On Heaven

For God is a good man; God is a kind man;
In the darkness he came walking to our table beneath the planes,
And spoke
So kindly to my dear,
With a little joke,
Giving himself some pains
To take away her fear
Of his stature,
So as not to abash her,
In no way at all to dash her new pleasure beneath the planes,
In the cool of the even
In heaven.

That, that is God's nature.
For God's a good brother, and God is no blind man,
And God's a good mother and loves sons who're rovers,
And God is our father and loves all good lovers.
He has a kindly smile for many a poor sinner;
He takes note to make it up to poor wayfarers on sodden roads;
Such as bear heavy loads
He takes note of, and of all that toil on bitter seas and frosty lands,
He takes care that they shall have good at his hands;
Well he takes note of a poor old cook,
Cooking your dinner;

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And much he loves sweet joys in such as ever took
Sweet joy on earth. He has a kindly smile for a kiss
Given in a shady nook.
And in the golden book
Where the accounts of his estate are kept,
All the round, golden sovereigns of bliss,
Known by poor lovers, married or never yet married,
Whilst the green world waked, or the black world quietly slept;
All joy, all sweetness, each sweet sign that's sighed—
Their accounts are kept,
And carried
By the love of God to his own credit's side.
So that is why he came to our table to welcome my dear,
   dear bride,
In the cool of the even
In front of a café in Heaven.

*Ford Madox Hueffer*
IRON

Guns,
Long, steel guns,
Pointed from the war ships
In the name of the war god.
Straight, shining, polished guns,
Clambered over with jackies in white blouses,
Glory of tan faces, tousled hair, white teeth,
Laughing lithe jackies in white blouses,
Sitting on the guns singing war songs, war chanties.

Shovels,
Broad, iron shovels,
Scooping out oblong vaults,
Loosening turf and leveling sod.

I ask you
To witness—
The shovel is brother to the gun.

Carl Sandburg
THE FALCONER OF GOD

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
    I shall start a heron soon
    In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
    Rising and crying
    Wordless, wondrous things;
    The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings
    The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
    I heard the mournful loon
    In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then, with feathery thunder, the bird of my desire
    Broke from the cover
    Flashing silver fire.
    High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
    The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gripped and held him fast.

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
    Nay! but a piteous freight,
    A dark and heavy weight

[96]
The Falconer of God

Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled,—
   All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
   Its guise with glory. O bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
   I shall start a heron soon
   In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
   I beat forever
   The fens and the sedges.
   The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
   All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find!

William Rose Benét.
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

POEMS

TO THE MEXICAN NIGHTINGALE

El Clarin

Clarin, from what glens of air
Chime your cameo-colored bells?
When they ring, I know them rare,
Fluted like the lips of shells
For the tone to ripple down,
Honey-pale or amber-brown.

When the tawny evening spills
Drops of topaz down the pine,
Light denied the dusking hills,
Do you gather and confine
In some clear aerial jar,
On the branch where flits the star?

Do you pour the liquid light
Early from your lyric urn?
Nay, it was at midmost night
That I heard among the fern
Golden drops that fell in showers,
Shaken down as out of flowers!

When the rain of light was gone,
Poured in rhyming gold like rain,
How your elfin bells at dawn

[98]
Poems

Delicately chimed again,
Soft as sea-shells murmur of
Her whose lovely name is Love!

Did the Foam-born brim those bells
With the wistful melodies
Of enchanted vocal shells?
Does the satin sigh of trees
Bring a memory of foam?
Clarin, do you sing of home?

AVE VENEZIA

The ocean is a garden
That folds you closely home
With larkspur-blue from heaven,
And roses of bright foam.

The dawn upon your waters
Is like anemones:
Your noons are flaked with scarlet
As from pomegranate trees.

The bubble-towers that sunset
Dilates with rainbow light,
Dusk turns to shadowed silver
Like olive trees at night.
O silver of dark olives,
Of cool night-shrouded seas,
That gives you rest from color,
And time for memories!

"I WILL NOT GIVE THEE ALL MY HEART"

I will not give thee all my heart
For that I need a place apart
To dream my dreams in, and I know
Few sheltered ways for dreams to go:
But when I shut the door upon
Some secret wonder—still, withdrawn—
Why dost thou love me even more,
And hold me closer than before?

When I of Love demand the least,
Thou biddest him to fire and feast:
When I am hungry and would eat,
There is no bread, though crusts were sweet.
If I with manna may be fed,
Shall I go all uncomforited?
Nay! Howsoever dear thou art,
I will not give thee all my heart.
THE LITTLE TOWN

Written in Germany

O little town of memories,
So brown and golden in the light,
Do you remember one who sees
You beckon, day and night?

There is a sweet French town that broods
Dove-grey upon a rounded hill,
Whose peopled streets were solitudes
To me, a wanderer still.

And in the South a white town sleeps:
Carven of ivory it seems:
But a man's heart perversely keeps
Such beauty for his dreams.

The rosiest, cosiest town I know
Is this above the rushing Rhine:
Here might he stay who could not go
Home to a town like mine.

They do not know you, little town,
Who say that all roads lead to Rome:
I've tramped the broad world up and down,
And every road leads home.

Grace Hazard Conkling.
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

THE TRAM

Humming and creaking, the car down the street
Lumbered and lurched through thunderous gloam,
Bearing us, spent and dumb with the heat,
From office and counter and factory home:

Sallow-faced clerks, genteel in black;
Girls from the laundries, draggled and dank;
Ruddy-faced laborers slouching slack;
A broken actor, grizzled and lank;

A mother with querulous babe on her lap;
A schoolboy whistling under his breath;
An old man crouched in a dreamless nap;
A widow with eyes on the eyes of death;

A priest; a sailor with deep-sea gaze;
A soldier in scarlet with waxed moustache;
A drunken trollop in velvet and lace;
All silent in that tense dusk. . . . when a flash

Of lightning shivered the sultry gloom:
With shattering brattle the whole sky fell
About us, and rapt to a dazzling doom
We glided on in a timeless spell,

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Unscathed through deluge and flying fire
In a magical chariot of streaming glass,
Cut off from our kind and the world's desire,
Made one by the awe that had come to pass.

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Against the green flame of the hawthorn-tree,
His scarlet tunic burns;
And livelier than the green sap's mantling glee
The spring fire tingles through him headily
As quivering he turns

And stammers out the old amazing tale
Of youth and April weather;
While she, with half-breathed jests that, sobbing, fail,
Sits, tight-lipped, quaking, eager-eyed and pale,
Beneath her purple feather.

A CATCH FOR SINGING

Said the Old Young Man to the Young Old Man:
"Alack, and well-a-day!"
Said the Young Old Man to the Old Young Man:
"The cherry-tree's in flourish!"

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Said the Old Young Man to the Young Old Man: "The world is growing gray."
Said the Young Old Man to the Old Young Man: "The cherry-tree's in flourish!"

Said the Old Young Man to the Young Old Man: "Both flower and fruit decay."
Said the Young Old Man to the Old Young Man: "The cherry-tree's in flourish!"

Said the Old Young Man to the Young Old Man: "Alack, and well-a-day!
The world is growing gray:
And flower and fruit decay.
Beware, Old Man—beware, Old Man!
For the end of life is nearing;
And the grave yawns by the way. . . ."

Said the Young Old Man to the Old Young Man: "I'm a trifle hard of hearing;
And can't catch a word you say. . .
But the cherry-tree's in flourish!"

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson.
EDITORIAL COMMENT.

"TOO FAR FROM PARIS"

It is easy to be patriotic in the days of a country's adversity; for then patriotism means something very personal. Its root is personal, no doubt, although that does not prevent the emotion's transcending the bounds of a merely selfish personal motive. But the fact that the sentiment is emotional and personal, rather than abstract and rhetorical, is what constitutes its living force.

When a country is in adversity then this emotion is continuously active. It is a passion which absorbs all the energies. So much so that it completely enlists the services not only of men of action and practical life, but also of the contemplatives, the poets, the dreamers, for whom this emotion, like others, becomes transmuted into something beyond the personal emotion.

But when a country is in the full tide of prosperity this emotion may remain dormant. The maternal love is often not awakened until the life of its offspring is threatened. The panther, fighting for its cubs; or a people subjected to tyranny, foreign rule or invasion, impoverished or destitute of succor, these are analogous. And curiously enough, it is exactly in such times of oppression and adversity that a country turns to its poets, admits their worth and is consoled or inspired to fresh courage by their songs. It may
be, so far as practical demonstration goes, that this is the supreme justification of the poet; and it may be that only in such a crisis does the country realize how much its poets and artists have contributed to the essential growth, mental, physical and spiritual, of the nation. This contribution is woven into the national make-up as surely as the wheat that has gone into the bread and nourished the bodies of the people. It is an integral part of that national entity whose destruction the people resent as surely as the ravages of fire and sword that lay waste their territories.

Happy is that country, therefore, which, in times of prosperity, nourishes and cherishes great poetry and great art; and happy are those poets who do not need to wait for a threatening fate to move them to song whose spirit is at once national and individual, a realization of life in terms of immediate experience.

We, in the United States, have need at present of just such poets.

It is easy for us to appreciate the Irishman’s zealous love for Ireland, the celebration of Bengal by the great East Indian poet, or the passionate spirit of the Roumanian folk-songs. Not only have these the direct motive of adversity, the minor note of which has been so much in sympathy with the spirit of the last century’s literary movement, but they are all deep-rooted in that tradition which has had its earliest expression in folk-songs and legends—always an enduring basis for subsequent poets and artists, and an integral part of the blood and bone of the people.
Too Far From Paris

But here in the United States we have naturally that direct break with the past which is an artificial feature of the creed of certain revolutionary European artists and poets. The European traditions of our early settlers have, through the flux of constant new additions, worn away; the imported folk-songs are almost all buried with the snows of yesterday; the legends remain as literary deposits, in no way native, vital or moving. All that we owe to the native soil itself is Indian or negro, and the latter,—we can not say certainly how much—is of African origin. These, while very interesting, do not belong to us in any racial sense. They are exotic, and any attempt to be national through the use of this material is begging the question. Therefore, whatever contribution this country makes to the great international body of literature or art must be largely individual, and the contribution already made by this country has been individual. The nation has been expressed through the individual. Poe and Whitman in poetry, Whistler and Sargent in art, Hawthorne and Henry James, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, Lincoln, and a few fine architects,—these, although diverse, have given us the soul of the nation through the expression of individuality.

Meantime the nation is still very busy finding itself. For the American poets of today to be told that they are too far from Paris is an anachronism. Incidentally it may be remarked that the temperamental distance between Calais and Dover is very much greater than that between Calais and Chicago! "Know thyself" is the first postulate for the
poet, as it is for the mystic. The "critical mind of France" has a very great value, but the creative source of much of the modern European movement is American in spirit, or draws its inspiration from that international current of thought of which the fertilizing seeds are not confined to any one nation, and of which the United States has certainly furnished heroic growths.

Edgar Allan Poe, who was never in France, is nevertheless a leading figure in the French symbolist movement; Hawthorne's fine realism, not concerned with externals alone, is of international significance; Whistler, by his keen analysis and perfect synthesis of the divergent tendencies of his period, is recognized as the progenitor of all that is vitally true and lasting in modern art. And then there is Walt Whitman, whose large cosmic "I" and inclusive technique seem to embrace many separate schools of French, German, and English followers. Especially to be emphasized in this connection is the fact that each of the Americans of acknowledged creative genius is equally gifted with the critical faculty, building from basic first principles and owing nothing to superficial contemporary models.

So individual is the creative structure reared by these men that imitation seems almost to bear upon its face the stigma of plagiarism. Emulation is in the spirit rather than in method, and for this reason the school or group unit is more rare in the United States than on the continent or in England or Ireland. More numerous, indeed, in Europe than in America, the continental followers of Whitman have
too far from Paris

escaped imitation through the diversity of language. But if, even so, these European disciples complain of the allegiance of American poets to the Whitman model, whose right is greater? Indeed, it is much better for the young American poet today to build upon Whitman, as the Greeks upon Homer, than to imitate the twilight tone of the Celtic Revival and the English poets of the 'nineties (indirectly indebted through the French symbolists to Poe), or the modern French school, which furnishes them an indirect, rather than a direct, method of approaching Whitman.

It may be that the spirit of Whitman is still, in any large sense, to capture. It will be captured and transmuted into expressions varying widely in outward form if the American poets realize their birthright and heritage of individual genius. There is no doubt that a wider acquaintance with the critical mind of France or England is valuable, but its chief value lies, not in imposing foreign standards and models, against which a healthy reaction is a good sign of vitality, but in awakening American poets to a sense of the creative sources and forces that lie nearer home.

The main thing is self-realization; after that comes self-expression, and through self-expression, the expression of the race or nation.

Nothing could have furnished a greater contrast at the recent dinner given in Chicago than the reading by Mr. Yeats and Mr. Nicholas Vachel Lindsay of their poems. Supreme in his own art, and a spokesman for his fellow-craftsmen in England and Ireland, Mr. Yeats carried the
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audience by the power of his poetry as poetry. We were moved with him for romantic Ireland dead and gone, and O'Leary in his grave, although we did not know Mr. O'Leary any more than Mr. Yeats knew Lincoln. The poems of other writers that Mr. Yeats read were also beautiful. He praised their simplicity of diction, which was wholly admirable. He belittled the Victorian rhetorical morality, which has already, so far as we are concerned, shrunk to the size of a pea, though evidences of its survival are still as prevalent in the English Review and other English periodicals as they are in American magazines—and indeed a large proportion of those in American magazines come from English sources. But, and I do not believe that Mr. Yeats thought of it, all the poems that he read except his own, however simple and explicit in diction, portrayed poetic fixities, or took their root in past tradition: Miss Coleridge's in the Nativity; Mr. Sturge Moore's in Greek symbols of emotion. So it was naturally with something of a shock that Mr. Lindsay broke the spell with his newly quarried Congo.

Mr. Lindsay did not go to France for The Congo or for General William Booth Enters Into Heaven. He did not even stay on the eastern side of the Alleghenies.

The traditions of the past are as open to the poet of Springfield as to the poet of Paris. Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, the Upanishads—Walt Whitman on the shores of Long Island accepted and acknowledged his debt.

But the tradition of the present is yet to make.
Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse

We cannot forecast Mr. Lindsay's future. He is already, as Mr. Yeats said, assured for the anthologies. But his example is valuable. He is realizing himself in relation to direct experience, and he is not adapting to his work a twilight tone which is quite foreign to him, as it is, generally speaking, to the temperament of the nation. He is working out his salvation in his own way. It will be his salvation at any rate, and therefore worth more to him than if he trundled in on the coat-tails of English or French credentials, and much more worth while to the nation.

The task for the American poet is twice as difficult as it is for his continental brother. The artistic tradition upon which he has to build is solely, as I have said, individual. It is a great tradition, nevertheless, and essentially so in spirit, and it is in spirit that it must be emulated.

A. C. H.

MR. HUEFFER AND THE PROSE TRADITION IN VERSE


In a country in love with amateurs, in a country where the incompetent have such beautiful manners, and personalities so fragile and charming, that one can not bear to injure their feelings by the introduction of competent criticism, it is well that one man should have a vision of perfection and that he should be sick to the death and disconsolate because he can not attain it.

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Mr. Yeats wrote years ago that the highest poetry is so precious that one should be willing to search many a dull tome to find and gather the fragments. As touching poetry this was, perhaps, no new feeling. Yet where nearly everyone else is still dominated by an eighteenth-century verbalism, Mr. Hueffer has had this instinct for prose. It is he who has insisted, in the face of a still Victorian press, upon the importance of good writing as opposed to the opalescent word, the rhetorical tradition. Stendhal had said, and Flaubert, De Maupassant and Turgenev had proved, that "prose was the higher art"—at least their prose.

Of course it is impossible to talk about perfection without getting yourself very much disliked. It is even more difficult in a capital where everybody's Aunt Lucy or Uncle George has written something or other, and where the victory of any standard save that of mediocrity would at once banish so many nice people from the temple of immortality. So it comes about that Mr. Hueffer is the best critic in England, one might say the only critic of any importance. What he says today the press, the reviewers, who hate him and who disparage his books, will say in about nine years' time, or possibly sooner. Shelley, Yeats, Swinburne, with their "unacknowledged legislators," with "Nothing affects these people except our conversation," with "The rest live under us;" Rémy De Gourmont, when he says that most men think only husks and shells of the thoughts that have been already lived over by others, have shown their very just appreciation of the system of echoes, of the general vacuity
of public opinion. America is like England, America is very much what England would be with the two hundred most interesting people removed. One's life is the score of this two hundred with whom one happens to have made friends. I do not see that we need to say the rest live under them, but it is certain that what these people say comes to pass. They live in their mutual credence, and thus they live things over and fashion them before the rest of the world is aware. I dare say it is a Cassandra-like and useless faculty, at least from the world's point of view. Mr. Hueffer has possessed the peculiar faculty of "foresight," or of constructive criticism, in a pre-eminent degree. Real power will run any machine. Mr. Hueffer said fifteen years ago that a certain unknown Bonar Law would lead the conservative party. Five years ago he said with equal impartiality that Mr. D. H. Lawrence would write notable prose, that Mr. De la Mare could write verses, and that Chance would make Conrad popular.

Of course if you think things ten or fifteen or twenty years before anyone else thinks them you will be considered absurd and ridiculous. Mr. Allen Upward, thinking with great lucidity along very different lines, is still considered absurd. Some professor feels that if certain ideas gain ground he will have to rewrite his lectures, some parson feels that if certain other ideas are accepted he will have to throw up his position. They search for the forecaster's weak points.

Mr. Hueffer is still underestimated for another reason also: namely, that we have not yet learned that prose is as
precious and as much to be sought after as verse, even its shreds and patches. So that, if one of the finest chapters in English is hidden in a claptrap novel, we cannot weigh the vision which made it against the weariness or the confusion which dragged down the rest of the work. Yet we would do this readily with a poem. If a novel have a form as distinct as that of a sonnet, and if its workmanship be as fine as that of some Pleiade rondel, we complain of the slightness of the motive. Yet we would not deny praise to the rondel. So it remains for a prose craftsman like Mr. Arnold Bennett to speak well of Mr. Hueffer's prose, and for a verse-craftsman like myself to speak well of his verses. And the general public will have little or none of him because he does not put on pontifical robes, because he does not take up the megaphone of some known and accepted pose, and because he makes enemies among the stupid by his rather engaging frankness.

We may as well begin reviewing the *Collected Poems* with the knowledge that Mr. Hueffer is a keen critic and a skilled writer of prose, and we may add that he is not wholly unsuccessful as a composer, and that he has given us, in *On Heaven*, the best poem yet written in the "twentieth-century fashion."

I drag in these apparently extraneous matters in order to focus attention on certain phases of significance, which might otherwise escape the hurried reader in a volume where the actual achievement is uneven. Coleridge has spoken of "the miracle that might be wrought simply by one man's feel-
Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse

ing a thing more clearly or more poignantly than anyone had felt it before.” The last century showed us a fair example when Swinburne awoke to the fact that poetry was an art, not merely a vehicle for the propagation of doctrine. England and Germany are still showing the effects of his perception. I can not belittle my belief that Mr. Hueffer’s realization that poetry should be written at least as well as prose will have as wide a result. He himself will tell you that it is “all Christina Rossetti,” and that “it was not Wordsworth, for Wordsworth was so busied about the ordinary word that he never found time to think about le mot juste.

As for Christina, Mr. Hueffer is a better critic than I am, and I would be the last to deny that a certain limpidity and precision are the ultimate qualities of style; yet I can not accept his opinion. Christina had these qualities, it is true—in places, but they are to be found also in Browning and even in Swinburne at rare moments. Christina very often sets my teeth on edge,—and so for that matter does Mr. Hueffer. But it is the function of criticism to find what a given work is, not what it is not. It is also the faculty of a capital or of high civilization to value a man for some rare ability, to make use of him and not hinder him or itself by asking of him faculties which he does not possess.

Mr. Hueffer may have found certain properties of style first, for himself, in Christina, but others have found them elsewhere, notably in Arnaut Daniel and in Guido and in Dante, where Christina herself would have found them.

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Still there is no denying that there is less of the *ore rotundo* in Christina’s work than in that of her contemporaries, and that there is also in Hueffer’s writing a clear descent from such passages as:

I listened to their honest chat:
   Said one: “Tomorrow we shall be
   Plod plod along the featureless sands
      And coasting miles and miles of sea.”
   Said one: “Before the turn of tide
      We will achieve the eyrie-seat.”
   Said one: “To-morrow shall be like
      To-day, but much more sweet.”

We find the qualities of what some people are calling “the modern cadence” in this strophe, also in *A Dirge*, in *Up Hill*, in—

Somewhere or other there must surely be
   The face not seen, the voice not heard,
and in—

Sometimes I said: “It is an empty name
      I long for; to a name why should I give
   The peace of all the days I have to live?”—
      Yet gave it all the same.

Mr. Hueffer brings to his work a prose training such as Christina never had, and it is absolutely the devil to try to quote snippets from a man whose poems are gracious impressions, leisurely, low-toned. One would quote *The Starling*, but one would have to give the whole three pages of it. And one would like to quote patches out of the curious medley, *To All the Dead*,—save that the picturesque patches aren’t the whole or the feel of it; or Sussmund’s capricious *Address*, a sort of *Inferno* to the *Heaven* which we are print-
Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse

As we come up at Baker Street
Where tubes and trains and 'buses meet
There's a touch of fog and a touch of sleet;
And we go on up Hampstead way
Toward the closing in of day. . . .

You should be a queen or a duchess rather,
Reigning, instead of a warlike father,
In peaceful times o'er a tiny town,
Where all the roads wind up and down
From your little palace—a small, old place
Where every soul should know your face
And bless your coming.

I quote again, from a still earlier poem where the quiet
of his manner is less marked:

Being in Rome I wonder will you go
Up to the Hill. But I forget the name . . .
Aventine? Pincio? No: I do not know
I was there yesterday and watched. You came.

(I give the opening only to "place" the second portion of the
poem.)

Though you're in Rome you will not go, my You,
Up to that Hill . . . but I forget the name.
I was there yesterday. You never came.

I have that Rome; and you, you have a Me,
You have a Rome, and I, I have my You;
My Rome is not your Rome: my You, not you.
. . . . For, if man knew woman
I should have plumbed your heart; if woman, man,
Your Me should be true I . . . If in your day—
You who have mingled with my soul in dreams,
You who have given my life an aim and purpose,
A heart, an imaged form—if in your dreams
You have imagined unfamiliar cities
And me among them, I shall never stand
Beneath your pillars or your poplar groves, . . .
Images, simulacra, towns of dreams
That never march upon each other's borders,
And bring no comfort to each other's hearts!

I present this passage, not because it is an example of Mr. Hueffer's no longer reminiscent style, but because, like much that appeared four years ago in Songs from London, or earlier still in From Inland, it hangs in my memory. And so little modern work does hang in one's memory, and these books created so little excitement when they appeared. One took them as a matter of course, and they're not a matter of course, and still less is the later work a matter of course. Oh well, you all remember the preface to the collected poems with its passage about the Shepherd's Bush exhibition, for it appeared first as a pair of essays in POETRY, so there is no need for me to speak further of Mr. Hueffer's aims or of his prose, or of his power to render an impression.

There is in his work another phase that depends somewhat upon his knowledge of instrumental music. Dante has defined a poem as a composition of words set to music, and the intelligent critic will demand that either the composition of words or the music shall possess a certain interest, or that there be some aptitude in their jointure together. It is true that since Dante's day—and indeed his day and Cassella's saw a re-beginning of it—"music" and "poetry" have drifted apart, and we have had a third thing which is called "word music." I mean we have poems which are read or even, in a
Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse

fashion, intoned, and are "musical" in some sort of complete or inclusive sense that makes it impossible or inadvisable to "set them to music." I mean obviously such poems as the First Chorus of *Atalanta* or many of Mr. Yeats' lyrics. The words have a music of their own, and a second "musician's" music is an impertinence or an intrusion.

There still remains the song to sing: to be "set to music," and of this sort of poem Mr. Hueffer has given us notable examples in his rendering of Von der Vogelweide's *Tandardei* and, in lighter measure, in his own *The Three-Ten*:

> When in the prime and May-day time dead lovers went a-walking,
> How bright the grass in lads' eyes was, how easy poet's talking!
> Here were green hills and daffodils, and copses to contain them:
> Daisies for floors did front their doors agog for maids to chain them.
> So when the ray of rising day did pierce the eastern heaven
> Maids did arise to make the skies seem brighter far by seven.
> Now here's a street where 'bus routes meet, and 'twixt the wheels and paving
> Standeth a lout who doth hold out flowers not worth the having.
> But see, but see! The clock strikes three above the Kilburn Station,
> Those maids, thank God, are 'neath the sod and all their generation.

What she shall wear who'll soon appear, it is not hood nor wimple,
But by the powers there are no flowers so stately or so simple.
And paper shops and full 'bus tops confront the sun so brightly,
That, come three-ten, no lovers then had hearts that beat so lightly
As ours or loved more truly,
Or found green shades or flowered glades to fit their loves more duly.

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And see, and see! 'Tis ten past three above the Kilburn Station,
Those maids, thank God! are 'neath the sod and all their generation.
Oh well, there are very few song writers in England, and it's a simple old-fashioned song with a note of futurism in its very lyric refrain; and I dare say you will pay as little attention to it as I did five years ago. And if you sing it aloud, once over, to yourself, I dare say you'll be just as incapable of getting it out of your head, which is perhaps one test of a lyric.
It is not, however, for Mr. Hueffer's gift of song-writing that I have reviewed him at such length; this gift is rare but not novel. I find him significant and revolutionary because of his insistence upon clarity and precision, upon the prose tradition; in brief, upon efficient writing—even in verse.

Ezra Pound.

Note. Mr. Hueffer is not an imagiste, but an impressionist. Confusion has arisen because of my inclusion of one of his poems in the Anthologie des Imagistes.

E. P.

NOTES.

Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, of London, is the author of numerous novels, and of books of verse now included in the Collected Poems, reviewed in this issue. He was the founder and first editor of the English Review.

Mr. Carl Sandburg, of Chicago, was introduced by POETRY last March.

Mr. William Rose Benét, a young New York poet who is on the staff of The Century, has published one book of verse, Merchants from Cathay (Century Co.) a second,
Notes

_The Falconer of God and Other Poems_ (Yale University Press), will soon appear.

Grace Hazard Conkling (Mrs. Roscoe P. Conkling), lives now in her native state, New York, after several years' residence in Heidelberg, Paris and Mexico. Her _Symphony of a Mexican Garden_ was printed in the first number of _POETRY_. She has published no book as yet.

Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, who is one of the Poetry Bookshop group of young English poets, has issued two books of plays in verse, _Daily Bread_ and _Womenkind_, and a book of poems, _Fires_, all now published by the Macmillan Co.

**BOOKS RECEIVED**


_Alla Troll_, from the German of Heinrich Heine, by Herman Scheffauer. B. W. Huebsch, New York.


_The Social Significance of the Modern Drama_, by Emma Goldman. Richard G. Badger, Boston.


_The May King_, by F. W. Moorman. Constable & Co., Ltd.


_A Vagabond's Philosophy_, by A. Safroni-Middleton. Constable & Co.


_Impressions, California and the West_, by James Rowbins. Privately printed.

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MAGAZINES RECEIVED

UNITED STATES.

New York: The Century; The Forum; Scribner's Magazine; Current Opinion; The Literary Digest; The Nation; The International; The Survey; The Woman's Home Companion; The Edison Monthly; The Colonade.

Chicago: The Dial, System, The Drama.

Philadelphia: The Conservator.

Boston: The Print Collector's Quarterly.

Portland, Maine: The Bibelot.

Woodstock, N. Y.: The Wild Hawk.

New Haven, Conn.: The Yale Review.

Tampa, Fla.: The Poet and Philosopher.

FOREIGN:

Paris: La Vie des Lettres—Nicolas Beauduin, Directeur; La Renaissance Contemporaine Poème et Drame; Les Baudouins d'Or; Mercure de France; L'Effort Libre; Les Poètes; L'Ile Sonnante.

London: Poetry and Drama, Harold Monro, editor; Poetry Review, Stephen Philips, editor; Rhythm; The British Review; The Egoist.

Wellington, New Zealand: The Triad.
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