The Via Dolorosa of Art
by Robert McAlmon
Union, by John Drinkwater
Osbert Sitwell, W. Bryher
Yvor Winters
You may be interested in knowing that we got a very satisfactory number of responses from our advertisement [The Century Co.] in POETRY . . . many more than from advertisements in other periodicals.

Earl Marlatt

Vol. XVII No. III

POETRY for DECEMBER, 1920

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WHITE stallions dashed by.
I could see their teeth gleaming
Through their lips as they sneered
With death-laughter upon them.
Light poured in silver
Off their arched necks.
But there was blood upon their flanks,
Scarlet trickling upon the white sinews.
The stallions were prancing to death,
Trumpeting defiance with their nostrils.

White Chillingham bulls followed them.
I saw them gore the stallions,
But a wince of pain was across their eyes too.
Sharp horse-hoofs had struck them on the heart.
They fought with missing heart-beats
To plow on, tearing the soil with polished hoofs.

If they could only reach the forest,
If only to die there!
I could not help them.

I remembered dreams I had had
In which white mastodons trampled the plains,
Seeking to reach the forest before death.
And white Irish stags, ten men high,
With antlers that were giant trees with white bark,
Had stumbled under the weight of their own bulk.
A wince was across all their eyes—
But a smile, a never-mind tenderness.
Perhaps they were sure of coming into the purity
Because of their whiteness.

I knew why they were white:
They were my dreams—all frozen,
And all white with the frost upon them,
And white with the frost all through them.
They were frozen thwarted male things
Rushing somewhere—
Seeking, fighting, and killing;
But white—say that of them.
The steam off their quivering flanks,
Sweated and weak with exhaustion, was white.
They would never find mates
Before they died.
There would be no more white males,
None so clear a white as these;
Only some tinged with gray—dusty.
But I could not watch them rush to the forest forever—
Not one did I see arrive there—
A cloud or night or blackness always intervened.
I saw them rush forward and disappear,
And then saw no more of them.

TODAY'S MUSIC

His being started with decision,
Quick as a pair of highstrung horses given the rein,
When the orchestra's music danced
With his impalpable sensual images.
It was wine-steam to drunken him—
Heavy, rhythmic, plucked gold petals of music,
Floating with sonorous etherealism about him.

He could not wait when it had ceased:
More could be heard on other nights.
Out to walk with his head amongst the stars,
With the sky standing straight before him,
He went, breathing the poignant night, drugged,
Knowing the moon was a diadem for his head.
And the slow sensuous ecstasies
Of music that his mind could not quite catch . . .
Only he was living . . . music . . .

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Many times he had thought how sufficient life would be
Could a man dance the motion he feels,
And sing the songs within him.
But when your limbs fail you . . .
When your voice will not ascend . . .?
But tonight, he would make music,
Music that was virile and barbarous.

He could see electric threads of clipped blue
Dancing from positive to negative electric poles
In music.
He could hear color, movement, and noises.
He could see music that pictured the flow of generations
Into life—impetuous, rushing, gleaming with flesh and sunlight and darkness.
The shriek of maddened prehistoric brutes was in his ears—
They were waging battle to death, wading in blood,
Fighting for the preservation of their species,
Deep in the tangled forest.
The dissonances of many insects rasping shrilly,
The silence for moments of murderous insect warfare—
He could hear music that was a history of sound
Since the world began.
. . . the lighted city streets ran ahead of him
Like slender gold lizards basking in the moonlight. . . .
So many years the moon, too well known,
Had irked him for being no exotic moon . . .
. . . tonight, he would compose music,
Free music, for the soul, the intellect—
Not honey in the listener's ear:
The dolorous drip of harps,
The sob of bass violins,
Catgut moaning mindless sorrow.
He would write music, something of sweetness too:
The pipes of goat-herds on Athenian hills;
Slim girls chanting for religious ceremonies,
And dancing, love in their limbs where worship should be;
The clash of knights' armor in tournament,
All coming to the climax of subways clamoring in tunnels.

And other sounds. . .
Far-away train whistles, fog's-horn on the bay;
Aliens singing their native songs,
Hunched in drab haunts of a metropolis;
Chinese—discordant falsetto babblings,
Pale yellow notes descending in eighth tones. . .
He would write music . . . there would be no more lone-
liness
Of the soul for him. He would reach back through the ages,
Reach forth to the future for companions of his spirit,
And his music would touch them as with understanding
hands.
He was through with themes and composition:
Only kaleidoscopic resoundings, playing upon the nerves,
Awakening the instinct memory of people
With their jeering, gentle, maniacal, forgiving heterogeneity.
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Negroes would run, quick blood in their hearts,
As progenitors in Africa had run centuries ago—
Savages in a religious dance shrieking fear
At some demon's wrath because storm and lightning
Has broken in upon their ceremonies;
The bellowing of a rhinoceros bull as he rushed
To gore the huntsman whose arrow had wounded him;
The trumpet of elephant herds stampeding, panic-stricken,
Through the forest, tearing aside small trees as they rush;
The rumble of bison hoofs beating endlessly over plains
With Indians whooping in pursuit of them:

. . . He would write music such that one would hear
The rush of the stream of life—
Music of evolution . . .
The sibilant hiss of snakes fading into
The flap of reptilian bird-wings . . .
The satin swish of sea-species leaving the waters
To go forth upon the land, prospering as land-beast
Or going toward extinction . . . music just the same . . .
Washed scarlet tones, high, persistent and dissonant.
He needed such music for the rhythm of his blood,
Such music for the vehement dance restrained within
him . . .
A mad, wild dance . . . limbs breaking, bones cracking,
A dance hurtling the sky, a life dance.

He would make music . . . yes, such, such music.
He intended to make music.
And he turned at the corner near his boarding-house.
The same cats were making love in the same way
As they had made love for the three dull months of summer.
The same pastry-shop stood in front of him . . .
. . . the same dark room, the same gas-light in its grayness
Awaited him. He would make music . . . music of tedium too.
Yes, tomorrow, music . . . tonight—
He needed coffee and doughnuts, to sleep well—
And then . . . such music . . . tomorrow . . .

FORM DESTRUCTIONIST—SCULPTOR

Many moods—apathy tagged to the end of most—
Had gone into the carving of his masterpiece:
Lady with a three-cornered smile.
He groveled when a critic spoke of his
“Ironical incision, and sensitive cognition of inner essence.”
God!—he could not so facilely
Plumb for himself the dolorous enigma of his art.
Her obese countenance
Proclaimed his contempt for most of mankind—
At their best making an art of adaptation,
And at their worst . . .
Words signify nothing when silence is permissible.

Three times he had destroyed beginnings of his last work,
Fearing that they were not authentic expressions
Of impulses indigenous of his own contacts.
Given the alien substance of some trifling annoyance,
His nature could furnish nacre
For finer pearls of concept and of execution than these.

Some things of his, completed—
Minor things, not a discredit to him—but . . .
He shrugged an intellectual shoulder inwardly
When they were praised.
Certainly he knew
He’d caught the tigerish amative spirit
Of the over-pure in his Satyre Religieux;
But its blazing orbs, lecherous with lust-light,
Treacherously savage with repression,
Were too flamboyant a repetition of satire well done before.
The plastic suavity of his Enigmatic Nun,
With a smile of invitation upon her saintly lips,
Gratified his sense of attainment but slightly.

“Realism and truth be damned!” he was often heard to say—
“They are trite insistences.
What is the realism of a plasmic germ
Whose species we do not know?—
Creation is the only reality.”

Phantasmagorical statues almost emerged
From the gray draperies of his subconsciousness
At moments of such proclamation.
Everything in the universe swirled
Or went through his mind in fluid conceptions.
“There is no infinite—only our questions
Which are unreal until we answer them definitely;
Only space which our minds do not fill with forms.
But it is not of the ego . . . it does not exist.
I am my universe. What I know, exists.
What I do not know is not”—
He would say to his reflection in the mirror,
And it did not disconcert him with a refutation.
Whereupon impulses that were themselves masterpieces
Arose from the dormancy of his will.
He planned to put them into marble.
“Eternity is the metabolic process of the universal germ;
The universe is an organism . . .
Species the corpuscles in its blood, its veins;
My intellect is the skeleton of my universe”—
He told portraits upon the wall of his room.
They acquiesced.
Some day through the sweep of his imagination
He would come upon form, transcended
Beyond the limitation of line and contour.

Meanwhile . . . He worked on lesser things, recalling:
The tiny spotted fawn he had found in the woods—
A hunter must have killed its mother,
For hunger had robbed it of instinctive terror.
An inquisitive baby snout had sought his face
As he carried it in his arms—
Moist nose, little hungry tongue licking,
Luminous trustful eyes . . .  
Tenderly he recalled the tiny thing  
Which of course died, too young to eat as he could feed it.  
So beautiful, so sweetly pathetic an impulse  
Was in him,  
He put it into marble in the form of an oval,  
With dim lines to subtly suggest many possibilities—  
New life, love, destruction.  
He would always disdain visual reproduction.

Tiny lizards, antelope-like in grace,  
That he had watched for days out on the desert,  
Certainly could not be caught in cold hard stone  
By showing them in any fixed postures.  
Their alert listening bodies, when they stopped  
In running through lavender sage-weed,  
He had memorized in marble  
By slender oblongs that bent upward in a quick angle.

Only because the unique shape of sea-horses  
Fascinated him had he copied their likeness.  
Twining two stallion-necked, worm-headed beasts  
With watch-spring bodies together, he felt gratified  
Believing he had them as they made love  
In the marine garden’s tank.  
Yet he was not sure that his tapering-based  
Interrogation marks did not please his sense  
Of the thing to be done with them in art the more.
Robert McAlmon

And for these things to be called
“A symbolistic ironist!” He shuddered.
He trifling with that ephemeral quality—irony,
Doing a burlesque of the things that change!
“I have no religion but self—
Nothing I worship but my art,”
He told his quivering sensibilities to soothe them.
He knew there was lion passion in him
As well as lamb softness.
He would run the gamut of experience,
Then compress a year’s living into a gesture, a line;
So that his passion of resistance,
His thwarted longings amidst loneliness,
His cleansing of soiled actualities,
Had permanent expression in symbols
Sufficiently withdrawn not to be subjected
To the misinterpretations of the multitude.

Music that sent him forth
To walk across Brooklyn Bridge,
His heart caught between the pricks
Of pointed melodies,
His breast cold in the salt wind,
His wrists singing with the pain of being,
This music—
Flutes—cold water ringing on thin glass,
Sombre violins droning bee-tragedies—
He would hold these tonalities into being

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For a longer time than it takes silence to seep them in.
He would put music into white marble—
Marble that sang;
And dancers—and colors—
These he would transform to marble too—
White marble—abstract of form.
But sensitive intuitions would recognize
The color, the motion, in them;
Attuned ears would hear the music
Of his white marble—
Gray-green-violet, magenta-orange-blue-yellow
Moss, melody, movement,
Caught in white marble,
Caught in the whiteness of abstraction,
Worshipful beauty for spiritual intimacies.

But this morning he could not speak to himself in the mirror.
Morning was a pathologic time of Time for him.
From his window he saw that hills were green,
But he did not care to explore their greenness.
After all, green is a slavery—
Green trees, then red-yellow, white;
Spring, summer, autumn, winter,
And after some years
Other trees come into the slavery of the same routine.

As for his sculpturing,
Well enough—

[128]
But what of his living?—
Between sunrise and sunrise any life is held pendulating.
What if a few stars are stitched
In the hem of the garment one cannot throw off—
The sky one cannot look far into?
What of his living—just to live?
Life swirled past him in a flowing stream—
Ebb the tide, flow the current—
Wind of Time:
The only thing existing the things in his mind,
And it a mind wild for freedom . . .
Wind-gust were dry leaves crackling,
Dust on his windowpanes.

He washed his teeth, and combed his hair;
He tied a colored cravat in a freshly linened collar.
In the mirror his face was a morbid picture,
Rather appealing perhaps—
Sullen with youth . . . grave with despondence.
But there was breakfast to have—
The day was never his without his coffee.
So he thought of coffee:
In his mind the universe—thinking
Alone of coffee—sieved his self-perceptions.
Coffee—with not too much cream and sugar.

Robert McAlmon
MRS. FREUDENTHAL CONSULTS THE WITCH OF ENDOR

A nose, however aquiline,
    Escapes detection in a throng—
So she hopes; but sense of sin
    Made her shrink, and steal along.

Streets glazed by mocking summer heat
    To semblance of a cool canal,
Where iridescent insects beat
    Their wings upon the liquid wall;

Where radiant insects, carrion-fed,
    Buzz and flutter busily—
Smile, or frown, or nod the head,
    Expressing some familiar lie.

Enter the house, ascend the stair!
    Consult the scintillating ball.
Beatrice Freudenthal, beware!
    Eve felt like you before the Fall.

Within the shining mystic globe
    Lies luck-at-bridge, or martyr's crown;
A modern prophetess will probe
    The future, for one guinea down.
For that amount, the future's sword
    From crystal scabbard she will drag.
She can unpack the future's hoard
    As we unpack a Gladstone bag.

Without the agency of man,
    Solely by fasting and by prayer,
The wizards of old Jenghiz Khan
    Could move a wine-cup through the air

Until it reached him, and he drank
    Fermented juice of rye or grape.
The cup flew back; his courtiers shrank
    Away, astonished and agape.

Before the Llama turns to grapple
    With state affairs, he learns to spin
(Despite Sir Isaac Newton's apple)
    In mid-air sixty times—to win

Amusement mixed with approbation
    From skeptical ambassadors;
For any kind of levitation
    Increases prestige with the Powers.

Such things were practised—did not tend
    To promote war or anarchy;

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Yet now such things would even end
A Constitutional Monarchy.

Magic for a holy race
Is surely wrong; how strictly hidden
The future in its crystal case
Lies—oh, so near, and yet forbidden!

Though gentile kings upon their thrones
May weave a spell or dance like Tich,
Yet ponder on the bleaching bones
Of Saul, who sought the Endor witch.

DEAD MAN'S WOOD

In Dead Man's Wood
The rustling trees
Shiver, shudder
In the breeze.

The bird-song drips
On Dead Man's Wood,
Trickles through
Like falling blood.

And if the sun
Gives forth its light,
The yellow glory
   Turns ash-white.

The dark tall trees,
   When day is past,
Draw back their leaves,
   Pale and aghast.

When rusty shadows
   Fall at dusk,
Surely the spirit
   Leaves its husk?

All night, all day,
   Within this cover,
I sit and wait
   For my dead lover.
Suppose me dead; think of the man you made,
A moment, but as earth, unbreathing more,
His garments folded, and his reckoning paid
Of love and faith and fame; then, as before,
A chronicle all done, with finis writ,
Ask if the man you made had truly been
More worth your pride and daily watching wit
Had fear of you one passage cancelled clean.

Would you not say, serenely gospelled then?—
"I taught him faith, I bade his word be said
Fearing no challenge nor reproof of men;
And had the happy courage that I bred
Once brought me chill obedience for wage,
This chronicle had been a poorer page."

For, dear, I can but serve you at the rate
That is my heart’s occasion—that is all.
If I deny myself and with you wait,
It is not I, however you may call.
Something of me must go if I deny,
Though in denial shall be with you still
A body walking and a watchful eye—
The patient service of an impoverished will.

For if the love that loved, and chose, and came
Ever again to you, nor ever found
Estrangement in far absences, nor blame
For pilgrimage to other Edens bound,
Should know one beauty by your will denied,
Thenceforth how should old faith be satisfied?

III

But when you bid me go as beauty calls,
Knowing that my desire could follow none
But fair vocation, and that intervals
In honest love are still love's errands done,
When you upon my embarkation wait,
And cry, "O keel! Forth in pursuit of spring,
All archipelagos to navigate,
You are my ship, and this your voyaging!"—

Then nothing lets between your sovran pride
And all my kingdom, nor is poor pretence
That over all my fortunes you preside
When half my levies are rebellious pence:
Then do you govern that your craft began—
A man, and not the shadow of a man.

John Drinkwater
Aphrodite!
Aphrodite of the blue sleep, the bird-black sea,
I thank you that at last my body is at peace.

I toss these flowers from the flowers, your feet,
From the pear-buds of your ankles,
The white hyacinths of your limbs.

The love-hour is ended.
Swallow-wings, dreams of a spiked iris,
Gipsy your eyes.

The hollows under your knees are sweet with love.
Your knees are quince-blossoms, bent back by the rain.

Blue of your eyes,
Blue of the Greek seas that has no name,
Am I lifted
To the porch of Aphrodite on your wings?

EOS

Your face is the flush of Eos:
You are dawn.
Your face is Greece.
Under your lifted arm
There is lavender to kiss;
Sea-lavender, spiced with salt.

Before the fierce cyclamen wine has burnt my lips,
I kiss your limbs, wild followers of Artemis.

Your eyes break sleep!
I touch the pansy set below your heart;
Each kiss a star
That fades upon your body, which is dawn.

April scent of your throat,
O spiced flowers of your shoulders,
Will you shrink from the lion, my heart?

O wild rose, bend above my face!
There is no world—
Only the beat of your throat against my eyes.

White moss is harsh
Against these soft white petals of your feet.
It is hard to dream you have followed the wild goats
Aslant the perilous hills.

I have only the fire of my heart to offer you,
O peach-red lily of my love!
THE WORKER

I've towered above the hilt of my spade,
Knowing with what muscle-gnawing action,
I mold the earth into usable shape;
And there rises within me, what is more pain to stay . . .
But the desert is answerless.

The desert is blue and yellow and answerless.

I've risen above the hairy smell of me;
I've held down my rigored fists,
I've stood high over shoulders
To the mind of me . . .
But the mind's unresponsive as lead,
And the lips are sealed as with lead.

As a leaden bell with a song it must sing.

I've faced men with God in their faces,
I've shown them the crucifixion in mine;
From a breast not yet washed of oil and mud of labor
I've loosed my blood on foreign lands for men;
And I've cried aloud,
But it was not the cry of battle pain.
Now the people wave flags in drunken triumph,
And smother my only song in street dust and confetti.

With my spade I've changed the desert,
With the fire of me I've melted the lead:
But, men,
Even Christ could not make you listen!

THANKS FOR A SEASON

My thanks to Thee are rhythmmed air—
Ring out, bell . . . sea!

The meadow lark feels the swing of morning,
Chortles a carol of coming day;
The milkman tinkles down a stony street;
The merchant click-a-clacks past a row of stores,
And opens his own with a click-a-click of keys;
A huckster’s wagon, fresh with country scents,
Wheezes along; the reveller’s hack
Whirs down the avenue toward the dark in the west
Whence come cathedral chimes;
At town’s end the sun bends in afresh,
Makes roadside pools iridescent with dawn;
A new pale sweet now blows over gutter ways,
And eastern walls of jail turn mellow pink,
And numbed hills delight in opening poppies:
I think this day,
Lord, these be my prayer!

David Greenhood
LISTENER

I've been with old men
Shadowy and slow,
Men dead and buried
A long while ago;
But the songs that they sang me,
Grave songs and sweet,
Held me the whole day
Stretched at their feet.
Fire danced, and water
Whirled to the tune;
Laughter went ringing
Down the long noon.
But oh, what I loved most
Was not song at all!
Not the rich cadence,
The silvery fall
Of passionless voices
Kept me in thrall;
But the unquenched ardor,
Pitying, wise,
That lit their frail features
And flamed in their eyes
With a flame that transfigured
Starlight and dew—
The deep peace of old men
When singing is through.

Bernard Raymund
MOCKERY

Happened that the moon was up before I went to bed,
Poking through the bramble-trees her round gold head.
I didn't stop for stocking,
I didn't stop for shoe,
But went running out to meet her—oh, the night was blue!

Barefoot down the hill road, dust beneath my toes;
Barefoot in the pasture smelling sweet of fern and rose!
Oh, night was running with me,
Tame folk were all in bed—
And the moon was just showing her wild gold head!

But before I reached the hilltop where the bramble-trees are
tall,
I looked to see my lady moon—she wasn't there at all!—
Not sitting on the hilltop,
Nor slipping through the air,
Nor hanging in the brambles by her bright gold hair!

I walked slowly down the pasture and slowly up the hill,
Wondering and wondering, and very, very still.
I wouldn't look behind me,
I went at once to bed—
And poking through the window was her bold gold head!

Katharine Riggs
POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

POEMS

**TWO SONGS OF ADVENT**

**I**

On the desert, between pale mountains, our cries;  
Far whispers creeping through an ancient shell.

**II**

Coyote, on delicate mocking feet,  
Hovers down the canyon, among the mountains,  
His voice running wild in the wind's valleys.

Listen! listen! for I enter now your thought.

**HAWK'S EYES**

As a gray hawk's eyes  
Turn here and away,  
So my course turns  
Where I walk each day.

**THE FAR VOICE**

Roads lie in dust—  
White, curling far away;  
And summer comes.
THE WALKER

A leaf turns—
The mind burns.

Thin and clear
Death stands here.

His lips bend
For Time’s end.

Over all
My feet fall.

BALLAD

I sat alone:
Lest thought might fail
Down the fine road of day.

I sat alone.
The swinging flail
Of men will never stay.

I sat alone.
A blade of grass was pale,
Like a woman far away.
THE IMMOBILE WIND

Blue waves within the stone
Turn like deft wrists interweaving.

Emotion, undulant, alone.
Curled wings flow beyond perceiving.

Swift points of sight,
  mystic and amorous little hands,
The wind has drunk
  as water swallows sifting sands.

The wings of a butterfly
Feel of the wind
Tentatively; as men die
In thought, that have not sinned.

SONG FOR A SMALL BOY WHO HERDS GOATS

Sweeter than rough hair
On earth there is none,
Rough as the wind
And brown as the sun.

I toss high my short arms
Brown as the sun;
I creep on the mountains
And never am done.
Sharp-hoofed, hard-eyed,
Trample on the sun!—
Sharp ears, stiff as wind,
Point the way to run!

Who on the brown earth
Knows himself one?
Life is in lichens
That sleep as they run.

BALLAD OF MEN

Like long clouds
On the sky-line,
All day men come to me.
I stand and watch them sidewise,
In thought eternally.

And if men pass
They pass like birds
With necks craning aside.
And when they pass I know that You
Or they or I have lied.

And all my life
And all my sight
Are scattered like green sea;
There is death in women walking.
Thus I come unto Thee.
THE PRIESTHOOD

We stand apart
That men may see
The lines about our eyes.

We perish, we
Who die in art,
With that surprise

Of one who speaks
To us and knows
Wherein he lies.

WHERE MY SIGHT GOES

Who knows
Where my sight goes,
What your sight shows—
Where the peachtree blows?

The frogs sing
Of everything,
And children run
As leaves swing;

And many women pass
Dressed in white,
As thoughts of noon pass
From sea to sea.

[I46]
And all these things would take
My life from me.

**DEATH GOES BEFORE ME**

Death goes before me on his hands and knees,
And we go down among the bending trees.

Weeping I go, and no man gives me ease—
I am that strange thing that each strange eye sees;

Eyes of the silence, and all life an eye,
Turn in the wind; and always I walk by.

Too still I go, and all things go from me
As down far autumn beaches a man runs to the sea.

My hands are cold, my lips are thin and dumb.
Stillness is like the beating of a drum.

_Yvor Winters_
THE recurrent holiday season, chiming like a clock above the voices of the world's unrest, may well remind us of laws more ancient than the race, of rhythms which reach beyond our little planet. Even now, in this epoch of upheaval, when the world is bubbling down into a new shape after its mighty brew, even now we keep step in the procession of life, and move on eternal and immutable tides. Disorder, so visible and audible, is merely a surface phenomenon of sputter and spatter, of foam and roar; from an airplane nearer than a summer cloud we should see it for part of the pattern, for the burden of one of time's waves, to be cast up at last on that shore at the sky-line as ruthlessly as the most violent generation of the past.

To consider the beauty of order is almost to adventure upon platitudes, yet even that risk may be accepted when the clock strikes through the noise. The movement of days, of seasons, of years, the super-rhythms of sun and stars—to feel these is to hear the fundamental chord on which the music of life is based. And the endless procession of life, beating its slighter tunes in time to those rhythms, varying its measures from the march to the dance, rounding the circle from fluttering infancy to trembling age—this is a beauty more poignant than love or death, the immense beauty which embraces love and death.
“Why don’t we write about it—the most poetic thing in the world?” said a poet the other day—a poet still young, but past youth’s first dazzle and blare. “The baby emerging like a tiny spark in the dark; the child dancing with its little candle; youth waving its torch, blinded by its own light as it runs; men and women loving and laboring, fighting and sorrowing, bearing the new race, passing on the glory, the terror; then the autumn time of richest color, of deepest splendor flaring before it fades; and finally the soft whiteness of age, shimmering, obliterating: with death always tempting life, always poising its dart, uttering its cry; and life always beginning again in inexhaustible hope. Why aren’t we always shouting it, singing it, making people feel what they so often forget—the eternal magnificent rhythm of it?”

Indeed, this message has been, from the beginning, the underlying meaning of art. What other reminder than art do the generations leave as they pass—what other reminder of the beauty of life, its majestic rhythms and harmonies? But for the arts, resounding and enduring, this earth would possess no records of its past; each generation would wither like this autumn’s leaves, to be trodden out by the next, and forgotten as the beast forgets. The arts alone can tell the tale of the tribe—in carved or masonried stone, in color, in song. The arts alone assert immortality in beauty, and say nay to obliterating death. They alone give mankind its memories.

H. M.
"Others" Again


The magazine Others having apparently come to the end of its gay career, the present collection is made up from books and other magazines; POETRY being responsible for the entries of H. L. Davis, Vachel Lindsay, Max Michelson, and Wallace Stevens, and having published all but four of the twenty-six poets represented before ever they became "others." The general effect of the book is much less radical, less experimental, than the previous Others anthologies; and the material presented is naturally less new than when the magazine was a haven for the wildest orgies of proud-spirited youth.

Let us take up the entries in their alphabetical anthological order—thus one may offer a casual comment on the more recent work of these poets.

Conrad Aiken: The delicate green-and-lavender nuances of love; the play of unspoken or half-spoken passion softly rhyming its way to fulfilment in Conversation: Undertones, and unfolding a tragedy in Portrait of One Dead. Good Aiken—these poems, "brushing our dreams with soft and shadowy words." A quiet, subtly harmonized étude played in the dark by an artist.

Witter Bynner: Poor Bynner, in my opinion—the effort of a conventional mind to express itself unconvention-
ally; achieving merely insincere artificial conceits, like the brief *Horses*, or this from *Leer*:

If I might be tall negroes in procession,
Carrying each of them a rib of you,
And a cannibal-king bearing your collar-bone,
One in my right hand, one in my left,
And touching my forehead with them at slow intervals,
Might I not be too comforted
To weep?

Emanuel Carnevali: A capricious young poet and lover, but sure of both vocations; splashing all over the place, but somehow making you believe in him—in his talent and his feeling; saying simple things with a certain freshness and authority, as in these lines:

You see all things with newness,
You see all—
All but my love.

H. L. Davis: A pastoral poet of the great western ranges; who feels, and makes the reader feel, the slow strength of the soil, the reluctant passion of sand, the patient force of vast fields of grain ripening to the harvest, and the power and beauty of men and women standing inevitably in their place, doing the work of the world: a poet whose rhythms flow massively, like deep rivers; and whose lines, whether of the solid earth itself or of the rare figures moving over it, are simplified, sculpturesquely and with commanding art, into planes and masses. A new poet of power, one of the most promising of *Poetry's* prize-winners.

Jeanne D'Orge: An airy and mischievous sprite, flashing brilliantly in *To a Fumbling Lover* and still brightly
in *Defeat* and *Annabel*; and splashing in the others.

Donald Evans: Still pursuing his ironies, somewhat de­liberately and a little less fleet of foot.

Robert Frost: *Mais que fait-il dans cette galère?*—and with *Mending Wall* too! However, there are too later poems, compact and sure, as firmly cut and shapely curved as Baptiste's axe-helve which one of them celebrates.

Arturo Giovannitti: Here with *The Walker*, from his book of 1914—a prose-poem monologue of prison misery; powerful, tragic—a formidable arraignment; its rhythms holding it mostly to the prose side of the border-land.

Wallace Gould: A poet rather in the mass than in de­tail; insisting too loudly on peculiarities of manner; a lit­tle too self-conscious, too

\[ \text{serenely proud} \]
\[ \text{of having no limitations.} \]

A poet too assertive, no doubt, but piling up his images with muscular audacity until one gets a certain cumulative effect, as of a natural force at work in some place where it be­longs. For example, one feels the dying New England year in *After Tschaikowsky*.

Marsden Hartley: Not quite the best work, these, of this painter-poet, who can handle words with a certain color­subtlety. Delicate impressions though, whimsical or descrip­tive.

Orrick Johns: Oriental musings in rhapsodic prose from the author of *Country Rhymes*, one of the finest lyrists of our time. Rather a misfit, a mere literary exercise.
Fenton Johnson: The best Negro poet now before the public; a man who speaks with authority for his race—in beautiful “spirituals” and other lyrics both in and out of dialect, and in such prose-poem sketches as these. A man whose sincere and finely developed art may reveal to us his people, tell us why they are growing “tired of building up somebody else’s civilization.”

Throw the children into the river; civilization has given us too many. It is better to die than it is to grow up and find out that you are colored.

Alfred Kreymborg: A poet to be taken more seriously than the public seems to think; who, like the thorough musician he is “on the side,” is pursuing his own individual investigations into both lyric and dramatic rhythms. A poet who can say true things with a delightful air of whimsicality, and whimsical things with a gay gusto; besides, now and then, sorrowful things that drive to the quick of tears. Not quite at his best here—but then, his best is before the footlights.

Vachel Lindsay: A new arrival among the Others, but so old an arrival in Poetry that he scarcely needs a word from us for these gay Whimseys which we printed a year or more ago, and this chanting and stamping Daniel Jazz.

Haniel Long: A poet often happy in rhyming lyrics, but achieving merely prose in this alleged free verse. Interesting glimpses, though, into teacher-and-student relations.

Mina Loy: An extreme otherist, as innocent of all innocences as of commas, periods, sentences. A knowing one.

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but we would rather have some other other's eyelashes polish our stars.

Max Michelson: A true poet, a fine artist. Offering here delicate but deep searchings into the beauty and mystery of life—of the lives of our neighbors, so near and yet so aloof. And always with a sure touch upon his finely tuned instrument—poetic rhythms of accurately responsive beauty. These poems make us grieve the more that for the last year or two he has been silent.

Marianne Moore: "Chinese nuts, with more shell than meat"—so said A. C. H. of this formidably clever lady's product years ago, when she made her début in POETRY. H. D., once her college-mate in Philadelphia, ranks it near the top of the column, however; and at least we may commend Miss Moore for going her own way.

Openly, yes,
With the naturalness
Of the hippopotamus or the alligator
When it climbs out on the bank to experience the

Sun, I do these
Things which I do, which please
No one but myself.

Lola Ridge: A socialist poet, a poet with a message, like Giovannitti; and perhaps, like him, even more ardently revolutionary than poet. This poem is a fiercely passionate arraignment of the "dictators," the "Late Lords of the Iron."

Robert Alden Sanborn: A resolute aspirant, but the trail of the Muse's garments is hard to find in this rhapsodic description of a prize-fight.
Carl Sandburg: Well, we have spoken often on this theme—this poet has climbed beyond need of a hand from us, and is likely to go still higher for all the world to see. *Autumn Movement* proves him once more the master as a lyricist in free verse.

William Saphier: Again a resolute aspirant, observant and descriptive.

Evelyn Scott: An interesting mind, but too pre-occupied, perhaps, to be often responsive to the muse. Achieving suggestions, descriptive sketches, set forth in up-to-date forms; but only now and then a poem—as, for example, *Night Music*.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert: Not quite at her best here, though these *Love Poems in Autumn* are impassioned music sounding through grey curtains. But *Maura* is more deeply tragic in its slow and solemn movement, while *The Old Woman, The Portrait of a Woman in Bed*, and one or two other things in her book may be ranked high in a kind of art extremely rare in this western world, though common enough in the Orient—a kind which might be called the high grotesque, expressing as it does tragic significance through a veritable riot of abundant and beautiful gayety. Few artists of our somewhat weary era have sheer animal spirits enough, not to speak of humor and deep experience of life, to attempt what Mrs. Seiffert accomplishes so easily.

Wallace Stevens: At last a chance to say a word about this reticent poet, who refuses to print a book and thereby prove himself the peer of any poet now living, and of many
a famous one now dead and enshrined. I well remember the amazed delight with which we received his contribution to our “war number” of November, 1914—a new and significant note from a man then unknown—and crowded it in although the magazine was already made up. And since then his every appearance in our pages has been, for us, a distinguished honor, of which the recent award of the Levinson Prize to his *Pecksniffiana* is a too slight acknowledgment.

One risks banality in any comment on works of art of complete and perfect beauty, but the public should be reminded that no less than that is what Mr. Stevens often achieves.

In verses wild with motion, full of din,
Loudened by cries, by clashes, quick and sure
As the deadly thought of men accomplishing
Their curious fates in war—

he gives us a big man’s gorgeous mirrorings of life. One feels in his poems not so much his keen vision, his deep intense delight in this curious world, his serene scorn of paltriness—not so much these things as his exhaustless reserves of them. Here is a poet as unapologetically modern, and as generous and self-content, as the Elizabethans were in their day; a poet rich and humorous and profound, provocative of joy, creative of beauty, in those who can respond to him. His artistic creed confesses certain austerities:

The fops of fancy in their poems leave
Memorabilia of the mystic spouts
Spontaneously watering their gritty soils.
I am a yeoman, as such fellows go.
I know no magic trees, no balmy boughs,
"Others" Again

No silver-ruddy, gold-vermilion fruits.
But, after all, I know a tree that bears
A semblance to the thing I have in mind.
It stands gigantic, with a certain tip
To which all birds come sometime in their time.
But when they go that tip still tips the tree.

If you want the poet's feeling about
This luscious and impeccable fruit of life,
look with his self-searching eyes through Le Monocle
de Mon Oncle, from which the above extracts are quoted.
If you want some of his most perfect poems, read these few Pecksniffiana, and then turn to the whole group in POETRY
of October, 1919. Such masterpieces of lyric beauty, charged
in some cases with satiric humor, as Fabliau of Florida, Peter Parasol, and above all The Paltry Nude Starts on a
Spring Voyage, require no comment. If you are captured
by them, you will go back over the files of POETRY and
Others to find the complete works of this poet—such splendid
poems as Peter Quince at the Clavier, Three Travellers
Watch a Sunrise, or Sunday Morning, of which Arthur
Ficke said, "It is either the greatest poem ever written, or
nothing at all!" If you are not captured, give up Mr.
Stevens in despair, and read Neihardt; but your grandchil-
dren, to the third and fourth generation, will reproach you.

William Carlos Williams: Excellent Williamsesque
studies of flowers—Daisy, Queenannslace, Thistle, Great
Mullen, of which last:

One leaves his leaves at home,
Being a mullen, and sends up a lighthouse
To peer from.

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Dr. Williams is like no one else—he is himself. Only, this poet of mixed blood is not quite all of himself; for he is always most strenuously and emphatically—indeed, violently—denying the Puritan in him; and the Puritan strain is the strongest of all. To assert his freedom he must play the devil, show himself rioting in purple and turquoise pools of excess—I don’t mean in these poems, but in certain others. And unquestionably he riots gracefully—whatever didoes he may cut up with words, rhythms, conventions or morals. But he doesn’t need to assert his rights—we are all quite ready to admit them. He is a poet, indisputably; the brilliant, witty, dexterous, hot-blooded Mercutio of the tribe. These are no X Y Z’s. Here, for the present, is the end of Others.

H. M.

"TALL TIMBER AND A LOON"


"Why not," asked Mr. Sandburg in his brief introduction to this book, "why not have the loam and the lingo, the sand and the syllables of North America in the books of North America?" Therewith he sounds a challenge, and expresses as well a deep-rooted hunger—that hunger for an image of ourselves which is at bottom the most pertinent problem for the American artist to solve. How to get on paper or canvas what is most native to us, the result of our own experience, childhood memories, daily contacts? Only through this faithfulness to our intimate experience can a national
"Tall Timber and a Loon"

literature be created; since a national literature is a com­posite of individual expression, and not something abstract or arbitrarily concocted by recipe, in answer to the demand.

In writing of the American Indian, Mr. Sarett has been true to himself; he is writing of himself, as it were. His contact, as forest ranger and guide, with the Chippewas, has unquestionably changed his outlook on life; and I do not think it possible for any imaginative person to come in real contact with the Indians without having his mental vision subtly changed and remoulded. When I say the "imaginative person" I do not of course mean the average Indian agent or missionary who, without any imagination of his own, can not possibly enter into that of the Indian.

There are two ways of expressing what we may call an Indian inspiration. One is to use the Indian's own method—to get within. The other combines with this a more objective view; and we have the Indian in a transitional, rather than in a primitive stage, in which he expresses himself as an Indian, because he is an Indian, but also as he would try to express himself in terms of the white man's understand­ing and limitations.

Mr. Sarett uses both methods. His first section, Flying Moccasins, contains poems for the most part in the first method. The section called Chippewa Monologues implies a white man's audience, if not actually present, at least present in the background of the Indian's consciousness. These dramatic character studies have a fine satiric humor—and humor, by the way, is one of the most salient features
of the Indian mind. Here we have the Indian on the reservation, striving to hold on to his own traditional nobility of behavior and good faith, in spite of his keen recognition of the opposite on the part of his aggressive antagonist. Particularly trenchant is Little Caribou's council-talk, in which he comments on the government's attempt to make good farmers of the Indians by giving each an allotment of a hundred and sixty acres of lake and swamp-land:

For Eenzhun be good farmer
Eenzhun should be fish.

In the *Flying Moccasins* section, Mr. Sarett has attempted an even more difficult thing, which is to write Indian poems with the beat of Indian music. This is an almost impossible thing to do, and I think he has come closer to it, in *The Blue Duck*, than any other poet who has attempted it. It is extremely difficult for the trained musician to catch the intervals of Indian music, both in pitch and time, and when the poet tries to catch the accent of Indian song, he usually resorts to the expedient of *mentioning* the accompanying drum-beats or gourd-rattles, or of imitating them by onomatopoeic methods, usually not successful. Mr. Sarett has come closer than the others to achieving the Indian accent in the *ictus* of his verse itself, although he, too, sometimes reverts to the more imitative and descriptive methods, as in the *Squaw Dance*.

Indian symbolism, with the image as employed by the Indian, is to my mind the most fruitful and translatable contribution that Indian poetry can make to our own. Mr.
Sarett understands the Indian's concrete natural symbolism, and *The Blue Duck* is a fine example of this "sympathetic magic."

In the poems in which Mr. Sarett speaks in his own proper person, there is perhaps more suggestion than actual achievement; yet his lyrics have the power of conjuring up arctic nights, granite mountains, and the lone wolf cry; and in them we find the "tall timber, fresh waters, blue ducks, and a loon" of Mr. Sandburg's graphic introduction. This is not, as Mr. Sandburg suggests, library poetry; it is pioneer poetry, with the breath of the wilderness in it, and as a transcript of American life it is especially valuable.

A. C. H.

**THE POETRY OF THE SITWELLS**


The poetry of these young people has several times been mentioned in the critical portion of this periodical, but as "the Sitwells"—one is forced to this unceremonious grouping—are about the most vivid literary personalities which emerged in England during the war, it may be as well to run through their achievements to date. I hope I shall not be considered rude in speaking of "these young people;" the phrase was used in its un-Gosse-like or complimentary
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sense. For I should think that the first quality an unprejudiced reader would find in their work is youth, the energy and vitality and healthy scorn and keen senses of youth. They seem to belong to a race which is utterly distinct from the stolid souls who continue to grind out the amiable barrel-organ noises, euphemistically called "Georgian poetry." They have nothing in common with what Miss Sitwell amusingly defines as the "village idiot" school. They are distinctly aware of the demise of Queen Victoria, and they know that there is a continent of Europe. They have visited numerous modern art "shows" and have taken pleasure in them; they do not believe that it is essential to know no language but one's own; they do not look at literature from the Solomon Eagle suburb. In fact they do what most English "poets" of today never dream of doing—they live in touch with the intellectual activity of the time. (I am not praising the "intellectual activity of the time," but one certainly ought to know it. Stravinsky, the Russian ballet, Proust, Joyce, Picasso and Braque, *et hoc genus omne*, are the expression of our time and are supremely ignored by the dazzling wielders of the English Kultur weapon.)

All this simply means that the Sitwells are in revolt against that petrifying dullness which makes most English life a kind of projection from the pages of *Punch*. The Sitwells hate "good form" and "the right thing" and "my country right or wrong" and "cricket" and "what nice people do," and all the other thousand-and-one mental barriers erected by a senile generation to make thought and life impossible.
And, though I won't pretend that I agree with all their conceptions of poetry, I do think that their attitude towards the art is an immense advance on that of most, of practically all their compatriots.

Let us consider their works more closely. Mr. Osbert Sitwell has two or three distinct styles. The first and most obviously popular is the ironic political satire. Here he has achieved individuality. It makes no difference whether he signs them with his own name or with a pseudonym, or leaves these satires unsigned. Anybody who has read one of them can immediately detect his hand in the others as they appear in the Nation and the Herald. I don't suggest that they are the last word in lyric poetry, but they are very satisfactory as satires; even that hobbling rhythm, which leaves one uncertain as to whether he is writing prose or vers libre, is particularly apt for this conversational irony.

Mr. Sitwell has not reprinted many of these in book-form, and they would be rather out of place in a book containing poems designed to produce an effect of beauty; but in a separate volume they would be entertaining. The book should be called England's Conscience, or something of that sort. Mr. Sitwell's social satire is much lighter than Mr. Sassoon's, and therefore, I think, preferable. No one else has made such devastating fun of the perplexed, muddle-headed English "good people." Their faculty for "doing the dirty" with words of peace and love on their lips is a legacy from the good old days when their ancestors spread civilization with the Bible and brandy. It is not exactly
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hypocrisy, because they never think enough to be hypocrites; it is a heaven-sent faculty to enable them to rule the waves. Mr. Sitwell's little soliloquies expose the process admirably and with scorn; but they probably have about as much effect as a neatly flung assagai on a bank of Thames mud. There is a whiz, a plop, the wounded slime gently heaves over and buries the weapon, and all is as before.

When Mr. Osbert Sitwell is attempting to create beauty he is less sure of himself than in satire; one can see that he is experimenting carefully, and trace a development from the method of a poem like *Clavicords*, with its pure emotionalism, to the fantastic decoration and irony of *De Luxe*. In his more recent poems I seem to trace the effect of that aspect of Laforgue which has been so admirably developed by Mr. Eliot. I notice this development with great interest, since Laforgue strikes me as one of the most dangerous influences one can imagine; his style is sometimes very confused, and his cynicism is so frequently a mere confession of his sentimentalism. I don't think Mr. Sitwell can be accused of sentimentalism; at least I detect none, but I confess some doubts about his style. He is certainly more careful now, but opening *Argonaut and Juggernaut* at random I find:

Again we sing
Enchantment, love, vague fear, and memories
That cling about us like the fumes of wine
With myriad love-enhancing mysteries
We pour out in one song—intense, divine—
Down the deep moonlit chasms of the waves
Our song floats on the opiate breeze.

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Ce n’est pas ça. Mr. Sitwell has a far better sense of style when he is juggling with the sentiments of Mrs. Freudenthal and Mrs. Kinfoot. He does get the Laforgue effect, and without the sentimentalism.

Miss Edith Sitwell’s *Clowns’ Houses* gives me a most pleasant feeling of bright colors, movement, and guitar music. I have not come across any modern poet—not even Miss Lowell—who takes so much pleasure in colors or who records color impressions with so much precision. She has a painter’s sense of words; her poems have a sort of “primitive” art convention, which is quite modern, and may be likened (not too fantastically, I hope) to the paintings of Mr. Gertler or to Edy Legrand’s *Macao and Cosmage*. In the twenty-nine pages of *Clowns’ Houses* I find the following large proportion of color adjectives: Colored, or colors, 9; black, 17; white, 9; green, greenery, 8; gold, golden, 9; red, 8; pink, 5; yellow, 4; blue, grey and silver, each, 3; and gilt, gilded, tawny, orange, brown, amber, vermilion, each 1. Frequently these are compound: i. e. air-white, parrot-green, proving a conscious desire to convey the precise shade of color visualized. In addition, Miss Sitwell uses many words which suggest color, or at least flash and glitter, like fire, rainbow, metallic, sequined. The whole effect is bright and invigorating, the very opposite of the drab “Cotswold” kind of poem. There is an alert and sensitive mind behind these poems, a mind which does perceive the world in its own way. Where I do not at all like Miss Sitwell is in her use of simile and metaphor, where
she often utterly twists the meaning of words: "Chattering heat," "purring greenery," "instruments that snore like flies"—all from Minstrels—are just the sort of thing Miss Sitwell would detest in a "Georgian." True, she has the merit of being original, and true, also, she is not in the least aiming at a "classic" effect of sobriety and precision; but it is after all the Apollinaire fallacy. This may be only a personal crochet—no doubt it is; but the mixed metaphor and the telescoped metaphor, even when used by Mallarmé, spoil my enjoyment of a poem. Those "snoring flies" make me think of Milton at his worst.

I find Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell extremely satisfactory at times. He has an exquisite sense of beauty and he can create a mood. I like his use of words. When he says: "Silence, the cape of Death, lies heavy round the bare shoulders of the hills," he really "does the trick" for me. It is poetry, or rather it is the kind of poetry I most enjoy. He has a gift for precise observation and description, as for example:

The water
Lies like a sword
With marks of rust
Where the sun has caught it.

Almost every page has something with that kind of quality in it. The Mayor of Murcia is the opus of his book, The People's Palace, and is probably the most consistently good piece of work in it. The passage beginning, "The whole wide Earth trembles and totters," gives an effect of sonority and richness without being rhetorical. Mr. Sitwell has got to live up to some high hopes of him.
The Poetry of the Sitwells

The *Wheels* anthology, published from 1916-19 yearly, is edited by Miss Sitwell and contains most of the readable poets who “appeared” during the war. The *Wheels* people were fortunate in not having to do all the arguing which the Imagists had to do a couple of years earlier, nor did they find it necessary to enounce any aesthetic “doctrine.” With these anthologies and with their own books the Sitwells have created a sort of colored oasis in the drab wilderness of English literary squirarchy.

Richard Aldington

A PRIZE-WINNING POEM


In this book the author has set himself a hard problem. The poem, or series of poems, takes for its subject a controversy between the Hebrews and the Kenites in the reign of David. The Hebrews represent the conception of Jehovah as a god supporting the strong—the religious theory held by ruling classes in all ages—while the Kenites are the advocates of a more spiritual conception. The researches of modern scholars have been used by the author in building his poem.

The difficulties involved in a work of this type are partly technical, partly in the theme itself. A long poem, or series of poems forming an organic whole, must have unusual qualities if it is to interest even those who read poetry regularly. Perhaps more important, the attempt to embody
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a modern theme in an ancient setting presents serious stylistic and other problems. Particularly, God is a large subject. That in the opinion of some critics Mr. Wood was successful in solving his problems, is indicated by the award of one of *The Lyric* prizes for 1919 to this volume.

In the opinion of this reviewer the book is only a workmanlike production, with some elements of strength and with obvious weaknesses. There are effective dramatic passages and pleasant lyric passages, Mr. Wood being at his best in the latter; but the book does not hold the reader.

In putting his theme into its Hebraic setting, the poet endeavors to weave together the atmosphere, spirit, and manner of Hebrew times, and a modern theme and spirit. It is not easy thus to combine the ancient and the modern—there is only one James Branch Cabell. The two are not woven together in Mr. Wood's book. They are rather laid side by side, with threads overlapping here and there.

Some of the songs in the book have the spirit and manner traditionally associated with Jehovah-worship and cults contemporaneous with it:

His wrath is a hungry lion—
He has lifted up his spear in anger
And slain a thousand of the guardians of Baal!

A few pages farther on, one comes to other verses full of the psycho-analytic content and the characteristic rhythms of sophisticated *vers libre*:

There is one inner room
I keep for myself.

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A tiny room—
I have locked the door, and lost the key—
You cannot enter.

Each moment is a step
Up an ascending stairway of raptures.

There is a long sleep there,
But beyond the sleep—
Beyond—beyond—

The characters, moreover, are not quite convincing. Zadok, the priest, may actually have had the manners and speech of a shifty, grafting political boss, but we don't feel him as a reality. Even the beautiful vision of Jotham, in the last portion of the book, where Jehovah is seen as a God of brotherhood and perpetual peace, seems Mr. Wood's vision much more than Jotham's. It is not welded into the structure of the work.

A good deal of the reader's feeling regarding the book is probably due to conceptions formed by the Old Testament scriptures; but so vital a place do these writings, in the King James version, occupy in the literary background of all English-speaking people that a writer dealing with Hebraic subject-matter cannot justifiably overlook their influence.

Jehovah represents a big conception and theme, and contains many fine lines; but it is not a satisfying book. It fails to give the reader a sense of ultimate reality.

Nelson Antrim Crawford
Dear Editor of Poetry: Please allow me to reply to Richard Aldington’s criticism of the work of John Rodker, printed in your October issue.

Because Rodker is constantly groping for new methods in poetic style, and because he sometimes attains these roads, he must naturally arouse the anger of those who believe that poetry should stand still, should forever observe the rules of that sublimated “two-times-two-equals-four” which men call simplicity. I am, however, more tolerant than Mr. Aldington. I do not dislike candor, simplicity, naturalness and health, but I cannot see why they should have an endless monopoly on English poetry. I am also afraid that critics like Mr. Aldington are inclined to rail at sexual frankness and intellectual complexities without understanding that health is not always a virtue when it lacks the keenness of other elements. Besides, this charge of “unhealthiness” is an easy and hollow gesture used by critics who possess no better arguments. Mr. Rodker’s poetry is often involved and sardonic, but it holds a bitter strength far removed from the flabby virulence of disease. To some men, only the movements of a child playing in a garden can be considered healthy!

Mr. Aldington charges Rodker with affectation, and sneers at his “mangled metaphors...panted out in telegraphic journalese.” Rodker does not believe that life
is a succession of unbroken colors—he spies tangled and elusive shades and strives to capture them with friendly metaphors. After all, coherence is a relative word—Nietzsche and an Aleutian Islander would probably quarrel over its definition. Its presence is a matter of taste and discernment. To substantiate his contentions, however, Aldington adopts the old critical method of separating phrases and lines from their content, distorting their meanings and taking care to select the poet's least representative lines. At the other extreme we have critics who carefully select the best lines in a poet's work and strive to create an equally false and facile impression. Quotations prove nothing unless they are fairly numerous and unmutilated! I shall therefore refrain from quoting many beautiful lines in Mr. Rodker's work and content myself with advising people to read it before pronouncing judgment.  

Maxwell Bodenheim

NOTE: The editor confesses feeling strain, rather than achievement, in Mr. Rodker's beautifully printed Hymns.

A KANSAS PRIZE

Dear POETRY: The Kansas Authors' Club has offered a prize of $100 for the best poem, and a similar prize for the best short story, produced by a citizen of Kansas in 1920. Published and unpublished work is equally eligible. Material submitted or requests for information may be addressed to the president of the club, Professor J. W. Searson, Manhattan, Kansas.

N. A. C.

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NOTES

Three English poets and five Americans are represented this month. Of the former, Mr. John Drinkwater has appeared before in our pages, and since then has been prominently before the public as the author of the play *Abraham Lincoln*. His latest book is *Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Co.).

Mr. Osbert Sitwell, of Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire, is sufficiently introduced, in this number, by Mr. Aldington’s review of his latest book. The Pond Bureau announces that Mr. Sitwell, who is a connoisseur of art as well as a poet, will come to America this season with a series of lectures on *The Modern Movements in England*.

Miss Winifred Bryher, of London, is a young poet, critic and novelist who has contributed appreciative articles on American poets, especially the Imagists, to the London *Saturday Review* and other papers. Her novel, *Development* (Constable & Co.), will soon be issued over here by the Macmillan Co. Miss Bryher and H. D. (Mrs. Richard Aldington) crossed the ocean in September, and will spend the winter in Santa Barbara.

Of the five Americans in this number, two have appeared before in *POETRY*:

Mr. Robert McAlmon, whose aeronautical poems we printed in 1919, was born in Kansas in 1896. After demobilization from the A. E. F., he lived for a time in Los Angeles, and since last spring has been a resident of New York.

Mr. Yvor Winters, of Chicago, was for a time a member of the students’ Poetry Club of the University of Chicago. At present he is sojourning in Santa Fe, N. M.

The three poets who appear this month for the first time are: Mr. Bernard Raymund, of Chicago; Mr. David Greenhood, a young poet of San Bernardino, Cal., who was for a season in Mr. Bynner's class at Berkeley; and Miss Katharine Riggs, of Wallingford, Conn., who is now a student at Mount Holyoke. Miss Riggs' poem has recently won the prize in the annual Mount Holyoke poetry contest, and is therefore included, by our special permission, in the December number of the college monthly.

The editors wish to express their thanks to subscribers for their cheerful acquiescence in *POETRY*’s increased price. We ask certain of them to accept this grateful acknowledgment of cordial letters too numerous to be personally answered.

We have received several copies of *POETRY* for January, 1920;
but, as the number is still scarce, we shall be glad to pay the full retail price for more.

**BOOKS RECEIVED**

**ORIGINAL VERSE:**


*Songs and Sonnets*, by Kenneth Slade Alling. Priv. ptd., N. Y.


*The Twilight Soul*, by Gustave Frederick Mertins. Privately printed, Montgomery, Ala.


*As the Wind Blew*, by Amélie Rives (Princess Troubetskoy). Frederick A. Stokes Co.


*High Company*, by Harry Lee. Fred. A. Stokes Co.

*The Elfin Artist*, by Alfred Noyes. Fred. A. Stokes Co.

*Smoke and Steel*, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace and Howe.


POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

TRANSLATIONS AND ANTHOLOGIES:
The Twelve, by Alexander Blok. Tr'd from Russian by Babette Deutsch and Abraham Yarmolinsky. B. W. Huebsch.
The Poems of Meleager of Gadara, tr'd by R. Aldington. Egoist.
Sappho Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings, and Literal Translation by Henry Thornton Wharton. With Paraphrases in verse by Anne Bunner. Brentano's, N. Y.
The Bride of Corinth and other Poems and Plays, by Anatole France. Translated by Wilfrid and Emilie Jackson. John Lane Co.
The Poets in the Nursery, by Charles Powell. John Lane Co.
American and British Verse from the Yale Review. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn.

PLAYS:
Sham—A Social Satire in One Act, by Frank G. Tompkins. Stewart & Kidd Co., Cincinnati.
The Wisdom of Akhnaton, by A. E. Grantham. John Lane Co.

PROSE:

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