These Are but Words
by Muna Lee
Talk from the Dust
by Elizabeth Roberts
Song Nets
by Hilda Conkling

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AUGUST 1922

THESE ARE BUT WORDS

THE SONNET

WHAT other form were worthy of your praise
But this lute-voice, mocking the centuries
In many a silvery phrase that hallowed is
By love not faltering with lengthening days?
A lute that I have little worth to raise
And little skill to sound—yet not amiss
Your love may find it, since my heart in this
Only one thing for your heart only says.

These are no perfect blossoms I offer you,
No rose whose crimson cup all longing slakes,
Not moonflowers, sunflowers, flowers rich of hue,

[235]
Nor silver lilies mystical with dew—
No more than bluets, blown when April takes
Millions of them to make one meadow blue.

I

I have been happy: let the falcon fly,
And follow swiftly where the light wings whir—
Let him bring down the reckless wanderer,
Snatch back that eager rapture from the sky!
And I have been contented: let me cry
My discontent, until, like reeds astir
Before the swift, the tragic whisperer,
Broken are these frail dreams that satisfy!

I have known laughter: make me blind with tears.
I have loved silence: make me deaf with sound.
For every joy set vengeful grief above.
I will not shrink before the threatening years;
I will not falter, I will not give ground;
And I will love as you would have me love!

II

I have a thousand pictures of the sea—
Snatches of song and things that travellers say.
I know its shimmering from green to gray;
At dawn and sunset it is plain to me.
Like something known and loved for years will be
That sight of it when I shall come some day
Where little waves and great waves war and play,
And little winds and great winds fly out free.

Of love I had no pictures: love would come
Like any casual guest whom I could greet
Serenely, and serenely let depart—
Love, that came like fire and struck me dumb,
That came like wind and swept me from my feet,
That came like lightning shattering my heart.

III

Life of itself will be cruel and hard enough:
There will be loss and pain enough to bear;
Battles to wage, sorrow and tears to share.
We must know grief—the bitter taste thereof;
Must mark the Shadow towering above;
Must shut our eyes to gain the strength to dare,
And force tired hearts to face the noise and glare
Though it is dusk and silence that we love.

Life has no need of stones that we might heap
To build up walls between; no need of tears
That we seek out and proudly make our own.
O my beloved, since we have alone
These brief hours granted from the hurrying years,
Be patient—life itself will make us weep!
There have been many Junes with larkspur blowing,
Many Octobers with crimson-berried haws,
When from my heart regret like smoke withdraws,
Wreath after wreath, to watch the sunsets glowing,
And see tall poplars make so brave a showing
Against pale skies at dusk. There were no flaws
To mar the summer for me; never pause
In my delight for winds and waters flowing.

Yet was all beauty beauty uncompleted,
Vaguely perceived, not truly heard and seen;
Or seen as are the hills with mist between,
Or heard as song thin echoes have repeated;
Until you gave earth meaning, giving me
The love that lifts the heart to hear and see.

You have not known the autumns I have known.
November for you has bloomed as bright as spring,
With tropic suns to glow and birds to sing,
And flowers more vivid than mine in August blown.
You have made, beside, those autumns half your own
That come with ice and sleet and wind, to sting
The blood itself to ruddy blossoming—
Such autumns as the bleak North knows alone.
Muna Lee

My autumns are merely quiet, and they show
Straight trees that are bared alike of leaves and snow—
Yet it is only thus you can know the trees.
Love proud enough to forego bloom and song,
To strip the boughs of foliage; bare and strong
To bide your judgment, would be most like these.

VI

It would be easy to say: "The moon and lake
Made wizardry—how could we see aright?
That was a world unreal in silver light,
And we were lovers for the moment’s sake.
It was youth spoke in us, quick to mistake
Earth-lamp for dawn, the mirage for true sight;
Hailing a hill-crest as the long-sought height,
Swearing such oaths as honors us to break."

That would be easiest: then no regret
Could chill a heart grown happy to forget,
Nor touch a soul that sophistry sufficed.
There was a man once, in a hall of trial,
Thrice before cock-crow uttered such denial—
And knows forever that he denied the Christ!

VII

I make no question of your right to go—
Rain and swift lightning, thunder and the sea,
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Sand and dust and ashes are less free!
Follow all paths that wings and spread sails know;
Unheralded you came, and even so
If so you will, may you take leave of me.
Yours is your life, and what you will shall be.
I ask no question: hasten or be slow!

But I who would not hold you—I who give
Your freedom to you with no word to say;
And, watching quietly, with my prayers all dumb,
Speed you to any life you choose to live—
Shall ask God's self, incredulous, some day,
Why in the name of Christ He let you come!

VIII

No love can quite forego the battle-field;
Since life is struggle, and love and life are one.
No soul is quiet and sheltered enough to shun
The tireless foes at work to make love yield.
Not flowers and samite, but lance and shield
Were dower of love; not wreath but gonfalon;
And while the bitter struggle is unwon
Not even to faith is all the truth revealed.

Each heart its own most dreaded foe must meet;
Each heart its own conspiracies must lay,
And fight what it finds hardest to defeat.
Mine is it to meet Doubt in serried mass

[240]
Stronger and subtler with each toilsome day;
Yet steel my soul to swear, "They shall not pass."

IX

It will be easy to love you when I am dead—
Shadowed from light and shut away from sound,
Held deeper than the wild roots underground,
Where nothing can be changed and no more said.
All will be uttered then: beyond the dread
Of failure in you or me, I shall have found
Most perfect quietness to fold me round,
Where I can dream while all Time's years are sped.

But now Life roars about me like a sea,
Sears me like flame, is thunder in my ears.
There is no time for song, no space for tears,
And every vision has forsaken me.
In a world earthquake-shaken, lightning-charred,
Love is the hardest where all things are hard.

Muna Lee
AT NIGHT

THE SLEEPER

Night. O heavy breather in the surf of sleep,
What is that strange and rosy slenderness
You hold against your heart with so much tenderness?
The Sleeper. It is my wife I hold—
I love her more than life.
She has hair of bronze and gold,
And in twin strands divides it;
It lies across her bosom surplice-wise.
This I know to be true though darkness hides it.
Night. Now all things false dissolve beneath the moon!
This is a sheaf of whispering dreams you hold,
Bound by the tawny sinews of your arm.
They nod together with plumes of bronze and gold,
They breathe and are warm;
They speak together in a sibilant tune.
The Sleeper. It is my own wife.
Her mouth, that is merry and wise,
Is shut; and the lids are shut that cover
Her faithful eyes.
Night. A sheaf of dreams—hush!
The First Dream. She is untrue,
Brother and brother!
This one is new—
Where is the other?

[242]
Jessica Nelson North

The Second Dream. I hear men say
He had ceased to love her.
Even today
His voice can move her.

The Third Dream. I have seen her tremble
When she meets his eyes.
She is deft with lies,
She is quick to dissemble.

The Fourth Dream. How is this done,
Brother and brother,
To sleep with one
And dream of another?

Night. A sheaf of dreams, of dreams...
The Sleeper. My wife.
My wife.

FIRST AUTUMN

All in our pearl-pale window
The moon’s aroma hung.

My love and I together
Our heads upon one pillow,
Looked out where an elm upflung
A branch like a peacock feather.

Heigho, first autumn weather!
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

DREAMS

You curve your body into a vibrant ball,
Dead drunk with sleep.
I have no part in your slumber-scheme at all,
I cannot strike that deep.

You hold me insecurely in your life
As a sand-dune holds trees.
I say, "It is five months—I am your wife."
What shadow facts are these?

I put my hand into your breast. It lies
Unowned, apart.
While more familiar hands . . . and lips . . . and eyes
Press close around your heart.

SUDDENLY

We have a gray room. The walls are gray and bare.
I have hung pictures and set flowers there.
I have made curtains with wide and snowy hem
For our tiny windows to make the best of them.

You look at me. Your look is still and gray.
Your look is cool and dim and far away.
I cannot open the stubborn husks that shut
Your heart away like the kernel in a nut.

[244]
I am afraid of what is in your heart.
I must probe deep; I must tear your mood apart.
Suddenly like a rocket, unaware,
Your eyes blossom and flare!

**BOGIE**

The black rain settles in our empty block.
The drunken street-lamps leer with sidelong eyes,
Dim and unholy.
Old newspapers, grown restless in the gutter,
With flap and flutter
Rise and subside and rise.
It is half-past-twelve-o’clock,
The night—goes—slowly.

I am awake again. I cannot sleep.
I light the lamp again, and draw the shutter.
I light the lamp against the feet that creep,
The sounds that mutter.
I draw the shutter against the lids that peep.

Something goes crouching at the dripping flank
Of the broken wall! Something in tatters slips
Down alleys dank!
Something from door to door before the rain
Dodges and whines! Something with twisting lips
Terribly smiles outside my shuttered pane!
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

BOATMAN

Boatman, leaning on your pole on the Secret River,
Will you tarry for a soul who never knew a lover?
She is very young and cold, her beauty makes me shiver.
I will give you coins of gold to take her softly over.

TO THE MAN WHO LOVES TWILIGHT

Why do you go along the street caressing with quiet eyes
Gray walls, bleak houses, and the dull wet skies?
Have all things gray your blessing?

We do not love your twilight, God and I.
He pelts the rainy heaven
With gorgeous autumn,—hangs the dripping trees
With yellow apples of Hesperides
In lines
Sweetly uneven.
Loops every sodden fence with scarlet vines. . . .

And where you sit
Sufficient to yourself, hugging the gloom,
I prance with rustling silk and candles lit
To make an orgy in our quiet room.

Jessica Nelson North
YOUR HANDS

Hands, your hands, quite calm now
At the day’s end,
You are not delicately molded, not exquisite,
Not gentle always. . . .

You are scarred,
With broken lines—
Sultry lines of passion.
There are grotesques in you,
Like forests after fire.

You hold valleys of renunciation,
And crags shaken by the storm,
That only faiths like wild goats know.

Yet now rises, within that dark repose,
Beauty, as she comes hooded at twilight. . . .

Ah, do not touch me, yet . . .

FROM THE TELEPHONE

Out of the dark cup
Your voice broke like a flower.
It trembled, swaying on its taut stem.
The caress in its touch
Made my eyes close.

Florence Ripley Mastin

[247]
ELDERS

At night the moon shakes the bright dice of the water;
And the elders, their flower light as broken snow upon the
bush,
Repeat the circle of the moon.

Within the month
Black fruit breaks from the white flower.
The black-wheeled berries turn
Weighing the boughs over the road.
There is no harvest.
Heavy to withering, the black wheels bend
Ripe for the mouths of chance lovers,
Or birds.

Twigs show again in the quick cleavage of season and
season.
The elders sag over the powdery road-bank,
As though they bore, and it were too much,
The seed of the year beyond the year.

RESOLVE

So that I shall no longer tarnish with my fingers
The bright steel of your power,
I shall be hardened against you,  
A shield tightened upon its rim.

A stern oval to be pierced by no weapon,  
Metal stretched and shaped against you.  
For a long time I shall go  
Spanned by the round of my strength.

Changeless, in spite of change,  
My resolve undefeated;  
Though now I see the evening moon, soon to wane,  
Stand clearly and alone in the early dark,  
Above the stirring spindles of the leaves.

KNOWLEDGE

Now that I know  
That passion warms little  
Of flesh in the mold,  
And treasure is brittle,  

I’ll lie here and learn  
How, over their ground,  
Trees make a long shadow  
And a light sound.

[249]
LEAVE-TAKING

I do not know where either of us can turn
Just at first, waking from the sleep of each other.
I do not know how we can bear
The river struck by the gold plummet of the moon,
Or many trees shaken together in the darkness.
We shall wish not to be alone
And that love were not dispersed and set free—
Though you defeat me,
And I be heavy upon you.

But like earth heaped over the heart
Is love grown perfect.
Like a shell over the beat of life
Is love perfect to the last.
So let it be the same
Whether we turn to the dark or to the kiss of another;
Let us know this for leavetaking,
That I may not be heavy upon you,
That you may blind me no more.

TO A DEAD LOVER

The dark is thrown
Back from the brightness, like hair
Cast over a shoulder.
I am alone,
Louise Bogan

Four years older;
Like the chairs and the walls
Which I once watched brighten
With you beside me. I was to waken
Never like this, whatever came or was taken.

The stalk grows, the year beats on the wind.
Apples come, and the month for their fall.
The bark spreads, the roots tighten.
Though today be the last
Or tomorrow all,
You will not mind.

That I may not remember
Does not matter.
I shall not be with you again.
What we knew, even now
Must scatter
And be ruined, and blow
Like dust in the rain.

You have been dead a long season
And have less than desire
Who were lover with lover;
And I have life—that old reason
To wait for what comes,
To leave what is over.

Louise Bogan
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

POEMS FROM THE CHINESE

In the original syllabic and rhyme scheme, to accompany the Chinese chanting tunes.

AN OLD MAN’S SONG OF SPRING

By Seng Dji-Nan (Sung Dynasty)

Among the trees I may yet
Enjoy the day at sunset;
For willow winds are not cold,
Apricot rains are not wet.

SEEKING THE HERMIT IN VAIN

By Gia Dao (T’ang Dynasty)

“Gone to gather herbs”—
So they say of you.
But in cloud-girt hills,
What am I to do?

ON BEING, DENIED ADMITTANCE TO A FRIEND’S GARDEN

By Yeh Shih (Sung Dynasty)

Although your gate bar my way,
You cannot check the spring’s play;
For free above your proud wall
There hangs one apricot spray.

[252]
THE SUDDEN COMING OF SPRING

By Cheng Hao (Sung Dynasty)

Scant clouds just flake the noon sky;
By willowed streamlets stroll I.

But men know not my heart’s joy,
And say, “Old fool, the hours fly.”

NIGHT-TIME IN SPRING

By Wang An-Shih (Sung Dynasty)

Silence reigns where sound has been;
Chill the breeze, half soft, half keen;

While the moon through sleepless hours
Shifts dark blossoms up the screen.

Translated by Louise S. Hammond
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

SUMMER PHASES

THE SPREE

In the uplift of spring
Earth had high thoughts in trees;
Smiling her apple-blossoms,
Blushing her peach-petals,
Delicate as a sprite.

Now she sprawls,
Making loose gestures with spreading vines;
Guffawing vegetables and fruits—
Harlequin melons, Punchinello squashes—
Hiccoughing cucumbers, stuttering tomatoes.
She is mad-drunk with summer.

Soon she’ll lie still,
Decently covered with the leaf-brown quilt.
She’ll give loud, gusty yawns, then sleep,
Jeered at by rains, pitied by snow;
And wake to chastened, stiff sobriety.

TRANSIT

The purple shadow clings with desperate will
Tightly to the granite hill;
Tries to grow to it.
I try, beloved, dear,
To carve me out one solid moment here—
Afraid of cruel winds to blow,
Winds implacable that know
Shadows go.

Winds strip shadows off from hills,
Signalled by cloudy change above.
An instant’s whim, and death may harry love.
Should it sever you from me,
I drift, I drift,
Agnostic of reality.

A PARABLE

The magnolia bud
Loosens her white garments
With exquisite reserve.
So love unfolds
While delicate mysteries,
Like odors,
Subtly escape.

The white magnolia,
Of lucent petals
Textured like woman skin,
Crumples to leather
Limp and brown,
Binding a story told.

[255]
WHOLLY HAPPY

This is the Sabbath Day.
I keep it my own way.
I do not need to go to church to pray.

Feeling and being me
Is good as good can be.
I claim my own identity.

I am as happy as a flower
Perfuming its one hour
With a sweet sense of power.

I am unfettered as a bee
That cleaves a tiny path, but free,
Choosing an orange-blossoming tree.

Making my honey as it does,
I feel as holy as saint ever was.
This is my perfume, prayer and buzz.

Katherine Wisner McCluskey
TALK FROM THE DUST

THE SKY

I saw a shadow on the ground,
   And heard a bluejay going by.
A shadow went across the ground,
   And I looked up and saw the sky.

It hung up on the poplar tree,
   But while I looked it did not stay;
It gave a tiny sort of jerk
   And moved a little bit away.

And farther on and farther on
   It moved and never seemed to stop.
I think it must be tied with chains,
   And something pulls it from the top.

It never has come down again;
   And every time I look to see,
The sky is always slipping back
   And getting far away from me.

NUMBERS

When I can count the numbers far
   And know all the figures that there are,

[257]
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Then I'll know everything, and I
Can know about the ground and the sky,

And all the little bugs I see;
And I'll count the leaves on the poplar tree,
And all the days that ever can be.

I'll know all the cows and sheep that pass,
And I'll know all the grass,

And all the places far away;
And I'll know everything some day.

**AUTUMN**

Dick and Will and Charles and I
Were playing it was election day;
And I was running for president,
   And Dick was a band that was going to play,

And Charles and Will were a street parade.
   But Clarence came, and said that he
   Was going to run for president,
   And I could run for school-trustee.

He made some flags for Charles and Will,
   And a badge to go on Dickie's coat.
He stood some cornstalks by the fence
   And had them for the men that vote.
Then he climbed on a box and made a speech
To the cornstalk men that were in a row.
It was all about the Dem-o-crats,
And “I de-fy any man to show”;
And “I de-fy any man to say”,
And all about “It’s a big disgrace”.
He spoke his speech out very loud
And shook his fist in a cornstalk’s face.

THE PEOPLE

The ants are walking under the ground,
And the pigeons are flying over the steeple;
And in between are the people.

A BEAUTIFUL LADY

We like to listen to her dress;
It makes a whisper by her feet.
Her little pointed shoes are gray;
She hardly lets them touch the street.
Sometimes she has a crumpled fan.
Her hat is silvered on the crown,
And there are roses by the brim
That nod and tremble up and down.
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She comes along the pavement walk,
    And in a moment she is gone.
She hardly ever looks at us,
    But once she smiled and looked at John.

And so we run to see her pass
    And watch her through the fence, and I
Can hear the others whispering,
    "Miss Josephine is going by."

AUGUST NIGHT

We had to wait for the heat to pass,
    And I was lying on the grass,
While Mother sat outside the door,
    And I saw how many stars there were.

Beyond the tree, beyond the air,
    And more and more were always there.
So many that I think they must
    Be sprinkled on the sky like dust.

A dust is coming through the sky!
    And I felt myself begin to cry.
So many of them and so small—
    Suppose I cannot know them all.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

[260]
SONG NETS

Song nets,
I weave you with all my love.
You glitter like pearls and rubies,
In you I catch songs like butterflies.
You go past my reaching hand
With a thin gauzy floating,
And the songs are caught
Before they fade away.
Last night
My hand caught a song
Of pines and quiet rivers:
I shall keep it forever.

SNOW MORNING

Morning is a picture again,
With snow-puffed branches
Out of the wind;
With the sky caught like a blue feather
In the butternut tree.
I cannot see the world behind the snow;
But when I look into my mind,
There, with all its people and colors,
The world sits smiling
Quite warm and cosy.

[261]
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WHAT I SAID

Lilies of the valley,
Bell-shaped moments clustered,
Doves of time—little white doves
Through the dusky sunset-colored air
Set free,
I stroke your wings,
I stroke your folded wings.

LITTLE GREEN BERMUDA POEM

Green water of waves
On the Bermuda beaches,
White coral roads running away,
Pink shells waiting for me to come,
I shall come some day.
How would it sound to be there alone
And hear the Atlantic Ocean
Crash on bright rocks?

This island is a great rainbow
That lasts forever;
People go and come
And the waves forget them.
I see the island turn and turn—
A soap-bubble with rainbows drifting down,
A rainbow ball turning . . .
Always light, always glitter looking through.

[262]
My poem that began with a green wave
Has broken into colors.

WHEN MOONLIGHT FALLS

When moonlight falls on the water,
It is like fingers touching the chords of a harp
On a misty day.
When moonlight strikes the water
I cannot get it into my poem—
I only hear the tinkle of ripplings of light.
When I see the water’s fingers and the moon’s rays
Intertwined,
I think of all the words I love to hear
And try to find words white enough
For such shining.

ELSA

My sister stood on a hilltop
Looking toward the sea.
The wind was in her bronze-colored hair;
She was an image
On a broken wave . . .
Foam was at her feet.
So for a moment she wavered
And was lovely:
And I remember her.
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CLOUDY-PANSY

Wandering down a dusty road,
I met a gypsy.
She might have dropped out of the trees.
She had a green kerchief
And a blue velvet skirt,
A lavender cape
And a gold locket:
Green shoes on the feet
That trod the powdery road
To the marble-floored Vermont river
Thinking as it goes along . . .

FIELD-MOUSE

Little brown field-mouse
Hiding when the plough goes by,
Timid creature that you are,
Wild thing,
Were you once in the forest?—
Did you move to the fields?
In your brown cloak
You gather grain
For your secret meals;
You will build a house of earth
The way you remember.
From a baby up to your full-grown feeling

[264]
Hilda Conkling

You have run about the field,
As other field-mice will run about
When another century has come
Like a cloud.

"I WONDERED AND WONDERED"

I wondered and wondered ...
I saw a comrade of mine;
It was a wave smooth and blue
That tossed ... fell away.
I wondered and wondered ...
I saw a mountain white with old age:
I could not remember
How I came there.
I wondered and wondered ...
Under a motherly sky
That knew my name and kind,
That rested my tired thoughts,
That said, "I have a rainbow for you, Hilda,
And a young moon, hidden."

Hilda Conkling
COMMENT

NATURE THE SOURCE

HOW can one pause for thought or dreams when midsummer beckons from stream and hill? There are days when the sheer beauty of the sky is enough to prove the fourth dimension or the doctrine of relativity, when the lapping of lake-water washes away not only human sins but human theories. The ecstasy of mere existence, on such days, may thrill even paltry souls; and those who are keen-winged for joy rise to intuition of the infinite.

Whistler, discussing the relation of nature to art in Ten O'Clock, says, “Nature is very rarely right,” thereby hammering down a truth with a paradox. But he also says: “Nature contains the elements, in color and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music,” elements from which “the artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science, that the result may be beautiful.” The artist can not take nature ready-made—he must re-create with his own imagination and re-inspire with his own breath. But nature is his source and starting-point, and back to nature he must go for truth and beauty in the large.

And nature seems sometimes to capture the special graces of art. She composes a field with a tree and cloud, she patterns foamy waves along a strip of beach, she lets fall a cataract in a mountain cleft, she builds the Grand Canyon, she drives a naked colt across a meadow, she
Nature the Source

makes a girl move like a goddess—all with an adroit regard for rightness, with that studious care for mass and balance and proportion which art proclaims in masterpieces. The artist must go to nature for hints of rightness—for the thrill of ineffable recognitions by which he knows immortal beauty has bespoken him.

I recall an hour in Rodin's studio, when the great sculptor showed me some of the countless outline drawings in which it was his habit to catch on the wing, as it were, the swift unconscious attitudes of his models as they moved about the room. I remember his almost breathless reverence for liberal nature and her marvellous gifts; and his modest deprecation of himself, of his own share in his art. And Hokusai, at ninety or more, "died learning."

Poets especially must derive the breath of life from nature—only thus may they escape sophistication and find perpetual renewal. They cannot escape her influence—consciously or unconsciously they work out what she has taught them. Do we not find Greece in Homer—the Greek landscape, and its complete and happy union with Greek life? Is it not Italy that we discover in Dante, and merry England—Elizabethan England, wilder than Victorian—in Shakespeare? And today, while the Georgian poets are repeating over and over, rather monotonously, their enchantment with English rural life, do we not hear a larger story from the Americans?

Our poets are becoming aware of their continental heritage. Reading them, one begins to feel nature's great
scale, her wide spaces, her inexhaustible variety, in these forty-eight big states compacted into a single nation. A country larger, freer, wilder than the little England whose tongue they speak is asserting its power and scope in the songs they sing.

It may be that the hope of American art—its one advantage, at least, over European—lies in that love of the wilderness which we inherit from the pioneers. We are nearer to wild nature than the crowded old-world peoples, and we still throw off more easily the husks of civilization to build a campfire under the stars. Recently two young poets, both almost penniless, have hiked westward through this office carrying their blanket-rolls; sleeping where they fell after the day's fatigue, trusting to luck for a chance job and meals; tasting of freedom, feeling wide spaces underfoot, wide winds overhead. Let us hope there are few poets so fixed in urban or rural habits that they can not throw them all off for a summer month or more, take a deep plunge into the wilderness, and challenge nature for renewal of life.

H. M.

ON TRANSLATING CHINESE POETRY

I

In the midst of the little whirlpool caused in affairs poetic by the recent translations of Chinese classical poetry—Waley's, Lowell's and Bynner's—I should like to raise a small voice of caution.

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Do not, because this poetry, as it comes to us, is so simple and direct as almost to seem like folk-poetry, be deceived into thinking that you therefore understand the Chinese. Nothing would be more natural, yet to me it seems that few things could be more erroneous.

For the apparent simplicity of these poems is the result of a complexity so great as to be far beyond anything the West has ever produced. Such a poet as T. S. Eliot, in our own day, is still much too unsophisticated to have written a T'ang poem. Far from being folk-poetry, it was written by the emperors and scholars, much as Latin verse was written in the middle ages of Europe by the scribes and rulers. The intricacies of its prosody are endless. So full is it of plays on words, of classical allusions, of double meanings, that even today one of the favorite pastimes of Chinese scholars of the old school is the endless and friendly discussion of the fine points of these poems. Under the old system the entire education of the young consisted in teaching the children to understand them; and now that education has turned in a different direction it is, I think, safe to say that in a few generations there will remain in China only a handful of men able to appreciate them fully.

The very Chinese language in which they are written, which used once to be thought more primitive than ours, because it is not inflected (that is, the tenses of the verbs, the parts of speech, etc., are not differentiated) is now thought by philologists to have gone through our inflected
stage almost before the dawn of history. So that our method of speech became too simple for the Chinese thousands of years ago, and their language went on around the circle to the point where it is found today, in which root ideas only are used, and the rest is left to the imagination. The effect on a westerner is as though they were always cabling, at so much per word.

There are, properly speaking, two Chinese languages now, the written language and the spoken language. The written language is as much more complicated than the other as the most difficult legal phraseology in English is more difficult than ordinary speech. Not only can an uneducated Chinese neither read nor write the written language, he cannot even understand it without explanation when it is read to him, that is, when the syllables are spoken aloud. This has proved very difficult for the missionaries who, in translating the Bible, have therefore felt obliged to make two separate versions, one—which I am told is very bad—in the written language, and one in what is called the "spoken language written down."

The written language has over forty thousand different ideographs, yet there exist only about four hundred word sounds. Each of these words is a monosyllable, polysyllabic words being unknown. Theoretically, therefore, each word-sound has a hundred different meanings. In practice of course this is not so, as the vocabulary of the common people contains very few words, and even a scholar hardly reads more than eight or nine thousand
On Translating Chinese Poetry

characters. Yet the humblest peasant knows probably half a dozen meanings for ʿli, or a mysterious unpronounceable syllable that sounds like ʿsu and is everywhere much in evidence. In common speech the Chinese get around this difficulty in a number of ways; for instance, by putting two syllables which have approximately the same meaning together, so as to strengthen the association in the mind. The common pidgin phrase “look-see” is a literal translation of this device for making their own language comprehensible to themselves.

Another, and more far-reaching way, is the adoption of “tone.” The same syllable pronounced in differing tones of voice takes different meanings. There are four of these tones in Mandarin, and, I believe, as many as nine in Cantonese. These tones, or rather the forerunners of those used today, are one of the elements of prosody.

I have mentioned these few outstanding complexities of the language itself—and I assure you there are many more—only to show the difficulty of the tools with which the Chinese poet works. Let anyone who finds it difficult to write poetry in English offer praises to Apollo that he is not a Chinese!

The prosody is as complex and difficult as might be expected from a nation which communicates in such a language. Too many better informed persons than I have written about it to make more than the merest suggestion necessary here.

The three major elements used are length of line,
rhyme, and tone. Prosody distinguishes between two tones, a flat or low tone, which in the metrical skeletons is called “ping” and the deflected tones, which include the rising, sinking, and abruptly arrested tones, and are all included in “tseh.” These deflected tones are more emphatic, and therefore bear some faint resemblance to our own accented syllables.

A concrete example may make this clearer. Here then is the metrical skeleton of a tsueh or four-line poem—one of the standard forms, beginning in ping:

```
ping ping tseh tseh tseh ping ping
  tseh tseh ping ping tseh tseh ping
  tseh tseh ping ping ping tseh tseh
  ping ping tseh tseh tseh ping ping
```

The first, second and fourth lines rhyme. The third is unrhymed. The tonal pattern is absolutely set, except for six characters, three in each of the middle lines, which may be varied at will. The first and last lines are alike. The third is usually the exact opposite of these two. In content the “short-stop,” as it is called, is the first half of a longer poem in which the end is left to the imagination; as with the Japanese hokku, though suggestion has been more highly developed by the Japanese.

I give a literal translation of such a poem by Su Shih (1036-1101) to show the telegraphic condensation of the content.

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Spring evening, one moment, price thousand gold.
Flowers have fresh odor, moon has shadow.
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Singing, piping (comes from the) balcony floor, fine, fine.
Garden swing is motionless, evening drips, drips.

I have added punctuation and words which are understood. The last three words mean that the water in the water-glass which records the evening drips and drips.

What are the difficulties of our sonnet compared to this? Miss Louise Hammond, of Wusih, in Kiangsu, has recently done some very interesting work in taking down the chanting tunes to which these poems are recited by the Chinese scholars. And to accompany these tunes she has made (see page 252) translations having the same number of syllables as the original poems, the same rhyme-scheme, and reproducing as nearly as possible the rhythmic patterns. The tonal pattern, of course, cannot be reproduced, as we have no equivalent in English. She found that "iambic metre, with a sudden unexpected bang on the seventh syllable where the two stresses come together," was made necessary by the tune. Her translations of these poems show the form, although the reader can judge for himself how much of the content must be omitted in order to bring the English version down to the required number of syllables. These translations, preserving as they do part of the original form, preserve also, to my ears, much of the magic. Whereas the recent free-verse translations, in reproducing the entire content, have been obliged to sacrifice this magic of form which is so essential a part of the Chinese poems.

So much for the complexity. Now to return to the
simplicity. The T’ang poems, to which the bulk of the recently rendered poems belong, are written in language “so simple as to be almost colloquial,” always, be it remembered, within the complexity already mentioned. Witter Bynner’s co-worker, Dr. Kiang Kang-hu, was constantly urging him to use the simplest and most direct language possible in putting them into English. Hence the folk-like quality of the better translations. There seems little doubt that the T’ang poets themselves would prefer to be translated thus simply, since to them the complexity was merely a part of an already assimilated background, as the lesser complexities of our own language and prosody are merely a background for our own poets. And the poets of this golden age of China, like ourselves, were being deliberately direct.

Yet the effect on a western reader is oddly deceptive. It all seems so easy and comprehensible. At last we understand the Chinese! But do we? I for one, doubt it. And in the midst of the jubilation I raise my voice of caution.

Eunice Tietjens

(To be concluded)

REVIEWS

MR. SQUIRE


One may go to Mr. J. C. Squire without shock-absorbers, confident that he will not affront by offering crude
Mr. Squire

novelties either in substance or in treatment. One may go to him as to an old acquaintance whose conversation one knows without listening. Not that Mr. Squire might be called a reactionary. No, indeed. He skips beats; he employs in every second or third poem a set of imperfect rhymes; he speaks with true modern insight of an aeroplane, a football, strychnine, and angina pectoris. If he mistakes history for profundity, he is at any rate to be commended for making a thorough job of it: vide, The Moon, with mention not only of Hector and Achilles but also of Carthage, Alexander’s Grave, and the tomb of Moses in the wilderness. Nothing has been omitted save Jacob’s Ladder and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. As a matter of fact, Mr. Squire has, inadvertently perhaps, discovered and demonstrated a most pleasant, a most esthetic, manner of teaching the truisms of science: of ornithology in The Birds, of introductory psychology in Process of Thought, and of botany in A Poet to his Muse. History I have already mentioned; but history is an art, not a science, and with Mr. Squire art is incidental.

He takes his materials as he finds them, mixed and ready: middle-aged and respectable combinations of rhythms and words, plus the philosophy of his forefathers slightly modified to include Darwinism. Upon this he has superimposed the sentimentality of a boy in his first love affair. Above all one must not look a fact in the face. Circumlocution, he points out, is praiseworthy. Ideas may thus be dispensed with. It is difficult to break
ways, to create new images and force them into coherence in fresh words, to penetrate beyond externals. Let us, therefore, glorify Science, Nature, Patriotism, and our dog which has just died (vide, A Dog's Death). As soon as the new tariff is passed, we shall again have peace on earth.

*Fen Landscape* is the single poem in the volume that one may in good conscience select to quote. However, it is not representative:

Wind waves the reeds by the river,
Grey sky lids the leaden water,
Ducks fly low across the water,
Three flying—one quacks sadly.

Grey are the sky and the water,
Grey the lost ribbons of reed-beds,
Small in the silence a black boat
Floats upon wide pale mirrors.

Pearl Andelson

**RED WRATH**

*Bars and Shadows—the Prison Poems of Ralph Chaplin.*


A book like this makes one wonder at the futility of certain human laws and processes. Mr. Chaplin, free, was an I. W. W. agitator shooting off social fireworks more explosive than destructive. Mr. Chaplin, imprisoned these five years, becomes a martyr-poet, shaping his dreams into arrow-pointed far-travelling songs. Society
doesn’t like this or that revolutionist, and so it sends him to prison, the gallows or the stake—in other words, sends him exactly where his suffering will make the most effective appeal to the imaginations of men, so that each word will drop weightily from his lips like minted gold.

Here is the first half of *The Red Feast*:

Go fight, you fools! Tear up the earth with strife
   And spill each other’s guts upon the field;
Serve unto death the men you served in life
   So that their wide dominions may not yield.

Stand by the flag—the lie that still allures;
   Lay down your lives for land you do not own,
And give unto a war that is not yours
   Your gory tithe of mangled flesh and bone.

But whether it be yours to fall or kill,
   You must not pause to question why nor where.
You see the tiny crosses on that hill?
   It took all those to make one millionaire.

It was for him the seas of blood were shed,
   That fields were razed and cities lit the sky;
And now he comes to chortle o’er the dead—
   The condor Thing for whom the millions die.

The bugle screams, the cannons cease to roar.
   “Enough! enough! God give us peace again.”
The rats, the maggots and the Lords of War
   Are fat to bursting from their meal of men.

This may be rather tawdry poetry, and to some of us it seems loose thinking; but it is like to prove bitter propaganda. If the lords of things as they are wished to speed the day of

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they could not do better than keep such men as Ralph Chaplin in prison.

Alas, how is it that the world jogs on regardless when such cries are ringing in its ears? Are we then of little faith? And are they prophets who can sing

Accursed Monster, nightmare of the years,
Pause but a moment ere you pass away—
Pause and behold the earth made clean and pure!

And so forth. These passionate pleaders actually believe that a day of social justice will dawn—nay, is dawning, when, under a "proletarian dictature" of imposed equalities, the lion and the lamb, the jackal and the prairie-dog, the ass and the race-horse, the elephant and the kangaroo, will live together in choral harmony, contributing and consuming each his just and reasoned communistic dole! Believe it—they go to prison, they suffer and die for it; they set up a temporarily proletarian autocracy in Moscow to prove it, and cling to the faith when their shaky Russian structure rings hollow with famine and brazen with force, and when Lenine, dying in the seat of the Tzars, surely knows at last that he attempted the impossible, and faces, like many another magnanimous dreamer, the tragic irony of his failure.

Ah me, "the Revolution" lags because, not of the apathy, but of the common sense of the world. Democracy is an education in common sense, therefore the
Revolution will lag to utter weariness in this democracy of ours, which has learned that slow adjustments are more effective than swift ones toward inducing such a measure of social justice as may be attainable under the limitations of human nature, which is always inexorably and adorably foolish and selfish and vain. So let the red agitators talk and the red poets sing; and for God’s sake open their prison gates! We need their fire, their color, we need the fervor of their dream. And we need not fear that the structure of our civilization will fall before them.

We have wandered some distance from our text. There is better poetry in Mr. Chaplin’s book than the fierce stanzas quoted above—for example, The Warrior Wind, or this one, Mourn not the Dead, which opens the book:

Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie—
Dust unto dust—
The calm, sweet earth that mothers all who die
As all men must.

Mourn not your captive comrades who must dwell—
Too strong to strive—
Within each steel-bound coffin of a cell,
Buried alive.

But rather mourn the apathetic throng—
The cowed and the meek—
Who see the world’s great anguish and its wrong
And dare not speak!

H. M.

Vers de société—suave, sophisticated, cultured, and very pleasant to read on a warm day in a hammock. I do not mean to be insulting. The poems have charm. And that which is rarer still in poetry—humor. They are the well-mannered expressions of a well-mannered young man. Mrs. Grundy would be entirely satisfied with them. And perhaps it is because I am not a Mrs. Grundy, that I wish Mr. Jones would occasionally forget to be such a perfect gentleman, and that he would, for once, be abandoned in his ecstasies and his passions, that his hand (or that of his hero) would not always “poise” so correctly above “her heart”

... till

(Like a rainbow scattered)
The spell, at a blow of his will,
Was bitterly shattered.

Indeed, so many of the poems poise above love that they are almost adolescent in their shy hovering. Mr. Jones does not halt the maid—he inevitably goes by, and wonders:

Would she have laughed? Or frowned and fled?
Or blushed, and waited?

And, in another poem, the music-box comes to the rescue:

When all her being seemed to glow,
And beg to be caressed,
When dancing threatened faith and trust
In one wild flood to drown—
The poor old battered music-box
For good and all ran down.
We laughed: I kissed her hand good night.
Ah, Virtue, take thy crown.

_Calm Waters_

_The Blue Ship_, the initial poem of the book, is the most successful. It is the story, told almost entirely in blank verse, of a man and a girl hovering (again) around love; or rather, the girl does the hovering. The psychology is excellent throughout, and the story moves smoothly and with interest. I like particularly the speeches of the heroine, and her startlingly realistic soliloquy:

He's honest, he's beguiling . . .
I'll never be his wife.
At least, not now . . . Tomorrow
He'll come and say goodbye.
I'm sorry for his sorrow:
He's not to blame, nor I.
Tomorrow he'll be swearing
He'll never see me more.
What dress shall I be wearing? . . .
He's sworn it twice before.

The shorter poems are very light: easy to read and easy to forget. And _Mary and the Sea-bear_—_A New-world Fairy-tale_ is somewhat too long, in spite of its originality, and certain delightful stanzas, and a very delightful pelican who came

Flying—flap, flap, sail,
And flap again and sail again, Pelican-style.

_Marion Strobel_
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FROM THE NINETIES TO THE PRESENT

_A Shropshire Lad_, by A. E. Housman. Henry Holt & Co.
_Poems, with Fables in Prose_ (2 vols.), by Herbert Trench. Constable & Co., Ltd.

“Let us thank God,” Hawthorne once said apropos of our Puritan ancestry, “for having given us such ancestors. And let each succeeding generation thank God for being so much the further removed from them.” These poets, with the exception of Flecker, are men who struck their pace roughly in the nineties; and though they may write about the Marne or the ravaging of Belgium, they belong to another poetic period than the present. They have standards, but not the standards of today.

Historically, Mr. Housman’s _A Shropshire Lad_ can scarcely be overestimated. Before directness was the fashion, it aimed at and achieved a straightforward simplicity. It stripped away turgid rhetoric and elaborate decoration, relying upon the simple human emotions, plainly expressed, for its effect. And it set a standard of metrical precision which immediate successors could not safely disregard. (Mr. Trench did disregard it, with disastrous results.) At once, and deservedly, the book
became a model, and its influence upon the English poets has been amazingly widespread.

But one must keep the historical point in mind to give the book its full due. Today, with a great war just past, one is inclined to comment on the abnormally high mortality rate in Shropshire. Something over half the poems have death in the abstract in the theme; and about a quarter of the poems deal with death in the specific. The gallows is well represented, and one inconsiderate lover cuts his throat "from ear to ear" while in his mistress' arms—after which horror she tastes something salty, and he has time for a speech. The truth is, death with Mr. Housman is not ever death but always the thought of it—he gets the sweeter half of its sorrow and none of its pain. As a result his poems have a true and clear, but a thin emotional base.

His themes, always so purified of any possible pain, are expressed with a direct deftness which is characteristic of the book—and of the standard which it set. One short poem of exile will show the quality of the workmanship.

'Tis time, I think, by Wenlock town
The golden broom should blow;
The hawthorne, sprinkled up and down
Should charge the land with snow.
Spring will not wait the loiterer's time
Who keeps so long away;
So others wear the broom, and climb
The hedgerows heaped with may.
Oh, tarnish late on Wenlock Edge,
Gold that I never see;

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Lie long, high snowdrift in the hedge
That will not shower on me.

Notice the preciseness of the accent, the full-stop, compact quatrain, the definitely marked line. There is nothing loose. Tightness characterizes it. And therein, to my mind, lies the chief contrast to be made between the best work of the nineties and of today. The one aims at precision, the other at effectiveness. The one is rather sparing in its use of figures, employs simpler never-complicated comparisons; the other relies upon striking metaphors, explosive effects, only too often overdone.

Mr. Newbolt’s work has the same ease and accuracy of expression. It never stumbles, never hesitates. He is at his best in the semi-dramatic pieces. *The Fighting Téméraire* is justly well known, and the refrain of *The Song of the Sou’wester* (indeed all his refrains are good) has a fine rushing swing to it. One can always be sure a poem by Mr. Newbolt will not disappoint—whether it will give the highest esthetic satisfaction or not is another matter.

The work of Mr. Trench is sharply in contrast. His muse in his *Stanzas on Poetry* sets him rather an appalling task which he quite reasonably recoils from. But he has nevertheless a tendency to assume rather pompously the bardic robes. The direct simplicity of *A Shropshire Lad* is alien to him (one finds in his vocabulary such words as chthonian, enorm, umbratility, augural, and gurges), and his metres are wooden. On the other hand he makes a bid for the richly sensuous (notably in parts of *Deirdre* [284])
Wedded, where he comes nearest success)—something Mr. Housman does not attempt.

From *A Shropshire Lad* to Bliss Carman’s *Later Poems* and the work of Flecker is a long journey, but, in the case of Mr. Carman at least, down a fairly straight road. Mr. Housman’s volume had a feeling for nature, but chiefly for nature with people in it. Mr. Carman has more of an eye for nature herself and a conventional felicity in description—although there is a touch too much of softness in his view of her. His link with Mr. Housman is again in the precision of his workmanship and a moderately marked affection for the quatrain. This volume, gathered, as I take it, from his later books, shows that he has not been out of touch with developments. There is in it a turning toward the effective figure which is modern.

Gold are the great trees overhead,
And gold the leaf-strewn grass,
As though a cloth of gold were spread
To let a seraph pass.

This has the contemporary touch, as has—

Through the street of St. Germain
March the tattered hosts of rain.

There is no reason why the virtues of this precisely marked rhythm should not be combined with the modern vividness—indeed the trend is toward a reconciliation of the schools. But Mr. Carman has not effected the reconciliation. He belongs to the nineties—with a vigor of his own.

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James Elroy Flecker, the last of these poets whom we have to consider, is at once the youngest and esthetically the finest. The tragedy, too, of incompleteness adds a glamour to his work; for it was only about 1908 that he struck his real pace, and in 1915 he died at thirty-one. The French Parnassians are his avowed models—and he admires them chiefly for the finish of their workmanship. Their doctrine, he thought, would redeem English poetry “from the formlessness and the didactic tendencies which are now [1913] in fashion.” Taking his stand then for a well-controlled expression (his rhythms, like Housman’s, are generally sharply marked) he yet employs exotic material, and he has the current passion for color and ocular vividness—the “statuesque” or picture quality he admires in the Parnassians.

So Flecker, serving in the precision of his form as a link between the 1890’s and the 1920’s, is distinctly a contemporary in spirit (and will people never learn that the contemporary movement is not a question of form but one of vision!). “It is not the poet’s business,” he says, “to save a man’s soul, but to make it worth saving.” And, without didacticism, he turns to beauty.

In the volume are several of Flecker’s translations from the French poets he admired—translations which are brilliant successes. I have not tested their accuracy, but they are fine poetry in the new language, which is mainly to be desired. And this short poem may show something of the nature of Flecker’s own work:

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From the Nineties to the Present

A linnet who had lost her way
Sang on a blackened bough in hell,
Till all the ghosts remembered well
The trees, the wind, the golden day.
At last they knew that they had died
When they heard music in that land,
And someone there stole forth a hand
To draw a brother to his side.

The transition from one century to the next, then, has been marked by a shift in emphasis. A technical preciseness plus the minor chords of emotion is no longer sufficient. Those qualities may and do and ought to exist. But the modernist, before he approves, now looks for something more than mere deftness. A clear-cut image generally indicates a clearly grasped idea, and before there can be vividness—that contemporary fetich—that there must usually be vivid feeling.

Royall Snow

CORRESPONDENCE

PARIS NOTES

Jean Cocteau’s new book begins with a charming medley of disconnected images:

Arbres, bocal d’oiseaux, feu de bengale, etc.—

but closes with eight-line stanzas that Malherbe might have polished, and four-line stanzas not unlike Gautier’s. Paul Valéry’s best productions are crisp flowers of the purest classicism. Valéry and Cocteau—a strange encounter in the noble garden of French verse. Fancy

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and Meditation go hand in hand under the reconciled
gaze of the marble nymths and fauns. Fancy is younger:

Hélas, je vais avoir trente ans!

But Meditation is wiser. Fancy wants to be taken
seriously:

Tel qui jadis me voulut mordre,
Voyant ma figure à l’envers,
Comprendra soudain que mes vers
Furent les serviteurs de l’ordre.

Meditation nods approval: poesy should be “the servant
of order.” Here we have, expressed by two different
poets, an eternal law more obviously put into practice
by French poets than by those of any other nation in
modern Europe—except Keats maybe. But then Keats
is an influence to be reckoned with in tracing the growth
of Cocteau and Valéry.

Of La Pléiade Valéry may be considered the only one to
achieve a perfect success. The Countess de Noailles, in
her verbal ecstasy, disregards the thought and cares not
for constructive splendor. Mazade’s Ardent Voyage
brings no new coloring: the sun-flooded lines of his
Provencal landscape, the glorious remains of the past, the
mellow pastel of the Rhone valley sometimes lashed by
the wind, he can express with a subtle nicety of rhythm;
but, master though he proves of his technique, he lacks a
quality possessed in the highest degree by Valéry—the
beauty of a form scintillating with thought. Valéry is the
idol among his brethren of the Pléiade. The Countess,
appalled by Valéry’s lyrical discretion, hails him “Maitre d’un chant nouveau.”

The themes of the neo-classicists are borrowed from the eternal glamour of nature and love. Following Valéry’s sibylline ratiocinations, de Magallon, Reynaud, and a few others take up the philosophical attitude. Naturally enough, the ancient symbols brought down to us by a continuous tradition (Ronsard, La Fontaine, Chénier) still serve to embody the actual modes of feeling. Even catholicism expresses itself through their medium in the work of Reynard. André Lamandé has made a wreath of hyacinths “Under the bright gaze of Athene.” (On this point read the enlightening article of Henry Gauthier-Villars in the Mercure de France of March 1st, 1922.)

Valéry’s verse is the newest form of poetic symbolism. His aloofness reminds the reader of Alfred de Vigny; his diamond-like glitter recalls Mallarmé. Tradition links him back to our very first classicists, Malherbe being the foremost. Malherbe is also the poet whose voice soars and guides the boyish chatter of Fancy in Jean Cocteau’s verse (Vocabulaire, Edition de la Sirène, Paris). It is reassuring to find a common ancestor to Valéry and Cocteau. Such pieces as:

Et vous, grande âme, espérez-vous un songe
Qui n’aura plus ces couleurs de mensonge
Qu’aux yeux de chair l’onde et l’air font ici?
Chanterez-vous quand serez vaporeuse?
Allez, tout fuit! . . . Ma présence est poreuse,
La sainte impatience meurt aussi!

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have the smooth polish of the Malherbian marble, veined by the very blood of the heart.

Such lines as:

La jeunesse me quitte et j'ai son coup reçu. . . .

or

Nous sommes tellement proche la douce vie
Qu'à peine par la mort elle nous est ravie;
Elle ouvre le passage et nous lâche la main. . . .

avowedly borrow archaic forms from the poet of Odes (1600).

Cocteau carves the roses of his fancy into stone before they slip between his youthful fingers. Valéry brings forth, out of the solitude where he studied mathematics, resplendent numbers with which he rebuilds his soul. I do not think Valéry would like Cocteau’s smiles and premature sadness. I do not think Cocteau would follow Valéry under the Greek porticoes. And yet Narcissus is a symbol to both of them. This is from Vocabulaire:

Comme une grande soif de lumière
Narcisse penché sur une eau,
Où se voyait de bas en haut.

While Valéry confesses:

Nulle des nymphes, nulle amie ne m’attire,
Comme tu fais, sur l’onde, inépuisable moi.

I know that there are a few deliberately imitative lines in Cocteau’s Vocabulaire. I also know that Ronsard and Malherbe are the chosen poets of Cocteau’s artistic predilection and standard.
Reflection brings amusement and unrest to Cocteau, and to Valéry the pride and ennui of the sage. Jean Cocteau remains what he always was, an exquisite ironist, akin to Watteau or Boucher, with the sensuality of the latter and the risky innuendo of the former. To the rustle of silk and the minuet of the violins, Cocteau adds the organ of the merry-go-rounds. All this music, even occasionally swelling into a jazz-band crash, is today’s laughter just emerging out of an heroic gloom.

Jean Catel

NOTES

The fact that this is a woman’s number of Poetry does not result from the editor’s deliberate intention. As most of the contributors had been promised space this month, it seemed wise to postpone the one or two masculine poets at first scheduled, and to present exclusively the feminine claim to variety of method and mood in this art. Quite a number of issues, during our past history, have been masculine, but this is the first one to speak entirely with feminine voices.

Muna Lee (Mrs. Luiz Munoz-Marin) lived in Oklahoma when she first appeared in Poetry and received, in 1916, a prize awarded “for a lyric poem.” After her marriage she resided for awhile in Porto Rico at her husband’s birthplace, but since returning to this country a year ago the family have lived in Teaneck, N. J. Her first book of verse will be published by the Macmillan Co. this autumn.

Miss Elizabeth Madox Roberts will also present her first book this autumn—Under the Tree, to be published by B. W. Huebsch. After a residence of some years in Chicago as a student at the University, she has now returned to her family home at Springfield, Kentucky.

Miss Florence Ripley Mastin, of Brooklyn, N. Y., is the author of Green Leaves (James T. White & Co.).

Mrs. Katherine Wisner McCluskey, of Phoenix, Arizona, has not yet published a volume.

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Jessica Nelson North (Mrs. R. T. MacDonald), of Chicago, was recently president of the progressive little Poetry Club of the University of Chicago.

Miss Hilda Conkling, who will be twelve years old next October, has hitherto appeared in Poetry's child section—a feature of each July issue from 1915 to 1919, since which date we have received no poems of good enough quality from children under ten. Miss Conkling, who now makes her début among the grown-ups, is the author of Poems by a Little Girl, published in 1920 by the Fred. A. Stokes Co., and a second volume will appear this autumn.

Miss Louise Bogan, who appears for the first time in Poetry, is a native of Maine who has lived in Panama and New York, and is now sojourning in Vienna.

Miss Louise S. Hammond has been for some years a missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church at its station in Wusih, China. She is a sister of Mrs. Eunice Tietjens Head, and a musician as well as a linguist.

Baylor College for Women, of Belton, Texas (not to be confused with Baylor University, of Waco, Texas), held recently a High School Poetry Contest, which was open to all high school girls in the state. The judges were Dr. L. W. Payne, Jr., Dr. J. B. Wharey, and Dr. A. C. Judson, all members of the faculty of the University of Texas; and there were about one hundred contestants. The winners of first and second places received cash prizes, while the third, fourth and fifth awards were a year's subscription to Poetry. Thus we welcome three young Texas girls to our roll of subscribers, and commend to other schools the example of this contest, the results of which, as Mr. Wm. H. Vann, head of the college's English department, writes, "have proved very gratifying, such as to warrant us in making it a permanent thing."

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