

Edward J. O'Brien

# OTHERS

*A Number for the Mind's eye  
Not to be read aloud*

Edited by WILLIAM SAPHIER

DECEMBER, 1917

Published by OTHERS  
63 West Ontario Street  
CHICAGO, ILL.

*Price 15c a copy*



# OTHERS for December, 1917

BAXTER ALDEN

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

LOUISE BOGAN

JEANNE D ORGE

DAVID O'NEIL

DAVID ROSENTHAL

MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

J. BLANDING SLOAN

WALLACE STEVENS



---

IN INK OF INDIA AND GOLD

I

A windless ebon night.  
White poppies spill their fragrance through the  
silence.  
The sky is gold;  
The sky is hard and pure and clear.  
  
The pallid petals drift and drift like snow;  
A god with beauty wounded bleeds and dies.

\* \* \*

II

Where lies this land, this land of spectral gold  
With sullen, swinging shadows deeper hued  
Whereon twist purple roads in fading curves  
With wild, black furrows where a chariot sped  
And left an angry, splendid resonance?

Here now two lonely peacocks, white as death,  
Fight on and on within the golden night;  
They splash the shadows with their pink, starred  
feet.

## III

The splendor of a windy twilight flung  
 In ink of India across a screen  
 Which drinks its substance leaving shadowed there  
 Life-like to float above it—irised—rich—  
 A burnished peacock which the great winds beat  
 To swirling emerald and stern sapphire—  
 Gold goblin eyes aghast within a sea.

Panels of soft darkness;  
 Down they drop  
 O'er faded summer flowers,  
 O'er ragged balls of white seed-dotted cotton.

\* \* \*

## IV

Monstrous twilights;  
 False and gilded dawns  
 O'er silences of water.  
 A fin, slanting, shines;  
 Shrieking sea-gulls  
 Shoot like arrows down.

\* \* \*

## V

A tattered square of beaten silk—white—dull—  
 Well sprinkled with a dust of powdered gold  
 The thirsty silk has kept and left but light;  
 In ink of India sketched—a winter's night;  
 Cold leagues of space.  
 One little maid;  
 Her white face wounds the night.

Two million-petaled winter plum trees near  
 Spray the darkness with soft flower-stars.

---

## PARADE OF CONSCRIPTED SOLDIERS

One soldier's face is like a mirror  
In which a dying child dangles from a string.  
One soldier's face is flat stone  
With bitter hieroglyphics of silence  
Cut deeply into it.  
Another soldier's face is a twitching white bird  
Suddenly clawed by a long-taloned question.  
And still another soldier's face  
Is that of a grave clown awkwardly bowing to death.  
O silent stiff-fingered people on the curbstone,  
You do not see this, but you feel  
Unspoken words from the marching conscripts  
Striking your faces like weakened fists.

## EAST-SIDE CHILDREN PLAYING

This lame boy with eyes like rain-washed berries,  
Stares at an orange on a push-cart,  
And seems a dwarf-tree slightly leaning toward the  
sun.  
Behind him, a chubby girl buried in soiled pink  
clothes,  
Swings her candy stick as though it were a scepter  
And the doorstep on which she sits an ancient  
throne.  
Above her, two boys with faces  
Like clumsily painted cherubs,  
Calmly slap each other's cheeks, and joyously weep.  
Then, a twisted washed out old man  
Drags himself past, and the children smile at him.

## MEETING

(Fairy-Tale)

A mood whose lips had kissed walls of moonlight  
Met another mood whose heart was a flagon of ashes  
Holding a little sleeping wine-song.  
The first mood kissed the breast of the other,  
And the little wine-song leapt up  
And filled the flagon with his pale purple breath.  
Then the two moods died, and he who bore them,  
Being an old man, sat down to make others.

## TO DOROTHY

Too light to be a shadowed dimple  
Upon a dragon-fly's sheer wings,  
Your presence clings to my heavy soul  
Like some unseen ghost of dandelion-fluff.  
My soul must clumsily stoop  
And cup its hands over your presence,  
Keeping, yet not daring to touch it.



## WHIMSY

See—with a twirl of fingers  
I scatter this tousled drab of a cobweb  
Creeping between the jet curls  
Of your sleeping, wine-puffed longing.  
Yet, he makes but the wraith of a grimace,  
As though he spied me in his sleep.  
Alas, it will take more than cobweb-snapping  
To lift him up again!  
But there's a spider hid in his orange doublet,  
Who, some day, will sting his wine-puffed slumber.

## FACTORY-GIRL

Why are your eyes like dry brown flower-pods?  
Still, gripped by the memory of lost petals?  
I feel that, if I touched them,  
They would crumble to falling brown dust,  
And you would stand with blindness revealed.  
Yet you would not shrink, for your life  
Has been long since memorized,  
And eyes would only melt out against its high walls.  
Besides, in the making of boxes  
Sprinkled with crude forget-me-nots,  
One is curiously blessed, if one's eyes are dead.

## BETROTHED

You have put your two hands upon me, and your  
mouth;  
You have said my name as a prayer.  
Here where trees are planted by the water  
I have watched your eyes, cleansed from regret  
And your lips, closed over all that love cannot  
say . . .

. . . My mother remembers the agony of her  
womb  
And long years that seemed to promise more  
than this.  
She says, "You do not love me,  
You do not want me,  
You will go away."

In the country whereto I go  
I shall not see the face of my friend  
Nor her hair the color of sun-burned grasses;  
Together, we shall not find  
The land on whose hills bends the new moon  
In air traversed of birds.

What have I thought of love?  
I have said, "It is beauty and sorrow,"  
I have thought it would bring me lost delights, and  
splendor  
As a wind out of old time . . .  
But there is only the evening here  
And the sound of willows  
Now and again dipping their long oval leaves in  
the water.

---

## THE YOUNG WIFE

### I

I do not believe in this first happiness,  
But one day I shall know that love is not a fruited  
bough

Low bending to the hand;  
One day I shall know that love is the secret wind  
Rippling the grass  
Along hillsides in the night;  
That it is the tree in spring  
Holding lightly in the air its shining twigs  
And with its roots throbbing in darkness.

So I shall take less love now  
And not think it as due me,  
And I shall not watch the eyes of my lover, their  
every glance,  
Nor take his day as mine, nor count the hours of  
his night.  
Even though love comes hard  
With all the labor of the spring,  
Though I may wish to grasp that for which I have  
suffered  
And crush it to me with a tight hand.

A day comes when all must go.  
Love does not stand;  
Love does not wait;  
No man can follow after love—  
A day dawns with a wild sky,  
I have laid my hand to the earth and felt how it  
    is cold,  
I have seen the little leaves that the poplar tree  
    lets fall upon the wind.

## II

Had I the sweet skin of Helen  
And Deirdre's autumn-colored hair  
I could not be as beautiful as all beautiful women.

I cannot have the voices of all beautiful women  
Were my voice bright with the trill and quiver of  
    water,—  
Nor their laughter  
Nor their speech.  
Though I might choose delicate words  
I could not speak so fair as they.

They have taken everything from me,  
The beautiful women my lover has had before me,—  
Gentle touches of cheek to cheek,  
The embraces of passion and of terror;  
They have given all to him before me:  
Love in the night,  
Tears,  
Trust and suffering and long desire—  
I can but repeat these, and say them over,  
All love's thousand things.

He has kissed me with closed eyes,  
Embraced me with a hidden face,  
And I did not know whose kiss he took and whose  
face burned behind his eyelids.

And all women will bear me out in this,  
All women now yielding to a lover,  
And all of other years:  
Ye, poor queens,  
And ye, poor haughty ladies.

## I

The moon is a girl  
Riding a white pony  
Over the gray sagebrush  
Of the sky;  
The stars are frightened white rabbits  
That run across the path in front of her.

## II

The moon is a silver fish;  
The tall pine has caught it  
In the net of its flung branches  
And stands watching its struggles  
And waiting for it to die.

## III

The clouds are sea-gulls  
Flying over the ocean of the sky;  
The moon is a lighthouse,  
And the white-bodied clouds  
Beat their gray wings against it.

## IV

From one of the branches  
Of the magnolia tree  
In our garden  
It is large and creamy and fragrant;  
It is the first flower of the year.

The other buds are angry  
Because it has opened first.

Buds, do not be angry!  
For it will wither  
And fall  
Before the morning——

---

## THE CONVENT

Nice to be God . . . .  
My passions sit in long white rows  
within the little chapel  
sending incense up to me  
or fast singing in lonely cells  
or walk whispering together thru grey cloisters.  
Last night a wild cat novice broke her vows  
and now her sisters wear away the stone  
praying for her.  
They cannot guess who slipped the bolts  
Who rode with her  
Who gave her to her lover . . . .  
Nice to be God . . . .

## THE FRESHMAN

His tadpole mind wiggles  
in humorous waters  
growing legs and laughter.  
He aspires to solemnity.  
He would be a frog  
and sit  
with other large frogs  
upon a philosophic bench  
croaking.

## SEA-MOOD

My ecstasy has long blue fingers  
like the sea;  
moves to the rhythm of the tides  
upon your shores;  
carving stone strength and rugged silence  
into slow passionate curves  
of music.

---

 STOLEN

I crept slyly  
 to your table  
 . . . Oo . . . m  
 Sugared peaches drowned in chianti . . .

Destiny  
 shaped heavily like a nurse girl  
 yanked me by the ear  
 planked me in my high chair.  
 "There" said she  
 "Eat what is set before you  
 Impudence."

Oh bread and butter  
 flat every-dayness  
 monotony  
 milk.

## THE PROBLEM IS

The problem is—  
 but I forgot—there is no problem.  
 I have only to put my sea  
 into a bottle of thin green glass  
 simple of form, as you suggest;  
 and to enclose my sky  
 in a carven case of pure ivory.  
 The test will be  
 when these stand upon your writing-table.  
 Will my sea fill the room  
 with its salt and its singing,  
 with wine, with vigor and movement?  
 Will my sky escape  
 lean over and give  
 her suns and moons  
 and the lightning of her silence  
 and manna of rest  
 and musical sleep?



## REGENERATION

I lie fallow,  
Crumbling with the freeze  
And the thaw,  
Yet I hold you,  
As the wind brought you,  
Wondrous seed.  
And with rain  
And sun  
And spring  
You will ripen  
And your roots  
Quicken  
And deepen in my heart.

## A NAVAJO POET

His bronzed face aglow  
With the light of a wish;  
His whittled arrows,  
Sun-vow arrows  
Lean and clean,  
For a journey  
To the sun . . .

The shavings  
He left  
For whistling winds  
To play with.

## INHERITANCE

Ancient trees  
Complacently usurping  
The sunshine;  
With forelooking tenderness  
Whispering to the saplings  
In their palsied shadows:  
"There is safety  
In our shadow  
But you will wither  
In our shadow."

## THE PRODIGAL SON

Where the rivers  
Ravage the shore,  
Willows like mothers  
Hold the sloping banks,  
And lean  
With a tender understanding  
Of the stream.

## THE UNQUIET

He thought to solve  
The unquiet of his heart,  
In the stillness of solitude;  
But the ticking of the clock,  
Penetrated the silence;  
Then song-sparrows sang  
In the evergreens at his window;  
And there came the ache  
Of a heavily loaded wagon  
Straining  
Up the hill;  
And the voices of things in his room  
Clamored,  
Till he sought the noise of the city  
For its silence.

## LIME LIGHT

See the giant trees  
Of the lowland,  
How they lose  
Their symmetry  
Seeking a place  
In the sun.

---

## THE PAINT BOX

When the only color  
On God's palette  
Is gray—  
When he smudges the sky  
With gray—  
And the hills  
And the fields  
And the lawns  
And the hearts of men  
With gray—  
I steal into the play-room  
Of my mind  
And take out the paint box  
My mother gave me  
A million years ago—  
And I smudge  
The hills with purple  
And the fields with gold,  
The lawns with blue  
And the hearts of men with crimson—  
There is always someone  
Who paints with laughter  
When the only color  
On God's palette  
Is tears.

## SYLVANETTES

### Rain on the Lake

To-day  
The lake is a disillusioned mirror—  
Weeping—  
Because its mistress has grown old. . . .

### Rain on the Lake

Little pearl fire-flies  
 Pirouetting—  
 In sparkling pizzicatos—  
 On blue glass. . . .

\* \* \*

### Over the Lake a Birch-Tree Bendin

Little birch-tree  
 With your nude body  
 Your white, melodious body—  
 You are a young girl  
 Combing your hair in the glass,  
 Awaiting your first beloved. . . .

\* \* \*

### In the Birch-Trees the Swallows Playing

Swallows  
 You are silver songs  
 Chasing each other  
 And playing tag—  
 Swallows  
 You are the songs  
 I make for my beloved  
 They too, play tag  
 In the birch-tree of her heart. . . .

\* \* \*

### Across the Moon a Thin Veil

Moon  
 You are a woman  
 Draped in black  
 Pale and beautiful—  
 Mourning the little birds  
 That sang  
 Through the windows  
 Facing the dawn  
 While you fed them the silver crumbs  
 of your youth. . . .

## PRINT BY KIYONAGA

(Design of Spring Greenery)

Take San, willow by a stream,  
How can I catch again  
The echo of your loveliness, and how design  
Your slender body—Oh passionless  
Mirage of beauty!

My hands are cold, are dead,  
And they no longer reach  
Toward beauty, toward your breast,  
My hands are old, are dead,  
Yet all you taught them once  
They still remember.

Today again  
As last spring when you came,  
My old hands quiver,  
The wind stirs in them, (old hands,  
Then young as willows by a stream).

Now like dead leaves in withered confusion  
They tremble in the April wind  
Blown by your loveliness  
Across my being, Take San . . .

Once touching your beauty I found it flame,  
Touching your beauty my fingers went blind.

Take San, uncaptured dream,  
My hands design  
That exquisite illusion—  
Beauty and desire at peace  
Merged in your body, fresh and cool  
As shining willows by a stream.

## A PRINT BY HIROSHIGE

(The Bow-Moon)

From the dawn, Take San,  
Ungathered star,  
Follow me back through night  
Till I recapture  
Evening.

The bending hours of darkness  
Sway apart like lilies  
Before the backward blowing wind  
Of my desire.

At last  
Bearing in her mysterious bosom  
Unravished beauty,  
Dark Yesterday folded in robes of twilight,  
Rises against her silent sky,  
Irrevocable—secret—  
Confronting the fantastic dream of an impossible  
Tomorrow.

There is a bridge,  
Frail, delicate, immutable,  
Arching above the rising moon,  
More everlasting than the fading sky,  
Joining What-was-not with What-might-have-been,  
That were Today  
If I had loved you, Take San,  
If you had loved me.

## KISS

Your kiss  
Is like the nestling  
Of a warming tear  
Upon a limpid drooping lash,  
The faintest curling of beloved lips  
In the launching of a smile,  
First blush of maiden's cheek  
At thought of being loved,  
A whisp of luscious fumed almost nothing  
Breathed into a lover's ear.  
Yes, 'tis like nothing. Save your kiss.

## PAM

Fleeting wave thoughts  
Whose crimson tips of foam  
Were drained in tiny drippings  
From deepest cell  
Of fore-drained heart.  
Struggling uncalmed ever.

Full emptied heart awaits  
A fine white sea gull  
With black tipped wings  
Against a cobalt sky,  
Flying unhesitatingly  
Into the face of fate;  
A whitest ivory column;  
Cool ray of moon  
Which comes and calms  
And goes to leave disturbed;  
A glorious swan grown feather  
Tipped with bronze,  
Expanding in the sun;

A tear from lash of God  
And gilt beam striking there  
Bursting into millions  
Of sun threads  
As delicate  
As web of phantom spider.

A thought  
Of clearest stillest water  
In a mellow marble pool;  
A gentle warmth of breath  
Through china silk;  
A faintest stir of summer air;  
A nature fumed breeze  
Amove among new grass blades;  
A freshest scented wind,  
Compensation for all longing;  
A wind! A flash!  
A burst of light!  
And calm.



## VALLEY CANDLE

My candle burned alone in an immense valley.  
Beams of the huge night converged upon it,  
Until the wind blew.  
Then beams of the huge night  
Converged upon its image,  
Until the wind blew.

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A  
BLACKBIRD

## I

Among twenty snowy mountains,  
The only moving thing  
Was the eye of the blackbird.

## II

I was of three minds,  
Like a tree  
In which there are three blackbirds.

## III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds,  
It was a small part of the pantomime.

## IV

A man and a woman  
Are one.  
A man and a woman and a blackbird  
Are one.

## V

I do not know which to prefer—  
The beauty of inflections  
Or the beauty of innuendoes,  
The blackbird whistling  
Or just after.

## VI

Icicles filled the long window  
With barbaric glass.  
The shadow of the blackbird  
Crossed it, to and fro.  
The mood  
Traced in the shadow  
An indecipherable cause.

## VII

O thin men of Haddam,  
Why do you imagine golden birds?  
Do you not see how the blackbird  
Walks around the feet  
Of the women about you?

## VIII

I know noble accents  
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;  
But I know, too,  
That the blackbird is involved  
In what I know.

## IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,  
It marked the edge  
Of one of many circles.

## X

At the sight of blackbirds  
Flying in a green light,  
Even the bawds of euphony  
Would cry out sharply.

## XI

He rode over Connecticut  
In a glass coach.  
Once, a fear pierced him,  
In that he mistook  
The shadow of his equipage  
For blackbirds.

## XII

The river is moving.  
The blackbird must be flying.

## XIII

It was evening all afternoon.  
It was snowing  
And it was going to snow.  
The blackbird sat  
In the cedar-limbs.

## THE WIND SHIFTS

This is how the wind shifts:  
Like the thoughts of an old human,  
Who still thinks eagerly  
And despairingly.  
The wind shifts like this:  
Like a human without illusions,  
Who still feels irrational things within her.  
The wind shifts like this:  
Like humans approaching proudly,  
Like humans approaching angrily.  
This is how the wind shifts:  
Like a human, heavy and heavy,  
Who does not care.

## MEDITATION

How long have I meditated, O Prince,  
On sky and earth?  
It comes to this,  
That even the moon  
Has exhausted its emotions.  
What is it that I think of, truly?  
The lines of blackberry bushes,  
The design of leaves—  
Neither sky nor earth  
Express themselves before me . . . .  
Bossuet did not preach at the funerals  
Of puppets.

## GRAY ROOM

Although you sit in a room that is gray,  
Except for the silver  
Of the straw-paper,  
And pick  
At your pale white gown;  
Or lift one of the green beads  
Of your necklace,  
To let it fall;  
Or gaze at your green fan  
Printed with the red branches of a red willow;  
Or, with one finger,  
Move the leaf in the bowl—  
The leaf that has fallen from the branches of the  
    forsythia  
Beside you . . .  
What is all this?  
I know how furiously your heart is beating.







Pamphlets in preparation :

*A Negro Number*  
*A Play Number*

*OTHERS will be published every six weeks and subscribers will receive 12 numbers for \$1.50.*

*Address all communications to*

WILLIAM SAPHIER, 63 W. Ontario St., Chicago, Ill.