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nalism.

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The American Family

Ben Hecht

The dead fingers of spent passions, spent dreams, spent youth clutch at the throat of the rising generation and preserve the integrity of the American family. Not that there is a typical American family. There is only the typical struggle between the dead and the living, between the inert and hideous virtue of decayed souls and the rebellious desires of their doomed progeny.

The ambitious and educated American mother is a forceful creature, a strong, powerful woman. As an individual she is dead. Once she knew and had the desire for beauty. Dead fingers reached into her heart and killed it. The force of which she was doomed to become a part crushed her. The conventions of the world are stronger than its natural destinies. Those conventions—the conventions of the family—are not of the man's making. Woman attends to her own subjugation. She preserves the spirit of the family, struggles and labors to keep it a unit, to keep its members alike. Moaning with the tyrannical lust for possession she enfolds her daughter in her arms. There are certain things in her daughter which must be killed. There is a dawning of love for "impossible" things in her daughter's heart. There is an awakened mental curiosity, a perceptible inclination to break from the oppressiveness of the surrounding dead. In the night the daughter wonders and doubts. She would like "to get away"—to go forth free of certain fiercely applied restrictions and meet a different kind of folk, a different kind of thought. She would like to be—to feel the things she is capable of. It is all vague. Always revolt is vague and intangible for the daughters of women. Revolt is for souls still living, and the living are weaker than the dead. The living soul is a lone, individual force, its yearnings are ephemeral and undefined. The mother knows what they are. The dead always know what it is they have lost. And in this knowledge the mother is strong. But the living cannot say to itself what it wishes to gain, what it reaches to attain. Only in the stray geniuses of time has the individual soul fought desperately and triumphantly for its

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preservation. And there is no genius in the daughter. There is merely the divine and natural instinct for self-realization. Once the mother felt it and it was killed. Now the daughter has caught the dread disease—the contamination which starts a cold sweat under the corset stays of society; the thing which brings down upon it for its destruction the phalanxes of fierce fatuities—the moribund mercenaries employed by the home for its defense and preservation.

Something happens to crystallize the revolt. It is a man outside the pale, a good man, a bad man. It is a book. It is a friend. Often the struggle is fought through little things too numerous to mention and the struggle itself too casual to classify. Sometimes it wages without a word; at other times there are blows. And at such times the enshrouding veils are torn aside. One can see the dead rise up, their pasty limbs dragging with the mould and slime of their couch. One can see them reaching their dead arms out, with the bloodless flesh hanging from them in shreds. One can watch them crawl on their bony feet and as they come close—these dead—the foul odor that issues from their sightless, twisted, rotted faces hangs like a grey smeared canopy above them.

They come. They take their stand at the mother's back. And the pitiful struggle is on.

It is the mother who strikes the blows. Her first weapon (she uses it like a poison) is her love. She calls it that. "You are my only happiness," she cries. "I have given you everything, a part of me, all you have needed. I have sacrificed everything for you. All my dreams have been for you. O, how can you permit anything to come between us?"

The daughter listens. There is a selfish ring to it. But love must be forgiven for selfishness. In the schools and the churches the preliminaries of the struggle have been insidiously fought. Children owe duties to their parents and not to themselves. It was what the daughter learned at school. It is what she read between the lines of her books and heard from the lips of all around her. And now it is the murmur that rolls into her ears. It is the odor of the dead.

Day after day the mother strikes with this weapon. Her red, furious eyes dripping tears, she moans it out. Her voice is like the yelp of a frantic animal. Her voice is like the whine of a woebegone fice. Her voice is cold and hard and hollow like the echo in a tomb.

The beauty that has come to her daughter is a fragile thing. The loveliness she visioned is the most delicately mortal of life's treasures. Fiercely the mother hurrs herself against it, hurrs the reproaches of her dead soul, the recriminations of her entombed spirit—the odors of the dead . . . And her weapons are tangible things. They are sentences. They are the moral perversions with which the family unit always has fought for its preservation. They are tried things, prophetic precedents. And the beauty
in the normal being is an indefinite force—a vagueness. It has no weapons with which to strike. Triumphant revolt is only for martyrs and artists. It is the losing force in normal existence.

Gradually it becomes clouded in the daughter's soul. She feels unclean. She imagines it is the beauty which is unclean. She does not know that it is the uncleanness of the dead—the uncleanness of her mother revealed to her in her heart by the divine light that is dying within herself. An agony comes into her. The struggle narrows to pain. Cold things reach at her heart. It leaps and flutters. She stands, her face white and a look of uncanny suffering about her eyes. The dead fingers grip fast.

The mother, moaning, shuddering, her eyes gleaming, enfolds her daughter in her arms. "I dare you to take her from me," she cries out to the man, to the friend, to the book, to the world of beauty, whatever it is toward which her daughter inclined for the divine instant of awakened soul. "I dare you. I dare you."

"Nothing can ever take me from you," the daughter weeps. Death. Tears, a form of decomposition now, roll from her cheeks. The struggle is over. The unit has been preserved and now one may look at the unit and see what it is. The rotted figures of the dead have dragged their shredded flesh back to the graves.

There are different kinds of families. Only in the struggle between the dead and the living do they become the same even when the contestants differ. I will describe only one type. Perhaps it is the American family; perhaps it is not.

It is the family which considers culture a matter of polished fingernails and emotional suppression and dinner table aphorisms, puns and the classics in half morrocco. It has bound volumes of The Philistine or some other mawkish philosophical twaddle on view in the bookcase. It—the spirit of this family—knows the titles of books memorized from literary reviews in current magazines and will discourse bitingly on the malicious trend of these radical volumes from the sweeping knowledge she has of their titles. In the matter of music the spirit of this family "plays safe." It will characterize as "tinkly" or "syrupy" anything melodious which secretly pleases it. The rather humorous falseness of its culture is inexhaustible.

Introspection is an indecent as well as impossible thing to the spirit of this family. To look into her soul and see the diseased and dead things that fill it is naturally impossible and naturally indecent. Dostoevsky calls man an animal who can get used to anything. And a man's adjustment to hideous things is not so final as a woman's.

For the spirit of this family to reveal an honest reaction when it is contrary to the approved artificial demands of a situation is as heinous
an exhibition of bad taste as to uncover a thigh. But luckily, this con¬
cealing of honest feeling is not often required. The spirit of this family is incapable in the main of honest feeling. That is a part of the beauty killed long ago in her, a part of the beauty she killed in the daughter, a part of the beauty the daughter will strangle in her own children. And one of the compensations for dead souls is that they naturally feel dishonest feeling and do not have to suffer with a realization of hypocrisy.

This family thinks of virtue in terms of legs. This family regards art and truth with a modulated leer. It is crudely cynical of everything outside its range. It sneers and pooh-hoos, it ostracizes and condemns. It is vulgarly contemptuous of the factors in life superior to it. The spirit of this family would have shrieked in outrage at the presence of Verlaine in its home—unless he could have reflected social distinction on it. It would have closed the doors to Ibsen,—except for the social distinction,—to every triumphant soul that had escaped the dead fingers and realized itself. And by some inexplicable trick of self-adjustment the spirit of this family looks upon thought as an undesirable affectation.

Social success means to this family a speaking acquaintance with any wealthier unit which originally considered itself "above" this family. Moral success means to this family an exemption from the prosecution of the forces it has reared for its own protection—keeping out of jail, out of scandal-monging newspapers, out of the malicious after-dinner gossip of its friends.

Of an evening you will find this family in the living room. The hus­band and father reads a newspaper. He has worked in his office all day and is tired. Life long ago ceased to mean anything to him. He is an animal husk in fine linen. He has his little prejudices and his little conven­tions. Indeed, he is a part of the system of the unit but not much inter­ested in it. He never was possessed of the capacity for beauty which his women folk once had and which they found it necessary to kill in each other. Man is a more natural part of the world's ugliness. He is coarser stuff in general. For him it is not necessary to wage any struggle. He accepted matrimony because of a concentrated physical curiosity in one woman, and because it was the thing to do at his age. Love suffered epeleptic dissolution in the nuptial couch. Honor toward his woman ex­pired when the mysteries of her flesh paled. Obedience is his natural state—that is, long ago he established a line of least resistance and inocu­lated his women folk with the fable that adherence to this line was the obedience and respect he owed them. If a latent instinct awakens sudden­ly in him he indulges himself. He finds it rather difficult to be immoral, but as he hesitates a latent strength overcomes his fear and thus he is able to be immoral and unfaithful to his own convenient restrictions in a natural manner and with no great loss of sleep.
One man in ten thousand inherits the beauty of the woman who bore him and he becomes an artist. It is not necessary for him to revolt. His fathers have taken care of that. There is an assured place in the world for him—not in the living room here in front of the fireplace but elsewhere, in places of which poets sing.

The family man keeps posted. He knows what is going on in the world but does not understand it. He is not capable of understanding. But sometimes understanding and reason coincide with his prejudices and he is then as liable to hold minority views as not. He is dry, sometimes clever. But always he jogs, jogs, jogs along. He can even sleep night after night in the same bed with his wife without feeling annoyance. His bluntedness is complete. Dostoevsky is right.

His wife and the mother of his children is a part of the furniture of existence for him. In his own way he is quite dead, but it was not necessary to kill him. If his son revolts the instinct of his mother is communicated to him and he fights. He borrows the mother’s weapons and he blasphemes in a half-hearted way about the duty to parents. But the beauty which the mother found easy to kill in the daughter usually discovers a harder citadel in the son and usually he carries it safely into the world.

The room—this living room—is dimly and “artistically” lighted. The fire in the grate glows. The daughter sits in a corner speaking to a friend. At the other side sits the father—reading blankly. The wife enters. She surveys the scene from the doorway with a feeling of warm satisfaction. She comes in and sits down. They talk about nothing, they think about nothing. The daughter and the young man, beneath the smooth surface of the artificial moments, are playing at the eternal indecency. The mother leads the conversation. Neighbors are discussed. Friends are derided. Social inferiors are laughed to scorn. Social superiors are spoken of with adulation and veneration. At last the father climbs to his bed like an ox. He is tired, poor fellow. The mother follows him into the bedroom. A victor, utterly triumphant, she hugs her dead soul to herself and smiles. The daughter retires after being desperately kissed by the physically curious young man, and she lies awake a while wishing in moments of provoked sex that she too was married and meditating in calmer spaces upon the advantages of the family unit, the fireplace, the party calls. O, this daughter! She is the one who had the vision of beauty. She is the one whose soul sang for a day with the capacity for all the world’s loveliness. Honesty, purity, fineness burned in her with their divine radiance. The lights are turned out. Death reigns supreme.
Patterns

Amy Lowell

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the splashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun shifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday sen’night."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam," said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?
ONCE I said something vague about the piano music of the future. There is something very definite to be said about it. I think the next music written for the piano will have in it a high concentration of clear color-sound and that the new pianist will focus his technique to just one end: to the clearest expression of this color-sound identity. Sea mist, for instance, has certain colors and certain smells; if you are keen-sensed it has certain sounds. You may say it has been the aim of all composers and musicians to put nature into music. Well, it has been the aim of most poets to put nature into poetry, but the Imagists have done it: their medium is not only a more direct one: the point is that they seem to have dispensed with a medium. Their words don’t merely convey color to you; they are the color. The new musician can do this—and I believe he can do it on the piano better than on any other instrument. His music will be all these things:

Sea orchards, and lilac on the water, and color dragged up from the sand; drenched grasses, and early roses, and wind-harps in the cedar trees; flame-flowers, and the sliding rain; frail sea-birds, and blue still rocks, and bright winds treading the sunlight; silver hail stones, and the scattering of gold crocus petals; blackbirds in the grass, and fountains in the rain; lily shadows, and green cold waves, and the rose-fingered moon; pine cones, and yellow grasses, and a restless green rout of stars; cloud whirls, and the pace of winds; trees on the hill, and the far ecstasy of burning noons; lotus pools, and the gold petal of the moon; night-born poppies, and the silence of beauty, and the perfume of invisible roses; white winds and cold sea ripples; blossom spray, and narcissus petals on the black earth; little silver birds, and blue and gold-veined hyacinths; river pools of sky, and grains of sand as clear as wine.

It will be made of dream-colored wings, and whispers among the flowering rushes; of moonlit tree-tops, and the gaiety of flowers; brown fading hills, and the moving mist; sea rose, and the light upon the poplars; shaken dew, and the haunts of the sun, and white sea-gulls above the waves; bright butterflies in the corn, and a dust of emerald and gold; broken leaves, and the rose and white flag-stones; sea iris with petals like shells, and the scent of lilacs heavy with stillness; scarlet nasturtiums, and dry reeds that shiver in the grasses; slim colorless poppies, and the sweet salt camphor flowers; gold and blue and mauve, and a white rose of flame; pointed pines, and orange-colored rose leaves; sunshine slipping through

*I have omitted quotation marks for the sake of appearance, but every phrase in the next five paragraphs is taken from the Imagists.
young green, and the flaring moon through the oak leaves; wet dawns, and a blue flower of the evening; butterflies over green meadows, and deep blue seas of air, and hyacinths hidden in a far valley . . .

It will be of harsh rose and iris-flowers painted blue; white waters, and the winds of the upper air; green wine held up in the sun, and rigid myrrh-buds scented and stinging; the lisp of reeds, and the loose ripples of meadow grasses; mists on the mountains, and clear frost on the grass blade; frail-headed poppies, and sea-grass tangled with shore grass; the humming brightness of the air, and the sky darting through like blue rain; strewn petals on restless water, and pale green glacier-rivers; somber pools, and sun-drenched slopes; autumn’s gold and spring’s green; red pine-trunks, and bird cries in hollow trees; cool spaces filled with shadow, and white hammocks in the sun; green glimmer of apples in an orchard, and hawthorn odorous with blossom; lamps in a wash of rain, and the desperate sun that struggles through sea mist; lavender water, and faded stars; many-foamed ways, and the blue and buoyant air; grey-green fastnesses of the great deeps; a cream moon on bare black trees; wet leaves, and the dust that drifts over the court-yard; moon-paint on a colorless house . . .

It will be pagan temples and old blue Chinese gardens; old pagodas glittering across green trees, and the ivory of silence; vast dark trees that flow like blue veils of tears into the water; little almond trees that the frost has hurt, and bitter purple willows; fruit dropping through the thick air, and wine in heavy craters painted black and red; purple and gold and sable, and a gauze of misted silver; blue death-mountains, and yellow pulse-beats in the darkness; naked lightnings, and boats in the gloom; strange fish, and golden sorceries; red-purple grapes, and Assyrian wine; fruits from Arcadia, and incense to Poseidon; swallow-blue halls, and a chamber under Lycia’s coast; stars swimming like goldfish, and the sword of the moonlight; torn lanterns that flutter, and an endless procession of lamps; sleepy temples, and strange skies, and pilgrims of autumn; tired shepherds with lanterns, and the fire of the great moon; the lowest pine branch drawn across the disk of the sun; Phoenecian stuffs and silks that are outspread; the gods garlanded in wistaria; white grave goddesses, and loves in Phryggia; wounds of light, and terrible rituals, and temples soothed by the sun to ruin; the valleys of Ætna, and the Doric singing . . .

. . . The moon dragging the flood tide, and an old sorrow that has put out the sun; whirling laughter, and the thunder of horses plunging; old tumults, and the gloom of dreams; strong loneliness, and the hollow where pain was; the rich laughter of the forest, and the bitter sea; the earth that receives the slanting rain; lost treasure, and the violent gloom of night; all proud things, and the light of thy beauty . . . Souls of blood, and hearts aching with wonder; the kindness of people—country folk and sailors and fishermen; all the roots of the earth, and a perpetual sea . . .
We sat at a moving-picture show. Over a little bridge streamed the Belgian refugees, women, children, boys, dogs, horses, carts, household goods—an incongruous procession. The faces were stolid, the feet plodded on—plodded on!

"See!" said my friend, "sometimes a woman turns to look at a bursting shell."

I murmured, "How interesting!"

And my soul shuddered. It shuddered at sophistication.

The man who had taken the pictures told us about them. He had been not more than three weeks ago in Belgium.

"Huzza!" sang my ancestor of five thousand years back. He led a band of marauders into an enemy's village. They ripped things up and tore about the place singing and looting. There was nothing much left to that village by the time they got through with it.

But the people many miles away did not behold his exploits. Alas, there were no moving-picture shows in those days!

The Modern Woman With a Sense of Humor

There was a Modern Woman with a sense of humor.

"I shall," she said, "teach to women the absurdity of bearing children to be killed by cannon."

"The absurdity!" exclaimed the men of the State, aghast at levity.

"Yes," answered she, "it isn't worth the trouble!" And she lifted her eyebrows and smiled, but in her eyes there was Knowledge.

And the men of the State were more terrified by the phenomenon of the Modern Woman with a Sense of Humor than by any phenomenon that had before confronted them.

The Incredible Adventure of Spring

The year was again a-foot on the incredible adventure of Spring. The earth broke into blossoming, and the nights were moon-drenched and astir
with the whisperings of wet winds. It was a really thrilling time of the
year to be alive—and therefore, besides all these breathless and miraculous
adventures of the grass and flowers, many innocent and unsuspecting souls
had started out on the incredible adventure of being born.

But the war-writers kept on writing that for man to reach true ex-
altation and vibrancy of spirit, he must blow out the brains of as many
people as possible.

Man and His Machines

He has builded him machines—man the Maker—using great cunning
of hand and of brain. And has not Bergson told us that thus has he evolved
that tool, the Intellect—through the dim ages of his making!

He has builded him states, politics, all the intricate architecture of in-
stitutions.

Now who would think that what he himself has builded—builded
through the thousands of years of endeavor—should thus turn about, un-
grateful, to destroy and to rend him?

The Annual Banquet

"We shall not, this year," said my rich friend—a Lady—"while the
people of Europe are starving and fighting—we shall not this year have
our large annual banquet."

But had she walked not a mile from her home, she would have seen
in her own city men starving, and fighting because of the terrible dread of
starving. And not this year alone had they been doing it, but for many
years of large banquets.

However, if all Ladies and Gentlemen felt acutely all these matters,
what would become of our institution of Large Banquets—or, indeed, of
the Divine Privileges of Monarchs!

What a Veneer Is Civilization

"War." wrote the journalists, "reveals what a veneer is civilization.
Man's real emotions, instinctive, primitive, brutal, leap to ascendency."

But I did not believe the journalists, because I knew better men's emo-
tions. Indeed, what tore asunder my heart was the depth and beauty of the
emotions of men and women. There was nothing—at least very little—the
matter with their emotions.

But with their thinking apparatus—ah, that is a different story!
DON'T know of anything more tragic and pitiful than the superstition that "Justice will triumph." What this metaphysical conception of "justice" really signifies, how it is to be expressed in applicable terms, is impossible to determine in view of the multiplicity of individual antagonisms and class interests.

But somehow we all believe in "justice"; yet the criterion of each is the degree of the attainment of his own purpose.

From time immemorial we humans have been clamoring for "justice," divine and earthly. Hence our slavery. And Kaiser and Czar both claim justice on their side, and millions are slaughtering each other to attain the particular justice of their respective masters.

In this blessed land of ours, justice is ranked high, and labor is constantly basing its appeals and demands on justice. But perhaps—let us hope—the John Lawson case has somewhat jolted the popular faith in the metaphysical conception, at least so far as it manifests itself in the Colorado courts. It is safe to say that there is no intelligent man in that state who does not know that the stage for Lawson's conviction had been set long before his trial. He was an intelligent, active agitator. He sought to crystallize the rebellious dissatisfaction of the miners into effective action:—sufficient reason for the Rockefeller-controlled state to eliminate, most emphatically, such an undesirable element.

In Colorado, as well as throughout the rest of the country, most people know that a great "injustice was done Lawson." What are the people of Colorado doing about it? Not a thing. The cheerful idiot, otherwise known as the good citizen, cares for justice only in the degree in which it affects his own pocket. And the masses of labor who do feel themselves and their cause injured by the railroading of Lawson to prison—they call the verdict a "miscarriage of justice"—applaud Professor Brewster who wired Lawson: "Unbelievable. Counsel friends keep cool. Justice will be done."

And the people of Colorado remain inactive, in the belief that the Supreme Court, the Governor, or maybe the Holy Ghost will see to it that justice is done.

Yet the Lawson lesson has not been entirely lost. It is possible that it has shed a light that will reflect itself on coming fights between labor and capital. It is more than probable that the lesson has already borne fruit in the more aggressive attitude of labor in some parts of the country. It has helped ever-growing numbers to realize that to expect "justice" in the struggle between labor and capital means to doom the toilers to defeat.
It will be highly interesting to watch the effect of the Lawson outrage upon the approaching trial of David Caplan and Mathew Schmidt, the aftermath of the McNamara case, in Los Angeles, California. The history of this case is illuminating of our legal and social "justice":

The labor unions in California have for the last nine years fought a bitter fight against the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, the Western branch of the Steel Trust. Every means, legal and illegal, has been used by the employers to exterminate the unions and paralyze the workers. And they have practically succeeded in breaking every labor organization in the Steel Industry from New York to San Francisco.

Where twenty years ago we had a powerful union—for instance, in Pennsylvania: the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers—today nothing but a pitiful remnant is left. Only one union in the steel industry has survived: the Structural Iron Workers. They survived because they contested every inch of ground against the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association. The result of that fight was a long war between capital and labor on the Coast. Every form of persecution and violence was used against labor, and labor was forced to defend itself. In consequence the Structural Iron Workers increased their wages from $2.40 a day to $4.40, and reduced their hours from ten to eight. Organized capital resorted to every trick to strangle the workers, and in Los Angeles a special law was passed prohibiting picketing. But the union defied the law, and five hundred men went to prison during the general strike of the metal trades in Southern California in 1910. During this fight the Los Angeles Times, the most relentless enemy of labor and of humanity, was destroyed. The brothers McNamara were arrested, as a result, and then the masters made the solemn promise that the war would be stopped and that all further prosecutions of labor men would cease if the McNamaras would plead guilty. It was only on the strength of this promise that the McNamaras were finally induced to plead guilty.

Hardly ten days passed, when the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association broke every promise they made. They began the prosecution of labor men in Los Angeles and Indianapolis, and did everything in their power to railroad to prison the most effective members of the unions. And now, four and a half years later, they have arrested David Caplan in Seattle and Mathew Schmidt in New York, and brought them across the country to Los Angeles to put them on trial for complicity with the McNamaras.

This perfidious activity of organized capital has made labor in California realize that the courts are controlled by the employers, and that labor cannot expect justice. They now understand what a fatal mistake was made in the case of John Lawson. The workers depended on the innocence of Lawson for his acquittal. They failed to act, expecting justice to be done.
At least some of the labor elements on the Coast are awakening to the situation. They feel that they cannot expect justice from the courts of the exploiters. They have now determined that more aggressive and militant action is necessary, if labor is not to be submerged by the oppression of capital. They are beginning to see that throughout the country the masters are picking out the most effective and intelligent fighters from the ranks of the workers and railroading them to prison, to terrorize labor and stifle the spirit of liberty and independence. The Lawson case, the case of Ford and Suhr, of Rangel and Cline, of Joe Hill, and the many other cases now pending in the courts of New York and elsewhere, all show what capital intends to do to labor.

Is labor really going to keep quiet and submit to this persecution and slavery? The unions on the Coast have determined that they will not. They are calling upon every one in sympathy with labor to join the great movement to stop the aggression of capital. They have decided on strong militant tactics to defend the workingman, his family and his union against the tyranny of the bosses.

They have issued the call to every central body, affiliated unions and radical organizations, to join hands at this most critical moment. This is not a question of theory or of philosophic ism. It is the great war of labor against capital, a struggle of life and death. In this struggle all local and theoretic differences may be safely forgotten, and all friends of labor make common cause.

I have been sent as a special delegate by some of the California unions to help organize the solidaric and militant forces of labor throughout the country. It is evident how significant this case is for the workers in general. It is imperative that they combine in solidaric unity in this vital matter, to register in mighty accents the sentiments and determination of the oppressed. Thus were Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone torn from the clutches of the jungle beast. Thus were returned to liberty Ettor and Giovannitti, Carlo Tresca, and other fighters for the better day. But whenever the workers failed to sound the tocsin of solidarity and make their gesture of protest, their prisoners of war have invariably remained the hostages of the enemy.

Organizations and individuals who are willing to give us their moral and financial assistance, should immediately send resolutions and funds to Tom Barker, Secretary Building Trades Council of Los Angeles, and Treasurer of the Caplan-Schmidt Defense Fund. Address, 201 Labor Temple, Los Angeles, California. My own address for the present is 917 Fine Arts Building.
Father and Daughter

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

The church is a hulk of shadow,
   And dark is the church's spire.
But the cross is as black as iron
   Against the sunset's fire.

The shops and sheds and hovels
   Are massed with the church's shade;
And a girl with a face like a lily
   Is plying her wretched trade.

And a drunken man reels homeward
   With a sullen leer in his eye.
And the street is filled with children,
   That play and wrestle and cry.

A broken hurdy-gurdy
   Rattles a hollow tune,
And a light as yellow as fever
   Shines from the vile saloon.

Two men are talking together,
   They pass where the children are;
And one wears a robe of sable,
   The other a silver star.

And one of them goes to vespers
   And one of them makes a search,
And one of them enters the groggy,
   And one of them enters the church.

And a shot is fired by the drunkard,
   And the girl falls dead in the street;
And God is peaceful in heaven,
   And all in the world is sweet.
I
Hierocleia, bring hither my silver vine-leaf-carved armlet and the mirror
graven with two Maenads,
For my heart is burned to dust with longing for Konallis;
And this is the silver armlet which pressed into her side when I held her,
And before this mirror she bound up her golden-hyacinth-curled hair, sit­
ting in the noon sunlight.

II
I, Konallis, am but a goat-girl dwelling on the violet hills of Korinthos,
But going down to the city a marvellous thing befell me;
For the beautiful-silver-fingered hetaira, Myrrhine, held me nightlong in her
couch,
Teaching me to stretch wide my arms to receive her strange burning
caresses.

III
Fair young men have brought me presents of silver caskets and white
mirrors,
Gold for my hair and long lemon-colored chitons and dew-soft perfumes
of sweet herbs.
Their bodies are whiter than Leucadian foam and delicate are their flute-
girls,
But the wild sleepless nightingales cry in the darkness even as I for Konallis.
We, Konallis and Myrrhine, dedicate to thee, Proserpine, two white torches of wax,
For thou didst watch over our purple-embroidered couch all night;
Was it thou who gavest us the sweetness of sharp caresses?
For at midday when we awoke we laughed to see black poppies blooming beneath our eyes.

The doves sleep beside the slow-murmuring cool fountain, red-five-petalled roses of Paestum strew the chequered marble;
A flute-girl whispers the dear white ode of Sappho, and Hierocleia by the pool
Smiles to see the smooth blue-sky-reflecting water mirror her shining body;
But my eyelids are shunned by sleep that is whiter than beautiful morning, for Konallis is not here.

O reeds, move softly and make keen bewildering music,
For I fear lest Arkadian Pan should seize Myrrhine as she comes from the city;
O Artemis, shed thy light across the peaks to hasten her coming,
But do thou, Eos, hold back thy white radiance till love be content.
VII

Last night Zeus sent swift rain upon the blue-grey rocks,
But Konallis held me close to her pear-pointed breasts.

VIII

Sappho, Sappho, long ago the dust of earth mingled with the dust of they dear limbs,
And only little clay figures, painted with Tyrian red, with crocus, and with Lydian gold,
Remain to show thy beauty; but thy wild lovely songs shall last for ever.
Soon we too shall join Anaktoria and Kudno and kiss thy pale shadowy fingers.

IX

When Myrrhine departed I, weeping passionately, kissed her golden-wrought knees, saying:
“O, Myrrhine, by what god shall I keep the memory of thy caresses?”
But she, bending down like golden, smiling Aphrodite, whispered to me;
And lying here in the sunlight among the reeds I remember her words.
Hierocleia, do thou weave white-violet-crowns and spread mountain-haunting lilies upon my couch,
For Konallis comes! and shut the door against the young men for this is a sharper love.

XI
This is the feast of Iacchus; open wide the gates, O Hierocleia;
Fill the kraters and kuathoi with sweet unmixed wine and snow; bring thyrsus-wands,
And crowns of pale ivy and violets; let the flute-players begin the phallic hymn
While the ten girl-slaves, drunken with the god, dance to the young men.

XII
Hedulia now lies with Myrrhine who aforetime was my lover,
But seeing Hedulia she forgot me, and I lie on the threshold weeping.
O marble threshold, thou are not so white nor so hard as her breasts, receive my tears
While the mute stars turn overhead and the owls cry from the cypresses.
XIII

Wandering in tears about the city I came to the dark temple of Priapus;
The tall, naked, scented-tressed priestesses taught me the mysteries,
And I lay between Guathina and Leuke and afterwards Chrusea and Anthea;
But now I worship the god on the mountain slopes, yet not unforgetful of Myrrhine.

XIV

This is the tomb of Konallis; Korinthos was her city and Kleobulina bore her,
Having lain in sweet love with Sesocrates, the son of Menophiles.
I lived three and twenty years, and then sudden sickness bore me to Dis
So they laid me here with my silver armlets, my gold comb, my chain and with little painted figures.
In my life I was happy, knowing many sorts of love and none evil.
If you are a lover, scatter dust, and call me "dear one" and speak one last "Hail."

Telos.
Nudity and the Ideal

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

ONE of the young men here loved the sunlight on his shoulders so well—had such a natural love for the feel of light and air upon his bare flesh—that he almost attained that high charm of forgetting himself half-dressed. . . . The country people occasionally come down to the water on the Sabbath or to sell (from their homes back on the automobile routes and the interurban lines) and for what they do not get of the natural beauty of shore and bluff, I have a fine respect. However they didn’t miss the Temporary Mr. Pan.

They complained that he was exposing himself, even that he was shameless.

Now, I am no worshiper of nudity. I’d like to be, but it disappoints in most cases. There is always a strain about an object that is conscious of itself—and that nudity which is unconscious of itself is either shameless, an inevitable point of its imperfection anatomically for the trained eye; or else it is touched with divinity and does not frequent these shores.

The human body has suffered the fate of all flesh and plant-fiber that is denied light. A certain vision must direct all growth—and vision requires light. The covered things are white-lidded and abortive, scrawny from struggle or bulbous from the feeding dream into which they are prone to sink.

It will require centuries for the human race to outgrow the shames which have come to adhere to our character-structure from recent generations. We have brutalized our bodies with these thoughts. We associate women with veils and secrecy, but the trouble is not with them, has not come from women, but from the male-ordering of women’s affairs to satisfy his own ideas of possession and conservation. The whole cycle of human production is a man-arrangement according to present standards, and every process is destructively bungled. However, that’s a life-work, that subject.

The thoughts of our ancestors have debased our bodies in color and texture and contour organically and to be seen. Nudity is not beautiful, and does not play sweetly upon our minds because of this heritage. The human body is associated with darkness, and the place of this association in our minds is of corresponding darkness.

The young man and I talked it over. We decided that it would be a thankless task for him to spend the summers in ardent endeavor to edu-
cate the Countryside by browning his back in public. That did not appeal to us as a fitting life task; moreover, his project would be frequently interrupted by the town-marshal. As a matter of truth, one may draw most of the values of the actinic rays of the sun through thin white clothing; and if one has not crushed his feet into a revolting mess in pursuit of the tradesmen, he may go barefooted a little while each day on his own grassplot without shocking the natives or losing his credit at the bank. The real reason for opening this subject is to express, without hatred, certain facts in the case of the Countryside which complained.

They are villagers and farm-people who live with Mother Nature without knowing her. They look into the body of Nature, but never see her face to face. The play of light and the drive of intelligence in her eyes is above the level of their gaze or too bright. Potentially they have all the living lights—the flame immortal, but it is turned low. It does not glorify them as men or parents or workmen. It does not inspire them to questing—man’s real and most significant business. They do not know that which is good and evil in food, in music, in color, fabric, books, in houses, lands or faith. They live in a low lazy rhythm and attract unto themselves inevitably objects of corresponding vibration. One observes this in their children, in their schools, and most pathetically in their churches. They abide dimly in the midst of their imperfections, but with tragic peace. When their children revolt, they meet on every hand the hideous weight of matter, the pressure of low vibrations, and only the more splendid of them have the integrity of spirit to rise above the resistance.

As for the clothing they wear, they would do better if left suddenly naked as a people and without preconceptions were commanded to find some covering for themselves. As herds, they have fallen into a descending arc of usage, under the inevitable down-pull of trade. Where the vibrations of matter are low, its responsive movement is gregarian, rather than individual. The year around, these people wear clothing, woolen pants and skirts, which if touched with an iron, touched with sunlight, rain or any medium that arouses the slumbering quantities, the adjacent nostril is offended.

They are heavy eaters of meat the year round. They slay their pets with as little concern as they gather strawberries. Their ideas of virtue and legitimacy have to do with an ecclesiastical form, as ancient as Nineveh and as effaced in meaning. They accept their children, as one pays a price for pleasure; and those children which come from their stolen pleasures are either murdered or marked with shame. Their idea of love is indefinite with desire, and their love of children has to do with the sense of possession.

They are not significant men in their own fields; rarely a good mason, a good carpenter, a good farmer; the many have not even found the secret
of order and unfolding from the simplest task. The primary meaning of
the day's task in its relation to life and blessedness is not to be conceived
by them. They are taught from childhood that first of all work is for
bread; that bread perishes; therefore one must pile up as he may the
wherewith to purchase the passing bread; that bread is bread and the rest
a gamble. . . . They answer to the slow loop waves which enfold
the many in amusement and opinion, in suspicion and cruelty and half-
truth. To all above, they are as if they were not; mediocre men, static
in spiritual affairs, a little pilot-burner of vision flickering from childhood,
but never igniting their true being, nor opening to them the one true way
which each man must go alone, before he begins to be erect in other than
bone and sinew.

They cover their bodies—but they do not cover their faces nor their minds
nor their souls; and this is the marvel, they are not ashamed! They
reveal the emptiness of their faces and the darkness of their minds without
complaining to each other or the police.

From any standpoint of reality, the points of view of the many need
only to be expressed to reveal their abandonment. . . . You see, I have
left the Countryside and am lost in the crowd now, any crowd, the world-
crowd, whose gods today are trade, patriotism and a certain limp-legged
tumbler.

. . . Yet we are told by every authoritative voice out of the past, and
we know it from the urge of our own souls, that we must love the many
before we can serve them. It is fatuous to love blindly, therefore we must
understand what we are about. I have touched here some small things
of the crowd, which are well enough to know; otherwise we are apt to
stand apart from the many crying: "How noble are the simple-minded!
How sweet the people of the Countryside! How inevitable and unerring
is the voice of the people!" As a matter of truth, unless directed by
some strong man's vision, the voice of the people has never yet given ut-
terance to constructive truth; and the same may be said of those who cater
to the public taste in politics or the so-called arts. The man who under-
takes to give the people what the people want is not an artist or a true
leader of any dimension. He is a tradesman and finds his place in his
generation.

The brave workman who dares be himself and go hungry for the
honor finds sooner or later a brilliant little fact rising in his consciousness
—one that comes to stay, and which future thinking must be built around:
that while the people are all that is low and bad in their change and rush
of personality, they are also the soil of the future, a splendid potential
mass that contains every heroism and masterpiece to be; that all great
things must come from the people, because great leaders of the people
turn their passionate impregnation of idealism upon them; that first the
dreamer dreams—and then the people make it action. . . .
That which we see that hurts us so as workmen, is but the unfinished picture, the back of the tapestry.

To be worth his spiritual salt, the artist, any artist, must turn every force of his conceiving into that great restless Abstraction, the many; he must plunge whole-heartedly in the doing, but cut himself loose from the thing done; at least, he must realize that what he is willing to give could not be bought. . . . When he is quite ready, there shall rise for him, out of the Abstraction, something finished; something as absolutely his own as the other half of his circle.

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**“Rooming”**

**HELEN HOYT**

I

O, I can tell when I get to my corner,
Where to turn in going to my house.
On the other corners along the avenue,
Northward and southward where the cars grind,
Are saloons and drug stores,
Glaring with signals and bright glass.
On both sides of the street the same,
One block like the next.

But on my corner is a florist’s shop
With ferns in the window
And sweet-peas and roses,
Glowing with red and pink and yellow.

And sometimes pansies
And moss.

Each night as I step down from the car
There the flowers are waiting
To say I have got home.
And I linger
Seeing gardens.
The room I have now is narrow,
Narrow
Like a coffin.
As plain and as straight
And as tight as a coffin.
Two corners at the end of it,
Are rounded off where the head lies.
Ugh!

In the bed, you stiffen
And look down at your feet
As if buried.

On the right side is the high bureau,
On the left side is the high desk—
How high and stiff and black they are!
How high and stiff and black they are
And what is "I" dwells in the cañon between,—
Where at any moment the narrowness may tumble
    and fall in upon me!
How far off the ceiling appears over my eyes!
At the coffin's head one window;
At the coffin's foot, one chair.

My room is narrow,
But wide enough.
My desk and pencils are wide as the world
And my books are like palaces and far journeys.

What have I need of space?
There is always room enough for thinking,
Or for dreaming or desiring.
There is always room enough to smile
And sing
And cry out.
If the feet are happy they can always dance
Even in narrowness.

(And a small room can be cold for a large one
When the mornings are gray.)
Closing the door I close out the world.
I am alone,
Free.
At home.
Castled.

After the mastery of the day
Now I am the master.
I expand and aspire:
I exult and strut and feel aware of myself.

The walls await me.
The mirror,
The chair.
Everything that is here is mine,
Familiar only to me;
Dependent upon my hands for use;
Dependent upon my heart for beauty.

The books on the shelf call to me,
They send out glances to me.
We have an understanding together.
They know I will come and touch them with my fingers.

But first I must get loosened from the day;
From people—
People crowding upon my shoulders.
I must loosen them from me.

How good to us doors are!
They make the whole universe not be except this room.

The curtain folds are full of quietness
And I have a great contentment with undressing.
My bed reaches out kind arms to me
And folds me in,
Awake with many thoughts.
V

How pleasant are sheets!
Smooth and fine with cool creases,
Laying comfort to your cheek,
Laying soft cleanness of touch to your throat;
Delicious with sun
And blown air
And lavender.

And then the kind wool of the blanket
Spreading out wide;
Dropping away plentifully,
Luxuriously over the edge of the bed;
Woven and spun out of living warmth,
Lightly;
Rich to possess against the proud cold.

VI

How generously into its soft yielding lap
The bed receives us now,
And its strong arms
Fold us about as a mother folds her children,—
Comforting, and long-acquainted, and secure.

Unquestioning our desserts;
Unfailing; never denying;
Never refusing our weariness;
Taking our weariness from us like a burden.

To petulance, to discomfort,
Answering with soft answers;
Smoothing away with silence our sorrows,
Till in those faithful friendly arms
We are enwrapped with quietness and content;
With old well-being of sleep.
The Ugliest Man

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

GOOD and evil, these are time-old opposites. So are beautiful and ugly. But these two opposites are seldom entirely coincident. No doubt there are good and high-class men who are commonly judged to be fundamentally ugly. And there are blinding beauties who are on a war-footing against all that we call good. The good satisfies our moral judgment; the beautiful, our judgment of taste. The one has to do with the content of human life; the other, with the form. But, at bottom, the moral judgment and the judgment of taste cannot remain entirely and materially dissociated. It was a more nearly correct feeling on the part of the Greeks when they let the beautiful and the good inter-grow. According to the Greek, the good and the beautiful, intimately united, constitute the ideal of virtue, however. We are reconciled after a fashion to the ugliness of a man if we find a great and noble soul in the repellent shell.

But if permanent beauty is to be preserved to human nature, efficient and high endeavor, free self-concentrated formation of character is the only means to this end. When the "outer man" mirrors goodness and beauty of heart, firmness and bravery of will, seriousness and depth of thought, his countenance glows under all circumstances with a radiance of happy beauty, and it would be a barbarian and pitiable eye indeed that could not apprehend such radiance or feel itself smitten with its glory. For the man of fine feeling, therefore, all that is ugly affects him morally at the same time. Indeed, the reproach of having behaved in an ugly manner he feels as keenly, frequently more keenly in fact, than the reproach of having behaved immorally.

In the case of Friedrich Nietzsche, the moral criterion of human worth was totally transformed into an aesthetic criterion! This man who had subdued all "morality" and left it behind him, who took his stand "beyond good and evil," submitted to a new evaluation, was measured according to his greatness. Greatness was nobility, supremacy, beauty. Smallness was vulgarity, baseness, ugliness. Not the wickedest, and not the wretchedest, but the ugliest man—der hässlichste Mensch—represents the power which the new culture has to struggle with—to overcome, indeed—if man is to mount to a higher plane of being.

Who is this ugliest man? Of all the Zarathustrian enigmas, this is perhaps the most enigmatic. It must have been a frightful ugliness which haunted and harried the poet-philosopher when he narrates that, amid his wanderings over men's disappointing earth, he had met the ugliest man.
Many and many were the types of human beings that Zarathustra had met in his lonely pilgrimages. Most of them he disposed of with high scorn or honest contempt,—thus did he dispatch the good and reputable, the custodians of the old tables of morals and order; then, the preachers of the doctrine of equality, who swarmed around like flies in market places, shunning all solitudes, able to exist only in masses; next the poisonous tarantulas who, with envious revenge, devised punishments, in cold blood dragged their victims to justice; finally, the wise and upright, the schoolmasters, whose duress converted all depths into shallows, managed to obliterate all men's peculiarities, till nothing distinctive was left.

But the ugliest man was uglier than any of these! These types did not so infuriate Zarathustra as did the ugliest man. At all these Nietzsche shook his head, but they did not floor him. He had been able to look upon them, to scold them, to laugh at them. "And again did Zarathustra's feet run through mountains and forests. . . . When the path curved round a rock, all at once the landscape changed, and Zarathustra entered into a realm of death. Here bristled aloft black and red cliffs, without any grass, tree, or bird's voice. For it was a valley which all animals avoided, even the beasts of prey, except that a species of ugly, thick, green serpent came here to die when they became old. Therefore the shepherds called this valley 'Serpent-death.'" Here Zarathustra found the ugliest man something sitting by the wayside shaped like a man, and yet hardly like a man, something nondescript. And all at once there came over Zarathustra a great shame, he blushed up to the roots of his white hair, he would flee this ill-starred place—the worst that there was in the whole world! But the Great Despisers, the Haters of all pity was himself so unstrung and overpowered by pity that he sank down all at once, like a giant oak that had weathered many a storm, or withstood many a stroke of the woodman's axe.

Who was this ugliest man? What was this ugliest thing which Nietzsche—the great man-spy and life-appraiser—had ever discovered in a human being? Before Nietzsche wrote, thus spake Zarathustra, he expresses himself in another work as follows: "Nothing is ugly save the degenerate man. . . . From the physical standpoint everything ugly weakens and depresses man. It reminds of decay, danger, impotence; he literally loses strength in its presence. The effect of ugliness may be gauged by the dynamometer. Whenever man's spirits are downcast, it is a sign that he scents the proximity of something 'ugly.' His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage and his pride—these things collapse at the sight of what is ugly, and rise at the sight of what is beautiful. . . . Ugliness is understood to signify a hint or a symptom of degeneration; that which reminds us, however, remotely of degeneracy, impels us to the judgment 'ugly.' Every sign of exhaustion, of gravity, of age, of fatigue; every kind of constraint, such as cramp, or paralysis; and above all the smells, colors and forms associated with decomposition and putrefaction,
however much they may have been attenuated into symbols,—all these things provoke the same reaction, which is the judgment 'ugly.' A certain hatred expresses itself here: who is it that man hates? Without a doubt it is the decline of his type. In this regard his hatred springs from the deepest instinct of the race. There is horror, caution, profundity, and far-reaching vision in this hatred,—it is the most profound hatred that exists."

Nowhere has Nietzsche told us of the zenith, who his superman is. But he here tells us of the nadir, who the ugliest man is—and the superman is the exact and august opposite. Thus we could ourselves construct his superman.

But the ugliest man—we recognize this strange figure of the Zarathustra poesy in the sharp cry of distress which all representatives of degenerate (de-genera) humanity groan out where the yearning toward a higher humanity overpowers them. The ugliest man then appears accoutered with a crown with which he has crowned his own head, and with two purple girdles which encircle him. In a later profound observation, Nietzsche informs us that the ugliest man is called der historische Sinn, the historical mind, or sense, which needs decoration, accoutrement, like all ugly things that would make themselves tolerable, at least for surface people. The degenerate man,—this is the ugly man, and the saddest degeneration is the surrender of life to the past—for the past is the big grave which swallows up all that lives. Whoever makes the past the goal of his longing walks among corpses which make him shiver. He becomes himself a corpse, whose society is freezing for living men. And because this man, assimilated to the past, living in the past, is nothing himself, he needs all kinds of fiddle-faddle to give himself the semblance of being something. He needs pomp which makes a world-stirring phenomenon out of a coronation; he scrambles and scratches after titles and orders—which long ago Frederick the Great, the philosopher-king on the Prussian throne, called the insignia of fools; he has himself accredited by father and grandfather, so that their merit may adorn the shield of son and grandson; in a word, he reverses the counsel of an apostle: "Forgetting the things that are behind," for he forgets the things that are before and reaches back for the things that are behind. And because there is for this backward-bent man an inconvenient monitor and witness of all life—because there is God, the omnipresent God, who ever sees all, even sees man through and through, this ugliest man became the murderer of God, he took revenge on the living God for being witness of the hiddenest life of man! "I know thee well," said Zarathustra, with a brazen voice, "thou are the murderer of God! . . . Thou couldst not endure him who beheld thee through and through, thou ugliest man. Thou tookest revenge on this witness!"

We have here, I think, with all that is enigmatic and obscure, a sharply-outlined picture of the ugliest man. Earlier Nietzsche wrote a book on the blessing and the bane of history for life. In that book he accorded right to
historical culture and to man's knowledge of the past only in so far as the 
life of the man of the present and of the future would be advanced thereby. 
But the historians in the schools, in chair and pulpit, did not so think. 
They acknowledged life only when it was dead! A zealous teacher of his­
tory was a meandering mummy from out the past, who had no blood more 
in his veins, no flesh more on his bones. Therefore was he so ugly. There­
fore did he create such a frosty temperature round about him. Under the 
pressure of these historical forces, all life became a cultus of the past. The 
older a thing was, the better it was. It was the long past, the outlived, that 
was noble. The more remote that past, the prouder men were of it, and the 
brighter shone its glory-beaming star to the eyes of men.

From this malady of the ugliest man, from this de-generation, we are 
by no means free. Instead of ascent to a higher genus than present man, 
to superman, there is descent to a lower genus. This antiquarian, hoary 
spirit pervades our whole social life, this re-spect for what has become old 
and rotten, for what can show no other merit than that it once—was! It is 
a sign of our own decay, this living on the dead, this ability only to resusci­
tate and copy past centuries—past poetry, past art, past philosophy, past 
morality, past religion!—this knowing in consequence no life of our very 
own. We build "whitewashed sepulchers" in our lives, because we have 
no courage of heart to create anything that belongs to life. At all events, 
that the putridity and the dead bones may be concealed, we use whitewash, 
much whitewash! We use decorations, brilliant, finely-painted decorations 
so that men may not observe that life has become a theatrical play, making 
an impression indeed under clever management, but inspiring no living 
human heart. All the splendor of this pomp, which we of today employ 
on the stage of life, cannot conceal the chilly vacuity of this whole business; 
and the man who peers behind the curtains and sees how people look shorn 
of their decorations, without powder and paint, without the artificial cunning 
luminosity of the day's puffery, has Zarathustra's feeling in the valley 
forsaken to the old green thick snake on its way to die,—Zarathustra's feel­
ing when he met the ugliest man, where much heaviness settled on his 
mind, because he did not think that anything so ugly and horrible could 
exist among men.

Yes, there are traces and traits of this ugliest man among us. If we 
but imagine all that is decoration, flummery, stripped off from us, think how 
much degenerate life would be disclosed! How much love for the dead 
that no longer lives, how much bitter strife and war over reliques, over some 
sacred cloak, or sacred bone, of which history narrates, telling us that they 
once belonged to life. How much slavish obedience to thoughts that once 
were; to institutions that once served the living. To be sure, men call this 
piety, and have thus designed a beautiful robe behind which they hide their 
moribund lives. For the sake of this piety, they exact consideration for 
all ancient dust which burden the homes and hearts of men, they arm them-
selves against him who, with mighty hand, would undertake a huge house-cleaning of life and for life. Piety,—it is this that they call admiration and veneration of every idol which for long has been played out, but still counts us of today among its devotees. Men must even deal God a mortal blow, the Living God of the living, and, with the ferocious hatred of their folly, pursue the God who sees their innermost heart as a living witness of what they would like to hide from themselves and all the world. "But he—had to die: he looked with eyes which beheld everything,—he beheld men's depths and dregs, all his hidden ignominy and ugliness . . . he crept into my dirtiest corners. This most prying, over-intrusive, over-pitiful one had to die. He even beheld me: on such a witness I would have revenge—or not live myself. The God who beheld everything, and also man: that God had to die! Man cannot endure it that such a witness should live."

Thus spake the ugliest man. Zarathustra started off, feeling frozen to the very bowels.

The God who told men that altogether they served death, not life, that they worked deterioration, not rejuvenation—had to die! Life is a dying—and yet there shoots through the heart of man such a nameless anxiety in the presence of this dying that he paints up and pencils all death till it looks like life. And indeed many are deceived, many see only men's rouge and mark not the great lie which it hides. This is the ugliest thing in the world, and it made the prophet of a new culture shudder and freeze—this, that we live and walk among corpses which yet look as if they were alive!

To fight and conquer this hindrance to a new culture, this is to fight and conquer death; and since death is death only through man, through his yearning or fear, the triumph of a new culture begins with the triumphal song of life, which knows how to make a festival out of even death. To be sure, Nietzsche did not set his most beautiful man over against his most ugly, but we can yet read between the lines what he conceived the most beautiful man to be. He is the man who has pushed far from him the last vestige and survival of fear and slave-service. He is the man who has learned dying as the great Consummator, victorious, surrounded by men who hope and vow that there shall ever be festival where a man who so dies dedicates himself to the living. Here Zarathustra-Nietzsche intimates a kinship with that other Dying Man Who proclaimed his life's victorious career in His: "It is finished!" and created on Christianity's Good Friday a festival of death. Nietzsche speaks of the Hebrew, too early dead, who would have confessed Zarathustra's doctrine, if he had attained to Zarathustra's years. It did not occur to Nietzsche that such a confession was not at all needed, because the world had perceived the glad message already which would make a festival out of death and teach men how the most beautiful festival was consecrated. Christian art had opposed to the ugliest man the most beautiful human picture: the head full of wounds
and blood, the King in the thorn-crown, who understood dying because he understood living. With this victorious song of death began a new culture, a new heroism of humanity, to which death ceased to be a pale ghost, but which confessed even in death: "as dying, and behold, we live!" Then men ceased to learn dying, and because they made no preaching of life out of dying and no vow to life, death became to them a torturing anxiety and care again; they did not dare name his name; they did not dare frankly look him in the eye. And this cowardice and lie disfigure all their action and passion; they would give to death at least the semblance of life; they would believe in ghostly existence still allotted to all the dead, rather than say to death: "Thou are a messenger of God, a revelation, a witness of life; since thou art good, I will greet thee and bless thee!"

So Zarathustra demanded of his disciples: "Let your dying be no blasphemy of men and earth; my friends, your spirit and your virtue shall still glow in your dying, like the evening red over the earth, or else death has miserably betrayed you."

Death our will even, our freedom—this is life's highest meaning! Who but Nietzsche could have thought that? Of course, this is not to throw life away, when it has become hard and heavy to bear. Such a death would be of all the most unfree. It would be a flight, not a deed; it would be a lamentation and a feebleness, not a festival of the soul! But it means that we take up death from the start into the order of our life, as the night which, no less than the day, belongs to man's full day. It means that we give to life a worth which no death can destroy, which first in death reveals its eternal power. I must die—so laments the slave, who has lived only non-entities even in his life, and has never learned that life is work, creation, consummation. I will die—so speaks the hero, to whom every fight brings the prize of a victory well worth death!—the hero who hazards his life every moment for the highest human good, who knows that he and his life have become a sacrifice from which a better, higher, freer humanity shall gain its life and its strength.

Who is ugly? Who is beautiful? Who is ashamed of his death and falsifies his deadness that it may look like life—who does this, bears death within himself as a power that drags him down, disfigures him in the fullness of which he would be able to live. But who, in his power to die, proves that he has learned to live, has overcome the ugliest thing in man, cast it out; namely, the fear of death which creates all the lies of life, and all the servility and unfreedom of men—which creates men over whom das Gewesen! the dead past, possesses power, so that they can never breathe a joyous breath, can never commit themselves to the living and the growing. But a beautiful culture will also become a good culture because one that is living is at once good and beautiful; the eternal life of God, of whom it is said: There is none good but God alone.
Emasculating Ibsen*

DEAR MR. IBSEN: I hope this letter finds you well as it leaves us the same. The reason why I write you is that I seen your play called *Ghosts* at the Bijou Movie Theater last night and I thought it was so grand that I had to tell you. I thought it was awful the way poor Mr. Alving is always seeing that hand which was pulling his hair out of the past. And it was awful too the way poor Mr. Alving crawled across the floor on his stomich and pulled the poison offn the icebox before he killed himself. The way his poor, dear mother suffered, that was terrible. She was such a strong, brave woman that I cried for her all the time. And The Rev. Manners he was such a real swell minister that my heart was all torn watching him. It ain't natural for everybody to be so good as ministers because they ain't got so much time and don't read the Bible so often. But he was certainly all there when it came to pureness and kindness. But even if the play was awful it was just grand the lesson that it taught. I sent my friend to see it and he thought it was swell. He said the kissing scenes where the terrible Cap. Alving hugs the different ladies was real stuff and that the lesson against the evils of drink was good for the young. This is what I want to write you about, Mr. Ibsen. We're going to organize a West Side Ibsen Prohibition Club and make you honary president. I wish therefor you will write the club a letter or better if you will write a sequil to the movie play *Ghosts* we will put it on at the club. I know how hard it is to have movie plays accepted because I have done some myself but if you don't write the sequil I will write it and send it to the Mutual people who put the first part on. I am certain they will take it because I will make it just so strong and powerful a sermon against the evils of drink as what you did. With best regards and hopes for your future success, I am your friend, Mobbie Mag.

*P. S. For the reader: The wet nurses who minister to the mob have put our old friend Ibsen into diapers and give him to their patients to play with. The cherubic little fellow is kicking up his dimpled heels and thriving well in all the movie houses.

Death

I HAVE always wished to know of death. I have always wondered what became of me when I went back to earth. Today I know.

I have watched a soul die and have heard its pain. Beside it I have stood and listened to its cries. I have watched it sicken and have noted how it struggled.
Life was beautiful to it. There never was so exquisite a soul. It leaped, and burned and danced when it was born. It was so radiant the dark world into which it came grew light.

I have always wished to know of death. Today I know.

It was raining softly and we sat within a room with pictures all about—a woman, fresh and young, and I—and trembled. The beauty and the loveliness of her were dawning in me. And something of myself that had not been took being. I loved. There was nothing as beautiful as her lips. There was nothing as beautiful as her eyes. There was nothing then in all the world as beautiful as she I loved. It was my soul. Restless as a song it reached from day to day to light new moments with its melody. Ever and forever it went singing, "I will live beyond the stars. I will live beyond the mystery of flesh. When the woman who awakened me is turned to dust I will live as now and sing as now."

I have always wondered what became of me when I went back to earth. Today I know.

It was so precious and so fierce. I loved so. I had but to look on her and taste of immortality.

Beside it I have stood and listened to its cries. I have noted how it struggled. In the night I have repeated its brave words, "Ever and forever." I have nursed it from her lips. I have given it to feed upon her breast.

It would not live. I loved so, I loved so—and yet I ceased to love.

There is one thing in the world that will not live. There is one thing mortal more than life. It is the beauty of which poets sing. Beauty dies in every moment. It is mortal with the hours. It flashes and it dies. It leaps and dies. It sings and dies.

I loved so and yet I ceased to love.

Her eyes became as nothing. Her lips became as nothing. Her voice became as nothing. Her laughter and her tears, the movement of her body when she walked, the strangeness of her face, the mysteries that made her one apart and glorified her and the radiance that burned in me at her approach—all became as nothing.

Miserable God. False Promiser. I have wished to know of death. I have wondered what became of me when I went back to earth. Today I know.

"The Scavenger."
Children's Poems

Alice Oliver Henderson, eight-year-old poet, wrote the following five poems when she was only seven. Her method is to chant them to her mother, Alice Corbin Henderson, who takes them down exactly as they are dictated. Mrs. Henderson thinks their interest lies in the fact that they are the expression of a child's mind, and so she refuses to change or "improve" them. Besides, it might be difficult to "improve" such lines as "The moon shines against my heart". . . . The other poems in the group were written by Percy Mackaye's children—Arvia's at the age of ten, and Robin's at twelve. Mr. Mackaye says that his daughter's were done while it was still difficult for her to read or write, but that she has always been read aloud to and has learned considerable poetry by heart.

A Mountain of Fire

There was a mountain made of fire,
Far in the sea —
It was very nice to everybody that lived in that world.
Right over in Japan, it was.
Where there are very good fighters and painters,
And very good little children,
And very good minders in that world.

Kathleen

(after seeing Kathleen ni Houlihan)

She looked very, very old when she came in.
The mother and the father that were in the house.
Had one brother in the house,
The other one had gone out
And got all the England people away
For Kathleen,
For Kathleen,
And then said, He shall be remembered forever.
She was a young woman when she went out,
And she sang when she went out the door.
The moon shines at night
When all are in bed,
And the dear little birdies sing for you
In the morning time to wake you sure.

How lovely the day is—
The moon shines against my heart—
I love the sweetness of the sky.
The beautiful day comes every morning true.

Miss Ungerich’s Japanese Play

Eyes all blackened, lips made beautiful,
Lavender under, then red over for the costume,
Acted wonderfully with her hands fixed all the time,
Bare feet, then on to the floor,
She made a thing that was beautiful.

Next was a man with a sword,
He acted the same way with her face.
Brown—gold costume, then a hat she wore,
Then a sort of stick-sword;
Then she did moving of hands and killing.
She was pretending, but there was only one actor,
Miss Ungerich.

The Snow Flakes

In the winter I saw the loveliest sky that you ever saw.
It was blue and pink and yellow and orange and white and black and grey.
That was the colors of the sky.
It pleased me so that I went and sat down.
You must think of life and the poor that war makes.

Done by Alice Oliver Henderson, Miss.
The Little Review

Fire Castles

Fast falling rain and every hill in mist
Make even my very saddest thoughts grow sadder,
And every sad thought lengthens my long list,
As, moaning over old things that make me madder,
I sit and sulk over some unkind word
And weep as if I had not wept before,
And think of words about me I have heard,
And with old thoughts grieve over them some more.
But soon, if I get up, or sit and gaze,
Telling myself stories of joyous thought
Before the warm and cheery, singing blaze,
Now all my bad thoughts in a trap are caught;
And if I gaze at castles in the fire,
Then all the while to gladness I grow nigher.

The Unknown Race

O dream, what are you?—
A fairy or a sprite,
A goddess in the air,
Or just a flash of light?

A sudden flash of joy
That brightens up my mind,
Till wonders I see now
Where first I was so blind.

Zephyr

Zephyr—Zephyr—Zephyr! Blow on, blow hard
Over hill and over dale!
O play in the green trees, leave nothing marred:
O blow—O blow—O blow a gale!
Zephyr—Zephyr—Zephyr! Play on, play long!
Play and sing in tops of trees,
And brush the valley's airy green hair strong;
Dip your head, diving down the leas!

Zephyr—Zephyr—Zephyr,
Like a little heifer,
Frolic and lie
In the field of the sky!

Good-bye, good-bye!
Frolic and turn and lie!

*Arvia Mackaye.*

**The Swimming Pool**

O! crystal-clear, transparent water,
The cool wind is thy joyous daughter.
As I glide through thee, quick and sleek—
Oh thou so quiet and so meek!—
I feel thy ripples lapping free,
And thou dost lie so near to me
I see my figure on thy face,
Entwined in shadows, linked like lace.

Oh! what art thou? what canst thou be,
That dost reflect my visage unto me?
I know not what thou seemest to another,
But thou to me art as a brother.

**To a Turtle**

O gallant knight in armour black
Blotched with grey and yellow squares,
A horny motto's on thy breast:
*Brevity* it bears.
O turtle, paddling through the grass
That skirts the cobwebbed shining lawn!
Come tell me true: where journey you
This dewy dawn?

I smell a pond, and in it are
Young tadpoles, newly hatched and fresh,
And larvas of mosquitoes plump
   And sweet of flesh;

And whirligigs, that streak and dart
Like water-lightning underneath
The greenish cat-tail spears, that shade
   The frogspit heath.

And there is oozy, deep, soft mud
For me to lie and bask upon,
And dine on lizards fat, and sleek
   Chameleon.

And there the bright-green, freckled frog
My only friend will always be.
To him I haste:—To you I bend
   My jointless knee.

Robin Mackaye.
Book Discussion

The Books of Poetry


There is considerable diversity in Mr. Fletcher's Irradiations, but one soon discovers that he has not enrimsoned himself with the standard passions of poetry. He does not display the usual contortions of love, hate, grief, and fear. Some persons have, therefore, found him aloof, oversubtle, and lacking in emotional force. This intimation that Mr. Fletcher's art is etiolated is an admission of the reader's incompleteness. Vitality does not depend on subject; nor is subtlety necessarily weakness. But the notion strangely persists that a poet must clothe his emotions in samite and dance with them around a blood-red fire to the plangent accompaniment of drums and trumpets.

To say that Mr. Fletcher has entwined himself with nature would unfairly give an impression of Wordsworthian insipidity. Yet Mr. Fletcher in many of his poems is a part of the rain, of the sand and wind, of the clouds and sky. But he is never merely descriptive. He has the power of conveying a mood in the terms of nature without intruding himself upon the reader. Let me illustrate with one of the best of his poems which has been much quoted elsewhere:

Flickering of incessant rain
On flashing pavements;
Sudden scurry of umbrellas;
Bending recurved blossoms of the storm.

The winds came clanging and clattering
From long white highroads whipping in ribbons up summits;
They strew upon the city gusty wafts of apple-blossom,
And the rustling of innumerable translucent leaves.

Uneven tinkling, the lazy rain
Dripping from the eaves.

Our tread-mill versifiers will shrink and mumble in the presence of Mr. Fletcher's clean new poetry. They who have inherited the dead mottled skin of old poetic form with its incrustation of ancient allusions, symbols, and yellowed figures, will not feel the alluring freshness of a poem such as this:

It is evening, and the earth
Wraps her shoulders in an old blue shawl,
Afar there clink the polychrome points of the stars,
Indefatigable after all these years!
Here upon earth there is life, and then death,
Dawn, and later nightfall,
Fire, and the quenching of embers:
But why should I not remember that my night is dawn in another part
of the world,
If the idea fits my fancy?
Dawns of marvellous light, wakeful, sleepy, weary, dancing dawns;
You are rose petals settling through the blue of my evening;
I light my pipe to salute you,
And sit puffing smoke in the air and never say a word.

In his preface Mr. Fletcher says the use of rhyme is in its essence barbarous; yet he himself uses it not infrequently together with such de­vices as assonance, onomatopoeia, and alliteration. He is not inconsistent, however, for he admits that rhyme used intelligently will add to the rich­ness of effect. It does:

The wind that drives the fine dry sand
Across the strand:
The sad wind spinning arabesques
With a wrinkled hand.

Labyrinths of shifting sand,
The dancing dunes!

I will arise and run with the sand,
And gather it greedily in my hand:
I will wriggle like a long yellow snake over the beaches.
I will lie curled up, sleeping.
And the wind shall chase me
Far inland.

My breath is the music of the mad wind;
Shrill piping, stamping of drunken feet,
The fluttering, tattered broidery flung
Over the dunes' steep escarpments.

The fine dry sand that whistles
Down the long low beaches.

Sand and Spray: A Sea-Symphony comprises the second part of Mr. Fletcher's volume. This symphony has much of the movement and variety of music. In manner it resembles many of the "Irradiations," and it is just as well worth reading.

Certainly there will be many who will not like Mr. Fletcher's work. Dogs will always bark at a new fragrance.

Japanese Lyrics, translated by Lafcadio Hearn.

Readers of Lafcadio Hearn will recall the many translations of Japanese haikai poetry which are scattered through his writings. Those trans­lations have been collected in the present volume. They are delicate whisps of thought, tantalizingly suggestive, most of them confined to a sentence. Here are some of them:

If with my sleeve I hide the faint fair color of the dawning sun,—
then, perhaps, in the morning, my lord will remain.
Perched upon the temple-bell, the butterfly sleeps:
Even while sleeping, its dream is of play—ah, the butterfly of the grass!

Many insects there are that call from the dawn to evening,
Crying "I love! I love!"—but the Firefly's silent passion,
Making its body burn, is deeper than all their longing.
Even such is my love . . .

The following poem, says the editor, was written more than eleven hundred years ago on the death of the poet's little son:

As he is so young, he cannot know the way.
. . . To the messenger of the Underworld I will give a bribe,
and entreat him, saying: "Do thou kindly take the little one upon thy back along the road."

Some discerning persons have asserted that "Imagism" is derived from haikai or hokku poetry. We shall leave to them the pleasant futility of discussing that theory. They may eventually discover that they are building on the shaky premise that "Imagism" exists other than as a clever word.

The Winnowing Fan, by Laurance Binyon.

My dears, we will tie vers libre in the garden. Then let us go into the parlor where Mr. Laurence Binyon will pour tea; it will have sugar in it. Mr. Binyon will read to you from his latest book The Winnowing Fan. He is a gentleman of taste and culture who is vexed at the Germans. He is meticulously metrical and counts his syllables. He will say nothing unexpected . . . . If vers libre howls in the garden, you may throw rhymes at him.

Mitchell Dawson.
Have You Read—?

(In this column will be given each month a list of current magazine articles which, as an intelligent being, you will not want to miss.)

Shadows of Revolt, by Inez Haynes Gilmore. The Masses, July.
Redemption and Dostoevsky, by Rebecca West. The New Republic, July 12.
The State of the War, by Arthur Bullard. The Masses, August.
Serbia Between Battles, by John Reed. The Metropolitan, August.
Richard Aldington’s lucid account of the Imagists and their history in Greenwich Village, July 15.
Almost any of the editorials in Harper’s Weekly.

Can You Read—?

(In this column will be given each month a resume of current cant which, as an intelligent being, you will go far to avoid.)

The reactions of the two Chestertons in The New Witness.
Midsummer fiction issues of The Century or Scribner’s or Harper’s.
The Continent on Edgar Lee Master’s Spoon River Anthology: “Each poem is in the nature of a confession, philosophical or satirical, telling secrets of human nature, good or bad—mostly bad. Because of its novelty and originality the book has attracted attention far and wide. . . . .
His attitude toward religious believers is a wrong one, and readers may well wonder at the scarcity of sincere, sensible Christians in Spoon River.”
The Reader Critic

Lee J. Smits, Detroit:

We are disgusted and impatient with "peo-pul" just to the extent that our realization of superiority fails us. That impatient attitude reminds me of the ordinary attitude of the white toward the black. The white man is not sure of himself; history and biology do not give him sufficient support. So he bullies negroes at every opportunity. Some men even are impelled to contend for their superiority by abusing dogs.

The sense of superiority abides in all living things of necessity, else no form of life would stand out against any other. Wild creatures never need argue, each with himself, as to his place in the world. His right to exist and to express himself is paramount in the animal's soul. Only man ever doubts.

Really "peo-pul" do not doubt. They with the artist's mark on them do the doubting. When it is very faint, their doubting asserts itself in strange ways and the crude egoism thereof revolts us. "Peo-pul" crawl along self-satisfied.

And why do you ask so much of artists? Why is it so important that they should use their strength in vain strivings to make butterflies of worms never destined to be butterflies or to amuse other artists who should be able to amuse themselves? If they get joy out of creating and preaching, let them preach and create—let them soar. If they get joy out of being, out of exultant living and watching, let them live, and do not scold.

The most beautiful butterfly I ever saw (some kind of "Emperor") merely rested on a lump of mud in the forest shade and very languidly moved his wings. That is all he did while I looked at him. He knew that he could fly, I knew that he could fly, and he either knew that I knew or else he didn't care.

We all know what impatience with "peo-pul" is. In the hush of a great flash of dramatic power from the stage, they giggle, and it would be good to fasten your fingers in the pulpy throat of one. They applaud idiotic vaudeville, and it would be glorious to arise, automatic in hand, and slay and slay.

That is your distrust of yourself—we all have it as much as we deserve it. "So I belong to this species!" you say.

I do not hate my dog when he seeks out carrion. I wash him with strong soap and try to explain him. I feel quite sure—most of the time—that I have come a little further than he has.

"Peo-pul" are even more interesting than dogs, when taken individually. We even have more in common with them than with other animals.

Some of them are beautiful in their simplicity, like children—unspoiled in their loves and hates, and it is entertainment to behold them; to be with them, yet not of them; to be the arch-snob, of such perfect snobbishness that it is indistinguishable from perfect humility, perfect democracy.

All the mighty ones have been artists in life; like unto children they have walked their ways, so everlastingly sure of themselves that rarely have they been betrayed into petulance by the wobbling of their sense of superiority.

Susan Quackenbush, Portage, Wisconsin:

May one who has read your every issue with joy and enthusiasm be permitted to
enter protest against that gross libel on the human race labeled *The Artist in Life*, in your June number?

Please—oh please—be an artist-in-life, in human life, as well as in sunsets and Paderewskis and Imagism, and see for one creative moment, in “terms of truth and beauty,” the wonderful, aspiring, suffering, loving, smouldering, flaming beautiful souls of that great living, growing, winged group of creations you have called—may the great human God forgive the phrase—a “mass of caterpillars!” Come and see how its soul, and the souls of its separate creations “spring from the rock” just as truly as the brook’s or your own. If they can not yet spring as far, it is because the weight above them is as yet too heavy.

When all the humans look like caterpillars to any one human, the trouble is with that one’s viewpoint. From an aeroplane, even the Himalayas look like anthills. Come down from your remote altitude and lose yourself in the beautiful, glorious psychic of the crowd—be one of them, and see what you will find!

*The Little Review* proclaims itself bent on the adventure of beauty. Is there any beauty like that of the “sad, sweet music of humanity?” What is the glow of the most gorgeous sunset ever splashed against the western skies beside the glow of the divine in the human which hurls itself upon you—and *into* you if you will let it—in a thousand beseeching, inviting, intoxicating flames from the midst of any crowd?

But only, of course, if you are *in* the midst.

Is there any adventure like the “adventure of being human”—and *with* humans? and of them? Go with Whitman into the heart of humanity—struggle with them—not from far above them—to lift from off their backs the crushing weight of wealth and masters and idle snobs and false gods so that they may get *room* to spread their wings—for they *have* wings, and then you will know them as they are, and yourself but as one of them.

If some of them still try to clip the wings of those who have struggled free from the crushing pressure, it is because of the maddening agony of their own atrophying wings. If a few seem even to be unaware of the need for wings, it is because the clamor of more insistent needs—the cries of hungry children, of bruised and broken and unsatisfied men and of suffering and degraded women—has silenced for every shame their own soul’s wing-cry.

But I think that you will find that those who perform the wing-clipping are the other butterflies whom money or position or callousness has set above the people—not those who are really of the crowd. They of the crowd *love* wings, and those who truly use them.

I am not daring to attempt reply to the statement which inflames me most, lest I become profane and entirely incoherent. I mean, of course, the statement that the estimate of four or five thousand living artists would be too optimistic because that would mean four or five thousand who “have nothing in common with caterpillars.” That’s a worse libel on artists than the rest of it is on people. But I’ll try to stop with one remark and one question. The estimate is entirely too pessimistic; I positively refuse to believe there are four thousand persons alive who have or even who think they have “nothing in common” with the great splendid mass of folks; if there are, the gods have pity on them! And—has there ever been one single real and great artist, whether of brush or pen or tone, whose art and whose very greatness was not absolutely dependent upon and because of the fact that he had, and knew he had, *everything* in common with, and indeed included in his being, the beings of these whom you term “caterpillars?—these whose life and living are and always have been and through ages will continue to be the most worth while content of all art? Of course you reply: *Nietzsche*; but he was an intellectual and spiritual Rockefeller—not an artist-in-life.
And Individualism? When all have been set free to use their wings, then the few may feel free to strive toward the super-butterfly. And when they arrive, perhaps,—oh, just perhaps—they will find all the other "caterpillars" there too, and with quite wonderful wings. There are wings, and wings, and if they but serve to bear us free of the disaster of meanness and cruelty and snobbishness and injustice, who shall say they are not super-wings?

Witter Bynner, Windsor, Vermont:

I wish I could honor the Imagists as you do. Hueffer wrote On Heaven (not imagistic); and Pound wrote well before he affected a school . . . Pound has a rhythm he can't kill. But none of them, except Hueffer, says anything worth mentioning. They build poems around phrases, usually around adjectives. George Meredith has thousands of imagist poems incidental to each of his novels. But he knows their use and their beauty. These people wring tiny beauties dry. I can imagine a good poet using their methods on occasion, but he wouldn't be so damn conscious about it. On the whole, the Imagists strike me as being purveyors of more or less potent cosmetics, their whole interest being in the cosmetic itself, not even in its application. Poetry gave signs of becoming poetry again and of touching life—when these fellows showed up, to make us all ridiculous.
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The Unbroken Chain, by Romain Rolland. The New Republic.
Dostoievsky and Tolstoy, by James Huneker. The Forum, August.
The Uninteresting War, by Max Eastman. The Masses, September.
Our Friend, the Enemy, by Alice Corbin Henderson. Poetry, August.
Nearly everything in The Egoist, August 1.

Can You Read—?
(In this column will be given each month a resume of current cant which, as an intelligent being, you will go far to avoid.)

The "Free" Poets, by Michael Monahan. The Phoenix, September.
Pearls from The Outlook for August 11, in regard to the Becker trial:

What can we learn from this story of trust betrayed, of dishonor in high places, and of a three years' legal battle over a crime which demanded immediate retribution? Certainly the law did not come out unscathed from this controversy. It is a familiar story, but it will bear repetition until it is remedied—we are very much behind England in our administration of criminal law. The efficiency of punishment as a deterrent to crime is largely based upon the swiftness and sureness of justice rather than the severity of the penalty inflicted. Becker is dead; but who can deny that whatever social effect may result from his execution would have been trebled had his death come within a reasonable interval after the commission of his crime? The case is significant, not because it is an exception, but because it is typical of the process of American law.
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