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DESIRE

Once you were always calling me,
Calling me when I could not answer,
Urging me where I could not follow—
So that I wished I had been born without desire,
As a stone.

But now many days you have left me,
And in the silence I have learned your meaning.

For a part of me is gone when you are gone;
I am less
And the world is less.

O let me have my longing back again!
Now gladly I will bear it;
Gladly I will hold it to me,
Though without release;
Always.

For what would be the pride of the sun itself
With its light gone?
O kindle me again, desire.
Return to me.
Return.

ESCAPE

O you, most gracious,
With soft breasts
And laughing kind eyes;
You, of so deep gentleness,
And wide-seeing, calm,
Unlaboring wisdom—
Whose body I love:
Let me be your baby!
Take me into your body,
To carry me unborn;
For I am tired now of being grown up
And thinking, and knowing:
I am tired of having always to will and make.
Let me sink myself in you,
In your love and steadfast quietness,
And not be fretting or contending any more.
Attainment allures me
And taunts me,
And I am weary of being urged.
I would like to rest from this living:
I would like to stop, and not be, for a long time.
Until I have rested and rested from life!
Take away what I have become
And let me be again unborn—
An unborn baby, and you carrying me:
Merged in you;

Not needing to live of myself:
Having my life through your life:
My peace in your serene,
In your sufficing strength.

RIDDLE

Physical,
So that nothing is more of the flesh;
Yet spiritual,
So that nothing is so wholly spiritual.

Without dignity,
Awkward, uncomely;
Yet of majesty equal with death and birth
And sacred with them.

Solemn,
What is more gay?
(With almost the gaiety of childhood)
Simple and swift and brief,
What in all the world is longer,
More intricate of result?

Desired above all joys,
And above all joys fled from;
To each new man and woman seeming utterly new,
Utterly their own
As if never tasted before;
Yet the property,
Common as dust,
Of all the millions of the world;
Old as life.

VITA NUOVA

I have entered into my heritage;
I also am one of the kingdom.
Oh it is good to the heart,
The pride of it swelleth the heart,
The love of it reacheth forth the hands in greeting.
Lo, I have part in the clouds
And the stars are mine and the sunlight;
The tall grass swept by the wind,
The silence of trees is for me;
The color and form of things,
The rapture of sound:
Thoughts that are born in my heart
And urge their way to my tongue,
Only the sweetness of them can never be gauged or
uttered.

NOVEMBER AFTERNOON

Upon our heads
The oak leaves fall
Like silent benedictions
Closing autumn's gorgeous ritual,
And we,
Upborne by worship,
Lift our eyes to the altar of distant hills.

Beloved,
How can I know
What gods are yours,
And how divine the visions of your spirit,
Or hear
The silent prayers your heart has said.

Only by this I feel
Your gods akin to mine—
That when our lips have met
On this last golden autumn afternoon
They have confessed
In silence
Our kisses were less precious than our dream

Today,
Our passion drowned in beauty,
We turn
Our faces toward the hills,
Where purple haze, like incense,
Spreads its veil of mystery.

THE LAST ILLUSION

Along the twilight road I met three women,
And they were neither old nor young,
And in her hands each bore what she most cherished,
For they were neither rich nor poor.

And in the hands of the first woman
I saw white ashes in an urn,
And in the hands of the next woman
I saw a heavy, jagged stone,
And in the hands of the last woman
I saw a tarnished mirror gleam.

Along the twilight road I met three women,
And they were neither fools nor wise,
For each was troubled lest another covet
Her precious burden, so she walked alone.

DISILLUSION

I touch Joy and it crumbles under my fingers.
The dust from it rises and fills the world.
It blinds my eyes, I cannot see the sun.
A choking fog of dust shuts me apart.

I remember the sparkling wind on a sharp autumn morning.

I let down my hair and danced in the golden gale,
Then chased the wind as the wind chased fallen leaves—
Wind cannot be caught and tamed like a bird.

I touch Joy and it crumbles to dust in my fingers.

LATER SONGS

I

The one who gives them out is short of dreams,
With jealous husbandry
He deals them carefully,
One dream to every two people.
"You must share it,
We're short of dreams," he says.
But they
Are only glad of the excuse of sitting down
To the same dream—

II

Perhaps,
God, planting Eden,
Dropped, by mistake, a seed
In Time's neighbor-plot,
That grew to be
This hour?

III

You and I picked up Life and looked at it curiously;
We did not know whether to keep it for a plaything or
not.
It was beautiful to see, like a red firecracker,
And we knew, too, that it was lighted.
We dropped it while the fuse was still burning—

IV

The careful ocean sews
Pools, like round blue buttons
On the gray coat of the sand.

V

The sun is dying
Alone
On an island
In the bay.
Close your eyes, poppies!
—I would not have you see death,
You are so young—

VI

The sun falls
Like a drop of blood
From some hero.

We,
Who love pain,
Delight **in this**.

VII

A woman stepped up behind me and spoke condescendingly.
“You forgot to put on convention,” she said, “and your
soul shows through.”

VIII

I waited upon a hill for the sunrise.
(It was a very little hill.)
I waited for the sunrise.
In the chill dark I waited.

And in the cool gray before any dawn.
I waited for the sunrise,
With lips apart to praise.
But when it came it was a very old sunrise,
And I went away weeping.

IX

You are calling upon me,
Fashionably clothed,
Properly prepared with small talk.
I sit sedately and help build up
The stone wall between us, with my little bricks of yes
and no.

There are hothouse flowers on the table,
New York is outside the window—and inside—
The housemaid has set the chairs as carefully in their
spheres as God could ever have placed the stars.

Within the grate
There is a fire burning,
It has nearly gone out.
It is only a smouldering red thing now.
But as we look at it
Suddenly ages crumple,
The room vanishes,
You and I are a man and woman in a cave
With fire—

X

Take what the gods give.
Tomorrow may be Monday on Olympus

VIE DE BORDEAUX, SAUCE SUPREME

(to E. L.)

August 13, 1914

Noon of the morn,
Golden,
Breeze-laden.

Fleet the hours
That carried me
Knowing and knowing not
The whither and when.

The hours connived,
Divining the road, devised the goal,
Spared me the dissonant collapse,
Mad-cap conspirators in laughter of flight,
Winking at mortal ecstasy,
Plotters of heavenly interlude.

Quivering like withdrawing wings
The day rose into **night**

Insensibly.

In my upper room I sat in the half-light
Looking out on the drab roofs,
Tiling, gutters, chimneys, chimney-pots—
Everywhere behind the clay tremulous sapphire
 ing.

I was tranquil, grew pensive,
Content of my chair—
In contemplation,
Perilous for ecstasy.
Suddenly,
Over my right shoulder,
Without design,
I looked straight at the young moon,
Perpendicular,
Peeping through the sky
Like a maiden that would.

My heart *did* bound,
And I went down into the Quinconces,
Sahara of parks, but for its trees
In flanking, vitiated ranks,
Sand and more sand
Beneath its ugly trees,
Its worm-gnawed, desolate trees,
Dropping a tainted leafage shamelessly
Though the night was summer,

Ruin and curse of trees, ignoble, scrawny,
Mercifully obscured by the night.

It is the park
And does not lack for benches.
There are even metal chairs—
In the day time they are let out for hire—
“Deux sous, s'il vous plait”—
If you happen to sit down on one,
But at night they are quite free.

So at night one goes to the Quinconces
Inevitably,
And one is several and sometimes many,
But when the moon is a maid,
Young and discreet,
One in the Quinconces by night,
May easily be two.

But never before the night of that young moon
Did two in the Quinconces
To me
Mean
You.

Oh—
I was full of the god that day,
The droll,
The secret
God!

VIE DE BORDEAUX

Grandee of Spain

Rue des Trois Conils

To E. L.

I never knew anyone else so well who did not tutoyer
me.

In the moment of the chief pain
You held the distance of the plural
Between our spirits,
Though and when
You inquired solicitously
Of my apparent suffering.

If now you were to tutoyer me
I think for me you would lose something precious,
Like a castle visited.
Lazy and obvious
Is the singular—
An intrigue in the shadow of a wall at night,
After which
You separate without knowing the color of each other's
hair.

Grandee of Spain—
Not yet,
And I am content.

THE CAFETARIA

This pillar-necked, faded-skinned girl in black and
white,

Whose eyes are like glimpses of heaving seas,
Peers up, in search of desire in your eyes,
And failing, praises her food-trays in a clinking
voice . . .

Beside her stands a mist-eyed, shrinking woman,
Whose body seems ivory draped in thin velvet.

You are a flat-colored fantasy to her—

She only sees your outlines . . .

And below her, a heavily-smiling, flitting-eyed Polish
girl

Thinks you a solemn doll she would like to touch.

TO A MAN

The once white statue of a woman, smudged and bloodied
With the dirty fingers of years, was his mind.

It lay, grave and neglected, at the base of its tall
pedestal . . .

But one day I found him washing it with his soul,
And heaving it with the strength of a smile, to the top
of the pedestal.

IMPRESSIONS OF A WOMAN

The dipping road she walked on
Had a still fringe of raised-lipped people,
Whose eyes spread out like dying water-drops,
As they gasped at her dress of braided moon-thread
And her face, a silken window laced with co
flames . . .

Thus did she seem to me
As we met upon one of the hill-tops of our lives.

A DAY

Split, brown-blue clouds are over me,
And brown-blue mist is also
Over the little hills of my sprawling moods
And under the pale blue revery of my soul . . .
Yet the hills are covered with shouting goat-her
To whom the mist and revery is nothing.

TO A. K.

This broadly-shaded, babbling man
Who barely strokes an old mandolin,
This broadly-shaded, bantering man,
Whose face is like the rain-dappled swell
Of flowers whispering through the night,
What veils him as he turns to me?

AN OLD NEGRO ASLEEP

As spilled, dried wine that colors earth,
The yellow-white light sinks into his rubbed brown face,
And perhaps reaches even the seeded dreams below,
Melting them to webbed shapes he cannot hold.
Happily so, for if he awoke still bearing them,
He would be a filled chest unable to open itself
He squats afterward, making white grinning trinkets,
And thinks them the dreams he had.

IN THE PARK

Stout woman in shades of red
And twisted-shouldered girl in a lemon-colored jacket,
Your lowered heads are slanting cups
From which fluid smiles splash upon my dry face
And in payment, let me trip beside you, pushing your
flat baby-cart,
And singing you songs of the simple trees on the way.

DEATH

Death and I felt the point of elbows on the hot, cluttered street.

His eyes were those of one who fears you may call him friend,

Who knows you will like him or hate him, with wrong reasons.

He spoke quickly, odd pauses pushing apart the words.

“I am walking now to a stupid, loose-lipped old shopkeeper.

When he is quite dead, he will be as you and I—

There is no difference in souls. . . .

We will take a piece of the road together,

As friends who are weary of glancing at each other.

Our meeting and parting will be quite casual.”

And I spoke.

“I think we are both weary of our work, Death,
And yet find a strange compensation in our weariness.”

He laughed. “You have almost fathomed me,” he said,
And walked off to the old, open-lipped shopkeeper.

JUST AFTER MIDDLE AGE

Through a window broken by its white leap,
Snow has tumbled into a small room.

It twists about the huge fallen black candles;

It licks the red feet of the tall, silk-stuffed altar;

It slowly rises till it grazes the arched, bare feet

Of a dancer, stiffened in her highest whirl.

FIRST MEETING

A softly angular woman gives me quick smiles
Which I grasp at, but never catch.
(They are like the wavering ghosts of glow-worms.)
Her voice is like an empty basket
Lined with the velvet promise of gifts.
I am a child in a cumbersome robe
Curled up in a corner, rebuked.
What must I do to fill the empty basket?

IMAGES OF EMOTIONS

I

The wind-brown columns of a broken temple
Are fixed in the green ripple of noon.
So are your sorrows enclosed by the washed-out sleep of
your soul.

II

An old man climbs up a little wet apple-tree
And hangs to its top, with raised arms,
Trying to touch the sky.
So does your desire move heavily up your soul,
And lift its bare arms.

III

Fragments of mist-covered silence pass over
The blue-white turmoil of water.
So does your love drift high above the whirl of your
sadness.

With this issue, "Others" inaugurates a Review Department in charge of Maxwell Bodenheim. In common with the pages of the magazine, reviewers will be unfettered in their expression. The department will deal chiefly with Free Verse. A. K.

THE CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY—1914-1915

Someone with a delightful sense of futuristic contrast arranged the poem sequence of *The Catholic Anthology*, placed W. B. Yeats next to T. S. Eliot, and Alice Corbin beside Orrick Johns. The poets should have been linked in simple alphabetical order, or placed in fairly friendly groups. But that is a small flaw—the anthology lives or dies through its content.

W. B. Yeats heads the book with a rhymed, ponderously cynical fling at scholars. One would have thought the subject antiquated through numerous attacks, certainly too venerable to lead the capering band of youthful souled choristers composing the anthology. After Yeats comes the languidly, pirouetting, naïve love-song of a middle-aged man, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* by T. S. Eliot. Eliot is one of the most completely-equipped original writers of free verse. He has a huge bag of grotesque, whimsically sad, new poetic emotions. His *Portrait of a Lady*, in the Anthology, mirrors him at his best. He is seated at a table, about evening, considering the poignant ghost of a past affair, suddenly arisen within him, and veiling his faintly bitter emotions with a softly casual expression. The poem is a miracle in sustainment and in the successful use of the frayed device of refrain. Next is Douglas Goldring with *Calle Memo O Loredan*, a purring, romantic poem of a night in an old palace—probably Venetian. Then Alice

Corbin with *One City Only*, a poem which quietly chats to you of the emotions of a young girl at the turning point in her life, in the city of her birth. The poem is unpretentious and succeeds within its limitations.

An unknown, or masquerader, Mr. T. E. H., follows with a war poem, a somewhat thinly outlined suggestion of the numb feelings of a soldier at the front. Orrick Johns comes after, with *Songs of Deliverance and Olives*. In the first he awkwardly strikes the brazen cymbals of youth, hating most of the things about it, longing to walk alone. In the second, he is plaintively humorous about defects in himself and others. When he becomes more than half-serious one will not be afraid to generalize about him. But now—no.

Alfred Kreyborg has a small unfortunate representation, through no fault of his own. Edgar Lee Masters bestows a Spoon River group, photographs clear in detail, leaving no part of the way for the reader to traverse himself, listing the main incidents in the lives of small-town types, with heavy accuracy. Harriet Monroe has a long poem, a *Letter from Peking*, almost eight pages, I think, which should have been squeezed to thirty or forty lines. She is out of place in the anthology, her moods of sentimental reverence are not part of the new poetic trend. As an appreciator of poetry she is a giant, but as a poet, she is too far behind the van.

M. B. has two quaint-imagined poems. Harold Monro is always a bit uncertain of himself, his unsubtle emotions brush over you, and leave no impress. Carl Sandburg is at his best in the book, with two poems, *The Harbour* and *The Road and the End*, examples of the repressed, lightly-sad style he sometimes is fortunate enough to use. In these poems he neither rants nor shouts and we have temporarily a new Sandburg. Allen Upward dis-

plays some stiffly-sketched, obvious Chinese tales—Chinese Lanterns. Then William Carlos Williams with *In Harbour* and *The Wanderer*; the first, a whimsical, delicately unhappy song of ships creaking at their ropes near the beckoning sea; the second the impressions of a sort of intangible Wandering Jew, who cannot quite understand the things he stumbles through, the garish city, the factory town, streets and fields of Europe. It is a little too drawn out, too reiterated, the only thing impairing its solemn, tired flavor.

At last we approach Ezra Pound, gaudy, wide-souled assembler of the book. He has a group two miles below his best, and six above his worst. His *Further Instructions* and *Study in Aesthetics* show him in a mildly jocund, smoothly satirical mood, slowly grimacing at himself. John Rodker ends the book with some Choric School examples in which he enters a little blind alley, of rythmical sound and diluted intricate emotion.

M. B.

(ELKIN MATHEWS)

POEMS BY JOHN RODKER

John Rodker is a weary-souled, intricately sensual, evanescent poet. He starts where a great many poets end, and takes one uncertain step, but he cannot be placed above these poets until he has taken another, surer stride. It is impossible to rate him. Out of his present half-splendor may come something or nothing. When he unites a delicate simplicity of wording with subtlety of subject, he entirely succeeds. But sometimes his multiplicity of half-moods is piled too thickly, one upon the other. He has in some degree the poetic essentials, compression, imaginative-originality, and restraint—the material out of which his future figure may be molded.

He is twenty-one—perhaps that is why he foolishly

opens his book with a credo, a stiffly written, rhymed introduction in which he attempts to show his purpose and, instead, weaves a mournful veil. Poetic introductions are curiously futile. A book of poetry either stands alone or falls. If it is good, it has a sweep of imagination, an interplay of mood, too wide to be squeezed into a little didactic box.

The very first poem, *A Slice of Life*, shows Rodker at his worst—a little bit of intangible gymnastics, of still-life melodrama—things floating out to the sea. It is barely saved by a quiet, almost indifferent treatment. Below it on the same page is another fragment, a hint, a glint, which says almost nothing, but veils much.

“Desperate and disdainful showed his wares. . . .
Stupid things, . . . laces, studs, . . .”

Santa Maria, *Immanence* and *Item* are the most alluring of his things along the way to his longest poem—*London Night*.

Santa Maria is the simply, softly-repressed expression of mingled sadness and joy too remote to be touched. *Immanence* barely sketches a trance-flowered sadness, a mood whisking past you. It is like a fleeting caress. It is perhaps the best poem in the book. *Item*?—a subtly humorous piece of glass in which lies the glazed, broken portrait of a woman.

And now *London Night*—Rodker's self-portrait seen through the incidents and reflections of an evening. We have him here, a youth half-afraid of the life-tangle about, half satirically sad, and at times bewildered or disdainful of the elaborately acting people about him. If it were only sustained, it would be his best.

Rodker has written too little to be accurately measured. But one can say, in all fairness, that he has indisputable hints of future ripening.

M. B.

MUSHROOMS

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In consequence, this volume to which about fifty men and women have contributed, cannot be overlooked by any lover of poetry or of literature.

“ . . . They are among the live things being done in America just now. Perhaps you are unfamiliar with this new ‘poetry’ that is called ‘revolutionary.’ Perhaps you’ve heard that it is queer and have let it go at that. Perhaps if you tried it you’d find that a side of you that had been sleeping would come awake again. It is worth the price of a Wednesday matinee to find out.” J. B. Kerfoot in *Life*.

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