

Edward J. O'Brien
#

OTHERS

Songs to Joannes

BY

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APRIL, 1917

Vol. 3, No. 6

Published by OTHERS

FRANK SHAY, Agent, 17 West 8th Street, New York City

E. R. BROWN, Boston Agent, Cornhill

Price 15 Cents

12 Issues, \$1.50

I

Spawn of Fantasies
Silting the appraisable
Pig Cupid his rosy snout
Rooting erotic garbage
"Once upon a time"
Pulls a weed white and star-topped
Among wild oats sewn in mucous-membrane

I would an eye in a bengal light
Eternity in a sky-rocket
Constellations in an ocean
Whose rivers run no fresher
Than a trickle of saliva

These are suspect places

I must live in my lantern
Trimming subliminal flicker
Virginal to the bellows
Of Experience
Coloured glass

II

The skin-sack
In which a wanton duality
Packed
All the completions of my infructuous impulses
Something the shape of a man

To the casual vulgarity of the merely observant
More of a clock-work mechanism
Running down against time
To which I am not paced

My finger-tips are numb from fretting your hair
A God's door-mat

On the threshold of your mind

III

We might have coupled
In the bed-ridden monopoly of a moment
Or broken flesh with one another
At the profane communion table
Where wine is spill't on promiscuous lips

We might have given birth to a butterfly
With the daily-news
Printed in blood on its wings

IV

Once in a mezzanino
The starry ceiling
Vaulted an unimaginable family
Bird-like abortions
With human throats
And Wisdom's eyes
Who wore lamp-shade red dresses
And woolen hair

One bore a baby
In a padded porte-enfant
Tied with a sarsanet ribbon
To her goose's wings

But for the abominable shadows
I would have lived
Among their fearful furniture
To teach them to tell me their secrets
Before I guessed
—Sweeping the brood clean out

V

Midnight empties the street
Of all but us
Three
I am undecided which way back
 To the left a boy
—One wing has been washed in the rain
 The other will never be clean any more—
Pulling door-bells to remind
Those that are snug
 To the right a haloed ascetic
 Threading houses
Probes wounds for souls
—The poor can't wash in hot water—
And I dont know which turning to take
Since you got home to yourself—first

VI

I know the Wire-Puller intimately
And if it were not for the people
On whom you keep one eye
You could look straight at me
And Time would be set back

VII

My pair of feet
Smack the flag-stones
That are something left over from your walking
The wind stuffs the scum of the white street
Into my lungs and my nostrils
Exhilarated birds
Prolonging flight into the night
Never reaching — — — — —

VIII

I am the jealous store-house of the candle-ends
That lit your adolescent learning
— — — — —
Behind God's eyes
There might
Be other lights

IX

When we lifted
Our eye-lids on Love
A cosmos
Of coloured voices
And laughing honey

And spermatazoa
At the core of Nothing
In the milk of the Moon

X

Shuttle-cock and battle-door
A little pink-love
And feathers are strewn

XI

Dear one at your mercy
Our Universe
Is only
A colorless onion
You derobe
Sheath by sheath
 Remaining
A disheartening odour
About your nervy hands

XII

Voices break on the confines of passion
Desire Suspicion Man Woman
Solve in the humid carnage

Flesh from flesh
Draws the inseparable delight
Kissing at gasps to catch it

Is it true
That I have set you apart
Inviolable in an utter crystallization
Of all the jolting of the crowd
Taught me willingly to live to share

Or are you
Only the other half
Of an ego's necessity
Scourging pride with compassion
To the shallow sound of dissonance
And boom of escaping breath

XIII

Come to me There is something
I have got to tell you and I can't tell
Something taking shape
Something that has a new name
A new dimension
A new use
A new illusion

It is ambient And it is in your eyes
Something shiny Something only for you
Something that I must not see

It is in my ears Something very resonant
Something that you must not hear
Something only for me

Let us be very jealous
Very suspicious
Very conservative
Very cruel
Or we might make an end of the jostling of aspira-
tions
Disorb inviolate egos

Where two or three are welded together
They shall become god

Oh that's right
Keep away from me Please give me a push
Don't let me understand you Don't realise me

Or we might tumble together
Depersonalized
Identical
Into the terrific Nirvana
Me you — you — me

XIV

Today
Everlasting passing apparent imperceptible
To you
I bring the nascent virginity of
—Myself for the moment

No love or the other thing
Only the impact of lighted bodies
Knocking sparks off each other
In chaos

XV

Seldom Trying for Love
Fantasy dealt them out as gods
Two or three men looked only human

But you alone
Superhuman apparently
I had to be caught in the weak eddy
Of your drivelling humanity
To love you most

XVI

We might have lived together
In the lights of the Arno
Or gone apple stealing under the sea
Or played
Hide and seek in love and cob-webs
And a lullaby on a tin-pan
And talked till there were no more tongues
To talk with
And never have known any better

XVII

I don't care
Where the legs of the legs of the furniture are walk-
ing to
Or what is hidden in the shadows they stride
Or what would look at me
If the shutters were not shut
Red a warm colour on the battle-field
Heavy on my knees as a counterpane
Count counter
I counted the fringe of the towel
Till two tassels clinging together
Let the square room fall away
From a round vacuum
Dilating with my breath

XVIII

Out of the severing
Of hill from hill

The interim
Of star from star .
The nascent
Static
Of night

XIX

Nothing so conserving
As cool cleaving
Note of the Q H U
Clear carving
Breath-giving
Pollen smelling
Space

White telling
Of slaking
Drinkable
Through fingers
Running water
Grass haulms
Grow to

Leading astray
Of fireflies
Aerial quadrille
Bouncing
Off one another
Again conjoining
In recaptured pulses
Of light

You too
 Had something
 At that time
 Of a green-lit glow-worm

Yet slowly drenched
 To raylessness
 In rain

XX

Let Joy go solace-winged
 To flutter whom she may concern

XXI

I store up nights against you
 Heavy with shut-flower's nightmares

Stack noons
 Curled to the solitaire
 Core of the
 Sun

XXII

Green things grow
 Salads
 For the cerebral
 Forager's revival

Upon bossed bellies
Of mountains
Rolling in the sun
And flowered flummery
Breaks
To my silly shoes

In ways without you
I go
Gracelessly
As things go.

XXIII

Laughter in solution
Stars in a stare
Irredeemable pledges
Of pubescent consummations
Rot
To the recurrent moon
Bleach
To the pure white
Wickedness of pain

XXIV

The procreative truth of Me
Petered out
In pestilent
Tear drops
Little lusts and lucidities
And prayerful lies

Muddled with the heinous acerbity
Of your street-corner smile

XXV

Licking the Arno
The little rosy
Tongue of Dawn
Interferes with our eyelashes
— — — — —

We twiddle to it
Round and round
Faster
And turn into machines

Till the sun
Subsides in shining
Melts some of us
Into abysmal pigeon-holes
Passion has bored
In warmth

Some few of us
Grow to the level of cool plains
Cutting our foot-hold
With steel eyes

XXVI

Shedding our petty pruderies
From slit eyes

We sidle up
 To Nature
 — — — that irate pornographer

XXVII

Nucleus Nothing
 Inconceivable concept
 Insentient repose
 The hands of races
 Drop off from
 Immodifiable plastic

The contents
 Of our ephemeral conjunction
 In aloofness from Much
 Flowed to approachment of — — — —

NOTHING

There was a man and a woman
 In the way
 While the Irresolvable
 Rubbed with our daily deaths
 Impossible eyes

XXVIII

The steps go up for ever
 And they are white
 And the first step is the last white
 Forever

Coloured conclusions
Smelt to synthetic
Whiteness
Of my
Emergence
And I am burnt quite white
In the climacteric
Withdrawal of your sun
And wills and words all white
Suffuse
Illimitable monotone

White where there is nothing to see
But a white towel
Wipes the cymophonous sweat
—Mist rise of living—
From your
Etiolate body
And the white dawn
Of your **New Day**
Shuts down on me

Unthinkable that white over there
— — — Is smoke from your house

XXIX

Evolution fall foul of
Sexual equality
Prettily miscalculate
Similitude

Unnatural selection
Breed such sons and daughters
As shall jibber at each other
Uninterpretable cryptonyms
Under the moon

Give them some way of braying brassily
For carressive calling
Or to homophonous hiccoughs
Transpose the laugh
Let them suppose that tears
Are snowdrops or molasses
Or anything
Than human insufficiencies
Begging dorsal vertebrae

Let meeting be the turning
To the antipodean
And Form a blurr
Anything
Than seduce them
To the one
As simple satisfaction
For the other

Let them clash together
From their incognitoes
In seismic orgasm

For far further
 Differentiation
 Rather than watch
 Own-self distortion
 Wince in the alien ego

XXX

In some
 Prenatal plagiarism
 Foetal buffoons
 Caught tricks

— — — — —

From architypal pantomime
 Stringing emotions
 Looped aloft

— — — — —

For the blind eyes
 That Nature knows us with
 And the most of Nature is green

— — — — —

What guaranty
 For the proto-form
 We fumble
 Our souvenir ethics to

— — — — —

XXXI

Crucifixion
 Of a busy-body

Longing to interfere so
 With the intimacies
 Of your insolent isolation

Crucifixion
 Of an illegal ego's
 Eclosion
 On your equilibrium
 Caryatid of an idea

Crucifixion
 Wracked arms
 Index extremities
 In vacuum
 To the unbroken fall

XXXII

The moon is cold
 Joannes
 Where the Mediterranean — — — — —

XXXIII

The prig of passion — — — —
 To your professorial paucity
 Proto-plasm was raving mad
 Evolving us — — —

XXXIV

Love — — — the preeminent literateur