

Vol. XVIII

No. VI

# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse  
Edited by Harriet Monroe  
September 1921

Poems by Paul Fort

Tr'd by John Strong Newberry

Spinners

By Marya Zaturensky

Still-hunt, by Glenway Wescott

Charles the Twelfth, by Rilke

Tr'd by Jessie Lemont

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*A MAGAZINE OF VERSE*  
*VOLUME XVIII*



# oetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XVIII

April - September, 1921

Edited by  
Harriet Monroe



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CHICAGO

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# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

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THERE MUST BE GREAT AUDIENCES TOO  
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Two annual prizes will be awarded as usual in November for good work of the current year. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the eighth time; and to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the seventh time, a prize of one hundred dollars.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.



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*POETRY*  
*A MAGAZINE OF VERSE*  
*VOLUME XVIII*



Your June number renewed me wonderfully—an absolutely joyous thing! Go to it, hammer and tongs! Infuse a little beauty, joy, spirit, pain into the life of today. Did I say a little?—Oceans of them!—A *Canadian subscriber*

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POEMS BY PAUL FORT

LOUIS ELEVENTH, CURIOUS MAN

**L**OUIS ELEVENTH, for trifles fain, I love you, curious man. Dear chafferer in chestnuts, discreetly did you plan to pluck the chestnuts of fair Burgundy! You seemed all friendliness and courtesy. Your hood was hung with images of lead and copper medals. Watchers would have said your pious thoughts were fixed on things above. Sudden you stooped, your long arms outward drove. Gently, not even ruffling your sleek glove, you filched a chestnut, another, half a dozen, beneath the menacing gauntlet of your cousin.

But if by chance he let his great fists fall upon your back, your scrawny back, you roared with laughter and his stolen goods restored. 'Twas but an empty shell.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Void were the chestnuts all. Your gentle industry served your fortunes well.

So I, good singer, sage of little worth, pilfer both heaven and earth, provinces of my brain, under the hands of the Lord, all light. I deftly pull from His fingers the roses of the dawn, the rings of the storm, the lilies of starry nights, and gain little ineffable images, a heap of shining things stored up beneath my skull.

To filch by slow degrees but sure, sweet Louis Eleventh, O man most rare! May God, good politician, O rare among the Louis, have you in His good care; and as, in days of old, when you were pleased, your favorite greyhound stretched beneath your breeches, mildly to judge by that grateful warmth appeased, beneath his golden slippers in Paradise may you be, blest little king at rest, his most fervent counsellor.

And, for having praised you, counter to my teachers, and with all candor having kept your law, when the day of my doom is at hand, when I, in my turn, shall stand awaiting judgment at the bar above, pluck at God's robe that he place me in His love.

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH

The tidings seemed so Heaven-sent—an uncle dead so apropos—my dear little Louis Eleventh was fain to prop-

erly express his glee and gain additional content with a modest fête; but intimately, in pleasant society.

Master Tristan, all imagination, counseled a picnic in the plain, and as he blinked with his sly red eyes, "I consent," said the king. "'Tis good advice. You're an old villain, though, just the same."

Next day, 'neath skies of celestial blue, gay and content, my sweet little king, Louis Eleventh, with Tristan L'Ermite and their fair, frail friends, Simonne of the Chains and Perrette of the Treasure, together came to fish for the gudgeon that swim in the Seine, at the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

Simonne of the Chains, soul and heart fast bound to the heart and soul of her well-loved king, like a dainty water-lily bent above an ancient nenuphar, on her lover's threadbare shoulder leant her bosom's snows, her brow of milk, her little nose of swan-white silk; and, now and then, the gracious king, Louis of France, with a tender look, would bid his lovely handmaid bring a squirming maggot to bait his hook. Then 'twas with such a melting charm that into a small green box she poured one.

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'twas with such a sweet and profound appeal that she gave the creature, all quivering, to that reclining king, her adored one, that Louis the impulse no more restrains, but kisses an ear (not the ear of the maggot but that of Simonne of the Chains) amorously whispering into its hollow meekly bent, "You shall be present when I call the Three Estates to Parliament."

Perrette of the Treasure (formerly King Louis' light-o'-love, your pardon!—now bequeathed, a charming guerdon, to Tristan by royal clemency) was plump and fresh as a rambler rose, cheeks like a peach, ample bosom bare, where in duplicate glows the rising sun, each breast an orb but a pointed one, starred with grains of beauty ambulant (fleas I would say), whereon the gaunt Tristan from underneath his hood full often lets his glances brood. And when good Tristan, his line drawn taut, a fresher maggot would fain acquire, 'twas with a manner so languor-fraught the plump dame granted this slight desire, that, quite transported with Cupid's blisses, he dropped his line her side to gain! The line, released, went flic, flac, floc, and sank beneath the Seine, while Perrette received on her neck, all warm, two or three hearty headsman's kisses.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's



black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

He saw with inattentive eyes, like a flower beside the river's brim, a certain Master Villon skim the reeds in chase of dragonflies. From eyes ablaze with anarchy a side-long glance he sometimes sends towards the place where those boon-companions ply the angler's art with their gentle friends. Master Oliver, still a virgin, having other fish to fry, that advent scarcely heeds. Vaguely he saw Master Villon disrobe among the reeds, but merely murmured in slumbrous tone, like one who speaks in dreams, "That naked gentleman is not unknown to me, it seems."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. The maggots spun in vain, in vain. And Master François Villon, now swimming in mid-Seine, as he floated whispered to his brother fish: "Liberty forever! Don't let yourselves be caught!"

"Gossip," said Tristan, "if you are good, and sage withal, I here engage to give you a pass, wherewith to break the cordon of the Scottish guard when I hang and when I decapitate." Quoth Perrette of the Treasure, "A neat reward." "And," continued Tristan in merry vein, "if your heart does not bid you the fatal view shun, some fine spring morning you shall see the rapid and joyous execution of the virgin Oliver le Dain." "I'll be there,

I'll be there," responded Perrette, clapping her hands with glee.

"Peace!" cried the king, "or this turbot I miss."

"A turbot, seigneur, is a fish of the sea," timidly ventured the tender Simonne. "With my mother I've sold full many a one in the market-place of Saint-Honoré in the time of my virginity." "A fish of the sea, eh? Then that was why I missed him!" The monarch made reply, not disconcerted in the least!

"Days that are o'er will return no more," hummed Perrette, on her hose intent. "Yes, youth has only a single time," Tristan intoned in hearty assent. Thereat the timid, the tender Simonne cooed to an air that is little known, "Twas twenty years ago my mother died." It needed only that—Tristan dissolved in tears. While the king, as he fished the wind, chanted stentorianly, "No, no, my friends, I do not wish a thing of naught to be."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. In vain the tempting maggot spins. The esthetic gudgeons loud applaud, clapping their frantic fins. Applaud, no doubt, is figurative, but who knows what fantastic dream is truth—in the depths, where fishes live at the bottom of the stream?

At the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle, those cronies good, headsman and king, in chorus sing like birds of the

wood. And about their floats the little fish waltz as sweetly as heart could wish.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin.

Then suddenly Perrette smothered a laugh in her skirt. My sweet little Louis Eleventh, feeling his line drawn taut and heaving it up with ardor, a king-fisher had caught. "A wager," Tristan said. Simonne, "A winged gudgeon," cried. And Master Oliver halted dead in the middle of his stride.

"On my word, the judgment was too empiric," mused Villon, swimming beneath the stream. "To fish for a gudgeon and catch a bird . . . in the bourgeois soul of that curmudgeon mean somewhere survives the germ of a lyric!"

And about their floats the little fish waltzed as sweetly as heart could wish.

#### THE LAMENT OF THE SOLDIERS

When they were come back from the wars, their heads  
were seamed with bleeding scars;

Their hearts betwixt clenched teeth they gripped, in  
rivulets their blood had dripped.

When they were come back from the wars—the blue,  
the red, the sons of Mars—

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They sought their snuff-boxes so fine, their chests, their sheets all spotless showing;

They sought their kine, their grunting swine, their wives and sweethearts at their sewing,

Their roguish children, like as not crowned with a shining copper pot:

They even sought their homes, poor souls . . . they only found the worms and moles.

The carrion raven clamored o'er them. They spat their broken hearts before them!

THE RETURN

Ivy has covered all the wall. How many hours, how many tears, since last we loved? How many years?

No roses now. Ivy has crushed the vine. Soul, whither didst thou go? Climbing across the nests of nightingales, ivy has stifled the whole chateau.

Wind, the deep wells are choked with the roses of yesterday. Is that your hiding-place, O my dead wife?

No one replies? Who would reply? Is it not best to listen to the wind that sighs through the grasses, "my sweet love"?

Flush with the roof, the ancient, crimson sun is cut through the midst so mournfully.

Shall I bid the gardener come? The gardener? No.  
It would be better to summon Death to reap the long  
grass:

So many memories and so much love, and the setting  
sun at the level of the earth.

THE LITTLE SILENT STREET

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none  
that this way comes?

Cobblestones count geraniums. Geraniums count the  
cobblestones.

Dream, young girl, at your casement high. Shelled  
green peas before you lie.

They plump the apron white you try with rosy finger-  
tips to tie.

I pass, in black from head to feet. Is it forked light-  
ning troubles thee,

Young maiden, or the sight of me? The peas have  
fallen in the street.

Sombre I pass. Behind I see cobblestones count each  
fallen pea.

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none  
that this way comes?

ETERNITY

One does not need to credit death. The human heart to rest is fain. O'er sleeping fields the evening's breath dreams, and I hear eternity chime in the bending ears of grain.

"Hark!—an angelus dies in heaven's blue height." Be comforted. Hours pass away. Hushed is the belfry? God doth wake. The nightingale salutes the day hid in the turret's rose-tree brake, and in its turn will mourn the night.

"Hark!—once again the hour doth swell." But the bell's already fast asleep. Eternity is chiming deep, borne by the sweet, tormented breath of zephyr and of Philomel.

One does not need to credit death.

*Translated from the French of Paul Fort  
by John Strong Newberry*

## STILL-HUNT

### OMINOUS CONCORD

As if I were Jeanne d'Arc,  
But wearier, I prepare  
Answer and return  
To the prophetic air;

My voice answering  
Voices of the unearthly nation  
With autumnal melody  
Of my own creation:

Melody of alarm lest my  
So long-imagined love retreat  
Into despair as sharp and fine  
As the print of sea-gull's feet.

They sing, stilling my response  
With silvery indifference;  
And what they mean or know  
Is, like the falling of first snow,  
An indecipherable cadence.

### WITHOUT SLEEP

He earns the oblivion of book and shelf  
Who will have for muse a Beatrice

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Sitting content by the hearth  
To whisper his history and thought.

Poet uncuckolded, he hears  
No mad ethereal crying  
For merciless cloud and ridge  
Tormented by the golden horn.

Ah, she will never lift  
Her intolerant head like a stag  
And scorn him, thinking of wind  
And naked hunter and his hallooing hound.

THE CHASTE LOVERS

Siberia is a land  
Drops from a cloud.  
The shackles click,  
Yet never loud,

Upon a pavement  
Of the frost—  
A road we know,  
Yet still are lost

Within the semblance  
Of its cold  
Mile after mile  
Till we are old.



You and I, man and maid,  
Together form  
Procession or cavalcade  
Minute as a worm.

Prisoners to each other,  
And to these even less kind—  
The bottomless beauty of body,  
The bottomless pomp of mind.

And perpetually discontent,  
We eye the crows,  
Or watch the weasel where it went,  
Or hail the wind that blows.

TO L. S.

I

O you  
Wing-of-the-wind,  
Why do you chant  
Ree, ree, with the mourning-dove,  
And dee, dee, with the male gannet—

When you may live forever  
In the fray of her feathers,  
And in the tumult of the dark wave  
Where he pillows  
In all weathers?

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II

Why the perpetual sway  
Of the air?  
Why the rift of the heaven  
Into light and dark,  
Into black and white of division?

Women are deeper than sound.  
They are the storm, which continues  
In quiet, in peace, in sunshine,  
Healing and building  
In the air the airy sinews.

THE POET AT NIGHT-FALL

I see no equivalents  
For that which I see,  
Among words.

And sounds are nowhere repeated,  
Vowel for vocal wind  
Or shaking leaf.

Ah me, beauty does not enclose life,  
But blows through it—  
Like that idea, the wind,

Which is unseen and useless,  
Even superseded upon  
The scarred sea;

Which goes and comes  
Altering every aspect—  
The poplar, the splashing crest—

Altering all, in that moment  
When it is not  
Because we see it not.

But who would hang  
Like a wind-bell  
On a porch where no wind ever blows?

THE HUNTER

You asked me what I did  
In peaked New Mexico,  
Where lives the most wild beauty  
To which a man may go.

And I answer that I pursued  
Content that would go in a song  
Upon its silvery mountains  
So vainly and so long

That if it were bear or lion  
Which I had hunted there  
I should now be like Orion,  
Fixed hungry in the air.

*Glenway Wescott*

NIGHT

NADIR

I am part of lonely things  
Of this lonely city. . .

. . . . .

A gold fish in a bowl,  
Lowered into a lake,  
Would feel the sleeping presence of fish  
Even as I  
Feel life withdrawn, suspended. . . .

An immanence of life,  
Like a remembered song of violins  
And oboes  
After a dance.

. . . . .

Even the sound of my footsteps  
Dies in the snow.

SUMACH

An old monk is my night. . . .

Long ago he was young . . .  
Song shone between his lips,  
And a necklace of round white arms  
Fulfilled his throat. . . .

Dried fruit of trees  
That blossom in bitterness  
Rustle on his bent shoulders . . .  
Wry grey flesh festoons his yellow teeth. . . .  
My night is old. . . .

BRACKISH WELL

If I were less than the sum of what I am  
I wonder—

My eyes seek yours  
Coaxing the flame—

If I were blind?

If I were dumb  
And had no song?

Say you would love me  
Blind and dumb—  
Nothing to hold you,  
Nothing to bind you to me.  
Say you would love  
My spirit . . .

I will say to you:  
Go and love some puff of wind  
From a graveyard.

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ENDYMION

The universe  
Crumbles away,  
Crawls away . . .

A simoon  
Keyed down,  
Hushed away  
To whispers. . . .

(Trickling, trickling—  
Bare legs—  
Impacts of sand-grains—  
Impacts of girls' eyes—)  
Up to my knees . . .

(Isolation  
Of flesh from flesh—  
Slippery, gritty,  
Hands grip and slide,  
Fingers roll  
On my face—)

Knee deep,  
Waist deep,  
Eyes prickling . . .

(It was my gift  
To catch their eyes,  
Catch and hold their eyes:

She knew that,  
But She could not blind  
All their eyes—)

Waist-deep—  
Up to my arm-pits. . . .

(She found one  
Could keep my arms knit—  
Body like a panther,  
That one—)

Up to my eyes—  
Sleep slides  
Grain by grain. . . .

(What She did to you  
No one knows. . . .  
She'll never kill the feel of you  
With Her sand—)

Crumbling,  
Crawling,  
Creeping—  
Ring about my neck . . .

(Yours—  
Your hands at my throat—  
Your lips—)

*John Crawford*

DESCENT

It is large life to sit on the door-log  
Of the Hill Tavern,  
Among the distinguished birches  
Standing in groups,  
And look beyond the monotonous green floor  
Of the matted tree-tops of the lower land  
To the high horizon and the barges,  
And the purple island in a ring of gold.

But I am of the lowland,  
Of the undistinguished trees and juniper,  
And must go down the deliberate trail  
Of the undistinguished dead—  
And no noon.

Below the bluff-rim—  
The trees now are more separate  
And individual of pattern;  
But the dusk marries them to one another,  
And their top branches interwine,  
Like parasols in a crowded park of listeners,  
As far as the path leads to the valley terrace.  
Then the black belt of tamarack  
And tangled bittersweet  
Is like the Lower Ten, leaning on brothers  
To make stand against the uncertain winds,  
And dying in the smother of a brief day.



*Ivan Swift*

Out of this and on the far side, I knew—  
And the stranger would scarce surmise  
And rarely venture—  
The sun dances in golden tack-points  
On the near, cool shallows of the sea.  
The gray islands have gone down  
Over the world's rim,  
And the freight barges are companion buoys  
Floating in pairs under thin smoke fans.  
The ring of gold is at my feet, glistening!—  
Washed clean by the white surf-reefs  
Broken by the blue shadow of a gull.  
A single tiger-lily  
Flames in a whorl of beach-juniper.

*Ivan Swift*

### AT NIGHT

Sometimes at night I hear the dark,  
Wide and wind-shaken, calling me.  
I should get up, and flying high  
Above the tree-tops to the sea,  
Scream till the waves scream back at me.

*Marian Thanhouser*

SPINNERS

SHE LONGS FOR THE COUNTRY

It is the May-time now,  
And in a place I know  
Some girl God will allow  
To see the cowslips blow;

And the hyacinths, the fern  
That grow by the riversides;  
Narcissi, white and stern  
Like sad unwilling brides.

Some other girl will run  
And, dancing through the grass,  
Will laugh in the wholesome sun,  
And feel the sweet hours pass.

Laugh and be merry—oh,  
Laugh! Laugh, and play for me!  
Go where the sweet flowers grow,  
And see what I cannot see!

THE SPINNERS AT WILLOWSLEIGH

*The young girl passes by*

The old women sit at Willowsleigh. They spin,  
And shriek and sing above the humming din.

They are so very old and brown and wise,  
One is afraid to look them in the eyes.

Their bony fingers make a chilly sound,  
Like dead bones shaking six feet underground!

Their toothless singing mocks—they seem to say:  
“What I was yesterday you are today;

Stars kissed my eyes, the sunlight loved my brow—  
You’ll be tomorrow what I am now.”

They dream and talk—they are so old and lean;  
And the whole world is young and fresh and green.

Once they were flowers, and flame, and living bread;  
Now they are old and strange, and almost dead!

The old women spin at Willowsleigh; they fool  
And scold, and sleep. Once they were beautiful.

SONG OF A FACTORY GIRL

It’s hard to breathe in a tenement hall  
So I ran to the little park,  
As a lover runs from a crowded ball  
To the moonlit dark.

I drank in clear air as one will  
Who is doomed to die,

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Wistfully watching from a hill  
The unmarred sky.

And the great trees bowed in their gold and red  
Till my heart caught flame;  
And my soul, that I thought was crushed or dead,  
Uttered a name.

I hadn't called the name of God  
For a long time;  
But it stirred in me as the seed in sod,  
Or a broken rhyme.

A SONG FOR VANISHED BEAUTY

The house is desolate and bare—  
So long ago young Honora left  
Her quiet chair!

Through the rose-bordered gardens, reft  
Of all her pretty, tender care—  
The silent hall, the lonely stair—

No one can see her anywhere.  
Here is her shawl, her fan, her book—  
She is not there.

No one remembers her bright hair,  
Or how she looked, or when Death came.  
Few can recall her name.

Where shall we turn to hope or look  
For beauty vanished like an air?—  
In what forgotten tomb or nook?

AN OLD TALE

What shall we say of her,  
Who went the path we knew of? She is dead—  
What shall we say of her?

Men who are very old  
Still speak of her. They say  
That she was far too beautiful; they say  
Her beauty wrought her ruin. But they  
Are very old.

The old wives break their threads, they shake their  
heads.

They shake their heads when men will speak of her;  
They say she was too beautiful.

I must not think of her, I must  
Not speak of her! My mother says  
One should not think of her.

She went the path we knew of; she is dead.  
They say few knew her truly while she lived,  
Though men will speak of her.

It really does not matter she is dead.  
One need not think of her, although one night

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Folks heard her weeping yet beside a pool  
One moonlit springtime I could swear she sang!  
But she is dead—one must not think of her.

MEMORIES

*Lower New York City at noon hour*

There is a noise, and then the crowded herd  
Of noon-time workers flows into the street.  
My soul, bewildered and without retreat,  
Closes its wings and shrinks, a frightened bird.

Oh, I have known a peace, once I have known  
The joy that could have touched a heart of stone—  
The heart of holy Russia beating still,  
Over a snow-cold steppe and on a hill:  
One day in Kiev I heard a great church-bell  
Crying a strange farewell.

And once in a great field, the reapers sowing  
Barley and wheat, I saw a great light growing  
Over the weary bowed heads of the reapers;  
As growing sweeter, stranger, ever deeper,  
From the long waters sorrowfully strong,  
Came the last echoes of the River Song!

Here in this alien crowd I walk apart  
Clasping remembered beauty to my heart!

*Marya Zaturensky*

CHARLES THE TWELFTH OF SWEDEN  
RIDES IN THE UKRAINE

*Kings in old legends seem  
Like mountains rising in the evening light.  
They blind all with their gleam,  
Their loins encircled are by girdles bright,  
Their robes are edged with bands  
Of precious stones, the rarest earth affords.  
With richly jeweled hands  
They hold their slender, shining, naked swords.*

A young king from the North did fare,  
Defeated in the Ukraine.  
He hated springtime and women's hair  
And the sound of the harps' refrain.  
Upon a steel grey horse he rode,  
And like steel was his grey eyes' glance;  
Never for woman had they glowed,  
And to none had he lowered his lance.  
Never a woman his colors claimed,  
And none to kiss him would dare;  
For at times, when his quick wrath flamed,  
A moon of pearls he would tear  
From a coil of wondrous hair.  
When seized by melancholy mood  
He wreaked his will of a maid as he would,  
And the bridegroom, whose ring she wore, pursued

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Through the glade and across the heath  
With a hundred hounds for many a rood,  
Till he hunted him to his death.

He left his grey land dim and far,  
Whose voice to him never spake;  
And rode out under the thrall of war  
And fought for danger's sake.  
Now he seemed under a spell to ride,  
Dreamily slipping his steel-gloved hand  
Over his armor from band to band;  
But found no sword at his side.  
And then a miracle occurred—  
A glorious vision of battle stirred  
And fired his kindling pride.  
He sat on his horse and glanced around—  
No movement escaped him and no sound.  
Steel unto steel in silver spoke,  
Voices were now in everything;  
Like many bells they seemed to ring  
As the soul of each thing awoke.  
The wind, too, stealthily onward crept  
And suddenly into the flags it sprang—  
Lean like a panther breathless leapt;  
Reeling as blasts from the trumpets rang,  
It wrestled and laughed and sang.  
Then again it would softly hum,  
As by some bleeding boy it would dart,



Beating a rally upon his drum,  
Carried with uplifted head  
Into the grave, borne like his heart  
Before his battalions dead.  
Many a mountain upward reared,  
As though the earth not yet old had grown  
But in the making still appeared.  
And now the iron stood still as stone,  
And then like a forest at evening swayed,  
And ever the rising shape still neared  
The army's mightily moving shade.  
The dust rose up like vapors veiled;  
Darkness, not of time, enveloped all,  
And everything grew grey and paled,  
And smoke rose up and fell like a pall;  
Again flame broadened and grew bright,  
And all was festively in light.  
They attacked: the exotic colors reeled,  
On swarms of fantastic provinces rode;  
All iron with laughter suddenly pealed;  
From a prince in luminous silver flowed  
The gleam of the evening battle-field.  
Like fluttering joys flags seemed to thrill,  
Each gesture now showed the desire  
To regally waste, to wantonly spill—  
The flames leapt on far buildings, till  
The stars themselves caught fire.

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Night came. And the battle's surging range  
Receded like a tired sea  
That brought with it many dead and strange;  
And all the dead lay there heavily.  
The grey horse cautiously picked its way  
Past great fists starkly warning it back;  
In a foreign land the dead men lay  
Where it stepped over grass that was matted and black.  
And he who upon the grey horse sat,  
Looked down on the colors moist and frayed,  
Saw silver like shivered glass ground flat,  
Saw iron wither, and helmets drink,  
And swords stand stiff in the armor's chink;  
Saw dying hands waving tattered brocade . . .  
And saw them not.

After the tumult of battle he rode  
Onward as though in a trance, alone;  
And as with passion his warm cheeks glowed,  
Like those of a lover his grey eyes shone.

*Translated from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke  
by Jessie Lemont*

## COMMENT

DANTE—AND TODAY

ON the fourteenth of this month Dante Alighieri will have been dead six hundred years. Therefore the whole world is thinking of him, and his spirit seems to be questioning the changes of six centuries, challenging modern civilization. Aristocrat and monarchist that he was, he was of too immense stature not to have deeply humane sympathies; his work was not for the elect—in his day the classically educated, but for the people of his time and tongue; and thus for the people of all times and tongues. Indeed, it is symbolically significant that the three greatest men in Italian literature—Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio—wrote in the dawn of that literature, in what was called *il volgare*, the language spoken by the *volgo*, the people. Although this does not make of Dante a person of democratic tendencies, still it points out again that all great things have their foundations in the *volgo*, as all buildings in the earth.

Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio: they embody the three traditions. Boccaccio was the artist who works to entertain and amuse his public. Among the thousands who follow this tradition are the buffoons, as Papini calls them, the souls sold to the public which the public buys with large sums. Petrarca is the delicate artist for whom only the inner world exists, in whose trail a thousand outcasts, egocentrics, morphinomaniacs, came; for whom

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delicacy is not a luxury, as it is for the strong, but rather an incurable idiosyncrasy. Dante embodies the greatest tradition—that of those who through literature judge men and the times; besides being representative of that sturdy healthy beauty which has a greater claim on longevity.

Dante gathered, into what is perhaps the most powerful work of all literatures, all the history and philosophy, and part of the science of his time. He classified men and judged them; but his judgment is, like the history contained in the *Commedia*, essentially and terrifically mediaeval. A fierce god is this "merciful god" who gets a vengeance a thousandfold more terrible than the crime, than any crime. And a fierce little man it was who went wandering into hell, cursing each and all of the Italian cities, and several of the foreign ones, and their unfortunate inhabitants, for some slight reason or other. Today his ethics are dead: they are at best the skeleton around which the beautiful immortal flesh of Dante's words was cast. Dante's words—only an Italian, and a good Italian, may know the magical beauty of them! The poignant dramatic beauty of his *Conte Ugolino*, and the sweetness of his *Francesca*, and the marvelous images scattered throughout his work like pearls and diamonds over a gorgeous gown!

But, as I say, his ethics, like the history in his work, are past and dead. We know now that hell is not necessary—there is nothing so horrible that it may not be

found, at one time or another, upon the face of our earth. We have developed a philosophy which is more apt to give life all the credit due to life. We are waiting for the poet who will give us a *Divina Commedia* of our own times, but it is something entirely different from Dante's that we expect. A hell more terrific than the hell of Dante is the hell of modern warfare—an immense, eyeless, stupid machine that batters, mangles, crushes, distorts, tortures, crazes men. And, as if this were not terrible enough, men are studying how to contrive more terrible means to kill; and the next war, it is said, will be mostly a war of gas and germs! Henri Barbusse and Andreas Latzko gave us some horrible glimpses of the War. But they left still a great area unmeasured, an area perhaps immeasurable, perhaps impenetrable.

The world has become overcrowded: human beings are lost in it and nobody knows. This twentieth-century world erects horrible structures that look like skeletons—skeletons of a thing already dead, living now in hell. The mechanical cities loom like the menace of the future over our rivers: over and under them the continual uproar of locomotives, soul-rending, passes. Railways hold the earth in a terrible embrace. And the makers of these are business men who do not see, and workers whom a whirlwind sweeps into this modern tremendous factory, and leaves there like fledglings caught in the blast of an immense furnace. Out of this factory the human soul comes crushed—out of this factory of neurosis, the modern world. Ma-

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chines and neurosis, out of this factory! The last trees are pushed farther and farther away by the oncoming cities. And there isn't a breeze but brings to them the feverish breath of the cities. Paradise might be the peace and the happiness that man has in spite of the world he himself builds.

This is Dante's challenge to a poet of today. Who will tune down this noise, arrange this turmoil, find one voice in this chaos of voices? His task will be a hundred times more arduous than Dante's. Dante's conception of his narrow world was centered around two main hypotheses—that of the absolute monarchy and that of the Roman Catholic power, the Pope. A modern poet would require, besides Dante's great genius, the energy to gather together in his thought a world which facility of transportation, and science in general, have made enormous.

The question as to whether a poet should be concerned in this great outer world, as opposed to the petty inner world of daily moods, cares, worries and affection, is a ridiculous question. And ridiculous is the thesis of the esthetic critic when he proposes that the individual who accomplishes the feat of expressing himself ably has thereby attained art: implying that a mole's observation of life is as valid as that of a soaring eagle who sees the world from above the horizons.

But there are still eagles: Walt Whitman, the multitudinous man, for whom the world was a purgatory of striving joy and self-redeeming pain—he enumerated, at

least, the modern world. And Verhaeren, with his *Villes Tentaculaires*, put down some of the horror of it. But it is either an *Inferno* only, or a *Purgatorio* or a *Paradiso* only, that the poets of the six centuries since Dante have accomplished. No one has attained Dante's completeness.

Emanuel Carnevali

JOHN ADAMS' PROPHECY

Not long ago *The Freeman* reminded us of a penetrating remark of old John Adams, first grand chief of the Adams clan and second president of the United States. Nay, not old; for he was only forty-five, and still seventeen years from the seat of Washington, when he wrote to his wife in 1780:

I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation and commerce and agriculture; in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.

In 1780 America was quite innocent of art; or rather, such art as it had—colonial architecture, a few imported paintings, plays, poems—it took quite innocently, with abstemious discretion. And Adams, if not himself a thorough Puritan, was only four generations from that Henry Adams who, according to his tombstone in Quincy, “took his flight from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire, England, and landed with eight sons near Wolleston.” And the Puritan hostility to art and all its works—

was it not attested by the closing of theaters, the destruction of old churches, the sale of Charles I's collection to Spain, and other temporarily convincing devices to crush out the universal human instinct for creating beauty?

Therefore it is surprising to find this eighteenth-century wise man bequeathing the arts as a glorious heritage to his grandsons yet unborn, and feeling his own hard labors in the founding of a nation to be a mere preliminary to that end. Probably he never asked the much reiterated modern question, "What is art?"—never debated whether it was an iridescent rust of the mind, the beginning of disintegration; or a white-heat of creative energy, the fulmination of spiritual planets and moons, new dwellings for the soul of man.

The nation John Adams helped to found has passed on to the third or fourth generation beyond him without yet getting its machinery into such perfect running order as to free its citizens for the active and creative life of the spirit. There is plenty of machinery, but it proves cumbersome, it clogs. For few descendants of those nation-makers are capable of freedom; they are bound—hand, foot and spirit—to the machine; and their unconscious effort is to bind in the same fashion those who could and would be free, and thereby to conceal the evidence of their own slavery.

Probably each age has its due proportion of artists, actual or potential—that is, its due proportion of creatively imaginative minds. Even John Adams' time, though



barren in artistic product, was probably no more barren than any other in artistic impulse. Certain square-minded historians and critics are always talking of "great artistic periods" as if the artists who illuminate them were necessarily born in clusters; as if, between these clusters, nature must hold her breath in barrenness. There *are* great artistic periods, of course; but they arrive when the creative impulse in the few meets a sympathetic impulse in the many, when all things conspire to bring the artists together into emulative clusters, and make them freely expressive and productive. The great artistic periods come when the creatively imaginative mind finds all conditions urging him, compelling him indeed, to produce temples, songs, tales, murals, carvings of men and gods, rather than "politics and war", or even "mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history" and the rest.

The artist can not be born to order, nor ordered after he is born. Yet it is paradoxically true that only by the will of the people, his contemporaries and neighbors, can he come into his own.

When will the sons of John Adams will it?

*H. M.*

REVIEWS

GERARD HOPKINS

*Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (now first published)

Edited, with notes, by Robert Bridges, Poet Laureate  
Humphrey Milford, London.

When the author's preface and the editor's notes are eliminated, we have here but a small volume of some eighty-five pages of poetry, and of these only a scant sixty-three consist of complete poems, the rest being fragments assembled from manuscripts in the Poet Laureate's possession. The majority of them date from the years 1876 to 1889; only three earlier poems are included. Hopkins is long in coming into his own; but it is not too much to say that his own will be secure, among the few that know, if not among the crowd, when many a Georgian name that completely overshadows him for the moment shall have become food for the curious.

For Hopkins' poetry is of the most precious. His voice is easily one of the half dozen most individual voices in the whole course of English nineteenth-century poetry. One may be repelled by his mannerisms, but he cannot be denied that overwhelming authenticity, that almost terrible immediacy of utterance, that distinguishes the genius from the man of talent. I would compare him to D. H. Lawrence but for his far greater sensitiveness to the music of words, to the rhythms and ever-changing speeds of syllables. In a note published in *POETRY* in 1914,

Joyce Kilmer speaks of his mysticism and of his gloriously original imagery. This mysticism of the Jesuit poet is not a poetic manner, it is the very breath of his soul. Hopkins simply could not help comparing the Holy Virgin to the air we breathe; he was magnificently in earnest about the Holy Ghost that

over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

As for imagery, there is hardly a line in these eighty-odd pages that does not glow with some strange new flower, divinely picked from his imagination.

Undeniably this poet is difficult. He strives for no innocuous Victorian smoothness. I have referred to his mannerisms, which are numerous and not always readily assimilable. They have an obsessive, turbulent quality about them—these repeated and trebly repeated words, the poignantly or rapturously interrupting *oh's* and *ah's*, the headlong omission of articles and relatives, the sometimes violent word order, the strange yet how often so lovely compounds, the plays on words, and, most of all, his wild joy in the sheer sound of words. This phonetic passion of Hopkins rushes him into a perfect maze of rhymes, half-rhymes, assonances, alliterations:

Tatter-tassel-tangled and dingle-a-dangled  
Dandy-hung dainty head.

These clangs are not like the nicely calculated jingling lovelinesses of Poe or Swinburne. They, no less than the impatient ruggednesses of his diction, are the foam-

flakes and eddies of a passionate, swift-streaming expression. To a certain extent Hopkins undoubtedly loved difficulty, even obscurity, for its own sake. He may have found in it a symbolic reflection of the tumult that raged in his soul. Yet we must beware of exaggerating the external difficulties; they yield with unexpected ease to the modicum of good will that Hopkins has a right to expect of us.

Hopkins' prosody, concerning which he has something to say in his preface, is worthy of careful study. In his most distinctive pieces he abandons the "running" verse of traditional English poetry and substitutes for it his own "sprung" rhythms. This new verse of his is not based on the smooth flow of regularly recurring stresses. The stresses are carefully grouped into line and stanza patterns, but the movement of the verse is wholly free. The iambic or trochaic foot yields at any moment to a spondee or a dactyl or a foot of one stressed and three or more unstressed syllables. There is, however, no blind groping in this irregular movement. It is nicely adjusted to the constantly shifting speed of the verse. Hopkins' effects, with a few exceptions, are in the highest degree successful. Read with the ear, never with the eye, his verse flows with an entirely new vigor and lightness, while the stanzaic form gives it a powerful compactness and drive. It is doubtful if the freest verse of our day is more sensitive in its rhythmic pulsations than the "sprung" verse of Hopkins. How unexpectedly he has

enlarged the possibilities of the sonnet, his favorite form, will be obvious from the two examples that I am going to quote. Meanwhile, here are two specimens of his more smoothly flowing verse. The first is from *The Leaden Echo*, a maiden's song:

How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known  
    some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key  
    to keep  
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from vanishing away?  
Oh is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,  
Down? no waving-off of these most mournful messengers, still messen-  
    gers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?  
No there's none, there's none—oh no, there's none!  
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair—  
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,  
And wisdom is early to despair:  
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done  
To keep at bay  
Age and age's evils—hoar hair,  
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs  
    and worms and tumbling to decay;  
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.  
Oh there's none—no no no, there's none:  
Be beginning to despair, to despair,  
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

This is as free as it can be with its irregular line-lengths and its extreme changes of tempo, yet at no point is there hesitation as the curve of the poem rounds out to definite form. For long-breathed, impetuous rhythms, wind-like and sea-like, such verse as this of Hopkins' has nothing to learn from the best of Carl Sandburg. My second quotation is from *The Wood-lark*, a precious fragment:

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*Teevo cheevo cheevio chee:*  
Oh where, where can that be?  
*Weedio-weedio:* there again!  
So tiny a trickle of song-strain;  
And all round not to be found  
For brier, bough, furrow, or green ground  
Before or behind or far or at hand  
Either left, either right,  
Anywhere in the sunlight.  
Well, after all! Ah, but hark—  
"I am the little wood-lark."

This is sheer music. The stresses fall into place with an altogether lovely freshness.

Yet neither mannerisms of diction and style nor prosody define the essential Hopkins. The real Hopkins is a passionate soul unendingly in conflict. The consuming mysticism, the intense religious faith are unreconciled with a basic sensuality that leaves the poet no peace. He is longing to give up the loveliness of the world for that greater loveliness of the spirit that all but descends to envelop him like a mother; but he is too poignantly aware of all sensuous beauty, too insistently haunted by the allurements of the flesh. A Freudian psychologist might call him an imperfectly sex-sublimated mystic. Girlish tenderness is masked by ruggedness. And his fuming self-torment is exteriorized by a diction that strains, and by a rhythmic flow that leaps or runs or stamps but never walks.

Here is *The Starlight Night*, one of his most characteristic sonnets—white-heat mysticism forged out of what pathos of sense-ecstasy!

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!  
Oh look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!  
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!  
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!  
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!  
Wind-heat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!  
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—  
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.  
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!  
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!  
These are indeed the barn; within doors house  
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse  
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

“Ah well! it is all a purchase.” You cannot have it  
for the asking.

And, finally, this other sonnet, addressed to his own  
restless soul, “with this tormented mind tormenting yet:”

My own heart let me have more pity on; let  
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,  
Charitable; not live this tormented mind  
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.  
I cast for comfort I can no more get  
By groping round my comfortless, than blind  
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find  
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise  
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile  
Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size  
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile  
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather—as skies  
Betweenpie mountains—lights a lovely mile.

But how many “lovely miles” could there have been

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on the long, rocky road traversed by this unhappy spirit?

In face of this agonising poem one can only marvel at the Poet Laureate's imperturbable exegesis of the word "betweenpie":—"This word might have delighted William Barnes if the verb 'to pie' existed. It seems not to exist, and to be forbidden by homophonic absurdities." From our best friends deliver us, O Lord!

*Edward Sapir*

UNITY MADE VITAL

*New Poems*, by D. H. Lawrence. B. W. Huebsch.

The unimaginative person divides life, art, science, anything he is dealing with. He analyzes it, classifies it, puts it into compartments. The poet, on the other hand, is not interested in divisions so much as in unity, because unity is the aspect under which life presents itself naturally to any unbound creative spirit.

Probably there is no living poet whose perception of the unity of all things is keener and more profound than D. H. Lawrence. He goes further than Wordsworth and the romantic school. He goes further than the symbolists. His books give not only new pleasure, but, more than this, new light to the understanding.

Saturated with Pauline theology—as all of us who have studied English literature at all are bound to be—we are prone to draw distinctions between body and spirit, or even between mind and spirit, and to set one up as above the others. The lesser poet may as well accept the



distinctions: an artist like Mr. Lawrence abandons these. He sees all experiences fused into the indissoluble whole which is life.

Nay, I persist, and very faith shall keep  
You integral to me. Each door, each mystic port  
Of egress from you I will seal and steep  
In perfect chrisim. . . . .

So you shall feel  
Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven  
Great seals upon your outgoing, and woven  
Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly  
Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me.

The utter unity of art is brilliantly revealed in such a poem as *Flapper*, which cannot fail to suggest architectural method in its structure, and in its keeping of all ornament in inherent harmony with the line of structure.

Love has crept out of her sealed heart  
As a field-bee, black and amber,  
Breaks from the winter-cell, to clamber  
Up the warm grass where the sunbeams start.

Mischief has come in her dawning eyes,  
And a glint of colored iris brings,  
Such as lies along the folded wings  
Of the bee before he flies.

Who, with a ruffling, careful breath  
Has opened the wings of the wild young sprite?  
Has fluttered her spirit to stumbling flight  
In her eyes, as a young bee stumbleth?

Love makes the burden of her voice.  
The hum of his heavy, staggering wings  
Sets quivering with wisdom the common things  
That she says, and her words rejoice.

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The ten-page preface to Mr. Lawrence's present volume is another witness to unity—a unity perhaps more far-reaching, more comprehensive, more marvelous, than has been suggested by the previous examples. In this preface the author points out that there are two types of poetry, that it is either "the voice of the far future, exquisite and ethereal, or the voice of the past, rich, magnificent". Both types possess an "exquisite finality, perfection which belongs to all that is far off".

The poet then turns to "the unrestful, ungraspable poetry of the sheer present, poetry whose very permanency lies in its wind-like transit". As the best example of this, he points to Whitman. Free verse, he says, is the norm of this "seething poetry of the incarnate Now", which is "supreme, beyond even the everlasting gems of the before and after".

In his discussion Mr. Lawrence uses with great effectiveness biologic and physical examples. Science and art may be popularly regarded as enemies. Mr. Lawrence does not attack science, he puts science into his pocket and walks off with it—a distinct achievement in the direction of unity.

So much has been written about Lawrence, intelligent readers know his work so well, that detailed discussion of his poems seems hardly in place. His *New Poems* has much the same qualities as his earlier volumes of poems. There is the same passion-filled, deep-running ardor, the same exactness of phrasing, the same fulness of conno-

tation, the same subtle rhythms. Places are much more extensively used as subject matter than in his previous books. The volume has not the emotional completeness of *Look! We Have Come Through*, but that is due to the plan of organic development followed in that work.

*Nelson Antrim Crawford*

YOUTH AND THE DESERT

*The Bitterns*, by Glenway Wescott. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

*The Immobile Wind*, by Yvor Winters. Monroe Wheeler.

These brief first books of two friends may naturally be reviewed together, since they are the product of sympathetic, though quite different, minds and temperaments working in the same tradition—the ultra-modern tradition of Ezra Pound, H. D., perhaps Carlos Williams and one or two others, and above all Wallace Stevens. The two young poets are both seekers of austere beauty in her remote cool haunts; and their Pegasus is reined in by a taut technique, which gives him order and direction but possibly too little freedom of movement.

Youth is so prone to prolixities and sentimentalities that the opposite excess is something of a relief—at any rate it may prove good discipline for young poets keenly strung and not less sensitive because they abhor facility. The temptations inherent in this compression are obvious—self-consciousness and what one might call a mannerism of tightness. In both these books one feels this strain

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—one wishes that each poet would be less reluctant to speak out, to let himself go, to reveal his meaning with a less mystical air.

Mr. Winters' poem, *The Priesthood*, suggests the kind of austere beauty both these poets are aiming at:

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.

And Mr. Wescott, veiling a similar theme, says in his initial poem, *After-image*:

Oh I have never sought  
This image of remembered fear  
Which clings to the eye of thought.

I have desired rather to create  
A balance of beauty as direct  
As the hills above the cruel farms,  
Or the two eyes of a fawn—

In ecstasy to separate  
Wheat of memory from rust.  
But trees by night lift heavy arms,  
Or a hawk screams at dawn:

And my sight turns gray as dust.

Residence of a year or two in New Mexico has confirmed this austerity by adding its own stark discipline

of deserts, mountain spaces, and the art of primitive races. These poets may be cryptic, secretive; but they can not rival the desert in either of these qualities, nor yet in a certain harshness streaked with color. Mr. Winters' book has the feel of the desert in its title, *The Immobile Wind*, which no one who has been in those still spaces can question as paradoxical. This poet has experienced their gift of solitude; he is

I, one who never speaks.

Again:

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

Indeed, the whole book is a voice from the desert, the expression of a spirit in intimate communion with it—a spirit proud and separate, who can say:

I paved a sky  
With days.  
I crept beyond the Lie.

The reader may be left to his own interpretation of the more cryptic poems, including the *Two Dramatic Interludes for Puppets*. But even one who lives "in the greatest of our valleys" can hardly fail to get from this one, with its beautiful last line, a hint of desert grandeur and silence:

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.

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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.

Mr. Wescott's experience of the desert is less intimate and static. He has followed the trail—for him the desert moves:

The sun slides down:  
I have not healed  
My lame leprous day;  
I am not swift enough to walk  
From May to May.  
Desert flows beneath my feet,  
Drips out of the sky.  
But I lie down beside content,  
For victory is imminent.  
Night opens her deep eye.

Indeed, the desert does not pervade this brochure of twelve poems. There is a hint of softer places and more personal emotions. Mostly however, it expresses youth's loneliness—perhaps the following poem is typical, in both mood and movement:

These are the subtle rhythms, rhythms of sloth:  
Mountains which fall in the green swirls  
Of twilight as petals, fallen and languid,  
Bud in the dawn, and fall again  
In the green swirls of twilight, a little  
Nearer the stars and the flickering final fires.  
These are the rhythms of sloth:  
Mountains, my feet on the trails.

Enough has been quoted from these two poets to show with what studious insistence they work out their closely packed thoughts in rhythms of original and delicate beauty. If the effect is sometimes too tight, too squeezed, this may be the ardor of youth, which will yield its over-emphasis to time. Meantime these poets have struck out, each one, a new and personal tune. As Mr. Wescott sings,

I, in my pitiful flesh  
Transfigured, have woven  
Music of wilderness.

H. M.

TWO ENGLISH POETS

*The Waggoner*, by Edmund Blunden. Alfred A. Knopf.  
*The Kaleidoscope*, by Sherard Vines. C. W. Daniel, Ltd.,  
London.

If these two English poets were dancing, I am sure one would do the foxtrot and the other the waltz. And I do not imply any lack of deference in using this analogy of another art.

Mr. Sherard Vines, the foxtrotter, would be playfully pagan with shoulders and feet; and Mr. Edmund Blunden, the waltzer, would glide smoothly and turn slowly: both with propriety. And just as the waltz is a more finished dance than the foxtrot, so Mr. Blunden's poetry is more polished than that of Mr. Vines.

I would recommend *The Waggoner* to all those who prefer the 1, 2, 3,—1, 2, 3 order of things. The poems are suave, smooth, and have music. They are very pleas-

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ing to the senses, and leave the emotions unruffled. They are filled with soft alliterations, and the simple panaceas of "wood-fairies" and "trysts" and "liliated lakes", as well as more original ones:

The wild-rose bush lets loll  
Her sweet-breathed petals on the pearl-smooth pool—  
The bream-pool overshadowed with the cool  
Of oaks where myriad mumbling wings patrol.

Frequently there are lines of arresting beauty:

The feather-footed moments tiptoe past.  
Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom.

And always Mr. Blunden is a sincere follower of the old English pastoral tradition. He has the same genuine appreciation and authentic knowledge of nature which inspired Wordsworth, George Crabbe, John Clare, and the eighteenth-century poets of rural life. *Sheepbells* is characteristic:

Moon-sweet the summer evening steals  
Upon the babbling day:  
Mournfully, most mournfully  
Light dies away.

There the yew, the solitary,  
Vaults a deeper melancholy,  
As from distant dells  
Chance music wells  
From the browsing-bells.

Thus they dingle, thus they chime,  
While the woodlark's dimpling rings  
In the dim air climb;  
In the dim and dewy loneliness,  
Where the woodlark sings.



Some of the poems are as coolly refreshing as their titles—*The Silver Bird of Herndyke Mill*, *A Waterpiece*, *Perch-fishing*, etc.—and all of them have a quiet charm. They tell of nature in her most gentle moods.

The range of Mr. Blunden's poetry is limited, but it is highly perfected.

Mr. Vines, on the other hand, springs fearlessly from one subject to another—starting with *Sunrise*, and going with breathless versatility to *The Gospel of Chimneys*, to *A Ballad of Judas*, to *Low Tide*, to *The Dying Bolsh*, and so on, concluding with *Anastasis*. He uses the direct appeal of human emotions, and hurls his observations on love, hatred, and despair with a brutal frankness:

The cold! The ghastly cold,  
All colorless! The only color is  
My blood, like red wax from a guttering candle—  
(You know these red candles ladies use  
In piano brackets).

Bitter wind,  
A draught blowing so shrilly through my wound,  
Blowing the life out, blowing the life out.

There are no sensuous cadences here, as in Mr. Blunden's poems; there is no beauty of wording: the effect is gained through a harsh simplicity, and the subject matter is always more unusual than the manner of expression. The poems are—to use the simile again—like the foxtrot, the modern dance: the dance that is primitive, virile, whimsical—pagan. The veneer of rhythm is strangely a part of, and at the same time incongruous to, the un-

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conventional audacity of the ideas, like the harmony of discords in modern music.

Perhaps *Little Mother of Sorrows* is as good an example as any one poem may be:

Little mother of sorrows,  
What is her desire?  
"Pence, to buy a drop of milk,  
And a few coals for a fire.  
"My baby gets no milk from me—  
He's crying out for food.  
I don't know who his daddy is,  
But one that was no good.  
"Yes, sir, I used to walk the streets  
Before I got so ill;  
And now I sell spring flowers or beg,  
Since there's two mouths to fill."  
Little mother of sorrows,  
With holes in your thin shoes,  
And little son of sorrows,  
With bare pink toes,  
No one in the whole town  
Cares for you at all;  
So go into the workhouse,  
Or drown in the canal,

The two poets, like the two dances, have found a dissimilar, yet each a merited recognition.

*Marion Strobel*

## CORRESPONDENCE

### CONCERNING AWARDS

*My Dear Miss Monroe:* Your comment on *The Dial's* generous offer of prizes, and your suggestion, repeatedly made, that poetry should be seriously recognized as a serious art in our country and encouraged and rewarded as such, are interesting.

Let me first, however, correct your statement about the recently won prizes offered for students in the Chicago Art Institute school. The prizes are larger than you stated. The French Memorial Prize is, I think, about \$1,200, and the Bryan Lathrop Memorial Prize represents \$800. They were not awarded to the two students, as you suggest, "for a couple of nice little academic bas-reliefs," but rather on the basis of these and all their school work during the past year plus their personal qualities; and the prizes are for definite study abroad. In these particular cases they were undoubtedly the culmination of three or four years of ardent work.

There is, so far as I know, no school for poetry excepting as your magazine, and perhaps to a less extent some others, afford an intelligent and discriminating outlet and opportunity to the young poets.

Could you devise and suggest some plan by which prizes would not be awarded for an individual poem, but based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need? An outline for such

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a prize might be worth publishing in POETRY on the chance of its attracting the generous sympathy of some well-to-do reader. In the meantime let me repeat that POETRY is itself the best school and reward, so far as I know, which exists at the present time for young poets.

*Arthur T. Aldis*

*Note by the Editor:* One of POETRY's annual prizes conforms to our correspondent's suggestion—that of \$100 "for a young poet," awarded last year and twice previously. This is not given "for an individual poem," but is "based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need." But we submit that there is a vast difference between this annual hundred dollars (not yet secured for this year, by the way) and those two far richer memorial prizes permanently endowed for the benefit of the Chicago Art Institute art school.

If anyone feels inclined to endow such a memorial prize in perpetuity for the benefit of young poets, the editor will engage to satisfy him as to the terms of such an endowment. Some trust company of proved reliability should be made custodian of such a fund, and a committee of prominent poets should administer it. The editor will be very glad of suggestions as to the best way of appointing and perpetuating such a committee, in order to keep it freshly authoritative and uninstitutionalized.

Those who are interested—and poets especially should be loyally interested—are requested to give this subject careful thought, and to send in their suggestions before September fifteenth, so that we may resume the subject editorially in our annual Prize-award Number in November.

### NOTES

Paul Fort has been crowned *Prince des Poetes* in Paris, and has recently published, through Eugene Fasquelle, his twenty-seventh volume of verse, *Au Pays des Moulins*. Yet, though perhaps the most popular and prolific of French poets, he was little known in this country, if one may judge by slightness of sales and library circulation, until Amy

Lowell introduced him in her *Six French Poets*, to which volume the reader is referred for an intelligent presentation of the man and his art. *The Miraculous Catch* is partly quoted by Miss Lowell, and admirably translated into prose. But as she does not attempt to reproduce M. Fort's rhyme-scheme, with its chiming repetitions of sound not unlike her own polyphonic prose, we present Mr. Newberry's version in the hope that our readers will be interested to compare the two translations of a poem so deliciously and whimsically French in its mood and style—its manner of achieving a modern picture of a mediaeval scene.

M. Fort's series of Louis Eleventh poems, of which we present two, have been incorporated recently in a play which is to be produced at the Odeon in October. This autumn Mr. John Strong Newberry will publish, through Duffield & Co., his book of translations, under the title *Selected Poems and Ballads of Paul Fort*.

M. Fort was born at Rheims in 1872, directly opposite the Cathedral—now "*la Cathedrale assassinee*," as he has called it since its destruction. For years he has lived in Paris. Miss Lowell speaks of his *joie de vivre*—"I know no one," she says, "except Sam Weller, who seems to me so bubblingly alive."

M. Fort's translator, Mr. John Strong Newberry, is a resident of Cleveland, Ohio.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the distinguished Viennese poet from whom we present a translation, was discussed by Padraic Colum in *POETRY* for June, 1919, in a review of a volume of the Lemont translations. "A mystic poet," Mr. Colum calls him, one "lonely amid the crowd."

Mrs. Jessie Lemont Transil, Rilke's very competent translator, is a resident of New York.

Of the American poets who appear this month for the first time:

Mr. Glenway Wescott, a native of Wisconsin and recently resident in Chicago and Santa Fe, is the author of *The Bitterns*, published by Monroe Wheeler and reviewed in this number.

Mr. John Crawford, a native of Arkansas and a resident of New York, has written for various papers—mostly prose criticisms.

Mr. Ivan Swift, a painter as well as a poet, is the founder of Chippewa Cove Woods, an artist colony near Harbor Springs, Mich., where he lives at least part of each year. He is the author of *The Blue Crane* (James T. White & Co.).

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Miss Marian Thanhouser, formerly of Milwaukee, Wis., is now studying at the University of California in Berkeley.

The only poet of this month whom our readers have met before is Miss Marya Zaturensky—born in Moscow and resident in New York since she was brought to this country ten years ago. She has contributed verse to various magazines.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Selected Poems*, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.  
*The Living Frieze*, by Mark Turbyfill. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.  
*Commemoration and Other Verses*, by Thomas Dwight Goodell. Yale University Press.  
*Poems*, by Marianne Moore. The Egoist Press, London.  
*A Song of Faith*, by Katherine Milner Peirce. Stratford Co.  
*Second April*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

#### ANTHOLOGIES:

- Modern Czech Poetry*, Selected Texts with Translations and an Introduction by P. Selver. E. P. Dutton & Co.  
*A Queen's College Miscellany, 1921*, selected and edited by Edmund Blunden and Alan Porter. Oxford, England.  
*A Hundred Voices and Other Poems from the Second Part of Life Immovable*, by Kostas Palamas. Translated with an Introduction and notes by Aristides E. Phontrides. Harvard University Press.  
*An Anthology of New English Verse*, edited by Makoto Sangu. Osaka, Suzuya, Japan.

#### PROSE:

- Paul Verlaine*, by Harold Nicholson. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*The Hound of Heaven: An Interpretation*, by Francis P. La Buffe, S. J. Macmillan Co.  
*The Story of a Poet: Madison Cawein*, by Otto A. Rothert. (Filson Club Publication No. 30.) John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, Ky.

#### DRAMA:

- Body and Soul*, by Elizabeth H. Marsh. Cornhill Co.

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*The New York Sunday Tribune of Jan. 9th, 1921, said editorially, in quoting seven poems from our January number:*

"The varied interest and beauty presented are typical of POETRY's quality. Thanks to a rare coincidence of poise and generous imagination, of sense and sensitiveness, it ranks as easily the best vehicle of poetry in the English language."

*In the London Times of Nov. 25th, 1920, we read:*

"We need not linger over the many English and French contributors to this periodical. . . We do have to note that it has published, as it honestly claims, much of the best experimental poetry written by Americans in the past eight years. . . They have succeeded in their primary design—to create a poetry which should be American in thought, feeling, subject, and form. That is, after all, a distinct achievement."

*The Chicago Evening Post, in commenting on POETRY'S eighth birthday, said:*

"No editorship is infallible, but it is rather interesting and enlightening to look over the old numbers of POETRY and to realize that the first important chance for publication in America was given to many poets, almost unknown, who have since obtained fame. . . We wonder how many more may yet be helped. POETRY is, so far as we know, unique in the length of its life, recognized position and rigorously artistic standard."

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