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# oetry,

**A Magazine of Verse**  
Edited by Harriet Monroe

JULY, 1914

Poems to be Chanted, Nicholas Vachel Lindsay  
The Fireman's Ball—The Santa Fé Trail, A  
Humoresque—The Black Hawk War of the  
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Comments and Reviews

A French Poet on Tradition—Mr. Lindsay on  
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JULY, 1914

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POEMS TO BE CHANTED

THE FIREMEN'S BALL

I

*In which the music of the Ball imitates the burning of a great building.*

“Give the engines room—  
Give the engines room!”  
Louder, faster,  
The little band-master  
Whips up the fluting,  
Hurries up the tooting.  
He thinks that he stands,  
The reins in his hands,  
In the fire-chief's place  
In the night-alarm chase.  
The cymbals whang,

To be read or  
sung in a heavy  
buzzing bass, as  
of fire-engines  
pumping

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The kettle-drums bang;  
"Clear the street,  
Clear the street,  
Clear the street—boom, boom!  
In the evening gloom,  
In the evening gloom,  
Give the engines room,  
Give the engines room,  
Lest souls be trapped  
In a terrible tomb."

The sparks and the pine-brands  
Whirl on high  
From the black and reeking alleys  
To the wide red sky.  
Hear the hot glass crashing,  
Hear the stone steps hissing—  
Coal-black streams  
Down the gutters pour.  
There are cries for help  
From a far fifth floor;  
For a longer ladder  
Hear the fire-chief call.  
Listen to the music  
Of the firemen's ball—  
Listen to the music  
Of the firemen's ball.

Shriller and  
higher

*Poems to Be Chanted*

" 'Tis the night of doom,"  
Say the ding-dong doom-bells.  
"Night of doom,"  
Say the ding-dong doom-bells.  
Faster, faster,  
The red flames come.  
"Hum grum," say the engines,  
"Hum grum grum."

Heavy bass

"Buzz buzz,"  
Says the crowd.  
"See see,"  
Calls the crowd.  
"Look OUT!"  
Yelps the crowd,  
And the high walls fall.  
Listen to the music  
Of the firemen's ball;  
Listen to the music  
Of the firemen's ball.

Shriller and  
higher

" 'Tis the night of doom,"  
Say the ding-dong doom-bells;  
"Night of doom,"  
Say the ding-dong doom-bells.  
Whangaranga, whangaranga,  
Whang, whang, whang!  
Clang, clang, clangaranga,

Heavy bass

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Bass—much  
slower

Clang, clang, clang!  
Clang. . . . . a . . . . . ranga,  
Clang. . . . . a . . . . . ranga,  
Clang. . . . . clang. . . . . clang!  
Listen. . . . to . . . . the . . . . music. . . .  
Of . . . the . . . firemen's . . . . ball.

II

*Many's the heart that's breaking,  
If we could read them all,  
After the ball is over..*Old song.

Slow and soft—  
in the manner  
of languorous,  
insinuating  
music

Scornfully, gaily,  
The band-master sways,  
Changing the strain  
That the wild band plays.  
With a red and royal  
Intoxication,  
A tangle of sounds  
And a syncopation,  
Sweeping and bending  
From side to side,  
Master of dreams,  
With a peacock pride.  
A lord of the delicate  
Flowers of delight,  
He drives compunction  
Back through the night;



*Poems to Be Chanted*

Dreams he's a soldier  
Plumed and spurred,  
And valiant lads  
Arise at his word,  
Flaying the sober  
Thoughts he hates,  
Driving them back  
From the dream-town gates.  
How can the languorous  
Dancers know  
The red dreams come  
When the good dreams go?  
" 'Tis the night of love,"  
Call the silver joy-bells,  
"Night of love,"  
Call the silver joy-bells.  
Honey and wine—  
Honey and wine:  
Sing low now, violins,  
Sing, sing low:  
Blow gently, wood-wind,  
Mellow and slow.  
Like midnight poppies  
The sweethearts bloom;  
Their eyes flash power,  
Their lips are dumb;  
Faster and faster  
Their pulses come,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Though softer now  
The drum-beats fall:  
"Honey and wine,  
Honey and wine."  
'Tis the firemen's ball—  
'Tis the firemen's ball.

To be  
whispered

"I am slain,"  
Cries True-Love,  
There in the shadow.  
"And I die,"  
Cries True-Love,  
There laid low.  
"When the fire-dreams come  
The wise dreams go."

Interrupting  
with heavy bass

But his cry is drowned  
By the proud band-master.  
And now great gongs whang  
Sharper, faster,  
And kettle-drums rattle,  
And hide the shame  
With a swish and a swirl  
In dead Love's name.  
Red and crimson  
And scarlet and rose,  
Magical poppies  
The sweethearts bloom.

Poems to Be Chanted

The scarlet stays  
When the rose-flush goes,  
And Love lies low  
In a marble tomb.  
" 'Tis the night of doom,"  
Call the ding-dong doom-bells,  
"Night of doom,"  
Call the ding-dong doom-bells.  
Hark how the piccolos still make cheer—  
" 'Tis a moonlight night in the spring of the year."

In a high key

Heavy bass

Clangaranga, clangaranga,  
Clang, clang, clang!  
Clang . . . . . a . . . . . ranga . . . .  
Clang . . . . . a . . . . . ranga . . . .  
Clang, clang, clang!  
Listen . . . to . . . the . . . music . . .  
Of . . . the . . . firemen's ball . . .  
Listen . . . to . . . the . . . music . . .  
Of . . . the . . . firemen's . . . . . ball.

III

From the first Khandaka of the Mahavagga:—"There Buddha thus addressed his disciples:—"Everything, O mendicants, is burning. . . . With what fire is it burning? I declare unto you it is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of anger, with the fire of ignorance. It is burning with the anxieties of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering and despair. . . . A disciple . . . becoming weary of all that . . . . divests himself of passion. By absence of passion . . . he is made free."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

To be intoned

I once knew a teacher  
Who turned from desire,  
Who said to the young men,  
"Wine is a fire;"  
Who said to the merchants,  
"Gold is a flame  
That sears and tortures  
If you play at the game."  
I once knew a teacher  
Who turned from desire,  
Who said to the soldiers,  
"Hate is a fire;"  
Who said to the statesmen,  
"Power is a flame  
That flays and blisters  
If you play at the game."  
I once knew a teacher  
Who turned from desire,  
Who said to the lordly,  
"Pride is a fire;"  
Who thus warned the revellers:  
"Life is a flame;  
Be cold as the dew  
Would you win at the game—  
With hearts like the stars,  
With hearts like the stars."

*Poems to Be Chanted*

Very loud

So beware,  
So beware,  
So beware of the fire!  
Clear the streets—boom, boom!  
Clear the streets—boom, boom!  
Give the engines room,  
Give the engines room,  
Lest souls be trapped  
In a terrible tomb.  
Says the swift white horse  
To the swift black horse,  
“There goes the alarm,  
There goes the alarm.”  
They are hitched, they are off,  
They are gone in a flash,  
And they strain at the driver’s iron arm.  
Clangaranga, clangaranga,  
Clang, clang, clang. . . . .  
Clang . . . a . . . ranga . . . clangaranga . . .  
Clang . . . . . clang . . . . . clang . . . .  
Clang . . . . . a . . . . . ranga . . . .  
Clang . . . . . a . . . . . ranga . . . .  
Clang . . . . . clang . . . . . CLANG . . . . !

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE SANTA FÉ TRAIL—A HUMORESQUE

*I asked the old negro, "What is that bird who sings so well?"  
He answered, "That is the Rachel-Jane." "Hasn't it another  
name—lark, or thrush, or the like?" "No, jes' Rachel-Jane."*

I

*In which a racing auto comes from the east.*

To be sung  
or read  
delicately to an  
improvised  
tune

This is the order of the music of the morning:  
First, from the far east comes but a crooning;  
The crooning turns to a sunrise singing—  
Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn;  
Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn . . . .

To be sung or  
read with great  
speed

Hark to the pace-horn, chase-horn, race-horn!  
And the holy veil of the dawn has gone,  
Swiftly the brazen car comes on.  
It burns in the East as the sunrise burns—  
I see great flashes where the far trail turns:  
Its eyes are lamps, like the eyes of dragons;  
It drinks gasoline from big red flagons.  
Butting through the delicate mists of the morning,  
It comes like lightning, goes past roaring.  
It will hail all the wind-mills, taunting, ringing;  
Dodge the cyclones,  
Count the milestones,

*Poems to Be Chanted*

On through the ranges the prairie-dog tills,  
Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills . . . .  
Ho for the tear-horn, scare-horn, dare-horn,  
Ho for the gay-horn, bark-horn, bay-horn!  
Ho for Kansas, land that restores us  
When houses choke us, and great books bore us!  
Sunrise Kansas, harvester's Kansas—  
A million men have found you before us!

Deliberately in  
a rolling bass

II

*In which many autos pass westward.*

I want live things in their pride to remain.  
I will not kill one grasshopper vain,  
Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door.  
I let him out, give him one chance more.  
Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim,  
Grasshopper lyrics occur to him.

In a deliberate  
narrative  
manner

I am a tramp by the long trail's border,  
Given to squalor, rags and disorder.  
I nap and amble and yawn and look,  
Write fool-thoughts in my grubby book;  
Recite to the children, explore at my ease,  
WORK when I work, beg when I please;  
Give crank drawings, that make folks stare,  
To the half-grown boys in the sunset-glare;  
And get me a place to sleep in the hay  
At the end of a live-and-let-live day.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds  
A whisper and a feasting, all one needs:  
The whisper of the strawberries, white and red,  
Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead.  
But I would not walk all alone till I die  
Without SOME life-drunk horns going by.  
Up round this apple-earth they come,  
Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb:  
Cars in a plain realistic row—  
And fair dreams fade, when the raw horns blow.  
On each snapping pennant  
A big black name—  
The careering city  
Whence each car came.  
They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,  
Tallahassee and Texarkana.  
They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Manistee;  
They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee.  
Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,  
Cars from Topeka, Emporia and Austin;  
Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo,  
Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo;  
Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi.  
Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami.  
Ho for Kansas, land that restores us  
When houses choke us, and great books bore us!  
While I watch the highroad  
And look at the sky,

Like a train  
caller in a  
railroad station



*Poems to Be Chanted*

While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur  
Roll their legions without rain  
Over the blistering Kansas plain—  
While I sit by the milestone  
And watch the sky,  
The United States  
Goes by!  
Listen to the iron horns, ripping, racking—  
Listen to the quack horns, slack and clacking!  
Way down the road, trilling like a toad,  
Here comes the dice-horn, here comes the vice-horn,  
Here comes the snarl-horn, brawl-horn, lewd-horn,  
Followed by the prude-horn, bleak and squeaking.  
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas!)  
Here comes the hod-horn, plod-horn, sod-horn,  
Nevermore-to-roam-horn, loam-horn, home-horn,  
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas!)

Harshly with a  
snapping  
explosiveness

*Far away the Rachel-Jane,  
Not defeated by the horns,  
Sings amid a hedge of thorns:  
"Love and life,  
Eternal youth—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!  
Dew and glory,  
Love and truth—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!"*

To be read or  
sung well-nigh  
in a whisper

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Louder and  
faster

While smoke-black freights on the double-tracked railroad,  
Driven as though by the foul-fiend's ox-goad,  
Screaming to the west coast, screaming to the east,  
Carry off a harvest, bring back a feast,  
Harvesting machinery and harness for the beast.  
The hand-cars whiz, and rattle on the rails;  
The sunlight flashes on the tin dinner-pails.  
And then, in an instant,  
Ye modern men,  
Behold the procession once again!

In a rolling  
bass with  
increasing  
deliberation

With a  
snapping  
explosiveness

Listen to the iron horns, ripping, racking!  
Listen to the wise-horn, desperate-to-advise horn—  
Listen to the fast-horn, kill-horn, blast-horn . . . .

To be sung or  
read well-nigh  
in a whisper

*Far away the Rachel-Jane,  
Not defeated by the horns,  
Sings amid a hedge of thorns:  
"Love and life,  
Eternal youth—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!  
Dew and glory,  
Love and truth—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!"*

The mufflers open on a score of cars  
With wonderful thunder,  
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,

*Poems to Be Chanted*

CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK,  
CRACK-CRACK-CRACK, . . . .

To be brawled  
with a snapping  
explosiveness  
ending in a  
languorous  
chant

Listen to the gold-horn . . . .

Old-horn . . . .

Cold-horn . . . .

And all of the tunes, till the night comes down  
On hay-stack, and ant-hill, and wind-bitten town.

Then far in the west, as in the beginning,  
Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating,  
Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn,  
Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn . . . .

To be sung to  
the same  
whispered tune  
as the first five  
lines

They are hunting the goals that they understand—  
San Francisco, and the brown sea-sand.

Beginning  
sonorously—  
ending in a  
languorous  
whisper

My goal is the mystery the beggars win.  
I am caught in the web the night-winds spin.  
The edge of the wheat-ridge speaks to me;  
I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree.  
And now I hear, as I sit all alone  
In the dusk, by another big Santa-Fé stone,  
The souls of the tall corn gathering round,  
And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground.  
Listen to the tale the cotton-wood tells;  
Listen to the wind-mills singing o'er the wells.  
Listen to the whistling flutes without price  
Of myriad prophets out of Paradise . . . .

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The same  
cadenced  
whisper as the  
Rachel-Jane  
song

Hearken to the wonder that the night-air carries.  
Listen to the whisper  
Of the prairie fairies . . . .  
Singing over the fairy plain:  
"Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!  
Love and glory, stars and rain,  
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!"

THE BLACK HAWK WAR OF THE ARTISTS

*Written for Lorado Taft's statue of Black Hawk at Oregon,  
Illinois.*

Hawk of the Rocks,  
Yours is our cause today.  
Watching your foes  
Here in our war array,  
Young men we stand,  
Wolves of the West at bay.

*Power, power for war  
Comes from these trees divine;  
Power from the boughs,  
Boughs where the dew-beads shine,  
Power from the cones—  
Yea, from the breath of the pine!*

*Poems to Be Chanted*

Power to restore  
All that the white hand mars.  
See the dead east  
Crushed with the iron cars—  
Chimneys black  
Blinding the sun and stars!

Hawk of the pines,  
Hawk of the plain-winds fleet,  
You shall be king  
There in the iron street,  
Factory and forge  
Trodden beneath your feet.

There will proud trees  
Grow as they grow by streams.  
There will proud thoughts  
Walk as in warrior dreams.  
There will proud deeds  
Bloom as when battle gleams!

Warriors of Art,  
We will hold council there,  
Hewing in stone  
Things to the trapper fair,  
Painting the gray  
Veils that the spring moons wear.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

This our revenge,  
This one tremendous change:  
Making new towns,  
Lit with a star-fire strange,  
Wild as the dawn  
Gilding the bison-range.

All the young men  
Chanting your cause that day,  
Red-men, new-made  
Out of the Saxon clay,  
Strong and redeemed,  
Bold in your war-array.

*Power, power for war  
Comes from these trees divine;  
Power from the boughs  
Boughs where the dew-beads shine;  
Power from the cones,  
Yea, from the breath of the pine!*

*Nicholas Vachel Lindsay.*

## POEMS

### FROM A CLUB WINDOW

Life, as I see young old men fight  
With sails or rifles, scheme or faith,  
And witness oldish young men pass  
This section of your hour-glass—  
I doubt if War may not be right,  
Your substance; Peace, your dawdling wraith.

### RODIN

Cold bronze he has made articulate,  
More scorching in its eloquence than the flames  
That melted it to his will of fire;  
Cold marble he has made compassionate,  
Wisdom unfathomable which understands  
All pain, all dread, all hunger, all desire;  
Cold clay he has made animate,  
Life that exclaims:  
"You are but babbling shells! I, life entire!"  
All these things he has done, this god,  
Not as a god by sure austere commands;  
But by thinking, seeing, feeling, believing;  
By invincible patience and tireless hands;  
With a back of scorn for the self-deceiving;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

With faith's disdain for The Day's demands,—  
A Titan self-made by his masterful mold,  
Who has fused into copper the meaning of gold,  
All the truth he could scan,  
All his ardor innate;  
Breathed his soul in each stone; poured his heart in each  
clod,—  
A man,  
Who stands shoulder to shoulder with Fate.

Out of bronze and marble and clay, formless, cold,  
One man has given death the lie!

STAR-MAGIC

Though your beauty be a flower  
Of unimagined loveliness,  
It cannot lure me tonight;  
For I am all spirit.

As in the billowy oleander,  
Full-bloomed,  
Each blossom is all but lost  
In the next—  
One flame in a glow  
Of green-veined rhodonite;



So is heaven a crystal magnificence  
Of stars,  
Powdered lightly with blue.

For this one night  
My spirit has turned honey-moth,  
And has made of the stars  
Its flowers.

So all uncountable are the stars  
That heaven shimmers as a web,  
Bursting with light  
From beyond,  
A light exquisite,  
Immeasurable!

For this one night  
My spirit has dared, and been caught  
In the web of the stars.

Though your beauty were a net  
Of unimagined power,  
It could not hold me tonight;  
For I am all spirit.

*Richard Butler Glaenzer.*

SITTING BLIND BY THE SEA

Oh, sing me a song of the sea, my son—

Oh, sing me a song of the sea!

For my eyes they are blind and I peer in the dark,

But my man's heart leaps when the sea-dogs bark;

Can thy young eyes follow the yelping pack?

Wild, bounding streaks of yellow and black,

Do they track over meadows of seething foam?

And will they be fetching the white gulls home?

Perhaps they'll retrieve one to me—

To me, sitting blind by the sea.

To me in my door by the sea, sitting blind,

To me, sitting blind in my door,

Days be when a battle is raging afar,

And the tramp of the cavalry crossing the bar

Comes nearer and clearer with many a gun,

So plain to my ears while I sit in the sun

That I'm sure there'll be many a rainbow at play

In and out of the manes and the tails of the spray,

As the chargers plunge down in the roar

To me, sitting blind in my door.

To me, sitting blind in the night by the sea,

Sitting blind by the sea in the night,

Times be when she purrs, a gray cat, at my knee—

Oh, the glow on the hearth and the mother and thee!

'Twas a hitch in her rocker that memory kept,

*Sitting Blind by the Sea*

And I'd know when it eased that our wee laddie slept.  
The sea has it all, to the creak in her chair,  
And I, peering blind, see the glint in her hair;  
    And it floods my lone soul with delight,  
    Sitting dark in my door in the night.

To me, sitting dark by the sea in my door,  
    To me, by the sea sitting blind,  
Rare times comes a silence as still as a cave,  
And I know 'tis His night when He walks on the wave;  
And, "strong in the faith," with my feet on the land,  
My soul speeds beside Him. I'd strive for His hand  
    To lay on my eyes, but ah! ever before  
I reach Him, He's gone—and I back in my door,  
    All alone, by a whiff of the wind,  
    In my door by the sea, sitting blind.

Still it's sing me a song of the sea, my son —  
    Oh, sing me a song of the sea!  
And sorrow's slow leaven I'll nurse nevermore,  
For the soul of the sea signals mine on the shore,  
Deep calling to deep, high answering high,  
Till my bosom seems gemmed with the stars of the sky;  
And when the moon nestles, a pearl on my vest,  
I feel *her* white soul come again to my breast;  
    And with this, lad—the mother—and thee,  
    Are we lonely or blind by the sea?

*Ruth McEnergy Stuart.*

ROUMANIAN POEMS

WE WANT LAND

Hungry and naked and without a home am I.  
My shoulders, you have charged them with loads,  
And you spit at me, and you have beaten me,  
And I have been to you a dog.  
Wandering landowner, brought by the wind,  
If you have an understanding with Hell  
That we shall be dogs to you, beat us more!  
We will endure loads, so will we endure want,  
Bridle of horses, yoke of cattle:  
    But we want land.

A piece of corn bread left from yesterday,  
If you see it in our home, you take it away.  
Away you take our boys to the war,  
And our girls—you take them too.  
You curse our dearest and our holiest things—  
No pity have you, nor faith!  
Hungry, our children are dying on the road;  
And we submit out of pity for them—  
Our lives would not be such dreadful things  
    If we had land.

The cemetery that was ours in the village,  
You wanted it for wheat; We, behind the plough,

Ploughing—O God! it is too dreadful—  
Out come bones—oh, what a sin!  
They are the bones of our own flesh and blood—  
But what is that to you?  
You took us out naked from our homes,  
In frost and wind you took us;  
Even as you took our dead out of their graves.  
Oh, for the dead and for their sake  
                    We want land.

We would like to know, we long to know,  
That our bones shall lie still in the grave,  
That children of yours will not sin  
With us when we shall be dead.  
Orphans and all who are dear to us,  
If they should wish to weep on our graves,  
They would not know what earth we lie in,  
Because even for a grave we have no land,  
And we are all Christians,  
                    And we want land.

You have put seed of wheat in the field,  
But we have buried here our forefathers and fathers,  
Mothers, sisters and brothers.  
Away, you heretics!  
Our land is dear and holy to us,  
Because it is our cradle and our grave.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

With hot blood always we have defended it,  
And all the waters that moistened it  
Are but tears that we have shed.

We want land.

We have no time even for praying,  
Because our time is in your hands.  
We have still a soul in our breast—  
It seems you have forgotten.  
All of you have made an oath  
That we shall have no rights, no words to say.  
Weapons and tortures when we protest,  
Loads and chains when we move,  
And dull lead when exhausted we cry

That we want land.

We have no strength, and we can't go on  
To live always a life of beggary  
And of tortures put upon us  
By the bosses brought by winds—  
Oh beware, you God Almighty,  
That we ask not for land, but for blood!  
When the time shall come that we can endure no more,  
When hunger shall rouse us all, beware of us!  
Even were you all Christs, beware!

Even in your graves!

From the Roumanian of *George Cosbuc*.

PEASANT LOVE SONGS

I.

*He*

In the garden of my sweetheart  
Sing two birds beautifully,  
And the sun proudly shines,  
And my darling sits and dreams.  
Near the garden of my sweetheart  
Runs a river clear and crystal  
Where my darling sits and weeps.

*She*

When you are here, little man,  
I dress all the time like a bride,  
Wearing flowers and pearls  
So you will like them.  
Since you have gone away, little man,  
The red belt and the tulip have vanished—  
It is so sad.  
Green leaf of the citron:  
My little man has gone to the army;  
He is gone and does not write to me,  
Neither on the leaves, nor on the river,  
Nor on the wings of the wind.

II.

Bad, O mother, is fever,  
But far, far worse is love.

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For fever you can eat and drink,  
But for love there is naught but pain.  
From fever my mother can cure me,  
But love is far from her care;  
From fever the priest can pray me,  
But not from the evil of love.  
All of us learn this evil,  
As did I a year from last spring.  
The longing is slowly killing me—  
Yes, love is an evil thing.

III.

If you did not love me, little man,  
God shall curse you for it.  
You should marry nine times,  
And you should have nine boys.  
You should have a girl too—  
She shall bring you water in prison,  
Because when you left me  
You broke my heart and my love.

IV.

Little man, tell me, is it true?  
Be honest and tell me, please—  
Do you love me or not?



If you like me only a little,  
Take any road that you wish,  
But never the one that leads to my house.

V.

Goodbye, darling, good luck!  
Remain beautiful as a violet  
In a glass on the table.

VI.

Beautiful girl with blonde hair,  
When I see you I begin to lean  
Like the leaves in the acacia  
When the wind is blowing through them.  
Like the leaves of the oak tree I lean  
When the breeze is blowing through them.

VII.

I had a beautiful neighbor,  
And a path to her garden;  
But she went and got married  
And said not a word to me.  
I would have taken her myself!  
If she had married three villages away,  
It wouldn't have hurt me so.

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But she married a man down our street,  
The third door from my mother's home!  
When I am in, I hear her voice;  
When I go out, I see her face:  
It makes my heart burn like fire.

THE CONSCRIPT

I.

Down there in the prairie  
Met two brothers from the army.  
Said one brother to the other:  
"Take this saddle from my horse  
And strike me on the head!  
What shall we two do at home?  
Mother, father, both are dead;  
The cattle have grown old in the stable—  
Where the house stood, all is grass."

II.

Mountain, mountain, hard rock,  
Let the youths pass by!  
Let them go to be shepherds,  
So they may run away from the army.

The army is a yoke of wood  
Which the boys pull until they die.  
The army is a yoke of brass  
That they pull without ceasing.

III.

When a man goes to the army  
The house becomes so poor  
Children have not even a hearth.  
If some day they grow up,  
They will not know they had a father.

IV.

*Why are you leaning, pine of the woods,  
Without swaying and so sad?  
Why shouldn't I bend so sadly  
When near me stand three woodsmen with their axes?  
They've come to chop me down,  
And put me in three wagons  
And take me to their town,  
Just to make of me a prison.  
Four stern walls they'll make of me  
Where bravest men shall die.*

Translated by *Maurice Aisen.*

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

A FRENCH POET ON TRADITION

*Bouvard penchait vers le neptunisme; Pécuchet, au contraire, était plutonien.*—Flaubert.

We must not boast too much of tradition. It is no great merit to place our feet exactly in the tracks which the road indicates; it is a natural tendency. Though it is not very wrong to give way to this tendency, it is better to attempt a new path. Necessarily it becomes confounded here and there with the old. We must resign ourselves, but without arrogance. The deed is less meritorious than unavoidable.

Tradition is a great power opposing the originality of writers. That is why the present so strangely resembles the immediate past, which again resembles the preceding past. This subjection, which is always very oppressive, even in epochs of apparent literary innovation, tends to become a real yoke when the fashion is obedience to tradition. Hence the literary eighteenth-century, hence the literature of the First Empire.

There is the continuous tradition and there is the renewed tradition. They must not be confounded. The seventeenth century believed that it was renewing the bond with antiquity. The romanticists believed that they had re-discovered the Middle Ages. These discontinued traditions are more fertile when the period which is renewed is distant and unknown.

### *A French Poet on Tradition*

It seems then that today would be a propitious moment for renewing the seventeenth century. It is an illusion. The seventeenth century, with its appearance of distance, is infinitely near us. It has served as a part of our education. It is known even to those who have not frequented it. We still breathe its atmosphere. Everything derived from it would savor of imitation.

The seventeenth century is, relative to the renaissance, in the position that we are to romanticism: the seventeenth century does not continue the renaissance, for there are erasures, changes in taste; it does take up the renaissance again, but unconsciously and thanklessly. Does it not seem to us that romanticism understood nothing of its own work? We have attempted to refashion it with an unconsciousness comparable to that of the seventeenth century. The works of George Sand and of Alexandre Dumas seem absurd to us; we deny their genius, but we refashion them. We are as incapable of refashioning the novels of Balzac and of Stendhal as the seventeenth century was of refashioning Montaigne and Rabelais.

You take literary tradition as far back as the seventeenth century. Why? Is it from ignorance of the past? Do you not know that our great literary centuries were the twelfth and thirteenth, otherwise good judges would not prefer the *Vie de Saint Alexis* to a tragedy by Racine?

I like the seventeenth century so much that its most furious admirers will never succeed in disgusting me with it. But

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if I had to pick out a unique book I should take it from the nineteenth century.

Tradition—I find it everywhere. All the past can be a part of tradition. Why this and not that? Why the laborious mysticism of Bossuet and not the spontaneous irony of Voltaire?

Tradition is a long chain with alternate rings of gold and lead. You do not accept the whole of tradition? Then tradition is a choice and not a fact. Considered as a fact, tradition is merely a mass of contradictory tendencies.

As soon as we choose we commit an act of arbitrary criticism.

The true masters of tradition were those who, like Sainte-Beuve, despised nothing and wished to understand everything.

Do you believe that anyone who goes back no farther than Flaubert and Baudelaire can possess a good literary tradition? I know such men and women, and they astonish me with the delicacy of their taste.

Tradition is sometimes nothing more than a bibliography, sometimes a library. Brunetière was a bibliography; Sainte-Beuve a library.

"The best French writer of the seventeenth century is Hélienne de Crenne," I was informed by a woman who possessed a somewhat feminist erudition, and who, besides that, was a bibliophile.

People who say to me, "You are in the tradition of Montaigne," amuse me, for I am no great reader of the *Essays*,

a fact of which I am almost ashamed. The greater part of the discoveries of professors on the formation and tradition of minds is of this sort. The traditional man cannot see analogous tendencies in two minds without thinking that the later comer is an imitator of the earlier. School habits.

My tradition is not only French; it is European. I cannot deny Shakespeare, Dante and Byron, who taught me what poetry is; not Goethe, who enchanted my reason; nor Schopenhauer, who began my philosophical education; I cannot deny Nietzsche, who gave a principle for my repugnance to spiritualistic morality; I cannot deny Swift and Cervantes. And yet the two first books which opened the world to my soul were Stendhal's *Amour* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, found in a cupboard of the house!

A curate who taught me Latin during the war, when the schools were shut, revealed Molière to me. I have always been grateful to curates on that account. The remainder of the classics were matters for lessons and impositions. I read them much later in life. Such is my tradition.

What most strikes me in the young men of today is their docility. They learn what is taught them. In my time a professor had no authority. We recognized in him a mission for preparing us for a degree.

I have only enjoyed that which does not teach. This plunged me into the Latin of the Middle Ages.

I have never put foot in the Sorbonne except to look at pictures—Puisis de Chavannes and the frescoes of Mlle.

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Dufau. It is apparent how much I have been inspired by discussing the teaching at the Sorbonne.

When I see a hand painted on a wall indicating a direction I instinctively look the opposite way. In the street I always walk against the crowd; I go where nobody goes. The voice crying, "Follow the crowd," makes me afraid.

I have often fought against my natural tendencies, often praised a state which was quite inaccessible to me; and several of my books are merely protests against myself. For a long time I have had no aggressive opinions on anything, but, with the *débris* of my old convictions, deeper convictions have been formed in me with which I judge even those matters on which I am silent.

We are always tempted to imitate what we love, when we do not love enough. If we push love as far as admiration, we become discouraged from imitation.

The true "classics" of the seventeenth century, the models of all men of taste, are today forgotten. They were Patru, Balzac, d'Ablancourt. Boileau in his day was a breaker of dishes.

The punishment of the tribe of professors is that it is eternally destined to despise La Fontaine alive and to venerate him dead. The great classic poet was first of all a kind of Ponchon, who entered life with his hat over one ear and with a girl on each arm. He has the reputation of a Théophile, but La Bruyère, at that time, still hesitated between Théophile and Malherbe.



### *A French Poet on Tradition*

The true tradition of the French mind is the liberty of the mind. To discuss all questions anew, to admit none save those which can be resolved *a priori*, only to admit the best reasons and to consider as the best those which contain a principle of independence. To remember that no tradition is worth the tradition of liberty. To be oneself, to disregard those who speak to one in the name of a dogma, but not to be one's own dupe, and not to wish to impose on others that liberty of which the constitution of their brains renders them incapable.

Preferences—a good word to use in a matter of literary, or even philosophical, taste. It contains no negation, no dogmatism.

Yet some negations are necessary; there must also be a little dogmatism. Affirm valiantly what you like. Then you also are a tradition.

And you are more complex than you imagine. However religious you are, be certain you are also slightly Voltairian. However positive you think yourself, you contain in yourself so much mysticism that you would be terrified if you could see everything clearly. Your admiration is for the great classics, but if you were quite sincere you would admit that nothing has so taken you as the beautiful works of romanticism.

At bottom everything in literature is useless except literary pleasure, but literary pleasure depends upon the quality of sensibility. All discussions die against the wall of personal sensibility, which is flesh on the inside and on the

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outside is a wall of stone. There is a way to turn it about, but this you do not know.

We have put art above everything, and it must remain there in spite of those who wish to replace it by opinions. I put *Candide* and *René* into my sack. Take away your Voltairian blague and Chateaubrian faith; they have nothing to do with me.

The French tradition is so vast, so contradictory, that it lends itself to all tastes. A famous poet once told me that his master was Dorat. Why not? I might have liked Dorat myself if I had known him.

How heavy is the burden of this literary tradition, which goes from *Émile Deschamps* to *Verlaine*, across *Villon*, *Rabelais*, *Ronsard*, *Montaigne*, *Malherbe*, *Corneille*, *Bossuet*, *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, *Chateaubriand*, *Hugo*, *Sainte-Beuve*, *Flaubert* and so many others. It is chaos, a bog in the forest. We can no longer see the sky. Cut them down! Cut them down!

They have taken beforehand all my works, all my phrases, all my ideas. Oh, these obligatory ancestors! They bind me. They suffocate me. Far from drawing tighter the bonds of tradition, we should release the brains which it binds. Bend your branches, great tree,

*Flecte ramos, arbor alta.*

What we need is less of models and more of the free light of life which you hide from us.

*Remy de Gourmont—*

Authorized translation by *Richard Aldington.*

Mr. Lindsay on "Primitive Singing"

MR. LINDSAY ON "PRIMITIVE SINGING"

Mr. Yeats asked me recently in Chicago: "What are we going to do to restore the primitive singing of poetry?" I find what Mr. Yeats means by the "primitive singing of poetry," in Prof. Edward Bliss Reed's new volume on the English lyric. He says in his chapter on the definition of the lyric: "With the Greeks 'Song' was an all-embracing term. It included the crooning of the nurse to the child, . . . the half-sung chant of the mower or sailor, . . . the formal ode sung by the poet. In all Greek lyrics, even in the choral odes, music was the handmaid of verse . . . the poet himself composed the accompaniment. Euripides was censured because Iophon . . . had assisted him in the setting of some of his dramas."

Here is pictured a type of Greek work which survives in American vaudeville, where every line may be two-thirds spoken and one-third sung, the entire rendering, musical and elocutionary, depending largely upon the improvising power and sure instinct of the performer.

I respectfully submit *The Firemen's Ball* as an experiment in which I endeavor to carry this vaudeville form back towards the old Greek precedent of the half-chanted lyric. In this case the one-third of music must be added by the instinct of the reader. He must be Iophon. And he can easily be Iophon if he brings to bear upon the piece what might be called the Higher Vaudeville imagination. The essential points are: close attention to the turning point in

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the middle of the piece, and delicate rendering of the first half of the second section, set in abrupt contrast to the second half, in which the death-whisper of True-Love—and, if you will, of all fine things—is drowned by the noise of the brass-band: “But his cry is drowned by the proud band-master.”

The first half of the third section, including the quotation, could be intoned in a semi-priestly manner. Then comes the final clamor of the engines.

*The Santa Fé Trail* is another experiment in this manner.

Big general contrasts between the main sections should be the rule of the first attempts at improvising. It is the hope of the writer that, after two or three readings, each line will suggest its own separate touch of melody to the performer who has become accustomed to the cadences. Let him read what he likes read, and sing what he likes sung.

The actual Firemen's Ball occurred in Springfield, Illinois, November 13, 1913. The vast I. N. G. Arsenal was jammed with fire-laddies and their sweethearts of an hour.

N. V. L.

DOINA

It is difficult to explain what the word *Doina* suggests to a Roumanian peasant. It seems to mean the very spirit of the popular poetry which is sung by native bards to the accompaniment of a simple instrument.

Mr. Aisen, the translator of our group of poems, who is a Roumanian living in Chicago, says:

The *Doina* has been created by our bitterly persecuted peasants to keep themselves alive; without it they would have disappeared. Singing or chanting their sufferings, imagining absent happiness, has brought them consolation, given them their only joy. One poet sings to the *Doina*: "Stay with us, for you are our Queen; if you go away, we shall have nothing to live for."

Living through their poetry, the peasants had to create more and more. The *Doina* is an immense body of wonderful poetry. George Cosbuc, the leader of these peasant poets and a man of genius, expresses the very quintessence of the *Doina*. His lyric, *We Want Land*, is the cry of the peasant that has gone on for centuries, and still goes on.

Indeed, it is the cry of the Mexican peon today.

## REVIEWS.

*Love and Liberation*, by John Hall Wheelock. Sherman, French & Co.

Mr. Wheelock's verse has a true lyric quality; it is simple, sincere, spontaneous, musical. For the best things in this latest volume we can only be grateful. And perhaps we should not complain if, like Wordsworth and many another immortal, he leaves the task of weeding-out to his readers.

But these are crowded days—the poet should do his own weeding-out, especially in a large garden of love-songs. For one is cloyed by excess, one wearies of repetition, in these two hundred and thirty-seven lyrics of love; the good things are smothered by the over-facile, the sentimental—one has to search too long for them.

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And then, while these poems seem sincere they come too easily. In these days it were idle to criticize any frank revelation of the reserves of passion; but one has a right to demand that such a revelation shall be, as it were, dragged out of the depths of human agony and rapture, that it shall seem reluctant in proportion to its intimacy. In these lyrics is no reluctance; there is ecstasy—even to the very word—on every page, scattered so lavishly that sometimes it spills over and becomes ridiculous. Indeed, if Mr. Wheelock had a sense of humor he would be saved such lines as

Where four lips are joined together . . .  
Oh abandon yourself to an ecstasy sheer ! . . .

But in spite of these lapses, and of the over-profusion of sweets in this volume, one finds, now and then, a lyric as lovely as this:

Tell me why I love you;  
Name yourself, my Heart,  
Every inward bounty,  
Every outward art;  
The hands, the lips, the eyes,  
The beauty in your breast,  
Your very inmost spirit  
Separate from the rest.  
When your lips have ceased,  
When your words have done,  
I will answer you,  
"Not for these alone."

Also there are a few fine poems on other themes, as *The Return to New York*, and the song first printed in *POETRY, I Shed my Song on the Feet of All Men*. In all these best things one feels warmth of sincerity, real tenderness, and clear lyric simplicity.

H. M.

*Little Verse for a Little Clan*, by F. D. W. Privately printed.

Now and then, in some stray book of poems, the personal note is struck with singular poignancy. The book is a confessional, where the hidden penitent feels deep relief in pouring out his story to the mysterious listener behind the veil. This tiny half-anonymous volume is of that kind, and its "simple and humble" lyric cry comes from a "weary and bewildered heart chained to the treadmill, which yet hears, now and then, through the grinding whirl of the machinery, strains of a far-away music."

It is flute-like music, never loud or rich, but often delicate and clear; manifestly the utterance of a fine spirit. The first stanza of *O Dulcis Pimplea* strikes the key-note:

Never was I a hoarder;  
All that I had I spent.  
Upon the twilight border  
Of dreams I pitched my tent.  
The wind to me is brother,  
The stars are kind as bread;  
The old brown earth, my mother,  
Is pillow for my head.

*Adversity, Keats, Titian's Mary, Because, Flawed, and Metamorphosis*, might be quoted as fitly as this one, called *Sacrifice*:

As love's last treasure to the fire you bore,  
What was it lured your hand?  
You did not speak, nor I, but all the more  
I could not understand.  
Winged words once passed our lips, I know;  
But there all words seemed vain,

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The while, before that flame, we trembled so,  
Like reeds beneath blown rain.

At last it fluttered, wavered, paused—and fell.  
What was it loosed your hand?  
Propitiation to what heaven or hell?  
Do you yet understand?

H. M.

*Unconditioned Songs*, Anonymous. Sydney J. Endacott,  
Melbourne.

From Australia comes a pleasant little volume, anonymous, called *Unconditioned Songs*. Perhaps its charm, or a good part of it, lies in the fact that it makes so little pretense at being great poetry. These are simple but genuine little songs, the occasional flutings, one would say, of a young and very active man who turns to poetry when there is no hard work to be done at the moment. And because he takes it so naturally he has given us what so often eludes the frantic striving of our muse-kissed youth, a true and faithful portrait of his own emotions.

The songs are sometimes derivative as to form and not always clearly crystallized as to content, but they have a distinctly personal tang, and a pleasant one. They have no titles, but of the lyrics the two beginning, "I want to go away—away" and "If I reach the ocean ever," are perhaps the most distinguished, and of the others, "They made me foreman of the job" and "Who smashed the sliprails down?"

E. T.



*Men of No Land*, by Mildred McNeal Sweeny. T. Fisher Unwin, London.

*Men of No Land* is a book of creditable, craftsmanlike verse of a rather unusually even quality. This is perhaps unfortunate, since though there is nothing very bad in it, there is by the same token nothing very good. They are conscientious transcriptions of emotional facts, but they are quite lacking in the vitality this method often brings forth. Any one of these verses taken singly would probably have more effect than a whole book. E. T.

*The Foothills of Parnassus*, by John Kendrick Bangs. Macmillan.

This is a book of the fifth age of man, "full of wise saws and modern instances," full too of Mr. Bangs' characteristic humor. It is homely wisdom, treading sometimes on the heels of art. E. T.

## NOTES.

Mr. Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, of Springfield, Illinois, is familiar to readers of POETRY through *General Booth* and the *Moon Poems*. His next book, *The Congo, and Other Poems*, to be published in October by Macmillan, will contain the three here printed.

Mrs. Ruth McEnergy Stuart, of New Orleans, is well known as a writer of southern stories. She has published little verse as yet.

Mr. Richard Butler Glaenger, born in Paris in 1876 of Franco-German and American parents, is a resident of New York and St. George's, Bermuda. He has published many poems in magazines.

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BOOKS RECEIVED.

- Poems of Human Progress*, by James Harcourt West. The Tufts College Press, Boston.
- Nova Hibernia*, by Michael Monahan. Mitchell Kennerley.
- William Vaughn Moody*, by Edwin Herbert Lewis. Chicago Literary Club.
- Poems and Legends*, by Charles Stratford Catty. Smith, Elder & Co., London.
- Songs of the Dead End*, by Patrick MacGill. Mitchell Kennerley.
- Eris*, A Dramatic Allegory, by Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff. Moffat, Yard & Company.
- Tender Buttons*, by Gertrude Stein. Claire Marie, New York.
- Candle Flame*—A Play, by Katharine Howard. Sherman, French & Co.
- Quillings in Verse*, by John Edward Everett. Privately printed.
- From Far Lands*, Poems of North and South, by "Gervais Gage" (J. Laurence Rentoul). Macmillan & Co.
- Collected Poems*, by Norman Gale. Macmillan & Co.
- The Sister of the Wind*, by Grace Fallow Norton. Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Syrinx*—Pastels of Hellas, by Mitchell S. Buck. Claire Marie, New York.

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