NOVEMBER, 1916

Myrrhine and Konallis;
And—

“The Brook Kerith”
“Windy McPherson’s Son”
Paderewski and Tagore
“Pelle the Conqueror”
Introducing Jean de Bosschere

L’Offre de Plebs
After Thought
Das Schone Papier. Vergeudet
Prison Sketches
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Dreams
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The Reader Critic
The Vers Libre Contest

Richard Aldington
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Jean de Bosschere
Mark Turbyfill
Ezra Pound
Stefan Brazier

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Myrrhine and Konallis

RICHARD ALDINGTON

I.
The Lamp

Darkness enveloped us; I kindled a lamp of red clay to light her beauty. She turned her dazzled eyes away from the flame, which glowed gently on her arms and the curve of her body.

Lamp! If you are a god, you must be broken; if a goddess we will honour you; none but a goddess may look upon our caresses.

II.
The Wine Jar

This is a common wine-jar. The rough painter has drawn on it a winged Psyche, fluttering in fire. She is edged with a black outline, but the fire is red.

My soul is black with grief when you leave me, but glows red with delight when you set your lips on my body.

III.
Red and Black

Wine is black, but red are the points of your breasts; black are the figures of heroes on the tall wine-jars, but your lips are red. Black, the frail sea-grass, but flushed faint red the curled shells. Red is your life-blood, but black, deep black, the inexorable end of all.

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IV.

After the Orgy

It is morning; the revelers of last night have departed; the music of flutes and the voices of girl-nightingales are silent now.

Half-filled wine-cups and empty jars stand by the couches; your torn golden chiton lies by a little pool of wine, your broken girdle dangles ironically from the Kyprian's wrist.

The flowers of your crown wither in my hand, shrivelled with the salt of my tears.

Silence and withered flowers and the empty wine-cups: Ah, the last silence and the last flower-crowns on the white stele, the last wine-cup poured in the last farewell!

V.

The Offering

Women have many gods: Astarte, daffodil-hair-curled; the apple-bearing Aphrodite; the wanton Aphrodite of Cyprus; Aphrodite Kottyto; the narrow-eyed Isis of Heliopolis; the great Mother of Ephesus.

Some worship the Aphrodite of the people; some Artemis, and the violet-crowned queen of Athens; some homekeeping Hestia and some peacock-loving Here.

All the gods are beautiful and to be revered but none more than the white-fingered daughter of Mytilene, to whom I bear these daffodils and this bowl of milk as offering.

VI.

The Wine of Lesbos

The wines of Chios and Samos are more esteemed than our heavy wine. But I mingle your name with the draught and the wine is keener than the gold-flowered-crowned drink of the Deathless.
VII.

April

Yesterday we wandered out from the town, under the green silver-olive trees, gathering the flowers born from the blood of Adonis;

Under a sunny wall we found a shepherd-lad piping beside a red-crested god of gardens;

As he played the green-golden-scaled lizards and the many-spotted butterflies stayed beside him to listen:

Eros had stolen the pipes of Marsyas.

VIII.

The Paktis

Under your fingers the strings of the paktis tremble and cry out shrilly and vibrantly of love.

Am I not more beautiful than an ivory paktis? Is not my voice as sweet?

IX.

The Charioteer

Eros, charioteer of my soul, why do you torment and urge me onwards?

For in her is absolute beauty and absolute knowledge and absolute—

"Not Sophrosyne," you say? Ah, but Sophrosyne is her captive, even as I.

X.

White Rose

Here is a white rose. Take it—the sceptre of Desires and Kharites.
XI.

Her Voice

Some are lovers of wisdom, some of beauty; of Eros and the Muses. But the Myrrhine's voice is more lovely than all, 'even than yours, O soul of Plato.

XII.

Antre of the Nymphs

This is the antre of the Nymphs—sacred, hushed, and dripping with white water.

Above the holy spring rustles a plabe-tree and about the sweet-breathing meadows bloom many flowers;

River-dwelling narcissus, the rose of lovers, white gleaming violets and the wind-flowers of Kypris.

I say to them, "Hail!" For these things are holy; yet I am sorrowful, for this loveliness passes away, like the songs of the singing-birds at evening.

Love also dies and there is none to mourn him, none to pour wine or thread sombre garlands of grief.

XIII.

Unfriendly Gods

There is a god of Fortune and a god of Love; they are seldom friends.

XIV.

The Old Love

From an old love there is sometimes born a new Eros.

It was Akmene, whom I once loved, who first brought you to me. Therefore today, we will hang a garland of white violets at her door.
XV.

Another Greater

Here are pines, black against vast blue; here, the cicada sings; here, there are sparse wind-flowers.

Above us, Helios; under our feet, the breast of the great Mother; far below us, the blue curls of Poseidon.

These are great and terrible gods, yet in your shape another greater and more terrible rules me.

XVI.

The Last Song

Along the shorn fields stand the last brown wheat-sheaves, casting long shadows in the autumn sunset.

White were the horses of Helios at dawn, golden at noon, blood-red at night—and all too brief the day.

So was my life and even so brief; night comes; I rise from the glad feast, drink to the gods of Life, cast incense to the gods of Death, to Love a shattered rose; and turn away.

Hail, all! Laugh, this is the bitter end of life.
ORD ALFRED DOUGLAS has sued George Moore for blasphemy. The Queensburys were born to be fools: whenever art appears in England they become Wilde-eyed.

Whoever started the tradition of George Moore’s naughtiness? The Brook Kerith is as reverent as Mr. Moore is chaste. A long time ago we used “psycho-analysis” on Mr. Moore and knew then that he could never get out of the world without writing a book about religion. The Brook Kerith is the story of the Christian religion made out of Mr. Moore’s religion, which is Art.

HERE is another man who hasn’t written the great American novel.

Where did the superstition arise which makes writers, dramatists, painters, feel that the goblins will get them if they don’t hold to American subjects to make American art? It’s as funny as if they should say: let’s use only American-made materials and we’ll have an American art. Landscape and atmosphere effect about the only difference of temperament in nations. At least Art is so universal that the temperament of your nation is the only thing that can stamp your Art. You might write about pink pagodas in China and have American art. The temperament in these American novels would make this country seem all a western plain under a steely sky. It’s the same with their style: it’s like going through underbrush, tough and tangled and scratchy, not like walking through rich old orchards or wandering in terraced gardens.

They all sound as though they had been written in the morning.

These writers want their novels to be strong. They are: strong like an ox, not like a tiger. And they don’t even know about these American things they are writing of. Dreiser doesn’t know what a genius is (I mean, what is a genius), so he makes one: a home-made genius who comes out like home-made clothes.
These writers want their books to be homely—the great American vice: made from the people, by the people, for the people. It's merely another form of the glorification of sockless senators, etc.

They can't even name their books:
"Sister Carrie"!
"Jennie Gerhardt"!
"Windy McPherson's Son"! etc., etc.

**Paderewski and Tagore**

**San Francisco, October 1.**

This morning I lay in bed looking at the ceiling and thinking about cats. How *elegante* they are, and impenetrable, and with what narrow slant-eyed contempt they look out upon the world. Perhaps that's the way it looks through little black perpendicular slits. . . . Anyway I thought of cats, and of violin strings made of catgut, and wondered about cats and music. Is it because violins are made of living things—wood and catgut and mother-of-pearl and hair,—that they make the most beautiful music in the world?

This afternoon we crossed the hills and the bay to the theatre where Paderewski was to play. We knew that Tagore was in the city too, and all the way over we speculated prayerfully as to whether he would be at the concert.

We bought standing room, and stood waiting in the foyer near the table, where Mme. Paderewska was selling her dolls for the benefit of destitute Poland. I looked at those dolls and wanted one so much that I was afraid I couldn't enjoy the concert. They were masterpieces! I shall make myself one—perhaps like the Polish Faust, a gorgeous man with fawn-colored kid boots; or perhaps like the Zaza, a little girl of pale pink sateen with somewhat the look of Mlle. Pogani in the Cubist exhibition. She had hair of red-brown silk thread, and her dress was emerald green. She had little pellets of bright pink satin sewed on to make cheeks,—"and she sits always on the piano when Mr. Paderewski practices."

I wandered back to my standing-room and looked indifferently at the crowded house. There were too many people, I thought. And then with tears hurting my eyes and an ache in my throat choking me I called out: "There—there's Tagore—in the third box!"—and made them look quickly
so they wouldn't see me cry. There he sat in the first chair in a robe the
color of grass-cloth and a pale violet cap upon his head. From where we
stood it looked like a high forage-cap, but soft; and he wore great glasses
made of horn. There were some East Indians with him, and two Ameri­
cans—just men. I watched him until I was almost in a trance: the angle
at which his head was put on, the cheek bones that were like an extra
feature. . . . Everything that lies beyond the reach of thought and won­
ter seemed concentrated in that dark Stranger. I trembled, frightened by
my imagination and a little melancholy.

At last Paderewski came out to his piano, elegante and impenetrable.
I seemed to see him quite differently beside Tagore—a bright heaven beside
a still universe. I was so filled there was no room left in me for the
music. Once he came back and played Schumann's Warum: a nice touch:
Warum, for that great Wonderer. What could our Warum sound like
to him?

All the while I watched Tagore who sat so motionless, not seeming
to be there, until Paderewski began some brilliant harsh thing of Liszt's,
when he smiled and leaned forward. Was he thinking "What wonderful
children these are?"

After the concert we ran down to the front row for the encores. The
theatre was filled with all its noises of banging seats and slamming doors
and people moving. Paderewski looked out at them as he played, eyes
narrowed, watching with contempt: a great cat! He stopped, waiting in
silken rage for quiet, then smiled, raising his hand and striking the keys
with a sheathed paw.

Tagore went behind, and we waited to see him by the stage entrance,
in a narrow paved alley under hanging iron stairways. How he came out
through the dusk, not looking, walking alone! And he went away on foot,
simple and mysterious, into the crowds.

With that spell upon us we went back into the dark theatre. Under
the one light, chattering women were packing the dolls and a man went
about slamming up seats. An expressman came, the trunks were taken
away, and the women left as noisily as they had come. The doors were
closed, and we waited in front of the theatre under a blazing white light. A
great limousine rolled up; a laughing group came from the stage entrance:
Paderewski in a high silk hat, a loose cape about his shoulders. He got into
the lighted car, waved his farewells to the group on the sidewalk, touched a
slight kiss to someone, and was driven away into the bright city.
"Pelle the Conqueror"*

Daybreak, the last of the four "Pelle" books, will come from the publishers this fall. I wonder how many people in this country have read the other three, or have ever heard of Martin Anderson Nexo? I went into McClurg's last Christmas to buy the first two volumes, but they told me they had ordered only one copy and it had been sold. In all of Chicago there wasn't one to be had.

There was an epidemic of Jean-Christophe here; every one had to read it whether he was an audience for Rolland or not. Critics like to compare Pelle and Jean-Christophe by saying that Nexo has done for a labor leader what Rolland did for a musician. But he hasn't: Rolland tells the life of an artist and makes of it a great tract; Nexo tells the life of a labor leader and makes of it a great work of art. The difference is something like this: underneath Jean-Christophe lies a skeleton structure of Rolland's on which he is constantly working, through Christophe's experiences in art, to raise a monument to the life force; in Pelle the life force sweeps all treatises from Nexo's hands and raises a monument to art.

Labor itself is the only thing that can help labor,—the only thing except Art. People can read about the wrongs of labor in the social magazines until they are blind, and stop outside the words. But here is something to stir the imagination, to make them feel and then to think about labor. And the poor! Nexo has made an Arabian Nights' of the poor. But instead of incense and magic and white palaces with gilded domes he tells of the fragile, perfect things the poor have out of Nothing,—out of which all beautiful things are made.

That first night in Bornholm when Pelle, left all alone in the shipyard, stoops down in the half dark to see if the ground is pink as he has seen it painted on a map in Sweden—that stuck me in the heart, and I knew how it would be with Pelle in the end. That is the whole story, really: Pelle was always looking for the painted ground. In Daybreak, although I have heard nothing of the book, I know Pelle finds it for himself and makes it for the poor.

The boy Pelle I love most,—that imaginative, creative little Pelle who went about carving his animals and ships, helping Lasse in the cow-barns

*Pelle the Conqueror: Boyhood; Apprenticeship; The Great Struggle; Daybreak, by Martin Anderson Nexo. New York: Henry Holt.
and sleeping there on the dung-piles, making his way through the strange and violent life at Stone Farm. This Pelle seems to disappear entirely in the labor struggle, during the time when he himself feels that whatever he gains for the poor is not what the poor most needs. But through all the story the love of Pelle and Lasse runs like music,—dear old smelly Lasse who was never able to match his idea of himself with the world. After a life of crushing labor and frustrated courage he crawls away to die in some horrible cellars under the docks, bound to be independent to the last. Pelle finds him there,—Pelle who couldn’t take care of one because he was caring for thousands. Like the rest of us he learned that little trick from God.

People say to me that the town where Pelle learned his trade is overdrawn. "Why make a town without one normal person in it? It isn’t true to life!" It’s truer than life: it’s as true as art. Poverty, like some great Rodin, has brought these people out of the earth: some twisted, warped, grotesque, brutally handled; others beautiful or gigantic, cut passionately; their feet only left in the ground—all part of that from which they are hewn.

In the Ark Nexo shows you something quite different of the poor—the city poor. My heart always aches about the Ark, not because they are so cold there and so without every last thing in the world; but because it is such an amazing and wonderful thing to be poor. Nexo doesn’t tell about the poor from any angle of the middle-classes; he doesn’t thrust upon them the psychology of any other class; he leaves them their own souls, and their own world. He isn’t writing of the abject, of failures, or of social settlement charges. He is writing of the Poor—the poor you have always with you. It isn’t the things they don’t have that make them so poignant: it’s what they have. He tells you of one little possession and you know all they have never possessed.

I am waiting for the fourth volume to find out what it was that Ellen did. Every reviewer in the country has taken it for granted that Ellen resorted to prostitution to save Pelle and their children from starvation. But if I know Ellen she did nothing of the kind. She never could have done that. She took Pelle’s carving of the ten-croner note and had it made into money, thereby causing Pelle’s arrest for counterfeiting. If this isn’t what happened then there is no psychology for women.

Out of all the stories in Pelle I choose these three: the story of Hanne, of the end of her proud youth; the story the old grandmother at Kalle’s tells
of her love; and the story of the Great Power and his wasted Art. There never was a story like the Great Power. It alone tells all there is to tell of the working classes,—how labor jumps at the throat of labor and the poor destroys its own.

**Introducing Jean de Bosschere**

The most 'modern' writer Paris can boast, not excepting Apollinaire,” is the word that comes from Ezra Pound. His *Ulysse fait son lit* was published in the August issue and *I'Offre de Plebs* will be found in this one. He has brought out many volumes, has been translated into Russian by Veselofsky, and before the war contributed frequently to *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise* and *L'Occident*.

The starting-point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion. The objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art. . . . There must be some one quality without which a work of art cannot exist, possessing which, in the least degree, no work is altogether worthless. . . . What is this quality? . . . Only one answer seems possible — significant form — and "Significant Form" is the one quality common to all works of visual art.—*Clive Bell.*
L’Offre de Plebs

JEAN DE BOSSCHERE

Le Misanthrope

Je t’ai devinée, Plebs, c’est aujourd’hui
Que tu veux me faire l’offre unique.
Ce don qui, pendant l’hiver et l’automne,
Se cachait aux plis de ton manteau logique.
Et dont, sur ta bouche, tremblait l’annonciation.

Plebs

Prends solitaire, mon offrande substantielle, c’est l’Ami.

Le Misanthrope

Dis-lui ce que tu sais, Solitude,
Et n’ouvre point la porte!
Garde-moi de la Revendeuse.
Elle me cherche, comme la menagère ou le gueux
Cherchent l’azaignée entre l’armoire et le mur,
Ou la puce dans le plis troué de la chemise.

La Solitude

Il ne veut pas un Ami.

Plebs

Solitude, femelle cynique, anachorète équivoque,
Laisse parler l’homme.
Et si tu sors de ton panier d’inviolabilité,
Nous te battzons, moi Plebs, et t’attacherons dans les ceps.

Le Misanthrope

Je ne veux pas d’un ami
Qui peut baiser les pieds d’une femme,
Je ne veux pas d’un ami
Qui peut s’agenouiller en Dieu.

Plebs

C’est ce que je t’apporte;
Il est vierge et athée.
La Solitude

Il ne veut pas d’un athée,
Plebs au nez de truie.
Je lui enseignai ce que tu caches
Avec ton masque
Volé au jeune Printemps
Et à la très vielle loyauté.

Le Misanthrope

Je veux qu’il ait un Dieu!
Il faut que cela soit mai...
Je veux qu’il ait un Dieu,
Et qu’il brûle en sacrifice toutes ses amours
Et ses maisons ;
Et que, pour moi, son esprit prenne
La robe des moines
Éclose comme la peau des grenouilles
Je veux que cela soit moi...

Plebs

En vérité, il est sans amour.
Ouvres à l’ami chaste, O ! Misanthrope,
Il n’a point encore de Dieux ni de Vices.
Il est beau, et son cœur est
Comme une sphère d’or
Dans la nuit.

La Solitude

Ne parle pas d’un homme qui ne soit beau
Ni d’un homme moins pur qu’une fleur fermée
Ni moins souverain que l’image d’un palmier dans le désert.

Le Misanthrope

S’il était sur notre terre ou dans les cieux
L’ami serait plus pur qu’une fleur fermée,
Ecoute, Solitude, ce masque croit
Qu’un ami peut n’être pas splendide
Parle aux vers, Plebs, offre leur
Tes choses multilées, tes oranges gâtées,
Tes femmes veuves et tes amis!
Le Misanthrope

Je ne veux pas d'un coeur qui a aimé
Je ne veux pas d'un ami qui sera hérétique.
Il y a la chair et le démon de l'esprit.
Il y a des arbres et aussi des parfums;
Il y a des ombres, des souvenirs;
Il y a des images, des rêves,
Et il y a l'espoir
Et la douleur
Il y a la pensée qui serait à lui,
Et non pas mienne,
Et qui serait dans lui comme un sale chose étrangère
Dans un coffre fermée.

Plebs

Il ne te quittera pas, O ! Poète. O ! Misanthrope.
Lui, c'est son ami qui L'abandonna.

La Solitude

Un ami ne quitte pas so ami.

Le Misanthrope

Je ne veux ni d'ami que l'on quitte,
Ni d'un ami qui recule.
Je veux, celui qui, marchant avec moi dans les crimes,
Chante avec moi
Le cœur de paradis!
Je veux d'un ami qui sache mourir.

Plebs

Il sera ton esclave, O ! Poète!

La Solitude

O Beute misérable, tu as perdu!
Retire-toi, il ne sortira pas de la toile d'araignée de son ombre,
Ton masque est plus cruel que mon panier!
Le Misanthrope

Je ne veux pas d'un esclave
Je ne veux qu'il ait un Dieu.
Il faut que cela soit moi.
Je veux d'un ami qui soit un Dieu,
Et qu'il goûte des mêmes herbes que moi,
Et qu'il trempe ses mains au même sang.
Je veux qu'il me suive
Et qu'il embrasse ma tête coupée.

After Thought

MARK TURBYFILL

Sometimes you smile
(Now that it is all over)
And drop me little, thin, gray words,
Like the coins we give to the blind.
Oh I am not blind!
And they are grayer to me than your
"Do not come any more."
I dare not think that you care
How I cared then,
Or now!
And yet you smile,
And drop me your little words
While I
Hold out my hand!
Das Schone Papier Vergeudet

EZRA POUND

BEFORE you issue another number of your magazine half blank, I must again ask you seriously to consider the iniquity of the present “protective” tariff on books.

This tariff has contributed more than any other one cause, and perhaps more than all other causes, to the intellectual isolation of America, to her general ignorance, to her sodden parochialism.

I have expressed myself on this subject many times. Mr. George Haven Putnam has been fighting against the evil for years. It is one ground on which all intelligent Americans, whatever their disagreements as to literary canon may be, can come together.

I am too much buried in work to write you an article at present. There are hundreds of young men with more time than I have, to whom this is a matter not of mere general interest, but of vital and personal importance.

The simple fact is that it is very, very difficult to get foreign books in the United States. There is no facilitation of their sale. The 25% tariff serves as an excuse for an exorbitant elevation of the price of all foreign books, whether imported in sheets, or bound.

Result: Editors of sodden and moribund “better” magazines talking about De Regnier and De Gourmont as “these young men”, in 1914.

Result: provincialism, isolation, lack of standards of comparison, and consequent inability to recognize good work when it appears. When it gets praise it is praised in company with rubbish.

American writers handicapped in competition with men living in civilized countries. Export of best, and even of moderately good, artists instead of export of art.

I can’t go into the whole question of free trade. It has worked in England. It has, more than anything else, made the “Empire.” I do not see why it should ruin the Republic.

But that is not my business. I mean, Free Trade in the widest sense is not my present affair. The prohibitive tariff on books is very much everybody’s affair if they care a hang for the intellectual state of the country.
The state of the copyright laws is barbarous, but it is perhaps more the affair of the maltreated authors than of the country at large. It is evil only as other obstructory measures are evil. But this matter of excluding foreign books in the interest of a few artizans (who are better paid than authors and who seek nothing above immediate gain, and whose loss in the event of reform would be negligible) is immediate and vital.

The whole question of censorship, as to Dreiser, as to Hokusai prints destroyed by customs officials, etc., are all really minor issues, largely dependent on this matter of the exclusion of the words thought and knowledge.

If among the young writers gathered about The Little Review you can not find two or three to take up this question, to study it, to marshal the data (vide Putnam's "Books and Their Makers" to start with, re. the causes of the rise of Paris as the world's intellectual capital),—if you can not find such young authors, then your young literati are a set of rotters and the Great West is more of a mud-hole than I should have thought it.

Form, in the narrow sense, is nothing but the separating line between surfaces of color. That is its outer meaning. But it has also an inner meaning, of varying intensity, and, properly speaking, form is the outward expression of this inner meaning. . . . The artist is the hand which, by playing on this or that key, i.e., form, affects the human soul in this or that way. So it is evident that form-harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration of the human soul. The more abstract is form, the more clear and direct is its appeal.—Kandinsky.
Prison Sketches
STEFAN BRAZIER

Yen Shee

Languorously,
In my bunk within my cell
I lie.
About me circles the reek of excrement
And the more putrid inanities
Of my fellows...

However,
Sentiently,
No awareness comes to me.
About me clings a gaseous vapor,
Impenetrable!
O warm black armor,
O fragrant yen-shee cloud...

Thank you, unscrupulous jailer!

Dreams

When wakedness
Surged over me like a sea
And derelict dreams
Drowned themselves
In that deep pool of mind
Whence only bubbles come again—
At that moment
A voice crashed inhumanly,
Unlike the cadenced rhythm
Of the speech I know...
A large tin cup
Was thrust at me:
Coffee.

But dreams would not drown.
The voice said
"Here's your Java!"

Java!

Visions in the word,
And palms,
And coral strands,
And copper bodies leaping in the surf.
And anything but jails!

**Memory**

Today,
Walking the corridor,
Glimpsing the sky,
And champing at the leash of life,
I saw the lake.
And the green-fringed park
That borders it.
Do you remember,
Distant One,
The green-fringed park,
And the night,
And the coming of Love?

How long shall it be
Before we shall lie again,
Lip-kissing, limb-kissing,
There on the green grass
Of the park
That borders the lake?
Fear

Big,
And brutal,
And hateful.
I shivered in his grasp.
Hair bristled on his great paws,
Oaths stammered to his lips,
Rage clouded his huge red face,
And I was afraid.

Fear is a hell of a thing
For a man to feel.

But when I looked
And saw his eyes,
Dropping before my steady gaze,
And marked his mouth agape,
Inarticulate,
I laughed.
Fear is a hell of a thing
For a man to feel
Toward an ox.

Hate

I shall destroy my prisons.
Not because I hate them
For from them has come to me
A brighter shaft
From Freedom's pharos-tower.
But yet I shall destroy my prisons
Because they are false idols
Worshipped by lovers of hate...
To these
My scorn shall be a scourge,
My most tender thought a scorpion.
And the fire of my hate
Shall consume their concepts.

To Our Readers

Will you make The Little Review a Christmas present by renewing your subscription if it has run out? We will value it more than having our stocking filled with gold. It will make the December issue possible for us and will insure your having the magazine during the year when it is to become really good.

We couldn't have an October issue, owing to our usual embarrassment about funds; so this will have to serve as a sort of October-November, though I can't put that on the cover because they tell me it would violate some new law.

We are back in Chicago where we shall stay for a month before moving to New York. Word comes from every part of the country that young magazines are dying, and that even The Masses may have to succumb before the increasing cost of paper, etc. That must not be! The Masses is too valuable to lose and everybody must do something about it. As for The Little Review, we may have to come out on tissue paper pretty soon, but we shall keep on coming out! Nothing can stop us now.

I feel as though we have an entirely new lease on life and were just starting with what we have to say.
The Reader Critic

For So Much Imagination, Our Thanks

[The following letter was written in the thirteen blank pages of the September issue. If the understanding in it were divided among two or three million people the ways of editors would not be so difficult in a prosaic and literal world.]

Roy George, San Francisco:

I said you couldn't be as valiant as you looked, but you are. Nobody thought you'd do it. And then my blood screams through that "must say it" stuff. It's violent and it's dear. Did you call for art or artillery?

"jh." may wreck your ship. I don't doubt the sincerity of the people who feel her rocking the boat right blithely, but she'll save your soul and this issue she certainly has saved. Her page! No one out of San Francisco can get the rest of it and no one in San Francisco can get this that she's pulled down right out of the stars; but it's just the touch to put you in Abraham's bosom at the last. Imagine it now in the grins of your friends, and around the hearthstones of your enemies—your worst enemies. The Breakfast! The Sheriff! "Tearing her hair for humanity" will save "her" when she's arrested for her seductive, seditious, and sudoriparous diatribe against—is it "against"? It's not a diatribe, it's an exposé; it's an exposure, an indecent exposure of the crying disloyalty of humanity to humans, stripped stark. Families? And oh, there are some such nice families. But maybe they never thought about this. The great process is "on." But who'd have known the earth was beginning to whirl on a new axis poking out through the crust in Mill Valley? Oh I think you said a lot in a little, flaming Angel. With discernment, too.

You were right. Why should the pages be filled until by something that simply will not be denied? Your analysis is sound, if it is in a footnote, and there's a mighty sane protest in the blank pages against the general welter. It's only the beginning. It is the beginning. It shows that even an editor may claim a little the inner sense of the dignity of life, that the prosy demands of a paid-up constituency for fodder—paid up, hell!—may be deliberately set aside if one needs a sweep for one's vision or room to swing an axe or a chance to breathe, or if he sees a chance to save his soul by suddenly taking a firm hold on that fundamental of individualism that says "I will not do what I really don't want to do" and by holding on until he's chinned himself three times whatever chinning the rest may do over it. Look like the end? How can it! How can a man like F. L. W.?—but maybe he's right; maybe he means the other end; maybe he could see what a beginning it was; but to most people it takes the actual sight of the blank pages to get a sense of what's written so clearly on them. You saw it. You felt it. And aside from the effect it will have on the world,—for it can never again be said that "they have to print it because they can't get anything better"; and it will be said many and many a time in defense of Modern
Letters, or a Summary of the Best of Contemporary Thought

that an editor did one

time assert her belief in herself, did blue pencil an entire issue and did contribute
twelve consecutive pages to contemporary thought, the best thought at least that her
subscribers are capable of, for they're left to do their thinking for themselves, and
if the thought's not as consecutive as the pages it's not the first time that that little
matter has come to light when readers have been brought to book; and when you've
said something so directly that "it can never again be said" it will have its effect, and
when you've made a contribution to pure thought it's bound to have its effect for
it's the confusion of tongues that keeps even the other kind (not impure but unpure
thought) from having its effect somewhere in an ineffectual world—aside from the
effect it will have on the world look at the impetus it gives you. Here are you with
twelve pages that you can tuck under your arm any time, day or the black night
between days, and march straight up to heaven's gate and demand a reckoning on.

The end? when you've here said twelve times over, for the first time, absolutely that
it's ever been perfectly said: "No compromise!"

Would to God some judge—(he will; they will,—I was near showing a lack of
faith in the power of this thing you've done)—some judge will step down from his
bench and leave a sentence unpronounced because the law shan't bind him to injustice.
Some preacher will come to his pulpit with his manuscript a blank because he can't
compel his hand to write more platitudes. A thousand artist hands will break the
thing they've chiseled at, and search their souls with yearning for the thing they are.

The end? This will be quoted. I refrain from mentioning the time when all else is
pied, including magazine magpies, and when the arch-fiend has gathered disloyal archi-
tects and all their works.

This says: "Life is long." This denies all that the poets have sung, and the
prophets have waited and philosophy has deluded us with. If the poets have gathered
rosebuds while they may, this makes no haste to gather thistles. If the Jeremiahs
have said Woe! Woe! this says "Whoa" once and compels it; and the philosophy of
this thing, instead of dividing art from its essence and proclaiming that art is long
and life is short; identifies life and art and says they're—both long—long enough. Life
is long enough for art—just. For art proves itself worthy only as the work of the
artist proves him able to work true while he lives and proves him great in so far as
his record shows him able to live true while he works. Dauber was all wrong, if art
is achievement, or he could never have had it in him to do the thing he was to do and
yet lose his grip on the yard-arm however the wind blew; but he was right, whether
of life or of art, in his dying cry "It will go on." He knew you.

These pages are a record bearing on life and art and you. They say that life is
long—long enough for pauses, long enough that haste is your only real sacrilege and
the artist's great outrage on life. They do not deny that the seasons are short,
whether seed time and harvest or the mating of turtle doves and snails, or even the
theatrical season or the press date; but they do define an attitude towards one's work,
and it's the direct expression of the artist mind. Here is a protest against that haste
that does what it may instead of refusing to do what it must not. And this is not
youth saying I will do as I damn please, but judgment saying I will avoid doing what
I please not; not a baby demanding the moon at all,—merely a proper young entity
refusing a rotten piece of cheese. And as for its bearing on you, here is a record
of existence, a record of a striving toward that happiness that comes through an understanding of life, a grip on life—the grip that Dauber didn't have.

You have life in your hands. You have everything. Never mind, you have. Something for your hands to dig into—a friendly attitude towards life, and an abiding faith. And these are the essentials. They are. Absolutely. They are the three essentials. A piano and a friend and one star—it's enough. It's all there is: something congenial for the hands (literally) to do when heart and mind can't quite, quite get the grip on things; the capacity for friendship; and faith in one's stuff. And I said no one could be as valiant as you looked!

It's easy to imagine your young god springing from the ranks of labor, and as for the oppression of family life I'm starting a subscription to establish a perfectly new ocean and build one big springboard for the proper-launching of an army of sixteen year old girls that I see heading this way from a thousand typical American homes. God bless us, but your mind is a crystal stream out of the high hills. I can see it,—I who had the one perfect home in all the world, with a mother who was afraid I'd be hanged and a father who was afraid I wouldn't, with grandfathers who painted all the world for me and a pair of grandmothers who made home better, with a brother to keep me beat up and a sister to mend my bones and bind me with bands of affection,—with all the loveliest ties and with freedom in everything from the first—if I can see it who is there that can't?

Just to have a race free so they can have a friendly attitude toward life, with eyes for the marvel of it and half an understanding of each other—it's such a little thing you ask because it's what everybody really wants. Surely the world won't have to be told it twice.

Loyalty?—how it crowns the graces and means the thousand things never dreamed of in a marriage vow and the platitudes of family pride. Your loyalty to yourself this time will feed your individualistic marrow in its bones. I glory in your shame.

Wuzzed Thinking

Anonymous:

Recall to mind the ultimatum of Max Eastman: "... Our literary intellectuals will have to go to work. (!) Otherwise we shall merely have to enjoy them like a song. They will have to pass their examinations. (!) Science holds the power to make all intellectual literature mere dilettantism and nothing but resolute giants of brain with feeling can prevent it." Reflect the philosophy of the age, and you will have served Art. Do not attempt to rise precipitously and gaze rapturously into the Blessed Isles, floating without our sphere, situate in the fourth dimension. Come to Jesus!

[Reflecting the philosophy of the age has no more to do with Art than holding the mirror up to nature.]
The last number pleased me especially for your satisfying definition of art versus life. It is the most complete and the most epigrammatic I have ever met with.

“My Word!”

Louise Bryant, New York:

BEAUTY

O foolish ones
Who lament
Because all the beauty
That you discover
Or that you create
Out of your minds
Is not posted
On a mountain
Before the eyes of the world—
Know you,
It is no less beautiful
Because all do not behold it.
It is no less beautiful
Because it remains in darkness.
Beauty is the same always,
It is itself
No less and no more.

From Berlin

Charlotte Teller

To my surprise, I found that Marsden Hartley had stayed on in Berlin in spite of the war; and that he was still living in the same place, the garden house, up three flights, at number four Nassauische Strasse. The world was whirling in martial mid-air, and all the planets were out of place. But Hartley had the same rug on the floor, and the same Persian stuff on the brown wall. And the next room was full of canvases—some forty; a few, done in Paris when he was just beginning to want the Northern Light stronger than France could give; most of them done right here in these rooms.

When the door was closed, the room might have been a magic carpet carrying us out into anywhere, where there are planes cutting into each other, where lightnings zig-zag outlines against black space, where colors refuse to fade, but stay sharp and clean, like good morals.
Marsden Hartley used to be told that he looked like Ralph Waldo Emerson. But since I last saw him he has lost that look of strife with the flesh which gives all Emerson's portraits a tortured undercurrent. What was before New England philosopher with a touch of the bird of prey is now Indian,—the old, rare, eagle-like Indian whom we have betrayed without counting the loss to the land whose life he knew back to Aztec days. On the card over Hartley's door-bell some boy has drawn in pencil an Indian. It looks like him. He does not know if it were done to protect him from being taken for an Englishman, or as a portrait. It serves as both.

The portrait I had seen of him when I was in Berlin two years ago was a dream he told me he had had. He had seen a pigeon tied by its feet to a great rock, struggling to get free: He watched it in torment; and saw finally how it flew off, leaving its feet bleeding upon the rock. And he has flown far.

One canvas that he showed me was painted in June, 1914, before there had been the slightest whisper of war. It expresses his feeling of what he calls "ecstasy" on the part of the dragoons at the maneuvers he had seen. A rising dome, the eternal symbol of endeavor weighted by the desires of the flesh, not able to cut clean like the triangle, the flame-sign of the Persians. And in this dome, and on either side, white horses, mounting, red trappings, white uniforms, and black boots; all of them pouring upward to a high point somewhere far outside of the painting itself. Here is the very spirit of Germany, proud of its display, not yet chastened by the grief of glory.

He has caught Germany and America, and grappled with them in the depths of their own consciousness. Planetary things there are in his work, gracious and balanced, weird and restless—"sensations" he calls them for fear of intellectualizing the emotions he has. But it is all his world. He does not pretend to share it with anyone, although he spreads it before you and listens, or half-listens, to your interpretation of circle and star and streaked skies.

I do not pretend to understand even the theories of these new schools which burst out before the war; and I have no theory about Hartley's paintings. I feel them, as I might feel a lyric from the Sanscrit if it were read me by one who knows that our modern speech is buried deep in this old language and must inevitably echo forth. When the rhythm swings round and round within the four sides of the frame, I know it as rhythm, although I might not be able to tell what begot it. When the motion set up by color and line goes sweeping out beyond the frame, beyond the walls of the room, beyond Berlin, and Europe, and the age we live in, I get the excitement of it, and I don't mind the loss of breath.

What Does It Mean?

Arthur Purdon, Livingston, Montana:

"A Real Magazine" just arrived, but it isn't. Art, like music, dies when talked about. The September Want Ad makes me smile. The Little Review is degenerating into the newspaper class, and has become a common beggar. It does not know how to keep its machinery out of sight. I sometimes wish I knew how to make a bomb. If I did I would be tempted to place it under The Little Review and blow its talk.
about past, present and future straight to hell. I am interested in an infinite present above time and space, that indefinable something expressed in music. There are no such things as Past, Present and Future. They are hollow hallucinations. The Little Review still worships at the altar of time and attempts to concern itself with temporal things.

Music or Art when labelled disappear. The think itself is quite sufficient. Don't you sometimes get a bit tired of talking so much about Art?

[No; what we get tired of is people like you and Alice Groff who talk out of the air, as though thoughts are made of air as words are made.]

Officer, She’s In Again!

Alice Groff, Philadelphia:

You are an insane isolist (ha! ha!)—a mad little self-made God, setting yourself on a pedestal as the only judge of Art (?)!!)

Every artist is the sole judge of his own art. Don't you know that? You may not like his art—but you have no right to say that it is not art. It is the embodiment of his ideal, and this is all that art is—an embodiment of an ideal by the soul that conceived the ideal. There is no such thing as good art or bad art. There is only art. Of course, you, as an editor, cannot publish every boy's art. You must discriminate and select, to appeal as far as possible to your clientele. But don't presume to say that what you reject is not art.

All that an editor can ever be as to art is a medium between the artist and the world. All that he can ever do is to bring the artist to the light of day that the latter may have a chance to speak the word to those of whom it is the word of life as it is for himself. This is all that the editor can do for himself even as an artist. The editor who fails to do this is unworthy to be an editor.

We Also Await

Anonymous:

I have never enjoyed any number of The Little Review so much as the September. Those blank pages linked with the cosmos: space before creation. I await Prometheus.

Everyone scolds you. May I? Forget propaganda and give us beauty, eternal, immutable, radiant beauty.

So Did We

Daphne Carr, Columbia, Missouri:

I bless your new enthusiasm and its effects. That half blank number was splendid—what there was of it, but I wanted to see as spirited things on the other pages too.
The Vers Libre Contest

The poems published in the Vers Libre Contest are still in the hands of the judges. There were two hundred and two poems, thirty-two of which were returned because they were either Shakespearean sonnets or rhymed quatrains or couplets. Manuscripts will be returned as promptly as they are rejected, providing the contestants sent postage.

The results will be announced in our December issue, and the prize poems published.

—The Contest Editor.

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