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# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse  
Edited by Harriet Monroe

Tenth Birthday Number  
October 1922

Avenel Gray  
by Edwin Arlington Robinson  
Novelette, by Aline Kilmer  
Two Poems, by H. L. Davis  
Worlds, by Edgar Lee Masters  
Anniversary Editorial

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I have been Chairman of the Committee on Poetry for the New York State Federation, and have been giving a good many talks on poetry. I have found your magazine more real help than any other source of information—I refer constantly to my files for both poems and reviews. *Louise Driscoll*

Vol. XXI

No. I

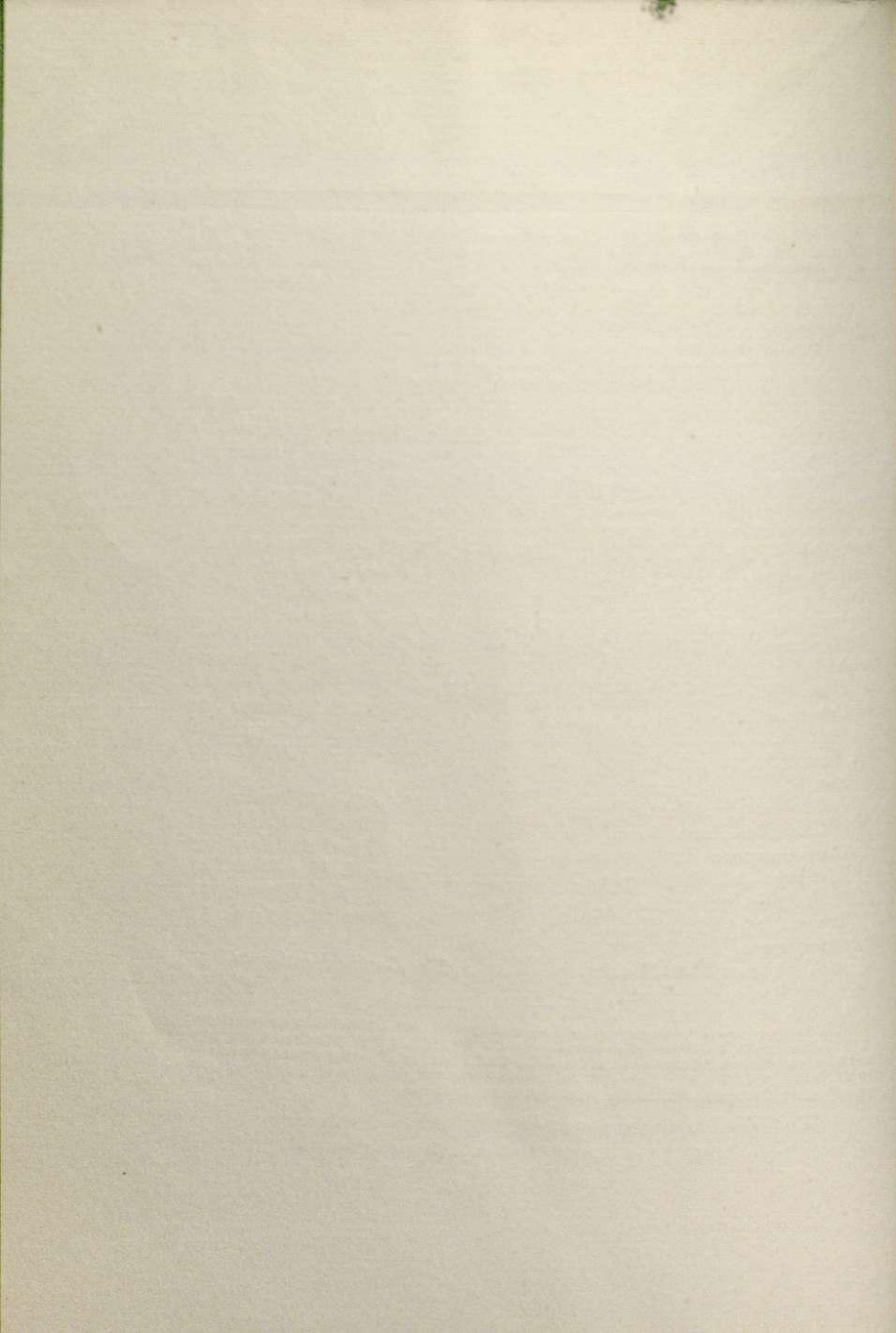
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 **Poetry**  
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XXI

NO. I

TENTH-BIRTHDAY NUMBER -  
OCTOBER, 1922

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AVENEL GRAY

AVENEL GRAY at fifty had gray hair,  
Gray eyes, and a gray cat—coincidence  
Agreeable enough to be approved  
And shared by all her neighbors; or by all  
Save one, who had, in his abused esteem,  
No share of it worth having. Avenel Gray  
At fifty had the favor and the grace  
Of thirty—the gray hair being only a jest  
Of time, he reasoned, whereby the gray eyes  
Were maybe twenty or maybe a thousand.  
Never could he persuade himself to say  
How old or young they were, or what was in them,

[1]

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Or whether in the mind or in the heart  
Of their possessor there had ever been,  
Or ever should be, more than room enough  
For the undying dead. All he could say  
Would be that she was now to him a child,  
A little frightened or a little vexed,  
And now a sort of Miss Methusaleh,  
Adept and various in obscurity  
And in omniscience rather terrible—  
Until she smiled and was a child again,  
Seeing with eyes that had no age in them  
That his were growing older. Seneca Sprague  
At fifty had hair grayer, such as it was,  
Than Avenel's—an atoll, as it were,  
Circling a smooth lagoon of indignation,  
Whereunder were concealed no treacheries  
Or monsters that were perilous to provoke.

Seneca sat one Sunday afternoon  
With Avenel in her garden. There was peace  
And languor in the air, but in his mind  
There was not either—there was Avenel;  
And where she was, and she was everywhere,  
There was no peace for Seneca. So today  
Should see the last of him in any garden  
Where a sphynx-child, with gray eyes and gray hair,  
Would be the only flower that he might wish  
To pluck, wishing in vain. "I'm here again,"

*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Seneca said, "and I'm not here alone;  
You may observe that I've a guest with me  
This time, Time being the guest. Scythe, glass, and all,  
You have it, the whole ancient apparatus.  
Time is a guest not given to long waiting,  
And, in so far as you may not have known it,  
I'm Destiny. For more than twenty years  
My search has been for an identity  
Worth Time's acknowledgment; and heretofore  
My search has been but a long faltering,  
Paid with an unavailing gratitude  
And unconfessed encouragement from you.  
What is it in me that you like so much,  
And love so little? I'm not so much a monkey  
As many who have had their heart's desire,  
And have it still. My perishable angel,  
Since neither you nor I may live forever  
Like this, I'll say the folly that has fooled us  
Out of our lives was never mine, but yours.  
There was an understanding long ago  
Between the laws and atoms that your life  
And mine together were to be a triumph;  
But one contingency was overlooked,  
And that was a complete one. All you love,  
And all you dare to love, is far from here—  
Too far for me to find where I am going."

"Going?" Avenel said. "Where are you going?"

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There was a frightened wonder in her eyes  
Until she found a way for them to laugh:  
"At first I thought you might be going to tell me  
That you had found a new way to be old—  
Maybe without remembering all the time  
How gray we are. But when you soon began  
To be so unfamiliar and ferocious—  
Well, I began to wonder. I'm a woman."

Seneca sighed before he shook his head  
At Avenel: "You say you are a woman,  
And I suppose you are. If you are not,  
I don't know what you are; and if you are,  
I don't know what you mean."

"By what?" she said.

A faint bewildered flush covered her face,  
While Seneca felt within her voice a note  
As near to sharpness as a voice like hers  
Might have in silent hiding. "What have I done  
So terrible all at once that I'm a stranger?"

"You are no stranger than you always were,"  
He said, "and you are not required to be so.  
You are no stranger now than yesterday,  
Or twenty years ago; or thirty years  
Longer than that, when you were born—  
You and your brother. I'm not here to scare you,  
Or to pour any measure of reproach



*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Out of a surplus urn of chilly wisdom;  
For watching you to find out whether or not  
You shivered swallowing it would be no joy  
For me. But since it has all come to this—  
Which is the same as nothing, only worse,  
I am not either wise or kind enough,  
It seems, to go away from you in silence.  
My wonder is today that I have been  
So long in finding what there was to find,  
Or rather in recognizing what I found  
Long since and hid with incredulities  
That years have worn away, leaving white bones  
Before me in a desert. All those bones,  
If strung together, would be a skeleton  
That once upheld a living form of hope  
For me to follow until at last it fell  
Where there was only sand and emptiness.  
For a long time there was not even a grave—  
Hope having died there all alone, you see,  
And in the dark. And you, being as you are,  
Inseparable from your traditions—well,  
I went so far last evening as to fancy,  
Having no other counsellor than myself  
To guide me, that you might be entertained,  
If not instructed, hearing how far I wandered,  
Following hope into an empty desert,  
And what I found there. If we never know  
What we have found, and are accordingly

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Adrift upon the wreck of our invention,  
We make our way as quietly to shore  
As possible, and we say no more about it;  
But if we know too well for our well-being  
That what it is we know had best be shared  
With one who knows too much of it already,  
Even kindness becomes, or may become,  
A strangling and unwilling incubus.  
A ghost would often help us if he could,  
But being a ghost he can't. I may confuse  
Regret with wisdom, but in going so far  
As not impossibly to be annoying,  
My wish is that you see the part you are  
Of nature. When you find anomalies here  
Among your flowers and are surprised at them,  
Consider yourself and be surprised again;  
For they and their potential oddities  
Are all a part of nature. So are you,  
Though you be not a part that nature favors,  
And favoring, carries on. You are a monster;  
A most adorable and essential monster."

He watched her face and waited, but she gave him  
Only a baffled glance before there fell  
So great a silence there among the flowers  
That even their fragrance had almost a sound;  
And some that had no fragrance may have had,  
He fancied, an accusing voice of color

*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Which her pale cheeks now answered with another;  
Wherefore he gazed a while at tiger-lilies  
Hollyhocks, dahlias, asters and hydrangeas—  
The generals of an old anonymous host  
That he knew only by their shapes and faces.  
Beyond them he saw trees; and beyond them  
A still blue summer sky where there were stars  
In hiding, as there might somewhere be veiled  
Eternal reasons why the tricks of time  
Were played like this. Two insects on a leaf  
Would fill about as much of nature's eye,  
No doubt, as would a woman and a man  
At odds with heritage. Yet there they sat,  
A woman and a man, beyond the range  
Of all deceit and all philosophy  
To make them less or larger than they were.  
The sun might only be a spark among  
Superior stars, but one could not help that.

“If a grim God that watches each of us  
In turn, like an old-fashioned schoolmaster,”  
Seneca said, still gazing at the blue  
Beyond the trees, “no longer satisfies,  
Or tortures our credulity with harps  
Or fires, who knows if there may not be laws  
Harder for us to vanquish or evade  
Than any tyrants? Rather, we know there are;  
Or you would not be studying butterflies

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While I'm encouraging Empedocles  
In retrospect. He was a mountain-climber,  
You may remember; and while I think of him,  
I think if only there were more volcanoes,  
More of us might be climbing to their craters  
To find out what he found. You are sufficient,  
You and your cumulative silences  
Today, to make of his abysmal ashes  
The dust of all our logic and our faith;  
And since you can do that, you must have power  
That you have never measured. Or, if you like,  
A power too large for any measurement  
Has done it for you, made you as you are,  
And led me for the last time, possibly,  
To bow before a phantom in your garden."  
He smiled—until he saw tears in her eyes,  
And then remarked, "Here comes a friend of yours.  
Pyrrhus, you call him. Pyrrhus because he purrs."

"I found him reading Hamlet," Avenel said;  
"By which I mean that I was reading Ham'et.  
But he's an old cat now. And I'm another—  
If you mean what you say, or seem to say.  
If not, what in the world's name do you mean?"

He met the futile question with a question  
Almost as futile and almost as old:  
"Why have I been so long learning to read,

*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Or learning to be willing to believe  
That I was learning? All that I had to do  
Was to remember that your brother once  
Was here, and is here still. Why have I waited—  
Why have you made me wait—so long to say so?"  
Although he said it kindly, and foresaw  
That in his kindness would be pain, he said it—  
More to the blue beyond the trees, perhaps,  
Or to the stars that moved invisibly  
To laws implacable and inviolable,  
Than to the stricken ears of Avenel,  
Who looked at him as if to speak. He waited,  
Until it seemed that all the leaves and flowers,  
The butterflies and the cat, were waiting also.

"Am I the only woman alive," she asked,  
"Who has a brother she may not forget?  
If you are here to be mysterious,  
Ingenuousness like mine may disappoint you.  
And there are women somewhere, certainly,  
Riper for mysteries than I am yet.  
You see me living always in one place,  
And all alone."

"No, you are not alone,"

Seneca said: "I wish to God you were!  
And I wish more that you had been so always,  
That you might be so now. Your brother is here,  
And yet he has not been here for ten years.

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Though you've a skill to crowd your paradigms  
Into a cage like that, and keep them there,  
You may not yet be asking quite so much  
Of others, for whom the present is not the past.  
We are not all magicians; and Time himself  
Who is already beckoning me away,  
Would surely have been cut with his own scythe,  
And long ago, if he had followed you  
In all your caprioles and divagations.  
You have deceived the present so demurely  
That only few have been aware of it,  
And you the least of all. You do not know  
How much it was of you that was not you  
That made me wait. And why I was so long  
In seeing that it was never to be you,  
Is not for you to tell me—for I know.  
I was so long in seeing it was not you,  
Because I would not see. I wonder, now,  
If I should take you up and carry you off,  
Like an addressable orang-outang,  
You might forget the grave where half of you  
Is buried alive, and where the rest of you,  
Whatever you may believe it may be doing,  
Is parlously employed." As if to save  
His mistress the convention of an answer,  
The cat jumped up into her lap and purred,  
Folded his paws, and looked at Seneca  
Suspiciously. "I might almost have done it,"

*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

He said, "if insight and experience  
Had not assured me it would do no good.  
Don't be afraid. I have tried everything,  
Only to be assured it was not you  
That made me fail. If you were here alone,  
You would not see the last of me so soon;  
And even with you and the invisible  
Together, maybe I might have seized you then  
Just hard enough to leave you black and blue—  
Not that you would have cared one way or other,  
With him forever near you, and if unseen,  
Always a refuge. No, I should not have hurt you.  
It would have done no good—yet might perhaps  
Have made me likelier to be going away  
At the right time. Anyhow, damn the cat."

Seneca looked at Avenel till she smiled,  
And so let loose a tear that she had held  
In each of her gray eyes. "I am too old,"  
She said, "and too incorrigibly alone,  
For you to laugh at me. You have been saying  
More nonsense in an hour than I have heard  
Before in forty years. Why do you do it?  
Why do you talk like this of going away?  
Where would you be, and what would you be doing?  
You would be like a cat in a strange house—  
Like Pyrrhus here in yours. I have not had  
My years for nothing; and you are not so young

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As to be quite so sure that I'm a child.  
We are too old to be ridiculous,  
And we've been friends too long."

"We have been friends  
Too long," he said, "to be friends any longer.  
And there you have the burden of a song  
That I came here to sing this afternoon.  
When I said friends you might have halted me,  
For I meant neighbors."

"I know what you meant,"  
Avenel answered, gazing at the sky,  
And then at Seneca. "The great question is,  
What made you say it? You mention powers and laws,  
As if you understood them. Am I stranger  
Than powers and laws that make me as I am?"

"God knows you are no stranger than you are,  
For which I praise Him," Seneca said, devoutly.  
"I see no need of prayer to bring to pass  
For me more prodigies or more difficulties.  
I cry for them no longer when I know  
That you are married to your brother's ghost,  
Even as you were married to your brother—  
Never contending or suspecting it,  
Yet married all the same. You are alone,  
But only in so far as to my eyes  
The sight of your beloved is unseen.  
Why should I come between you and your ghost,



*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Whose hand is always chilly on my shoulder,  
Drawing me back whenever I go forward?  
I should have been acclaimed stronger than he  
Before he died, but he can twist me now,  
And I resign my dream to his dominion.  
And if by chance of an uncertain urge  
Of weariness or pity you might essay  
The stranglings of a twofold loyalty,  
The depth and length and width of my estate,  
Measured magnanimously, would be but that  
Of half a grave. I'd best be rational,  
I'm saying therefore to myself today,  
And leave you quiet. I can originate  
No reason larger than a leucocyte  
Why you should not, since there are two of you,  
Be tranquil here together till the end."

"You would not tell me this if it were true,  
And I, if it were true, should not believe it,"  
Said Avenel, stroking slowly with cold hands  
The cat's warm coat. "But I might still be vexed—  
Yes, even with you; and that would be a pity.  
It may be well for you to go away—  
Or for a while—perhaps. I have not heard  
Such an unpleasant nonsense anywhere  
As this of yours. I like you, Seneca,  
But not when you bring Time and Destiny,  
As now you do, for company. When you come

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Some other day, leave your two friends outside.  
We have gone well without them for so long  
That we shall hardly be tragedians now,  
Not even if we may try; and we have been  
Too long familiar with our differences  
To quarrel—or to change.”

Avenel smiled

At Seneca with gray eyes wherein were drowned  
Inquisitive injuries, and the gray cat yawned  
At him as he departed with a sigh  
That answered nothing. He went slowly home,  
Imagining, as a fond improvisation,  
That waves huger than Andes or Sierras  
Would soon be overwhelming, as before,  
A ship that would be sunk for the last time  
With all on board, and far from Tilbury Town.

*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

## NOVELETTE

### DIAGONALS

Now this is the strangest thing since the world began:  
You tell me that you are a bad and a violent man;  
    But I see only  
    A child, little and lonely,  
Crying with fright in a desolate place apart.

While I am known as chaste and reasonably good;  
But you are blind to my virtuous womanhood:  
    Somehow you see,  
    Dragged out of the depths of me,  
The wanton that every woman hides in her heart.

### IGNIS FATUUS

“Your fires are false, they tell me. So?—  
I knew it long and long ago.

“But I choose false ones for my play—  
They are the safer any day.

“And if I burn my hands a bit,  
Why, who will ever know of it?”

All this I said when I was proud—  
Under my breath, almost aloud.

*Aline Kilmer*

All that I had of song—  
It was weak and low, I fear—  
Was sung to ease the ache of your own sorrow.  
But you would not hear.

All that I had of tears—  
And my tears were warm and blest—  
Were shed to make your agony less lonely,  
Upon your breast.

All that I asked to share  
Was the pain that you would not show.  
Now I have given you all that I had to give you,  
Will you let me go?

ESCAPE

Indifference may snare me, but only devotion can hold me.  
Where is the net you spread in hope that its meshes might  
fold me?  
Like a shadow I slipped through a web too slight to bind  
me:  
Now, free and wise, I cast the last frail threads on the  
wind behind me.

*Aline Kilmer*

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TWO POEMS

OPEN HANDS

Answer, now you watch the full stalks of ironweed break  
And carry their red seed among the leaves; and spray  
Beats them from the wind.

“I wish that sowing ironweed seed,  
With children bringing me full stalks, running to the  
orchard

To strip seed for me, took my time now. Their wet hands!  
This grass, white-headed because the seed's threshed,  
raked

The sand rising when I imagined love, when I was  
Too proud for children. Go down again—they are grown—  
You sand moving, you sharp duning sand, sing against  
The dead grass-blades, and fall here and cover me. Fill  
my hands.

Dry me out like dead bird-quills, milk my strength still.  
I know

That spirit is come to an end. There is no pain.”

You talk to the sand: and let me go, let me go.  
When the wind rose I thought that spirit knew of the sand  
And desired voice and hands; and that I knew that  
strength.

But your words hold me too close to my own grief,  
And make me remember what I desired, and know.

*H. L. Davis*

DOG-FENNEL

Today burn tree-prunings. Dead branches are cut and  
piled

And the soft-stemmed grass broken and raked to kindle  
them.

Rain beats a little light dust up from the sand.

This is the time when birds come to pick the grass-seed

Exposed, white on the ground sweetened with dead roots

Grown since you marked the scoured furrows with your  
name.

You made prints of your breasts here when you were lately  
grown,

But they are beaten out; and all the dog-fennel

Is burned, that stung your eyes with its white bitter dust.

O dead sister, your pride keeps seasons like the birds.

*H. L. Davis*

THE SEEKER

Your life seemed consecrated to a vow—

To seek for truth, even though the seeking led

Through solitary frozen ways. And now

You've found it—yet they speak of you as dead.

*Antoinette De Coursey Patterson*

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THE LINE FENCE

It was boots and spurs and hat and gun  
In a hole by a willow tree;  
And that is how we planted him  
Where the line fence ought to be.

Bill left his gun with the town marshal,  
An' I at the livery;  
An' I only had two jolts of gin  
An' a little rye in me  
When up comes this Hyannis Hal,  
An' he wouldn't drink with me.

He snorted some an' cavorted some,  
He slobbered, an' wagged his chin;  
An' he swore that he would wade in the gore  
Of us an' all our kin!  
"Roll up your pants, Hyannis,  
An' come a-steppin' in!"

I got my gun from the livery,  
An' Bill at the town marshal,  
An' we was joggin' pleasantly  
Along the Wolf Creek trail;  
An' at Warbonnet Springs rides out  
This same Hyannis Hal.

Says I, "You missed the section line;  
She's on my land five rod!"

*Edwin Ford Piper*

"I put her there, an' there she stays,  
If I got to wade in blood!

"I'll wade in blood to my belt gets red,  
I'll wade in blood to my chin!"

I answered back like a feller does  
On a couple of jolts of gin.

It seemed like there was too much talk;  
So the doin's, they begin.

It was boots and spurs and hat and gun  
In a hole by a willow tree;  
And that was how we planted him  
Where the line fence ought to be.

*Edwin Ford Piper*

## CARE

Care now lies  
Where Care was not,  
Shoved in the corner  
But not forgot—  
Care, in the corner.

I would call Laughter  
Out of the trees;  
But Laughter has bird-eyes,  
And Laughter sees  
Care, in the corner.

*Janet Norris Bangs*



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OCTOBER

*The sob that comes after the weeping is over,  
The smile after laughter,  
Faith when youth's gone and death beckons:  
The sum of life, plus a dream.*

GENDER

I don't know whether October's a man or a woman.  
When I say *She*, He looks at me with such masculine eyes;  
And when I say *He*,  
She shakes her red head at me.  
So I think maybe  
October's a child—or a god.

FOOLISH BIRD

Foolish bird,  
Do you think, because the rain's over  
And the sun's in your eyes,  
Summer's here again?  
Don't you know it's October?—  
Foolish bird that sings in my heart.

GRAY RIVER

Gray river,  
Do you care that the wind's kisses are cold now?  
That they are putting away the little summer boats?

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Then I plunged boldly in and played:  
By my own fires I am betrayed.

WEEK-END

"I am glad I have come."  
Let me stay, let me stay—  
I would not go home.  
Let me rest in your kindness,  
Your blessed blindness,  
For a night and a day.  
Your sweet incurious eyes  
Would widen in sharp surprise  
If you knew how under my breath  
I pray, "Let me sleep to death—  
O God, let me never go home!"  
But I speak through the fragrant gloom  
Of your hushed and decorous room:  
"Yes, I am glad I have come."

RELEASE

All that I had of wings—  
And they were not large nor bright—  
I broke against the harshness of your grieving,  
Night after night.

*Jewell Bothwell Tull*

SUM

Just when the year learns  
  What life is all about,  
Just when she learns it's not youth  
  Nor summer's hot kisses  
Nor even maternity,  
Just when she knows  
  What it's all for—  
Winter and spring and summer,  
The sum of it—October!

Next month you'll be so gray and tired,  
And then so still and white.  
October!

GOD-LIKE

Having given you all and got nothing,  
Having built here a fire for you,  
A fire that burned red and blue  
And white now,  
Having given you all and got nothing—  
Why should I care?  
I am more like God now.

*Jewell Bothwell Tull*

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ON THE EDGE

GONE UNDER

Rob had ambition, came to Africa  
To live the strenuous life and make a fortune.  
He had energy, his mother's money, and a boy's high hope.  
He met a planter—tobacco was the thing!—  
Was offered shares.  
He put in all he had;  
He worked—God, he sweat blood  
Rounding up niggers in the broiling sun,  
Planting, digging, trying hard for sales!  
Cigars were not two pounds the thousand lot.  
His partner used to loll in a long chair  
Groggy with whiskey, kissing his black girl.  
Rob cleared out finally, picked clean.  
He tried for jobs, had fever, lost his nerve. . . .  
Bubunde nursed him—cynical old chief.  
Rob took his girl to wife to get her cows,  
And grows his manioc on her fertile land,  
And smokes his pipe and drinks banana beer.  
Sometimes we chat of evenings—  
But by day he keeps away.

THE WHITE FATHER

Men never know what's written in their stars.  
Paul was a cadet of an old French line;

A lad, he was devout, on fire to serve,  
Became *père blanc*, wore robes, and grew a soft brown  
beard.

Three times in Africa he learned new tongues  
To bring the blacks to Christ;  
He baptized greasy babes, confirmed half-naked urchins,  
Wed savages in skins and beads  
And heard thick-lipped confessions. . . .  
He heard one too many—  
A slim young jade in scarlet calico,  
Bare-shouldered, saucy-eyed,  
Came whispering.

Later he in his turn confessed the wrong he'd done,  
The coming trouble. One child more or less  
To native wenches would not shake the world;  
But his superior was virtuous—  
Paul was unfrocked, no longer a *père blanc*.  
He married that black girl;  
He brought their black brat to the Holy Fount,  
By his small hut—he tried to keep it clean;  
He grew good vegetables to sell to the few Europeans of  
the post.  
At last he shot himself.

Not in the consecrated ground  
Could he find burial,  
But on a lonely hillside, weighted down  
With stones to keep the beasts away.

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THE TOSS

It's a million miles from Here to There,  
And not a soul who's here to care

Whether I sit by my lonely fire  
And smoke till the last grey ashes expire,

Or whether I go down the narrow way  
The goats spring up at break of day—

Past the huts where the thatched roofs gleam  
Silver-domed in the moonlight's beam,

Past the shambas where shadows deep  
Beneath the broad banana-leaves sleep—

On to a hut in the thorn-tree glade,  
Where a brown-skinned, ankleted, slim young jade,

Sulky and supple, is waiting for me. . . .  
Well, shall I go? . . . Toss a coin and see!

*Cecil John*

## OLD COURTESAN'S LAMENT

Faces, faces, faces—  
Why do ye turn away?

Young and old,  
Why will ye not gaze into my face?

Come, I am thirsty—  
Give me the chalice of your faces.

How can I forget  
Limbs helpless with lust?

How can time take from me  
The woundings of claw-sharp hands,

And the pleading anger of eyes  
That burn with hate of love?

I am withering with hunger,  
I who fed your famished sex!

Bring me the bare pittance of your pleasure,  
Young and old—faces, faces, faces!

*Dhan Gopal Mukerji*

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WORLDS

I have known or seen all the worlds of this world,  
And some of the worlds of the world to come;  
And I say to you that every world lives to itself,  
And is known to itself alone,  
Though it moves among the other worlds of this world.

I was in a hospital and given up to die—  
That is one of the worlds.  
I had turned blue,  
And they moved me to the charity ward of the dying—  
And that is one of the worlds.  
They had screens around us,  
So that we could not see each other die;  
But they had no way to shut out from each of us  
The cries, and prayers of the others.  
Next me was a little woman they called butter-ball—  
She was yellow from cancer  
And had been cut to death by the surgeons.  
She cried all night, she died at dawn,  
Just as I began to mend.

There is the world of the internes making love to the  
nurses.  
And the world of the surgeons hurrying to dinners  
And the applause of learned societies.  
And the world of their children at school, or in play,  
Ignorant of what it means to be learned and notable,



And to be the children of such men.  
There is the world of the policeman who walks by  
The hospital at night.  
And the world of the taxi-drivers,  
Who never see the hospital as they rush past.  
There is the world of the man and the woman in the taxi,  
Kissing each other in anticipation of the p'ace of assigna-  
tion.  
There is the world of the train crew  
Who make up the limited back of the hospital;  
And the world of travelers, happy or anxious,  
Going or coming.  
And this day there was for myself  
This world of getting well,  
With its meaning and its happiness  
Ungessed by the world of the well.  
And my eyes were opened to the worlds  
By suffering, and coming from that world  
Of the charity ward of the dying.  
And I saw that there is the world of a merchant;  
And the world of a judge;  
And the world of a legislator, or a president;  
And the world of a rich man,  
And the world of a poor man;  
And the world of a defeated man,  
And the world of a victorious man;  
And the world of a ruling nation,  
And the world of a people who are ruled;

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And the world of a servant, a laborer;  
And the world of a master, and a user;  
And the world of passion;  
And the world of love;  
And the world of envy;  
And the world of hate;  
And the world of strife;  
And the world of convicts,  
And those condemned to death.  
And the world of war and warriors;  
And the world of the young,  
And the world of the old;  
And the world of desire unceasing,  
And the world of desire that is dead;  
And the world of those who see God,  
And the world of those who see Him not;  
And the world of the faithful, the hopeful;  
And the world of doubters, and the hopeless.  
And the world of those who have loneliness forever;  
And the world of those who ease loneliness  
With futile activity;  
And the world of those who seek truth, and find it not;  
And the world of those who never give up  
In the search for beauty.  
And the world of those to whom the world is harmonious  
sound.  
And the world of those to whom the world is atoms or  
stars.

And the world of those to whom the world is a machine;  
And the world of those to whom the world is life.  
And the world of those to whom the world is an infinite  
mass

To be carved as the will wills;  
And the world of those to whom the world is chaos;  
And the world of those to whom the world is memory;  
And the world of those to whom the world is regret;  
And the world of those entangled in subtle horrors,  
And eaten minute by minute by thoughts that die not;  
And the world of those who front and touch  
The mystery of closing and suffocating horizons  
And the beleaguering Infinite  
With brows of sentinel and armed thought,  
Standing at the heights and the Thermopolae of life,  
Even to the hour of surprise from the plains  
By Death, the Persian.  
And I saw that every soul is a world to itself,  
Making its own murmurous music night and day,  
And having its realest world in itself,  
And knowing none of the other worlds.

And what worlds beyond our world  
Know our world of worlds?  
All worlds of this world, and all worlds,  
May be but the world of the mind of God,  
Of which He is not conscious Himself,  
Unless He chooses to think of them.

*Edgar Lee Masters*

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COMMENT

TEN YEARS OLD

MEASURED by the stars, ten years are but the trillionth of a twinkle. Measured by earth-aeons, they are a tiny fraction of a heave. Measured by historic time, they are a little tenth of a century, one of a thousand or more brief decades which have unrolled an open scroll for man to write his record on in ink or blood. Measured by human life, they are one-seventh of its allotted span, a fourth or a fifth of its period of power. A slight affair, all this—a mere wink of watchful eyes that somewhere, somehow, look on at the mysterious march of life.

But measured by events of literary history, ten years may be long enough to outlast the language or the race. In ten years the Greek drama became, in our limited human sense of the word, immortal. In ten years the urbane Roman inscribed his civilized message on the scroll. In a third of ten years a vagabond Galilean told a few stories and preached and died. In ten years—was it more or less?—a melancholy exile in Italy made the affairs of his neighbors important forever. In ten years *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were born into imperishable life. In ten years Byron, Shelley and Keats, were singing songs too beautiful to be forgotten. In ten years Poe uttered his last lyric cry, and Whitman began to gather his *Leaves*.

And so of our ten years what will be said—the ten years of the World War, of falling and rising nations, of the Russian revolution, of a thousand new movements and new hopes? In the face of events so tremendous, will the world “little heed, nor long remember, what we say here”; or will it accept our offering as adequate, and repeat over and over, through the crowded ways of the new time, the songs which our poets have sung to a changing age?

Who are they, these poets of the decade which POETRY has counted off from month to month, with never a break, since October, 1912—since Ezra Pound, with much tumult and shouting, buried the dry bones of the past and sounded the tocsin for a new era? In singles and pairs and cohorts they came trooping: Vachel Lindsay, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters; Wallace Stevens, D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot; Conrad Aiken and Rupert Brooke; Sara Teasdale and Edna St. Vincent Millay; the imagists—H. D. and Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington, John Gould Fletcher; the ironists—Carlos Williams, Alfred Kreymborg, Maxwell Bodenheim, Marianne Moore. Robinson had begun over a decade before, Masfield and Witter Bynner and Arthur Ficke a few years. Ford Madox Hueffer repented Victorian sins and swung new-made into the procession; Tagore translated himself; Waley and others translated the Chinese; and aboriginal singers were interpreted by Frank Gordon, Constance Skinner, Mary Austin and the

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other poets of the *Rainbow Anthology*. And, besides these, poets of other nations have come in by the translator's by-path—poets from France, from the Spanish countries, from Russia, from Scandinavia.

At least it is a long list and a varied one which we of the past decade offer to the serene choice of the next age. On this tenth anniversary it would be idle for POETRY to deny a certain pride in its share of the record, in its measure of responsibility for the gathering-together of these poets, in its offer of an exhibition gallery and an audience. The gallery may have been far from perfect and the editorial jury far from wise; but the audience, though smaller than it should be, has been choice and penetratingly cosmopolitan—POETRY has readers all over the world.

We may take some pride also in the stimulating effect of the magazine upon this far-flung audience. "POETRY has changed my point of view;" says one, "the verse I wrote ten years ago seems stilted." Another writes, "Here in China you are my only contact with the new poets, the new ideas." A wandering Englishman sends us from Port Said the group of sketches included in the present number, confessing: "I don't know whether these are poetry or not, but a friend showed me a copy of your magazine and I decided to offer them." From Madrid, from Constantinople, from Brazil and the City of Mexico and far-away antipodal Tasmania, come constantly these evidences that POETRY is enriching lives

and stimulating the impulse toward artistic expression, toward the creation of beauty.

Still more precious than these evidences from lands remote, are the proofs we receive from people nearer home—such proofs as the following, mentioned recently by Lew Sarett after a lecture-trip in Iowa, and written out at the editor's request:

The January number of *POETRY*, which I found on file in the reading-room of the Public Library of Council Bluffs, was much thumbed and dog-eared. The librarian said that the magazine is read by many.

At Mt. Ayr, tucked away down in the south-west corner of the state, a man drove in for my address thirty-odd miles. He told me that he subscribed for *POETRY*, believed that it was doing a fine work. He was an exceedingly well-read man—a leavening force, I imagine in that remote corn-fed section.

At Clear Lake, twelve miles from Mason City, half a dozen women came up to me after the lecture and said that they had come over from Mason City to hear me. One of them asked why I failed to read one of the stanzas in one of my poems. I was surprised—she apparently knew my poems as well as I did. The facts came out: she and the other women were librarians in Mason City; they said that they read *POETRY* every month, that many people in Mason City read it, and that as soon as the magazine arrives each month all the librarians read it.

These facts should be very heartening to you—they were to me. They show this much if no more—*POETRY* is reaching and molding the—what shall we call it?—the rank and file, the non-esthetes (you name it!) to a larger degree than one might think. Too often the statement is made that a literary journal like *POETRY* reaches only a limited pinched-out art group; so it does one's heart good to see that it is a force in the lives of many just "plain folk." It pleases me particularly because it tends to show that the Gopher Prairies of Sinclair Lewis are not all so benighted and artistically dead as he alleges.

Such testimony is precious because it proves an influence profound and fundamental exerted by the mag-

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azine. If America is ever to have a rich spiritual life and to express that life in art, this art must come, not from super-civilized coteries, but from the vital strength of the nation. Too much of the vital strength of the nation is now being frittered away in Gopher Prairie banalities—an emptiness in which the art-impulse is smothered, in which the seed of genius can never come to flower. The spiritual enrichment of the Gopher Prairies is the great problem, the stimulation of faith in the heart of the people—faith in their power not only to perceive but to create beauty. Without such faith life is stagnant; everywhere there are pitiful gropings toward it which need impulse and direction. If POETRY is one of the quickening influences which will make a vital people aware of its imaginative and creative power, then we may feel indeed that our ten years of labor have not been thrown away.

The great ages of art—we have said it often—come only when a wide-spread creative impulse meets an equally wide-spread impulse of sympathy. A masterpiece is rarely an isolated phenomenon—a single tree from a chance-sown seed dropped from the wings of Pegasus—but almost always the product of group influence, the highest tree in a forest. When every Gopher Prairie has its local exhibition, its dramatic society producing not only ready-made plays but also the experiments of its members, its musical society hospitable to local compositions, and its poetry group writing and criticizing



poetry from within as well as reading it from without—when all this happens, the future of American art will take care of itself.

On its tenth birthday POETRY acknowledges with thanks the monthly salutation of its readers, and salutes them in return.

Ten years, as we said above, are a long time, measured by events of literary history; and may be multiplied indefinitely in human memory. Whether the magazine will be recorded in the history of twentieth-century literature only the future can decide. But in the history of such enterprises POETRY may claim a proud pre-eminence: *The Germ*, *The Chap-book*, *The Yellow Book*, *Blast*, *Poetry and Drama*, *New Numbers*, *Others*—none of these lived ten years. Nor could POETRY have survived so long without its guarantors, to whose loyalty its poets and readers, as well as its editors, owe their appreciative thanks. It may be that no such work as ours can be done without endowment; indeed, precedents in the other arts would seem to prove this. Whether we cease tomorrow or continue another decade, we shall hope that such endeavors for the art may go on—under abler minds and ever more liberal auspices.

H. M.

REVIEWS

A GEORGIAN INTELLECTUALIST

*Real Property*, by Harold Monro. Poetry Bookshop, London.

Mr. Harold Monro is fairly well known to that part of the English-speaking world which concerns itself with poetry, as the organizer and chief showman of the Georgians. This position which he holds is slightly unfair to Mr. Monro. If he is a Georgian, it is a Georgian with a difference. To speak the truth, there are in him two poets: the first, a patient and tireless observer of little things, who persuades himself daily and hourly that whatever is nearest in life is also most important, and that the only way to write poetry is by simplifying technique down to the most bare and arid statement of fact; the second, a restless dissatisfied seeker, always wondering if the veil of consciousness will somehow lift and reveal the hidden purpose of God. The first Mr. Monro is a Georgian; the second is, or should be, a metaphysical poet. The difference and the contrast between the two, their combination in a single writer, is enlightening and instructive.

The poetry that ought to interest Mr. Monro the most, and possibly does interest him the most, is the tortuously convoluted, elaborately artificial work of such poets as Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in the past; or Mr. T. S. Eliot today; but for some reason which I do not

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pretend to fathom, he has attempted to avoid the consequences of being a poet whose path of approach to the subject is more largely intellectual than emotional. The passion for emotional rapture does not seize upon him; and he has elected to avoid equally the passion for thought. That passion expresses itself, in the case of Donne, in an elaborate play of verbal conceit, and in a vocabulary stiffened with inner scholastic meanings, and strained to the utmost point of expression. Unfortunately it is not possible for a modern poet to write in this style. The old rhetoric having gone by the board for once and for all, the modern poet whose interests are intellectual rather than emotional, has either to invent an elaborate technique of his own, or to give up writing. Mr. Monro has done neither. Instead, he has tried to express very complex ideas in the simplest language, with the result that his poems now read like this:

You only need to close your eyes  
And go within your secret mind,  
And you'll be into paradise.

I've learnt quite easily to find  
Some linden-trees, and drowsy bees,  
A tall sweet hedge with the corn behind.

I will not have that harvest mown:  
I'll keep the corn and have the bread.  
I've bought that field, it's now my own:  
I've fifty acres in my head.  
I take it as a dream to bed,  
I carry it about all day.

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Sometimes when I have found a friend,  
I give a blade of corn away.

These lines are taken from *Real Property*, which is the latest of Mr. Monro's slim volumes. I have quoted them here as a fair sample of his technique. It is worthy of note that the idea which these lines express is a very subtle one. But we are neither attracted to the idea, nor ensnared by its subtlety, for the reason that it is expressed in a style which recalls a child's primer. The author has given us, not the full thought together with the essential brain-processes that made it what it is, but merely the schemed-out result of a certain amount of preliminary thinking. He has, like some cubist painters, given us a geometrical diagram instead of a complete picture.

I cannot help thinking that to write poetry in this way is an affectation as dangerous, though not so likely to be popular, as the "Georgian affectation" which Mr. Monro apparently dislikes, if one may judge from the verses he has printed at the close of this volume. He has acquired, apparently, the habit of thinking it sufficient for both the writer's and the reader's purposes, merely to state his subject in the most summary terms, without either developing or solving it. It is a habit which has grown upon him with the years.

Fortunately it is comparatively absent from his first volume, *Children of Love*. In this he is as interesting as any seeker who has not yet found a convenient for-

mula in which to express himself, and he is content to set down the important reactions that occur to him. The book is fairly well known, and its first poems, like *Overheard on Salt Marsh*, *The Rebellious Vine*, and *The Strange Companion*, are frequently quoted in anthologies.

It is in his second book, *Strange Meetings*, that this poet ran up against the problem which has since tormented him—a problem expressed in the title poem:

How did you enter your body? Why are you here?  
At once, when I had seen your eyes appear  
Over the brim of earth, they were looking for me.  
How suddenly, how silently,  
We rose into this long-appointed place.  
From what sleep have you arrived,  
That your beauty has survived?  
You, the everlasting—you  
Known before a word was. . . .

Obviously, the only answer to that question is some form of pantheism or unanimism. And Mr. Monro took the hint, and wrote the excellent, if a little too long poem, entitled *Trees*. He also attempted unanimism in the curious, but not infelicitous *Everything*, and *The Journey*. These three poems, together with certain parts of the title-poem above mentioned, remain in the memory as the solid substance of *Strange Meetings*.

Unfortunately however he did not stop there. Pantheism or unanimism are at best but half-solutions of the problem of the "one become many", of "fragmentary godhead." If we are God, why are we temporal, to

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begin with; and is there anything that may be called not temporal but eternal? Attracted by these questions, or something like them, Mr. Monroe stripped his style still further of what he regarded, probably, as useless excrescences, and plunged into the gulf of the unconscious, dedicating himself beforehand "to any careful and thoughtful reader whose mind may move in harmony with my own."

The result, as I have above indicated, is unfortunate. Mr. Monroe does not exert himself sufficiently to *make* the careful and thoughtful reader's mind move in harmony with his. In consequence the whole of his first sequence becomes a series of mere schematizations, outlines rather than complete poems. The problems the author has set before himself remain for us also problems, to the solution of which we are no nearer at the end than at the beginning; and the mind gratefully turns to the comparative ease and relief of the more "Georgian" poems at the close, such as *Gold-fish* (slightly reminiscent of Brooke as it is), or the excellent *City Storm*, which remains one of the poet's best achievements to the moment.

On the whole, therefore, we must look on Mr. Monroe's work as an interesting specimen of poetry *manqué*. It somehow just misses that fire and rapture which are the possession of far less thoughtful and more slipshod practitioners of the art. In general, with the exceptions above noted, it attracts us without moving us. In this

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respect it is akin to the work of most of the other Georgians, though it is grounded on an intellectual honesty and willingness to experiment far greater than theirs.

*John Gould Fletcher*

A CANADIAN POET

*Moonlight and Common Day*, by Louise Morey Bowman.  
The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Toronto.

A rare and exquisite spirit, sometimes dancing, sometimes brooding, companions us in this book; a spirit so fine that one accepts with little question a certain looseness of technique, and forgives phrasing sometimes too careless and obvious. Mrs. Bowman happily possesses a modern and individual imagination. Her feeling is her own, not inherited or borrowed; her style is simple and direct; and such faults as she might be accused of are not Victorian reminders.

There is a certain appealing intimacy, for example, in the familiar and expansive poem, *Time-pieces*; and it succeeds in linking up a well-worn subject, the rhythmic march of time—not only with clocks and sun-dials, but with power-house engines. Here is the finale:

At first their rush and their crashing roar  
Terrified me.  
I wanted to scream and to run . . . gasping . . .  
Now the noise has become rhythmical . . . awesome . . .  
And I think, queerly, of deep green caverns  
Far under the roar of the ocean.  
How slow . . . slow . . . slow

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The old clock's striking at midnight,  
In comparison  
With this hurrying rhythmical beat of these mighty engines  
Timed to the fraction of a second.

Now I shall simply write down, laboriously . . .  
As a child writes . . .  
And very reverently . . .  
*God*  
*Sundials*  
*Clocks*  
*Engines*  
*Time and Eternity.*

This child-like approach may be found in many of the poems—mature feeling conceived in a child's fresh imaginative terms. One finds it in *Sacrament* and *Earth-born*, in *Sea-lavender* and *The Birthplace*, but sensitively enriched with the spirit of love which is beyond a child's experience. It is love more maternal than erotic, allying itself with nature in such poems as *Moonlight and Common Day* and *The Apple Orchard*, and reaching a rare intensity of maternal passion in the beautiful war-dialogue, *And Forbid Them Not*, and in that intuitive and poignant baby-tragedy, *The Little Death*.

It is difficult to reveal in a poem or two a personality so rich and fine, and a talent which attains in certain poems such a delicate bloom of beautiful and adequate expression. *Dinner of Herbs* is strikingly quotable, but neater and less original than others; ditto *The Poet*. Others mentioned above are too long to quote, including *And Forbid Them Not*, which was in *POETRY* some years



ago. Perhaps this one, *Darkness*, is as representative as any of the briefer poems:

It seems to be a foregone conclusion  
That if I worship the new gods  
Sincerely, in the sunshine,  
I must not pray in the moonlight  
By the shrines of the old gods,  
Where the cherry blossoms still shine.  
But sometimes, in the darkness,  
I mistake the shrines;  
And I kneel and pray, and the gods speak to me.  
And until I breathe suddenly  
The scent of the cherry blossoms,  
I do not know whether they are really  
The old or the new shrines.  
And by then I have wept, and prayed,  
And been answered.  
So what does it matter?

No, a few extracts are not enough. The book has unusual unity and personality. To make friends with the poet one should read it all. H. M.

CROSS PURPOSES

*Igdrasil*, by Royall Snow. Four Seas Co.

*Igdrasil* is an attempt, a sincere attempt, at grafting together the new and the old manners; but because temperamentally Mr. Snow is a romantic and to an extent a moralist, and because the infusion of the new has not been basic, *Igdrasil* is after all reactionary. It is when the formal device becomes a habit, and appears in the creative synthesis simultaneously with image and

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idea, that it has matured. I speak of the poet who, in schooling himself, has been conscious and determined enough to forego using esthetic and mental experiences which are not individual as well as common. Man in love, for instance, has been done and done again many times; here certainly the poet must have a new reaction to offer, or be able by association of image to carry the old thought successfully into a new context. Emotion alone will not do the trick. But poetry is a well that is never exhausted, for after many empty pails came *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Royall Snow, in his love poetry, is too much the idealist, too little the psychologist. One must not be deluded by his natural ear and excellent memory for sound *per se*. This must be inherent in the poet as in the musician; as well praise a singer for being able to carry a tune. *Rhapsody for a Girl* is the best of the love poems.

I pass over the excursions into the romantic: *A Vision of Dead Ladies, Salome and Herod, Omar's Grave*. I pass over also such lines as—

Here where we together used to lie  
and

They have the unplumbed cleanness of the uncaressed—  
and come at last to the *City Sketches*, all interesting but one, *Vista*, which is not concrete enough. These are objective and economical as well as original; one wishes there were more of them. For example, *Flirtation*:

Sluggishly the city

*Cross Purposes*

Draws her head back of a fan of night mists  
To hide her yawns, while with her thousand eyes  
She coquettes lazily with the river.

In the last analysis these sketches are doubtless prose divided with precision into short lines. *An Old Old Story* includes several apt phrases. As for *Humanity*—

A poor devil of a puppy  
Staring, half-intelligent,  
Out of great hungry eyes—

here, as well as in the rest of it, the comparison is only too neatly hit upon. Mr. Snow is at his best when he effaces himself and looks on, when he notes down an observation without perverting it into a text. *Pearl Andelson*

THE POET AND INSPIRATION

*Le Poète et l'Inspiration*, by Francis Jammes. Gomès, Nîmes, France.

The poet is that pilgrim sent down to earth by God to discover what may remain of our lost Paradise and of Heaven regained.

The poet is that beggar seated at noon on the steps of the old garden where the first man and the first woman were so beautiful. He holds in his hand his wooden bowl, and, his dog at his feet, asks of the heedless passerby, and even of God, alms of the beauty which was, which is and which shall be. . . .

The poet is he who watches, through the high grill of the park, the couples blurred in the evening blue; and who hears the frail invitation of the mandolins. He is not bidden to the feast; but the white convolvulus rises over the gate from the shadows, leans toward him who alone knows all its honey and all its warm snow. And, while the tender murmurs of maidens drown the song of the nightingale, that song is yet

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perceptible to the poet, whose heart fills with its divine harmony as a stream of pure water answers the voice of the bird. . . .

The poet is he who, having nothing, receives everything, who renounces his earthen cup to drink directly from the cool reflection of the sky. . . .

The poet is he who, in the tedious and commonplace situation of an accountant, in lassitude and bitterness, in the monotony of office dust, under the goad of an acid master, perceives the luminous profile of a little five-year-old girl, and on his work-table a morsel of bread for her.

The poet is he who, tapping the rock with his wand, draws from it, in the altered village, water that floods to the banks in the thick grass. . . .

The poet is he who, ears heavy with silence or the noise of insult, hears ascending from his heart, as from a temple, the song of seraphim and the voice of wisdom.

The poet is he who, never having taken in his arms a triumphant and beautiful wife, seizes the clay of which we are made and carves out beauty.

The poet is the young man I saw in an attic one day at Anvers twenty-five years ago, wrapped in shadows so profound that his father told me: "Citizens of the town have forgotten he exists." . . . He profited by this darkness to see at the bottom of the abyss a nameless star.

The poet is he who, leaning over a sick child, gazes kindly on the agonized mother. . . . He gives her a healing bark from the tropical forest. . . . And the child's temperature falls slowly with the dusk.

The poet is he who goes to sea. . . .

The poet is he who goes into the forest. . . .

The poet is he who takes in his hand a grain of wheat like a common pebble. And he sees there, in little, the bread which the laborer's child carries under his arm; and the harvest with its cornflowers, its poppies and cries of insects; and the church, and the priest ascending to the altar, and the mysterious traveller who, in the evening at Emmaüs, confounds the light of his forehead with the shining of the Host.

The poet is the man to whom God restores splendor. . . .

With these fourteen "beatitudes of the poet," given above only in part, Francis Jammes in *Le Poète et l'Inspi-*

### *The Poet and Inspiration*

ration approaches the mysteries of creative beauty. Happily edited by Gomès of Nîmes, with two suggestive etchings by Armand Coussens, one of the younger contemporary French artists, the small book was published last March in a limited edition of a thousand copies. It is purely an *essai* by a poet, for poets.

Francis Jammes deals with his ideas as delicately and firmly as the spider with his cobweb. In his poetry he throws over the subjects of his poems, small and apparently insignificant, a veil of curious softness and color, streaked with a humor so simple as to be deceptive. One does not always know whether to smile. But behind or beyond the shifting hues of his words, one is aware of the mystic who seeks to discover "*à l'extrémité de l'abîme une étoile sans nom.*" That is the key to his book.

The beatitudes—as I cannot help calling them—come first, like an abstract prologue. M. Jammes' convictions begin with a discussion of the poets inspired by good and evil angels: he places Verlaine and Baudelaire in a sort of "*pénombre musicale et spirituelle*" where the victory is won alternately by good and evil. He then tries to make clear the relation of the poet to "*les états contemplatifs*"; and gives him there the place of any mortal, with, in addition, "*ce privilège d'entendre mieux qu'un mortel ordinaire les voix qui nous découvrent le Ciel*"; Jammes believes that all mystics are not necessarily poets, but that all poets are somewhat mystic. His classification of poets as to their inspiration follows:

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I. Poets dominated by evil . . . "*qui sont uniquement voués au mal . . . ils ne sont point poètes en vérité.*"

II. Poets glorifying God indirectly by praise of his universe. To this group belong Theocritus, Vergil, Ronsard, Musset, among others.

III. Poets lifted to regions "*où nous sentons, par instants, le tremblement de Dieu, le vent d'une aile d'ange.*" In this group are Dante, Cervantes, Lamartine, the Verlaine of *Sagesse*, Paul Claudel.

The creative mysteries attendant upon the situation of places and the invention of characters are illustrated by a reference to the case of Anne Catherine Emmerich, a German saint, who in an ecstatic vision (the mystic) describes accurately, as later revealed by archaeologists, the country where Christ lived; and who, in an imaginative flight (the artist) draws an unforgettably moving picture of Mary Magdalen wandering about the sepulchre. But M. Jammes adds: "*Je ne dirai point que l'inspiration poétique suive le même processus.*" This is very unsatisfactory. One feels that M. Jammes came to a wall here and couldn't or wouldn't scale it.

Symmetry is maintained by a concrete epilogue, a presentation or picture of the house of life within which dwells the spirit—characteristically enough, a young girl, "*atteinte de troubles psychiques*"—that shall live in the soul of the poet.

This little book is the wistful voice of a poet, who, in the quiet of his village in the Pyrenees, particularizes in

*The Poet and Inspiration*

esthetic terms something—not all—of his reactions to the creation of poetry. One responds gently to his words; one's eyes are softened by glimpses of his heaven; one feels the blending of Catholicism with his art. But I should have been content with the beatitudes alone. They make the music that sustains the rest.

*Berenice K. Van Slyke*

IRISH ANTHOLOGIES

*Anthology of Irish Verse*, edited, with an *Introduction*, by Padraic Colum. Boni & Liveright.

*Irish Poets of Today: An Anthology*, compiled by L. D'O. Walters. E. P. Dutton & Co.

It has been the peculiar misfortune of the rich and lovely body of Anglo-Irish poetry that no adequate anthology has yet been made of it. The two outstanding attempts in this direction hitherto have been the *Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry* and the *Dublin Book of Irish Verse*; but in both these collections, especially the former, there is such a deal of chaff that the discouraged reader will with difficulty find the wheat. The reason for this result is largely that the compilers included too much material, and chose most of it from the earlier and middle decades of the nineteenth century, a period when the true Irish had not yet fully mastered the English idiom; with the consequence that their poetry written in English was apt to be either imitative or cramped in expression. With a few exceptions, it is only since the eighteen-

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eighties, with the appearance of the group headed by W. B. Yeats, that the native Irish have become masters of English style. Accordingly a satisfactory anthology, which to my mind means a selection of the best, must be drawn largely from the poetry of this period.

The two collections recently published might conceivably satisfy this long-felt want. When we take up Mrs. Walters' volume, however, it is a keen disappointment to find that, so far from being over-crowded, its hundred or more pages are entirely inadequate to cover its chosen field. Some of the most important poets, like Eva Gore-Booth and Nora Chesson, are represented by only a single poem each. And the selections show little real discrimination; for example, the two lyrics by Dora Sigerson give no hint of the powerful and stark ballad poetry which is her best title to fame. Moreover, a number of important authors, such as Eleanor Cox and Alice Milligan, are omitted altogether, while such relatively insignificant writers as Isobel Huske and Patrick Chalmers are given place. What this collection gives us is not bad, but it is not good enough.

The second collection is edited by that real poet and true Irishman Padraic Colum, who states in his preface that his anthology is intended to give a representation of the Irish national spirit throughout its history. From such a standpoint nothing but praise can be given to this volume, which is a discriminating and effective revelation of that vital and subtle spirit which is Ireland, from its



earliest recorded manifestation in the fifth century A. D. down to the present day. But Mr. Colum's title should have indicated his intention and not have misled us as it does. The unsuspecting reader will take up this book expecting to find in it the best of Anglo-Irish poetry; but instead he will find a large part of it devoted to patriotic and personal verse popular in its day but essentially journalistic and temporary. For unfortunately a poem may be an excellent example of a national spirit, and still be bad poetry. In other words, Mr. Colum's collection, excellent as it is in its own field, is yet not a real anthology of Anglo-Irish verse.

In spite of these two volumes therefore, the Irish poetic genius, as expressed in English, with its special racial passion, its novel feeling for words and figures, and its haunting and peculiar music, still awaits a satisfactory anthology.

*Jack Lyman*

TRANSLATING OLD ENGLISH

*Old English Poetry: Translations into Alliterative Verse*, by J. Duncan Spaeth. Princeton University Press.

*Widsith, Beowulf, Finnsburgh, Waldere, Deor*, translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Someone is always taking the joy out of life, for book reviewers, by attempting a poetic translation, in the original rhythmical structure, of a foreign poem. Once in a hundred times the attempt is successful. In translations of Old English poetry into modern English, the proportion

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of successes is even slighter. The best are doubtless Tennyson's *Battle of Brunanburh*, which suggests rather than reproduces, however, the structure of the original; and Ezra Pound's beautiful version of *The Seafarer*.

The fundamental reason for the numerous failures is that Old English is in vocabulary, phonology, and grammar much more foreign to modern English than many realize. It is more nearly akin to modern German—for the poet-translator most significantly in similarity of consonantal sounds—and there are several good German translations of *Beowulf*, the principal Old English poem, in the original alliterative verse structure.

Professor Francis B. Gummere's translation of *Beowulf* and the poems associated with it reproduces the original spirit and metrical structure better, perhaps, than any other English translation.

Neither Professor Spaeth's nor Mr. Moncrieff's version is an outstanding addition to modern renderings of Old English verse. The notes which fill a third of the former's volume form a useful commentary on the epic, lyric, gnomic, and historic poetry which is presented. The translations are workmanlike, but the rhythms resemble those of modern metrics rather than the old alliterative verse, and in other respects the translator shows himself the scholar more than the poet.

One must search in vain for a reason for Mr. Moncrieff's translation, whatever interest may attach to the charming portrait of the author on the jacket and the

*Translating Old English*

fatuous introduction by Lord Northcliffe within the book itself. The translation preserves exceedingly well the metrical structure of the original, but aside from this it is a curiosity in archaisms, inversions, and other peculiarities. While it professes to be "done into common English," it contains such words as *meinies*, *oxter*, *hythwarden*, *seely*, *wist*, and *quothey*. In his use of modern English words, Mr. Moncrieff shows lack of feeling for the factors of sound, implication, and connotation which must be observed if the spirit of Old English literature is to be presented.

*Nelson Antrim Crawford*

CORRESPONDENCE

A WORD FROM MRS. HENDERSON

*Dear Editor:* For a long time it has seemed to me hardly fair to leave my name on POETRY as Associate Editor, even in an honorary capacity—hardly fair, that is, to the rest of your active staff; and now that POETRY has reached its tenth birthday, I think it is high time for me to resign officially, though retaining as strongly as ever my deep interest in the magazine.

When I left Chicago in March, 1916, I thought that I should perhaps return; but now, after six years in Santa Fe, I feel myself as firmly rooted as a pinyon tree. So here I am, and there is POETRY, with a distance between us, but with a world in common; and for me many happy

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memories of my four years of active service in the old offices on Cass Street.

You suggest that I send you some reminiscences for POETRY's tenth birthday; but you have already covered the early years quite fully on other anniversaries, and if I were to give a "backward glance o'er travelled roads," it would probably be to recall innumerable small incidents far more amusing to us than to the general public. Those were strenuous days, when we had to "buck" the poets on the one hand and the public on the other; and when I think of the way you have carried on during the past six years, I am filled with admiration for your tenacity and zeal and high purpose. You have now won the public to a deeper appreciation of poetry; and the poets, particularly the younger generation, have to thank you for a world far less unfriendly than that into which they would have come but for your unselfish, tireless services.

And so, with congratulations for your fine achievement, I say "Many happy returns of the day," and remain as ever POETRY's devoted friend, and yours,

*Alice Corbin Henderson*

*Santa Fe, New Mexico: August 18, 1922.*

*Note by the Editor.* It is with regret that we cease to print Mrs. Henderson's name on our cover as one of the associate editors of POETRY; for although she has not shared the actual editorship of the magazine since her departure from Chicago, we have liked to remind the public and ourselves, by a kind of honorary title, that she was in at the beginning, and that the magazine, through those first experimental years, owed a great deal to her ability and devotion.

## NOTES

Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson requires no introduction to our readers. A resident of New York, he has spent the summers of late in the Macdowell Colony in Peterboro, N. H. In 1921 the Macmillan Co. published in one volume Mr. Robinson's *Collected Poems*, comprising his eight books of verse, from *The Children of the Night*, issued in 1897, to *Avon's Harvest* of last year. The *Collected Poems* had the honor of initiating the Pulitzer Poetry Prize—an annual prize of \$1,000 for the best book of poems published during the given calendar year, to be awarded in connection with the other annuals provided for in the will of the late Joseph Pulitzer.

Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, of Chicago, is also well known to all who read modern poetry; his books, from the *Spoon River Anthology* to *The Open Sea*, have been issued by the Macmillan Co. from 1915 to the present year. Of late Mr. Masters has also published stories for boys and a historical novel which follows the dramatic career of Stephen A. Douglas.

Aline Kilmer (Mrs. Joyce Kilmer) of Larchmont, N. Y., is the author of *Candles that Burn* and *Vigils* (Geo. H. Doran Co.).

Mr. Edwin Ford Piper, of the faculty of the University of Iowa in Iowa City, is the author of *Barbed Wire and Other Poems* (Midland Press).

Mr. H. L. Davis, of The Dalles, Oregon, has appeared before in POETRY with groups of poems which have been copied into various anthologies.

Antoinette De Coursey Patterson, of Philadelphia, is the author of three books of verse, of which the latest is *The Son of Merope and Other Poems*, published by H. W. Fisher & Co., of Philadelphia.

Janet Norris Bangs (Mrs. E. H. B.) is a resident of Chicago.

Three poets appear here for the first time:

Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, a Brahmin from Bengal, born near Calcutta in 1890, was educated in India and California, and graduated from the Leland Stanford University. Being a fluent speaker and writer in English, he has lectured through the United States on the literature and religion of India. In 1916 his first book of poems, *Rajani*, was published in England; and a number of his plays have appeared in *Poet-lore* and elsewhere.

Mr. Cecil John, a young English poet who has sojourned in various

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places "east of Suez," has published little as yet. The present group came to us from Port Said.

Jewell Bothwell Tull (Mrs. Clyde Tull), lives in Mount Vernon, Iowa, where her husband is in the faculty of Cornell College.

The editor deeply regrets to announce the resignation of Mila Straub as Business Manager of POETRY. With the utmost competence and faithfulness, Miss Straub has served the magazine since February, 1918. Last April her marriage to Mr. J. V. Houston was prophetic of withdrawal from her daily attendance at this office.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Arrow Music*, by Bryher. Privately printed in England.  
*Poems*, by Margaretta Schuyler. Privately printed in England.  
*Afternoons of April*, by Grace Hazard Conkling. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*A Critical Fable*. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*The Search for the Holy Spirit*, by Jennie M. & Thomas J. Flynn. Richard G. Badger.  
*For Your Sweet Sake*, by James E. McGirt. John C. Winston Co. Philadelphia.  
*Lays of Goa and Lyrics of a Goan*, by Joseph Furtado. B. X. Furtado & Sons, Bombay, India.  
*The Pageant of Harlech Castle: Book of the Words*, by Patrick Kirwan, Alfred Perceval Graves, A. S. Turberville, Owain Glyndwrand, Sir John Morris-Jones. Express Printing Works, Newtown, Wales.  
*Verse*, by Adelaide Crapsey. Alfred A. Knopf.  
*Burning Bush*, by Karle Wilson Baker. Yale Univ. Press.  
*True Sporting Verse*, by W. P. Gavin. Athlone, England.  
*Little Book of Garden Songs*, by Lura Coolley Hamil. Four Seas Co.  
*Hacia Las Cumbres*, by Gasten Figveira. Buenos Aires.  
*The Shepherd and Other Poems of Peace and War*, by Edmund Blunden. Alfred A. Knopf.  
*Down the River*, by Roscoe W. Brink. Henry Holt & Co.  
*Preludes and Symphonies*, by John Gould Fletcher. Houghton Mifflin.  
*Songs of Youth*, by Mary Dixon Thayer. Alfred A. Knopf.  
*Towards Democracy*, by Edward Carpenter. Mitchell Kennerley.  
*Ambush*, by Arthur Richman. Duffield & Co.

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