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Vol. XIV

No. II

# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse  
Edited by Harriet Monroe

May 1919

Whitman Centenary

Come Down, Walt!  
by J. R. McCarthy

The Ship's Prow  
by A. H. Proudfoot

Benét, Untermeyer  
Edna St. V. Millay

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Mopolis

POETRY has saved my life—with a check in time when all the rest of the world was unresponsive, and with a fine poem when all the rest of the world was dull.

*From a young poet's letter*

Vol. XIV

No. II

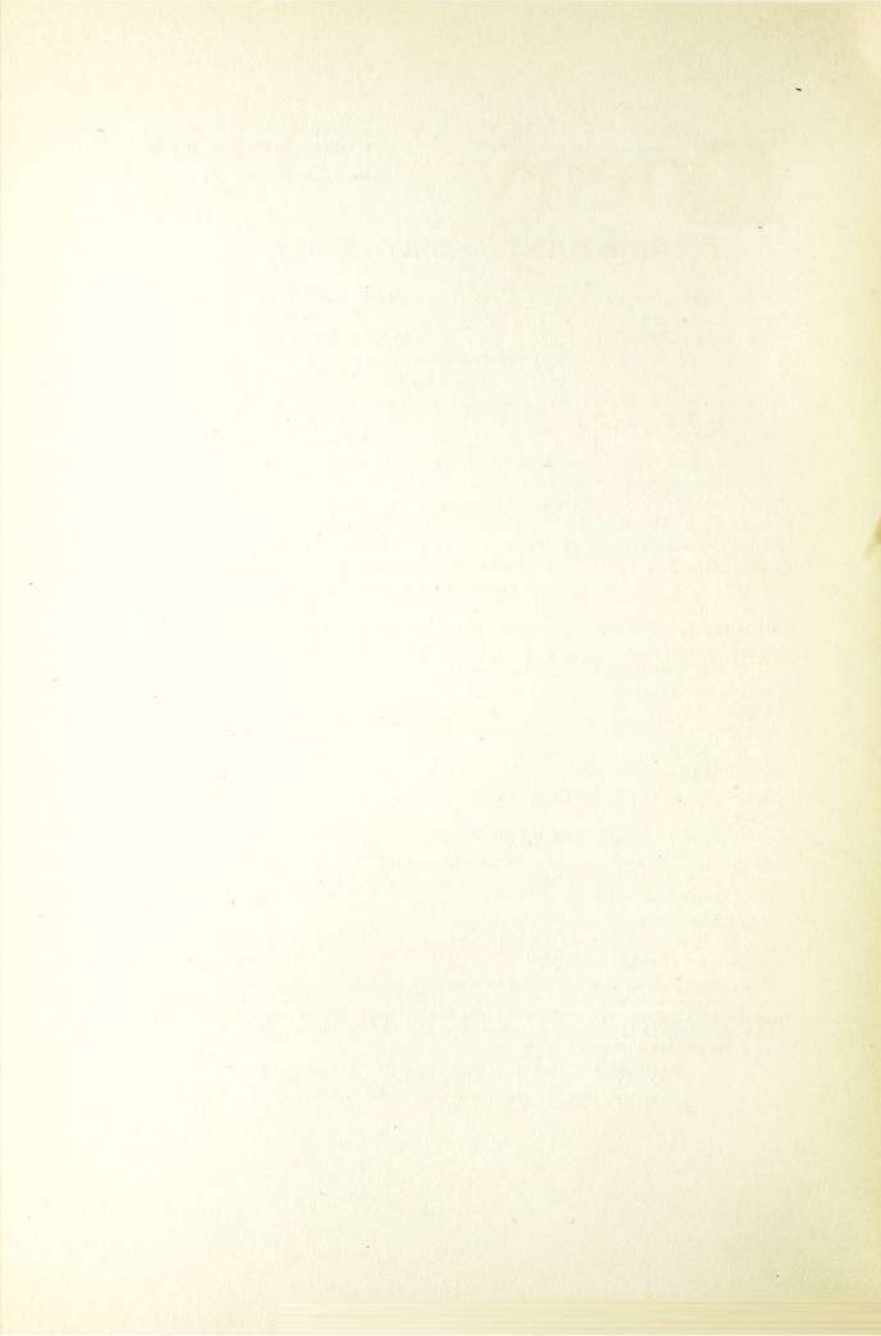
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oetry  
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIV  
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MAY, 1919

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COME DOWN, WALT!

**W**ALT! Walt!  
You burly old lover of men and women,  
You hairy shouter of catalogues from the housetops,  
Earth's prophet, through whom the Almighty chanted His  
works—

Walt! Walt! Up there! Do you hear us hallooing to you?

Out of stinking alleys,  
Out of gutters and dead fields,  
Out of the eternal monotony of the factories,  
From all abominable trades and places,  
Swarms an egregious horde:  
Speaking all tongues they come,  
Singing new songs, and loving and praying,  
And mauling and being mauled;  
And pushed down under the slime and bursting out to the  
heavens.



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We do not know them.

We futile men in white collars do not know them.

Walt! Walt!—

You burly old lover of men and women—

Can't you get a furlough?

Stop shouting above the noise of the harps,

Loose your arm from Abe Lincoln's

And come down.

Eat with this horde, Walt,

And laugh with them

And weep with them!

Then come forth chanting,

You prophet and diviner,

You lover and seer of men:

Find for us the perfume of their stench,

Shout forth the beauty of their dreams,

Translate their hundred tongues.

Come, Walt! Come!

*John Russell McCarthy*

WALT WHITMAN

Noon on the mountain!—

And all the crags are husky faces powerful with love for  
the sun;

All the shadows

Whisper of the sun.

*Emanuel Carnevali*

## THE SHIP'S PROW

Standing out, as from the confusion  
Of dark masses ebbing and flowing  
In surging wastes on all sides,  
I saw the signal figure of a man,  
Standing as though  
On the moving forepoint of a ship—  
A sea-going dragon-like monster ship.  
Always I saw this man figure:  
The ship's prow was always in the picture;  
And the sea, blue and continent,  
Swept its silhouette beyond and around him.  
But I had my soul's knapsack strapped on,  
Ready for the brave climb  
After the far-flung bloomy mass  
That fringes every woman's sky-line.  
And so I passed by the ship's prow  
And its picture of power.

O wooing Wonder of Life,  
You cast your spell upon me!  
You swept over me with shivers of frightened delight,  
And made every leaf and crevice  
Turn into a fairy hiding-place and brownie fane;  
You egged the trees to follow me,  
And brought them to a standstill  
When I turned and caught them;  
You taught the bluffs and hills

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To kneel and offer their breasts to me;  
With spiring cyclones and flooding gullies  
You whirled me out into the world-floods.

O wooing Wonder of Life!  
Your spirit of adventure pushed me;  
You rushed me with hot deeds  
For humanity—that workshop where ever must  
Young talent whittle itself into shape;  
Where the only hindrance is the crawling hour of youth.  
And oh, how I chafed like the steed of some boy Galahad,  
Begging to be unleashed from the plow of Time.

But somehow I escaped you,  
O wooing Wonder of Life,  
For another wonder wooed me!  
Always this massive figure of the man indeed,  
Face outward toward the limitless,  
Stood ready for the subduing leap into the blue,  
Filling me with terror lest he take it.

One restless morning  
Something made contact,  
And the voiceless one broke into quiet words.  
As though those words had called  
To my heart's Sesame,  
A great wall lifted,  
And I found myself behind it, shaking,  
Like a lily that had nestled unwisely



A roistering bee. And then something was stolen,  
Something that had swapped my honey for a bitter dew.

What had toppled?

What was broken?

What had been committed?—what wrong done

To the trust and charge that had been softly

Handed through the gate

When birth had kept its tryst with me?

There came a rust-gray swamp before me,

Where once the drowsy blueness of the day

Had lured me out into the shimmering mirage

That I had called my work.

Moonlights of promise and longing

Which had been opal before,

Turned to bronze-brown glare.

The warm rose of the cloud-edges

Of my daily doings shone off into a slimy silver void.

Haloes that had beckoned me to wear them

Fell into shivered icicles.

Roses I had reached for now were rags and sticks.

Songs that had called me to dizzy heights

Now tripped off in silly jingles.

Stories that had hungered me with plot-power died.

Garments that had helped me feel beauty and freedom

Fell as tatters, and I felt cold and naked . . . .

For I saw my primal, self-swung orbit

Against the zenith of the myriad;

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My solitary life against the solitary figure  
On the ship's prow,  
With the whole sea to rest its shadow.

Then the shadow of the sea flooded from my eyes,  
And, as though the whole of my future  
Had gulped me in, I stood there, completed yet rebelling,  
Lost in a boundless forest main.

For I realized his as a life that had the contour  
Of the spreading prodigal English oak;  
With a soul aspiring as the top-shoot  
Of a Norwegian fir, tapping the sky for space;  
With a fantasy complex as the cypresses of Lebanon;  
With a power to structure itself,  
Even as Lebanon's blossomed into building  
For a temple-ridden race, which bore David  
In its lute-slumbering womb. . . .

His ear and throat made the memory  
Long for an hour to prowl  
In the nightingale-haunted terraces  
Of the Black Forest pines,  
Where mix the scents of wine and resin.  
And again like Lebanon's planks  
There was laid in him an everlasting sounding-board  
Against which the mighty resonance  
Of a choral heart might throw itself in song,  
And sing as the Jehovah-mad Jew has sung to the ages—

A song which ever after mocked the little gods,  
As his melody since has mocked my littleness. . . .

His stern resolves were as the unfaltering spheres  
That endless—forward, backward—thread their silver paths  
Without a time-keeper or a score-line;  
Since some paternal force, inhibiting,  
Has seeded them with constancy.

A delirium of historic deeds ever battled  
To break into the world through him;  
Yet through the canyon of his fretless life  
There threaded such a line of fine refreshment  
That the merest weed and tiniest bird  
Might lave itself—as I had learned to lave myself,  
To lose my littleness.

And his untrammelled instinct  
Swung him to the plumb of daily life.  
*Honor, sobriety and self-control*  
Were swallowed up in a rage of instinctive rightness  
That held him ever at the ship's prow,  
Staying his acts as a relentless tide.

And the same tide caught me  
And swayed my life,  
And—*fie for shame!*—found me too small  
Or else it might have made a poet of me.

*Andrea Hofer Proudfoot*

SHE IS OVERHEARD SINGING

Oh, Prue she has a patient man,  
And Joan a gentle lover,  
And Agatha's Arth' is a hug-the-hearth—  
But my true love's a rover!

Mig her man's as good as cheese  
And honest as a briar;  
Sue tells her love what he's thinking of—  
But my dear lad's a liar!

Oh, Sue and Prue and Agatha  
Are thick with Mig and Joan—  
They bite their threads and shake their heads,  
And gnaw my name like a bone!

And Prue says, "Mine's a patient man,  
As never snaps me up;"  
And Agatha, "Arth' is a hug-the-hearth,  
Could live content in a cup;"

Sue's man's mind is like good jell—  
All one color, and clear;  
And Mig's no call to think at all  
What's to come next year;

While Joan makes boast of a gentle lad,  
That's troubled with that and this.

But they all would give the life they live  
For a look from the man I kiss!

Cold he slants his eyes about,  
And few enough's his choice—  
Though he'd slip me clean for a nun or a queen,  
Or a beggar with knots in her voice.

And Agatha will turn awake  
When her good man sleeps sound,  
And Mig and Sue and Joan and Prue  
Will hear the clock strike round.

For Prue she has a patient man  
As asks not when or why;  
And Mig and Sue have naught to do  
But peep who's passing by;

Joan is paired with a putterer  
That bastes and tastes and salts;  
And Agatha's Arth' is a hug-the-hearth—  
But my true love is false!



RECUERDO

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—  
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,  
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;  
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;  
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,  
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;  
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,  
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
We hailed, "Good-morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered  
head,  
And bought a morning-paper, which neither of us read;  
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and pears,  
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.

*Edna St. Vincent Millay*

## CHANGES

He thought it was a goddess in merry-making mood,  
But it was just a lady who wanted to be wooed.

He knelt before that lady, as suddenly to find  
Within his arms a woman who did not know her mind.

He whispered to that woman, discovering instead  
An insolent young savage who tried to kill, and fled.

He made after that savage, high mounted, pulse elate—  
Ah, will he know the beggar maid outside his postern gate?

## THE DECEIVER

He looks into my truthful face  
Beneath the rising moon,  
And on his balalaika  
He plays a lying tune.

My lover is but playing—  
The real deceiver I,  
Who look up with my truthful face  
And love him for his lie.

*Helen Muckley*

AT SEA

To A. B. G., U. S. S. M—

*Far out at sea a sail is drifting—  
Like a petal,  
Like a white moth,  
Like a scrap of paper blown by the wind.*

*O white-petal sail—  
Like a moth,  
Like a scrap of paper,  
Like me!*

*O ebb and flow and infinitude of the sea—  
As strange, as insurgent, as inevitable  
As my love!*

DAISIES

My lover is a sailor.  
If he misses me at all  
The gold-eyed daisies tell me—  
*One—two—three—the petals fall.*

In some sunny southern harbor,  
Where the girls line up to see  
*Les Americains—"Bonjour, M'sieur!"—*  
He will pass them by for me.

*Marjorie Meeker*

Every day I greet a sailor  
Walking lonely down the street—  
Give him cigarettes, a sweater,  
Or a box of something sweet;

And I tell him, if he's thinking  
Of a girl somewhere out west,  
Not to worry or be lonesome,  
Just keep liking her the best.

*One—two—three*—the daisies tell me,  
*Four—five—six*—the petals drop;  
*Seven—eight—nine*—yes, he still loves me,  
He will never, never stop!

And those black-eyed French cocottes  
With strange words upon their lips,  
Waiting there with smiles of welcome  
For the sailors from the ships—

*Much—a little—not at all*—  
(He's so far away, so free!)  
*Loves me not*—but last, *he loves me!*—  
He will pass them by for me.

*Marjorie Meeker*

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THREE POEMS

THE BELOVED

You are my holy city, my beloved ;  
    Dark as Jerusalem and bright as Rome.  
The gates of you are opened generously  
    To take the prodigal home.

What foreign towns I knew have never dimmed  
    The burning memory of your altar-fire ;  
My backward-hungering heart has always heard  
    In other songs, your choir.

I kiss your lips and dream of Lebanon !  
    You are my living Zion ; and I rest  
Here in the temple of your body's grace,  
    Beneath the white wall of your breast.

CONQUEST

You have not conquered me—it is the surge  
    Of love itself that beats against my will ;  
It is the sting of conflict, the old urge  
    That calls me still.

It is not you I love—it is the form  
    And shadow of all lovers that have died  
That gives you all the freshness of a warm  
    And unfamiliar bride.



*Louis Untermeyer*

It is your name I breathe, your hands I seek;  
It will be you when you are gone.  
And yet the dream, the name I never speak,  
Is that that lures me on.

It is the golden summons, the bright wave  
Of banners calling me anew;  
It is all beauty, perilous and grave—  
It is not you.

END OF THE COMEDY

Eleven o'clock, and the curtain falls.  
The cold wind tears the strands of illusion;  
The delicate music is lost  
In the blare of home-going crowds  
And a midnight paper.

The night has grown martial;  
It meets us with blows and disaster.  
Even the stars have turned shrapnel,  
Fixed in silent explosions.  
And here at our door  
The moonlight is laid  
Like a drawn sword.

*Louis Untermeyer*

WINGS OF SPRING

THE MARVEL

Up on the hill where trees were bare  
I saw her go the first spring dawn.  
The thrushes came while she was there  
And sang when she had gone.

I looked at noon, and saw how light  
Had crept into the apple row.  
"The hill," I said, "will soon be white  
With April apple snow."

So I was sure that I had learned  
Why thrushes sang where she went by—  
Yet on the day that she returned  
The leaves began to die.

MARGOT

Dear one, I cannot tell you in a word  
How sweet I think you are, for you are gone—  
Gone like a lovely song that I have heard,  
But never learned, from new-leaved woods at dawn.  
I think of fluting from a distant hill  
Blown in the spring by some light shepherd boy,

*George O'Neil*

Startling the winds and making birds be still;  
And in my soul awakes a sudden joy—  
A joy that rising to my lips must die  
With such pain as the night feels when afar  
Day's silver fingers slip along the sky  
And tremble up to take a fainting star.  
You are the memory that a dream awakes  
Like dwindling music that an echo makes.

SPARROW

O bird on the wire,  
What is the world to you?  
No vast place of unseen pressing things  
Designed by hidden gods;  
Just light, and warmth,  
And air to beat your wings upon!  
And that wet green bough  
Sparkling in the sun,  
Where you are fluttering—  
Is that your heaven?

*George O'Neil*

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SONGS TO A WOMAN

I

You are like startled song-wings against my heart  
Which flutters like a harp-string wounded  
By too much quivering music.  
You cover me with a blue dream-robe  
Whose silk ripples out like imaged water . . . .  
And when, for a moment, you leave,  
I am a black sky awaiting its moon.

II

If I could be moon-light scattered out  
Over the blowing dark-blue hair  
Of kneeling, flowing crystal breezes  
Breathing a litany of pale odors,  
If I could be moonlight scattered out  
Over the whispers meeting in your heart,  
The marriage of our souls would be  
No more complete than now.

III

Like a delicately absent-minded guest,  
Your smile sometimes lingers after  
Your lips are solemn.  
And once I saw a tear in your eye

Playing hide-and-go-seek with some leaping, dimpled memory.

These things, to me, are like scattered perfume  
Wavering down upon my heart.

IV

The struggle of a smile craving birth  
Invades her little weeping faun's face,  
And even makes her tear-drops leap . . . .  
She smiles as only grief can smile:  
A smile like ashes caught within  
A tiny whirlwind of light;  
When the light goes, the ashes drape her face  
Till even her lips seem grey.

V

Wave your veils to pallid gavottes,  
Blow them on with dimly-spiced laughs,  
And catch them breathlessly against your breast!  
You have prayed too long in your sinking temple—  
Night has come, with her fumbling release,  
Her moment in which you may play with sad thoughts.  
So, wave your veils to pallid gavottes,  
Blow them on with dimly-spiced laughs  
And catch them breathlessly against your breast.

*Maxwell Bodenheim*



FAUN

Your eyes are like the wind,—  
Grey, clean and shining.  
Behind them little lamps are lit eternally,  
Making them the altar of your inextinguishable spirit.  
I have seen a dream burn them blue,  
And tenderness warm them to hazel;  
And I have seen them black with thought:—  
But when I love them most they are the color of the wind,  
Sweeping over the grasses and the sea.

WISDOM THROUGH TEARS

I cannot seek to hold you—  
Holding is losing:  
Never my arms can fold you  
But by your choosing.

What if beside me lie  
Flesh and blood merely;  
And the soul wanders high  
I love so dearly?

*Miriam Allen deFord*

## SAINT SEBASTIAN

On slow and smoky fire thou burn'st and art consumèd,  
O thou, my soul!

On slow and smoky fire thou burn'st and art consumèd,  
With hidden dole.

Thou droopest like Sebastian, pierced with pointed arrows,  
Harassed and spent.

Thou droopest like Sebastian, pierced with pointed arrows,  
Thy flesh all rent.

Thy foes encircle thee and watch with gleeful laughter  
And bended bow.

Thy foes encircle thee and watch with gleeful laughter  
Thy torments slow.

The embers burn, and gentle is the arrow's stinging  
'Neath the evening sky.

The embers burn, and gentle is the arrow's stinging  
When the end draws nigh.

Why hastens not thy dream unto thy lips now pallid  
With deadly drouth?

Why hastens not thy dream unto thy lips now pallid  
To kiss thy mouth?

*From the Russian of Valery Bryusov  
Translated in the original metre by Abraham Yarmolinsky*

THIS MAN

If only you were here, Walt Whitman,  
To tell the largeness of this man!  
For only you could forget in space his enemies—  
You who saw Lincoln stand up before the faces of a city  
Alone like this man,  
Alone even when friended,  
Alone with destiny;  
You who saw him facing Manhattan,  
Manhattan hating him,  
Never a cheer—  
That silence,  
That anger,  
That misunderstanding:  
What would you say now  
Of this American,  
This liberator,  
This man of destiny?—  
Chaired by the voices of slaves who would be freemen  
And of freemen who would renounce their slaves,  
Called to be a witness of joy before the peoples of the earth?  
Would you not say that lilacs have bloomed again,  
And that out of their death their odor is the odor of life,  
And that a star which had risen at evening grew pale toward  
    a morning of sun?  
And that the beauty of the sinews of These States,  
Summoned now

*Witter Bynner*

By this man  
To a new stature,  
Shall become the beauty of the sinews of the world!

*Witter Bynner*

### MAYTIME

Out of darkness into light;  
Out of dumbness into song!  
Though the earth was wintry white,  
Though the cold stayed over long—  
Spring, we loved so, it has come  
Without any sound of drum.

Be it life we knew last year,  
Wandered far, and home once more;  
Or a new babe, cradled here,  
Born of life that went before—

We, who linger while the days  
Shyly bud and bloom anew,  
Are content that all the Mays  
Faithful are, steadfast and true.

*William H. Simpson*

GREEN AND GRAY

SOLID EARTH

Scurvy doctrine, that the world is a bubble—

It is much more solid than that!

A monument built out of rubble,

If you will—a high silk hat

With the inevitable brick inside,

A perfect whale of a brick!

Love to make you vain, and pride

To make you sick.

Scurvy doctrine, that love's a tambourine. A

Love that is fond and true

Is exactly like a tame hyena

(I'm telling this to you!)—

A perfectly tangible hyena,

With perfectly ponderable paws.

You could climb a mountain in Argentina,

But you'd know it was.

Scurvy doctrine, that joy is fleeting—

Joy is howling aloud

At everyone, in every meeting,

In every crowd!

Joy is what the heavens shake with

At the earth beneath.

Joy is the thing you tame the snake with—

And grit your teeth.

INFORMATION

He had green eyes, that excellent seer,  
And little peaks to either ear.  
He sat there, and I sat here.

He spoke of Egypt, and a white  
Temple, against the star-strewn night.

He smiled with clicking teeth and said  
That the dead were never dead;

Said old emperors hung like bats  
In barns at night, or ran like rats—  
But empresses came back as cats!

GRAY

Fold on fold the purple, crimson then—  
Gold? I shook my head and turned away.  
What? I turned and glared in that barbaric den.  
“Gray!”

Ashes, rats! You cannot, cannot mean it, surely?  
“Yes,” I chirped, “I’m weary; I have had a day;  
One thing only suits me, purely and demurely—  
Gray.”

Doves and twilight seas, fog and thistle-down,  
Granite quarried too; pearl, with all array



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Of colors quenched within. But you said—a clown!—  
Gray!

“Yes, I understand; but you don’t understand  
I’m the clown of heaven and mean to have my way.  
Cut me cloak and doublet. This is my command—  
Gray!”

*William Rose Benét*

GRAVES OF DREAMS

So softly bright the golden twilight hung  
Over the graveyard where my dead dreams lay.  
In other times I often passed that way—  
You see, they died so pitifully young!

But now I shun the graying line on line,  
For sterner tombs are rising, crowding there,  
And dreams are dead full-grown, and fair—oh, fair!  
Soon shall they all be dead, and none be mine.

*Robert Rand*

## POEMS

### THE BUDDHA

The little gilded Buddha sits  
Patiently on my table,  
With delicate, quiet, folded hands—  
Musing upon eternity.  
The lines of his drapery are  
Fluent as the ages,  
Drooping gracefully in curves,  
As life droops gently into death.  
His face is calm; he ignores me  
And all the fret and trouble of the world,  
Contemplating me indifferently.  
From the divan, where I lie alone,  
Vaguely I consider the gilded Buddha.  
I cannot reach to his serenity.  
He is not of my age; I am not of his race.  
He is not to me an inspiration  
To emotionless contemplation.  
To me he is only a work of art,  
The lines of his drapery drooping gracefully.  
If I were to make an idol, a symbol,  
It would not be beautiful;  
It would be a great Hammer,  
And the world lying in fragments;  
Or a woman with an angry face,  
Tearing her breasts.

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But on my table—an alien, a foreigner—  
Sits the gilded Buddha, with face serene,  
And patient, quiet, folded hands,  
Musing on eternity.

Life is greater than eternity.

KITTY

I say you are a spirit,  
So delicate and pale.  
You are not flesh,  
But in you love is meshed  
Which makes earth heaven, or near it—  
So all words fail.

Your face is moon-white, and withal  
Sad as the moon;  
And in your eyes a light,  
As of a temple lit by night  
Where tired souls creep and fall,  
Asking God's boon.  
Prostrate am I before your soul,  
For I have seen  
That it is luminous as love, as pure as pain,  
And kept forever washed by sorrow's rain.  
A chosen one to stand before the goal  
And lead the bruised one in.

SONGS FROM "THE ADVENTURER"

I

The robin is out in a speckled vest  
And his day is a day in June.  
Oh, what cares he for the old dead nest?—  
October will give him a new red breast  
And April the old, old tune.

II

O road, road, whither will you take me?  
What is 'round the bend?  
Will you make me or break me?  
And will the day forsake me  
Before I reach the end?

O road, road, whither are you flowing  
So far, so far, so far?  
Is any knowing where you are going—  
Through woods and up the hills to where is showing  
On the world's edge a star?

FUCHSIAS AND GERANIUMS

What is Life?

To me, life is to sit on these stone steps  
Under the peach-tree, eating green almonds,  
Watching the indolent shadow arabesques  
Shift on the terrace;

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While you couch on the coping of the steps  
On cushions of velvet from old Venice,  
Reading Endymion.  
Up from the city far below  
Comes the noon-scream of whistles.  
I watch the shadows of the slim peach-leaves,  
Gently finger your brown, soft-coiled hair,  
And know the sun is in love.

Suddenly a lustrous humming-bird  
Poises under the bell of a fuchsia flower,  
His green back shimmering opal fire.  
He hangs there a moment, a jewel, suspended from nothing—  
How can his wings move so fast?  
He is gone.  
Sun-god, are you a mechanic, a painter, designer?  
A yellow butterfly wanders aimlessly,  
So it seems to me, among the red geraniums.  
It is gone.

The fuchsias are goutts of blood;  
The geraniums are leaping flames.  
You couch on the coping of the steps  
On cushions of velvet of old Venice:  
And I am suspended before you a moment.  
This to me is life.

It is gone.

*Charles Erskine Scott Wood*

## COMMENT

WALT WHITMAN

ONE hundred years ago this month Walt Whitman was born. His simple, self-sufficient life is a record of unhurried, cumulative power, which waited until mid-career before setting itself to address the world. Though he lived seventy-two years, his complete works of verse and prose are easily contained in two volumes.

Rereading the *Leaves* consecutively, instead of repeating my favorites over and over, I have been reminded of a visit—in 1910—to the Rembrandt galleries at the Hermitage in Petrograd, where, in two hundred or more canvases good, bad and indifferent, one could study the great painter in all his moods, search his genius through days of faltering or excess as well as days of triumph.

Even so with Whitman, though he was less prolific than Rembrandt, his spiritual kinsman. His *Leaves* show his genius entire—the times when it lagged into prosy moralizing or leaped into bombast, as well as those proud hours of the Lincoln elegy, or *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, or the *Whispers of Heavenly Death*. They show—again like Rembrandt—his power as a colorist, as a draughtsman of immense and revolutionary rhythms, as a democrat and lover of men, and as a serious-minded thinker; also his limitations of perspective and range, caused by lack of humor and certain disabilities in self-criticism.

Almost everything has been said about Whitman, from



the sneers of his first detractors to the large praise of present-day enthusiasts—as when a recent article in the *Mercure de France* mentioned him, quite casually and as a matter of course, with Dante, Homer, Shakespeare and the few other greatest masters. His centenary finds his fame established and his mockers rebuked; already his bearded figure has grown and simplified into colossal monumental granite, as indestructible as a mountain, a place of pilgrimage for the imaginations of men. There he is, as Henry James might say; and there, whether we like it or not, his spirit may have the power of the *vates* to bring These States to his feet, and mold ideals for the democratisation of the world.

It may be our province, at this moment of general tribute, to record with special emphasis certain details of Whitman's service to poetic art. Even that noble shelf-monument, *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, by closing one period with Lowell and opening another with Whitman, shows how two exactly contemporary poets may live in different ages and be ruled by contrary stars. Whitman began a new era, and the *finis* which he uttered to the old was heard by "foreign nations and the next age."

Of course his first and most obvious service to poetic art was his insistence on freedom of form—his rejection of the usually accepted English metrics, and his success in writing great poems without their aid. Not that he misprized Chaucer, Shakespeare, Shelley and the rest; but he must find for himself a rhythm as personal as theirs. His second service was corollary to the first—the rejection of clichés,

including archaic diction and so-called "poetic" phrasing. That this rejection was not wholly instinctive, but enforced by conscious labor, is proved by a sentence from *Specimen Days*:

Commenced putting *Leaves of Grass* to press for good, . . . after many manuscript doings and undoings. I had great trouble in leaving out the stock "poetical" touches, but succeeded at last.

Such authority as he had for these rejections of the long-accepted, the worn, was derived rather from Asiatic than European classics—"the Hebrew Bible, the mighty Hindu epics, and a hundred lesser but typical works." And this brings us to his third service to the art, a service larger than the others, and purely spiritual—his reassertion of the ancient conception of the poet as prophet, and of poetry as religion, as an ecstatic expression of faith. He says:

All the poems of Orientalism, with the Old and New Testaments at the centre, tend to deep and wide psychological development—with little, or nothing at all, of the mere aesthetic, the principal verse requirement of our day.

To biblical poetry especially he ascribes:

Faith limitless, its immense sensuousness immensely spiritual—an incredible, all-inclusive non-worldliness and dew-scented illiteracy (the antipodes of our Nineteenth-Century business absorption and morbid refinement)—no hair-splitting doubts, no sickly sulking and sniffing.

And he asks:

Will there ever be a time or place—ever a student, however modern, of the grand art, to whom those compositions will not afford profounder lessons than all else of their kind in the garnerage of the past? Could there be any more opportune suggestion of what the office of poet was in primeval times—and is yet capable of being, anew, adjusted entirely to the modern?

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Thus his effort as a poet was to free the art of conventions of form and phrase, and to kindle in it the old sacred fire. Poetry was to be no longer an ornament of the libraries—it was to get out-of-doors and sing the large faiths—faith in life and death, in love and war, in mountains and trees and rivers, in the sun and sky and the good hard flesh of the earth; and it was to sing these large faiths in large rhythms, rhythms that follow the beat of winds and waves rather than man-made metrics.

He was but one of many—there would be armies of poets to follow him! “The personnel, in any race,” he insists, “can never be really superior without superior poems!” And in *Blue Ontario's Shore* he cries:

Of all races and eras, These States, with veins full of poetical stuff,  
most need poets, and are to have the greatest, and use them the  
greatest.

Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so much as their  
poets shall.

Soul of love, and tongue of fire!

Eye to pierce the deepest deeps, and sweep the world!

Indeed, at this point enthusiasm begets his one besetting sin—the poet is lost in the rhapsodist, and we have turgid pages describing this bard of the future, “west-bred” and “of the common stock.” Such turgidity, such excess, should hardly be mentioned, however—only the lesser masters are impeccable artists. Let us pause rather over certain poems in which spirit and art are in complete accord.

I find this—on the whole, and in spite of lapses which are carried in triumph, as it were—in the poem *Walt Whitman*, which (if I am not mistaken) opened the first edition

of *Leaves of Grass*. This poem was a declaration of spiritual and artistic independence; and technically it established his rhythmic system, which follows the diversified regularity of waves sweeping the shore, or of hills curving along the horizon, rather than the exactness of closer intervals. The poem has magnificent passages, from the much quoted—

I loaf and invite my soul;  
I lean and loaf at my ease, observing a spear of summer grass—  
to that trumpet-note near the end:

I too am not a bit tamed—I too am untranslatable;  
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

This poem was also the poet's declaration of faith, a faith fundamental, universal—

Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the Gods, saluting the  
sun;  
Making a fetish of the first rock or stump, pow-wow-ing with sticks  
in the circle of obis;  
Helping the lama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols;  
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and  
austere in the woods.

*Children of Adam* also contains magnificent passages, but as a poem it moves less surely than the other; as if the poet, in asserting the nobility of sex, were more conscious of fighting a battle, and therefore less spontaneous. In most of *Calamus*, *Salut au Monde*, and *Song of the Broad-axe*, the poet is lost in the rhapsodist. In the *Song of the Open Road* we find him again, and follow him through the gates of the West; and *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, with that song of the sea-bird to its lost mate, is a perfect and prodigious masterpiece.



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In many of the *Drum-taps* we hear, as in no other modern songs of war, the gathering and mighty tramp of armies; also the rush of city crowds at the call, the "spirit of dreadful hours," and the ultimate spirit of reconciliation:

Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be  
utterly lost;  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly  
wash again, and ever again, this soiled world.

Superb also are certain of the *Marches Now that the War is Over*; and most glorious of all, of course, is that grandest, most serene of elegies, *President Lincoln's Burial Hymn*, "When lilacs last in the door-yard bloomed." In all his songs of death—"heavenly death," "delicate death"—some of them beautiful beyond praise, is the same high serenity.

"I hear America singing," he cried, and it is for us and those who follow us to fulfil the prophecy. The *London Times* has pointed out how accurately, in *Years of the Modern*, he foresaw the present situation of the world—the "tremendous exits and entrances," the "new combinations," "the solidarity of races," the "issuing forth against the idea of caste," the "marching and countermarching by swift millions." Perhaps, at this moment of epic climax in the affairs of this nation and all nations, we may close with his word of warning:

To The States, or any one of them, or any city of The States,  
*Resist much, obey little.*  
Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved—  
Once fully enslaved—no nation, state, city of this earth ever after-  
ward resumes its liberty.

H. M.

MANNERISMS OF FREE VERSE

However much it may be claimed that free verse is closer to natural speech, to the natural breath-cadence and pause, than metrical poetry, the reverse is actually true of the majority of examples published today. Open any magazine at random and you will find that the score of the poem resembles a score of music in which the rests exceed the notes. Nor does the pattern, even so, resolve itself into music, into any organic rhythm of any sort; it is, rather, as jerky as a doll that is pulled by strings—strings which occasionally stick and elicit only *Pa*, when one is waiting for *Pa-Pa*, or *Ma-a-a* when one expects the full maternal salutation! Like an arrested movie of a man walking, the verse halts, foot high in air, without any apparent rhyme or reason, until the machine starts it going again:

Timidly  
Against a background of brick tenements  
Some trees spread their branches  
Skyward . . . . .

Or on another page:

A late snow beats  
With cold white fists upon the tenements,  
Hurriedly drawing blinds and shutters—  
Like tall old slatterns  
Pulling aprons about their heads.

Is it symptomatic of the disorganization and disconnection of modern life that so much free verse is composed of momentary impressions, stabbing sensations, the mere statement of which is supposed to make a poem, as in the above passage? images and sensations piled one on top of the



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other, with no continuity of thought or emotion, as with no fluidity of rhythm—a result momentarily arresting but with no power to hold beyond the moment; and, as examples multiply, certain to prove infinitely irritating and wearisome? Perhaps it will further illustrate the point to quote other passages following the one just given:

Lights slanting from Mott street  
Gibber out,  
Or dribble through tea-room slits,  
Where anonymous shapes  
Conniving behind shuttered panes  
Caper and disappear . . . . .

Only the Bowery  
Is throbbing like a fistula  
Back of her ice-scabbed fronts,  
Where livid faces  
Glimmer in furtive doorways,  
Or spill out of the black pockets of alleys . . . . .

Formerly we used to think that something was supposed to happen in a poem, but in these poems, full as they are of movement and as restless as a jumping-jack, nothing really ever happens at all. The Jack jumps up and down on the stick, but beyond Jack and the stick, there is nothing. Yet it is hardly the nothingness of the mystic!

Another pleasing characteristic of free verse as it is written today is the pompous solemnity of its platitudes, which, broken into fragments, would seem to the author to be less bromidically obvious than if stated in plain prose. But it need hardly be said that the author deceives himself. A pleasing title for a book of this kind would be *Cracked China*. And then there is the very simple statement, reiter-

ated, upon which much free verse builds itself in what we may call the Primer Style of *Vers Libre*:

I am sitting in my room.  
I am looking out of the window,  
At the leaves.  
The brown leaves,  
They fall,  
They flutter,  
They drop.

Do you see the leaves fall?

It is night.

The wind is blowing.  
Oh, how it blows!

Do you hear it blow?

Perhaps indeed the first readers of the next generation will be completely made up of the free verse of this.

But does it not seem odd that those who insist that poetry should be at least as well written as good prose, should have descended to a second childhood in free verse, and that the most of free verse is written in what is such incredibly bad prose? And does it not seem odd that the question of style has been overlooked by all the critics in a barren discussion of rhythm—rhythm which does not, for the most part, exist?

Truly, free verse as a vehicle exhibits many varieties which still await classification and analysis; and yet there is such a marked similarity among free verse practitioners today that without a signature it is difficult to tell one poet from another. Mr. Bernard Berenson thinks he can tell Botticellis by the shape of the thumb, but unless one is

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expert in some such detective method, one is at a loss to assign correctly the ownership of much free verse—that is, if one plays fair and refuses to look at the signature until one has ventured a guess.

It is difficult, for instance, to know whether Miss Lowell is writing Mr. Bynner's verse, or whether he is writing hers. With one or two exceptions, almost any of the free verse writers now practicing could have written Mr. Bynner's *Songs of the Unknown Lover*, whose recent anonymous publication gave one a good opportunity to guess.

But the proof of the poet is, as always, in the thing that distinguishes him from the crowd, the thing that makes one pick him out by "the divine sign," as Whitman would say. And this operates no less in free verse than in rhymed. Nor need one fear. Mediocrity in free verse, like mediocrity in metrical verse, will pass and be forgotten. While it lasts, however, it is if anything the more tiresome of the two.

A. C. H.

## REVIEWS

### CHAMBER MUSIC—OLD AND NEW

*Chamber Music*, by James Joyce. B. W. Huebsch.  
*Corn from Olde Fieldes—an Anthology of English Poems from the XIVth to the XVIIth Century*: with biographical notes by Eleanor M. Brougham. John Lane Co.

Mr. James Joyce is better known as a novelist and playwright than as a poet, and deservedly so. For after every-

thing has been said that could possibly be said in favor of his poems—after one has noted their musical phrasing, their verbal felicity, their delicate charm—the fact is that the general tone is rather pale and anaemic and the music thin. The music indeed has been compared to that of the Elizabethan song books, but this is hardly fair to Mr. Joyce; and the spirit of the poems is much closer to the 1890's than to the Elizabethan mood, which is very much fuller and richer in every way. There are, however, Elizabethan echoes in the book, as there are echoes of W. B. Yeats, Herrick, Francis Thompson and others. In fact this is one tantalizing feature of the book—there are so many undefined echoes in it; in a single poem one sometimes finds several distinct threads of reminiscence which one may not be able to trace all at once, an occurrence which proves as disturbing as failure to remember a name or a word. Of course for some people this does not detract from a poem—it seems rather to add a certain classic flavor to it; but unless this tendency is offset by something very positive of the author's own, it is, I think, likely to prove annoying.

Such a poem, for instance, as *VII*—"My love is in a light attire"—has several leads that start one off on false scents, making one forget the poem itself and hark back to the originals; and although one may not be able to put a finger on any exact source—though one may vacillate from Herrick to Francis Thompson and back again, stopping at certain anonymous song writers by the way, it is enough to make one wish for something more stable and resolute in



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the poem itself. The last poem in the book, "I hear an army charging upon the land," is complete Yeats, and would be a good poem, even so, were it not for the weak last line. Other poems, although musical and fairly free from echoes, are somewhat colorless. Admitting therefore all the delicacy and grace of the lyrics, it is impossible at the same time not to feel disappointed in the book as a whole. It is not that I love Mr. Joyce the less but that I love Elizabethan lyrics more!

A sharper, more distinctive mood is found in *XVII*; and *XXXIII* and *XXXV* are among the best of the poems; but the general effect of many of them is somehow benumbing. This one is typical enough to quote:

My dove, my beautiful one,  
Arise, arise!  
The night-dew lies  
Upon my lips and eyes.  
The odorous winds are weaving  
A music of sighs:  
Arise, arise,  
My dove, my beautiful one!  
I wait by the cedar tree,  
My sister, my love.  
White breast of the dove,  
My breast shall be your bed.  
The pale dew lies  
Like a veil on my head.  
My fair one, my fair dove,  
Arise, arise!

Set Mr. Joyce's book beside some of the formless free verse of today (and this is not to say that free verse is necessarily formless, quite the reverse), and one appreciates its

form, even when that form is quite definitely artifice; but set it beside Miss Brougham's anthology, *Corn from Olde Fieldes*, and one realizes that there is more stuff in a single Elizabethan lyric than in Mr. Joyce's whole book.

Take for instance, almost at random, two slight songs from this anthology, the first, *Two Loves*, by an unknown author:

Brown is my love but graceful;  
And each renowned whiteness  
Matched with thy lovely brown loseth its brightness.  
Fair is my love but scornful;  
Yet I have seen despised  
Dainty white lilies, and sad flowers well prized.

And the second, *Of Beauty*, is by Sir Richard Fanshawe:

Let us use it while we may,  
Snatch those joys that haste away!  
Earth her winter coat may cast  
And renew her beauty past:  
But, our winter come, in vain  
We solicit spring again:  
And when our furrows snow shall cover,  
Love may return, but never lover.

Although so slight and seemingly hackneyed and ephemeral, these have a fulness which we of a later more complex day may envy. And I have purposely chosen two which are inconsiderable as compared with others.

Miss Brougham's anthology is admirable in every respect. She has omitted from it almost all the better known poems included in the usual anthologies, and has given instead the poems of lesser known authors or the lesser known poems of well-known authors, which might otherwise escape those readers who care for poetry but have not the antiquarian



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bent. And she has thus rendered a very great service to the majority of us, who care very deeply for these old English songs. It is impossible to quote: the book itself is a quotation from centuries rich in poetic ore. One notes a remarkably high standard of excellence. "Good form" and fine taste, poetically speaking, characterize it throughout. It makes one wonder whether, after some years, our present welter of modern verse may not consolidate into some general really excellent mode of expression which shall serve to express the mind of our time?—for the mind of this book, although it covers three or four centuries, is practically one mind. One reason for this may be that the outstanding spirits, the high turbulent souls, are not represented here; or, if represented, in the less individual aspect. Today each one of us wants to be a high turbulent soul, an individual; each one is less concerned with creating good art than with producing something which may be considered original, and we spend more time talking about art than learning how to make it. (It is a fact that one gets paid more for criticism today than for creative work. A book of verse gives employment to countless reviewers, but will not support the author!) But ours is not the age of faith, and that is, I think, the chief trouble with our poetry and our pictures, although by faith of course I do not mean anything dogmatic or theological. But no matter what the individual attitude, the poems in this anthology seem to live in a free world of faith—of faith, that is, in art. Their mood is not hesitant; it is not analytical, but synthetic; and hence

their abundance and their richness, even under the guise of a seeming carelessness.

A. C. H.

OLD ENGLAND

*Last Poems*, by Edward Thomas. Selwyn and Blount, London.

I do not know of any recent poetry which conveys more of the feeling of unchanging England—the old England of heath and down and woodland, the wild, savage England that still strangely persists through the centuries—than does the poetry of Edward Thomas. With the solitary exception of Thomas Hardy, no poet seems less concerned with the industrialism, the cosmopolitan culture of this century, than does this brooding, semi-Celt from Wiltshire, who began to write poetry when he was forty, and who, but a year or two later, found a soldier's grave in France.

Reading these *Last Poems* of his makes one forget that Thomas became a soldier, forget even that he is dead. His voice, in these pages, still seems to vibrate in the air about us as of one living and very near. The soldiering, the sacrifice, seem the merest accident. Indeed Thomas would have wished it to be not otherwise thought upon. He was the sort of man to pass to death without a gesture of heroism, without a word of protest. Unless we understand this, we cannot understand how greatly he loved England. We cannot understand either, the minds of thousands of other English soldiers who have died in the same way.

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I do not mean to assert by this that Thomas was a great poet. He was not. We, especially if we are not Englishmen, must be careful not to read him except in a responsive mood. He annoys us otherwise, as the English climate is likely to annoy travellers to these shores. His persistent mood of melancholy, his perpetually letting one down; his harping always on some quite ageless and dateless past; his stumbling, awkward technique, reminding me of rough-cast walls and ragged hedges—all these prevent one from coming to immediate grips with him. For these reasons, though he is a deep, sincere poet, he never carries you quite away on a first reading. He is one to be studied, to be taken up and re-read from time to time.

In this respect, as indeed in most respects, he is a writer spiritually akin to Robert Frost. And I think it is no secret to say that but for Frost, Thomas might never have turned to poetry at all, or at least, might have written less well. Americans should feel proud to think that it was the work of the poet of New England that made it possible for Edward Thomas to express what was latent in him.

In the present volume, one's mind naturally turns first to the conversational quasi-narrative poems in loose blank verse, which show most of the Frost influence. The English critics have generally avoided praising any of these poems: *Wind and Mist*, *The Chalk-Pit*, and *The New Year*. To these we may add *The Other*, *The Gipsy*, *Man and Dog*, and *The Private*, which are in rhyme, but essentially poems displaying the same sort of motive and technique. It is in

these poems, however, that I think the essential Edward Thomas is to be found, and not in the lyrics, which show strong traces of W. H. Davies, and in some cases of Yeats.

*Wind and Mist* is in my opinion the finest of these poems. It is almost impossible to state the contents of this poem without quoting it entirely. Two men meet on a hilltop and fall to talking. Says one:

If you like angled fields  
Of grass and grain bounded by oak and thorn,  
Here is a league. Had we with Germany  
To play upon this board, it could not be  
More dear than April has made it with a smile.  
The fields beyond that league close in together  
And merge, even as our days into the past,  
Into one wood that has a shining pane  
Of water. Then the hills of the horizon—  
That is how I should make hills had I to show  
One who would never see them, what hills were like.

To which the other replies:

Yes, sixty miles of South Downs at one glance.  
Sometimes a man feels proud of them, as if  
He had just created them with one mighty thought.

The two men then begin discussing a house near by. The first speaker admires it, and wonders why it is empty. It turns out that the other man has lived there, and has left it, hating it. And in these words we are given a picture of the life there:

Doubtless the house was not to blame  
But the eye watching from those windows saw  
Many a day, day after day, mist—mist  
Like chaos surging back, marooned alone.  
We lived in clouds, on a cliff's edge almost,  
You see, and if clouds went, the visible earth  
Lay too far off beneath and like a cloud.



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..... There were other things  
Real, too. In that room at the gable a child  
Was born while the wind chilled a summer dawn.  
Never looked grey mind on a greyer one  
Than when the child's cry broke above the groans.

There were whole days and nights when the wind and I  
Between us shared the world, and the wind ruled.  
And I obeyed it and forgot the mist.  
My past and the past of the world were in the wind.

But the mere setting down of these fragments does not suffice to give the whole power and strength of this poem. Here we obtain a picture of an England not to be found in the writings of most present-day English poets; and we owe this to the insight, the knowledge and the love of Edward Thomas.

*John Gould Fletcher*

THREE WHITMAN BOOKS

*Visits to Walt Whitman in 1890-1891*, by J. Johnston, M. D., and J. W. Wallace. Egmont Arens.

*The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman*, edited by Thomas B. Harned. Doubleday Page and Co.

*Patriotic Poems of Walt Whitman*. Doubleday Page & Co.

Of Walt Whitman's prophetic utterances about his poetry none was more true than, "This is no book; who touches this touches a man." His touch reached with undiminished thrill across the ocean, as alive as though his personal presence went with it. *Visits to Whitman in 1890-1891* exhibits hero-worship in its most exalted form, and its most amiable. Not only may one savor the character and per-



sonality of Walt Whitman in these accounts, but taste enviably the glamour that was about the poet—his sanctity for the two young Lancashire men who came so far on their pilgrimages of devotion, and recorded them with such exact love.

The influence of a great soul over those few of its generation great enough to make answer to it takes many forms, knows many degrees in the discipleship it evokes. The response of a noble woman to a noble man must perhaps be expected to hold some tinge of sexuality in its blended force if it reaches perfection, completeness. It is too early to generalize about women. Anne Gilchrist's reaction to Whitman aroused all her nature. Intellectually her appreciation of Whitman, her appraisal of his greatness as a poet, of his message, of his future, have not been excelled in enthusiasm or acumen by any of the poet's eulogists, though her estimate came at a time (1869) when Whitman's detractors were many and those who understood him were few. By study and instinct Anne Gilchrist was scientific in outlook, and her analysis of Whitman's work in relation to evolutionary discoveries and revisions is significant of her time and of her character. From her *Confession of Faith*, which is reprinted in this volume as prefatory to the letters, comes the following passage, to be remarked by those who would talk of democracy and greatness:

True, Inequality is one of Nature's words: she moves forward always by means of the exceptional. But the moment the move is accomplished, then all her efforts are toward equality, toward bringing up the rear to that standpoint. But social inequalities,

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class distinctions, do not stand for or represent Nature's inequalities. Precisely the contrary in the long run. They are devices for holding up many that would else gravitate down and keeping down many who would else rise up; for providing that some should reap who have not sown, and many sow without reaping. But literature tallies the ways of Nature; for though itself the product of the exceptional, its aim is to draw all men up to its own level. The great writer is "hungry for equals day and night," for so only can he be fully understood. "The meal is equally set;" all are invited. Therefore is literature, whether consciously or not, the greatest of all forces on the side of Democracy.

Perhaps it is enough tribute to Walt Whitman that the year of his centenary finds the world discussing "democracy" as never before. It is a good year in which to call attention to Whitman as a patriot and democrat, and this his publishers have done in an effective way by bringing out the small book of selections containing the poet's "war poems" and poems of his hopes for America, his challenge to those who would be America's leaders and poets.

I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals.  
The American compact is altogether with individuals,  
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,  
The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single  
individual—namely to You.

H. H.

### LAMARTINE

*The Life of Lamartine*, by H. Remsen Whitehouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This is biography in a fascinating sense, and it is impossible to do it justice in the space of a short review. It is in two volumes, the first dealing with Lamartine the poet, the second almost entirely with the brilliant career, the disap-

pointments and the final days, of Lamartine the statesman. With tireless research into a veritable maze of material, with unsparing honesty, the author has coördinated force and weakness, has sifted out truths half hidden in falsehoods, and given us a living personality.

The author quotes Lamartine himself as saying that he held his poetic gift in slight esteem compared to his ambitions to be a statesman: "The credulous public believe that I have spent thirty years of my life publishing rhymes and contemplating the stars. . . . I have not spent thirty months in so doing." Mr. Whitehouse's work proves that, whatever may be said, Lamartine's political and poetical ambitions went almost evenly hand in hand throughout his life. Certainly, to be a poet was to be handicapped as a politician. Lamartine once wrote to a friend:

The reputation of poet is the worst of any in the eyes of the men who rule this matter-of-fact world.

And the author comments:

All his life long Lamartine was to experience the truth which underlies this axiom. His political career was to be continually subjected to the jeers and sneers of those who saw in every humanitarian measure he advocated, even in his unflinching faith in the future of railways and other economic innovations, the poetic idealization their souls abhorred.

It would seem that a discussion of Lamartine's contemporaries might well have had its place in this biography. A few years after the appearance of his second *Méditations* Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Casimir Delavigne, Alfred de Musset, Madame de Girardin and many others were conspicuous. Even then Gautier may have been chiselling

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out his *Émaux et Camées*, and Béranger was still thrilling France with his downright songs. Where such names as these do occur, they occur only incidentally, and there is no attempt at any discussion of the works they represent.

Lamartine has been called the French Byron. I see no reason why Byron should not as well have been called the English Lamartine. Though each denied a school, each really represented the romantic movement in his own country. But they were as different as are their two languages. True, Lamartine was in his early days influenced by the Englishman, whom he held in the highest admiration. But he was influenced even more by Rousseau and Goethe, even going so far as to speak of *Werther* as "the mental malady of my poetic youth." Those who derive from Mr. Whitehouse's work merely an echo of Byron should look deeper. They may be surprised to see how the French poet, writing in a time now so far from our own, was in touch with today, differing from his contemporaries in his use of form, in his free handling and varying of rhythms and metres, and in his setting aside of tradition whenever to do so seemed to serve his purpose. This led him to be looked upon askance by at least one publisher, whom he visited with the manuscript of the *Méditations* hidden under his coat—poems which later were to set the literary world aflame. The publisher, having looked it over, returned it to him, saying:

I have read your verses, sir: they are not devoid of talent, but they show no study. They resemble in no way that which is accepted and expected in our poets. One knows not where you have found



the language, the ideas, the imagery of this poetry; it can be classed with no definite kind; it is a pity, for there is harmony in your verse. Give up this innovation, which would simply upset French tradition; go back to our masters—Delille, Parny, Michaud, Raynouard, Luce de Lancival, Fontanes; those are the poets the public loves; imitate somebody if you want to be accepted and read.

Lamartine was of today, too, in his insistence that improvements in material life—for instance, steam-boats and railroads—have their poetical side and may be used successfully for poetical ends. In this connection passages are quoted from *La Chute d'un Ange*, wherein the poet, discarding the wings of Icarus as hackneyed, invents an airplane, and the biographer goes on to say: "The illusion produced is sufficiently plausible to impress the reader as to his knowledge of mechanics."

Several intensely interesting chapters of the first volume are devoted to the friendship between the poet and Madame Charles. Those who would understand the poet and his writings must take into account this vital factor. As to the actual character of this relationship there have been many opinions, but Mr. Whitehouse records that it purified the poet completely of any former taste for merely vulgar affairs of the heart. Whatever conjecture may have to say, the world is indebted for many imperishable lyrics to this one great love of his life, this spiritual union with Madame Charles. His friendship with this rare woman began long before he met the Englishwoman who became his wife, and who stood beside him so staunchly through his triumphs and misfortunes. About this marriage there has been much misunder-



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standing, his wife's wealth having given it a mercenary aspect. But we must remember that the French custom of arranging for a *dot* was adhered to even more rigorously in those days than now. They were congenial comrades from the first, and Miss Birch fell deeply in love with her brilliant suitor. That she married him with full knowledge of the dominating picture he still held in his heart is well known. When his wife's austerity discountenanced any audacity of thought or form, it was this picture that forced the poet to be himself and stand by aspirations then considered chimerical, but today justified—for, as Mr. Whitehouse points out: "He spoke for the future, and the present has vindicated him."

*Le Lac* and *Le Crucifix* share equal honors in being not only the two most exquisite of Lamartine's lyrics, but the two perhaps most directly traceable to the spiritual significance of his romance with Madame Charles. *Le Lac* is reminiscent of his first meeting with the woman he loved, and *Le Crucifix*, as poignantly tender and beautiful an elegy as was ever written in any language, sprang from his anguish over her death. A little ivory crucifix was given to Lamartine which his beloved had held in her hands in her last agony, and which had received her last breath. The poet has said of this elegy: "*Je ne relis jamais ces vers: c'est assez de les avoir écrits.*"

The author has shown discernment in his poetical quotations, which are none too many. Among them we are glad to see that outcry against injustice, the memorable address

to Count d'Orsay. Here are the closing lines :

Au pilori du temps n'expose pas mon ombre!  
Je suis las des soleils, laisse mon urne à l'ombre:  
Le bonheur de la mort, c'est d'être enseveli.

Je ne veux pas de vos bruits qu'un souffle dans la brise,  
Un nom inachevé dans un coeur qui se brise!  
J'ai vécu pour la foule, et je veux dormir seul.

Almost throughout the first volume we find the poet filled with a restless craving for political action, a craving satisfied in the second volume, where we follow his contact with the affairs of state—his parliamentary progress, his dealings with the provisional government, his foreign and domestic policy, etc., all of which brought him so conspicuously to the fore. Both volumes are enriched by good portraits.

*Agnes Lee Freer*

## CORRESPONDENCE

### WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

The following letter comes from the witty far-western author of the *Once-Over Books*:

Here in Coblenz  
At the Y. M. C. A. library  
There is one copy  
Of POETRY—  
September, 1917.  
And it is on the shelf  
With Keats  
And Longfellow  
And Whittier  
And Matthew Arnold  
And Idylls of the King  
And the Golden Treasury

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And Homer's Iliad, in Greek—  
Which interested me  
Because I couldn't read it—  
And Amy Lowell's  
Men, Women and Ghosts—  
Much of which need not have been written  
If husbands were nicer to their wives—  
And a lot of other books  
That folks weeded out of their libraries  
And gave to the A. L. A.,  
For the A. E. F.,  
Through the Y. M. C. A.  
And I took it,  
And found they had made a card  
And put it in a slot  
In the back of the magazine,  
Just like it were a book.  
And I signed up for it  
And brought it to my billet,  
And read it through  
From the first poem  
To the reviews,  
Where you folks take turns  
At saying nice things  
About each other's poems.  
And then I read the ads  
And the line—  
Most discouraging line—  
From Walt Whitman,  
And the names of the editors  
And advisors  
And others  
On the back cover.  
And I took it back  
And the lady at the counter  
Said, Yes,  
They had to handle it  
Like one of the books,  
So everyone would get a chance  
To read it.

*Rex H. Lampton, Private U. S. M. C.*

*Coblentz, Germany: Feb. 28, 1919*

## NOTES

Of the seventeen poets represented in this number, eight have appeared before in POETRY:

Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay, who now lives in New York, is the author of *Renascence and Other Poems* (Mitchell Kennerley).

Mr. Louis Untermeyer, of New York, is the author of *Challenge* (Century Co.) and *These Times* (Henry Holt & Co.), and of the prose volume, *The New Era in American Poetry*, just issued by the latter firm.

Mr. Witter Bynner is now in Berkeley as a temporary member of the faculty of the University of California. John Henry Nash, San Francisco's bibliophile printer and publisher, has recently issued a limited large-paper *édition de luxe* of this poet's *A Cantic of Praise*, the chorale which was so beautifully given last winter at the Greek Theatre to celebrate the victory of the Allies. Except for this, Mr. Bynner's latest book is *Grenstone Poems* (Fred. A. Stokes Co.).

Mr. William Rose Benét, who is once more in New York after his military service, has put out four books of verse, the latest being *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (Yale Univ. Press).

Mr. Maxwell Bodenheim, now a resident of New York, is the author of *Minna and Myself*, recently issued by the Pagan Publishing Co.

Mr. John Russell McCarthy, a young journalist in Huntingdon, Pa., has not yet published a volume. Nor has Miriam de Ford Collier (Mrs. Armistead C.), who now lives in San Francisco; nor Mr. Emanuel Carnevali, of New York.

The following contributors are new to our readers:

Mr. Charles Erskine Scott Wood, a prominent attorney of Portland, Oregon, is the author of *The Poet in the Desert* (privately printed in Portland), and *The Masque of Love* (Walter Hill, Chicago).

Mrs. Andrea Hofer Proudfoot, of Chicago, will soon issue her first book of verse, *The Ear of the Madonna and Other Poems*.

Mr. George O'Neil, of Saint Louis, who has recently returned from military service, has contributed verse to *Reedy's Mirror* and other magazines.

Marjorie Meeker (Mrs. Addison B. Gatling), a native of England and graduate of Bryn Maur, now lives in New York. She has contributed verse and prose to various magazines.



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Mr. William H. Simpson is a Chicago railroad man whose recent verse will be offered soon at greater length in POETRY.

Miss Helen Muckley, a Cleveland journalist, has published little verse as yet.

Mr. Robert Rand, of Rye, N. Y., is now a student at Harvard, after a year in the A. E. F.

Mr. Abraham Yarmolinsky, a native of Russia, has been living in Brooklyn since his arrival in this country five years ago. He has published in various magazines verse translations from the Russian, as well as prose articles.

Valery Iakovlevich Bryusov (or Brusov), the Russian poet represented through Mr. Yarmolinsky's translation, was born in Moscow in 1873. He is well known in Russia as the author of numerous books of verse, and he has published translations from Verlaine, Verhaeren and Poe.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

*The Wild Swans at Coole*, by W. B. Yeats. Macmillan Co.

*The Lane to Sleepy Town and Other Verses*, by Elizabeth Hays Wilkinson. Privately printed, Pittsburgh.

*Almost*, by Martha B. Mosher. Lyric Pub. Co.

*Escape and Fantasy*, by George Rostrevor. Macmillan Co.

*Dreams and Gibes*, by Edward Sapir. Gorham Press.

*The New Day*, by Scudder Middleton. Macmillan Co.

*Later Verses*, by Alfred Cochrane. Longmans, Green & Co.

*Uncertain Trail*, by Ned Hungerford. Privately printed, Rochester, N. Y.

*Poems About God*, by Lieutenant John Crowe Ransom. Henry Holt & Co.

*Canteen Classics—Rhymes of the K. P.*, by Alfred Eggers. Poet Lore Co.

*Ironica*, by Donald Evans. Nicholas L. Brown, N. Y. C.

*The Book of the Nations*, by J. E. Sampter. E. P. Dutton & Co.

#### PLAYS:

*The Slave with Two Faces*, by Mary Carolyn Davies. Egmont Arens.

*Blind*, by Seumas O'Brien. Egmont Arens.

#### PROSE:

*Convention and Revolt in Poetry*, by John Livingston Lowes. Houghton Mifflin Co.

*The New Era in American Poetry*, by Louis Untermeyer. Henry Holt & Co.



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Of Poetry, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for April 1, 1919.

State of Illinois, County of Cook. Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Harriet Monroe, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the editor of Poetry, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

That the name and address of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager is Harriet Monroe, 543 Cass street.

That there are no bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders.

That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant’s full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities that as so stated by her.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22nd day of March, 1919.

(Seal)

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To have great ports  
there must be great audiences too.

—Whitman

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