The Bookman Anthology Of Verse

Edited by John Farrar

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Hilda Conkling

A shy, bur normal little girl, twleve years old now, nine when her first volume of verses appeared, Hilda Conkling is not so much the infant prodigy as a clear proof that the child mind, before the precious spark is destroyed, possesses both vision and the ability to express it in natural and beautiful rhythm. Grace Hazard Conkling, herself a poet, is Hilda's mother. They live in Northampton, Massachusetts, in the academic atmosphere of Smith College where those who know the little girl say that she enjoys sliding down a cellar stairway quite as much as she does talking of elves and gnomes. She was born in New York State, so that she is distinctly of the East. The rhythm which she uses to express her ideas is the result both of her own moods, which are often crystal–clear in their delicate imagery, and of the fact that from the time when she was first able to listen, her mother read aloud to her. In fact, her first poems were made before she herself could write them down. The speculation as to what she will do when she grows to womanhood is a common one. Is it important? A childhood filled with beauty is something to have achieved.

Lonely Song

Bend low, blue sky,
Touch my forehead:
You look cool . . . bend down . . .
Flow about me in your blueness and coolness,
Be a thistledown, be flowers,
Be all the songs I have not yet sung.

Laugh at me, sky!
Put a cap of cloud on my head . . .
Blow it off with your blue winds;
Give me a feeling of your laughter
Behond cloud and wind!
I need to have you laugh at me
As though you liked me a little.

Edwin Markham

There are many settings in which one might remember Edwin Markham, born in 1852, yet with a vigor in the poise of his white head, and a firmness of carriage that many younger poets might do well to emulate. One might remember him reading his verses from the pulpit of St. Mark's in the Bouwerie, or seated calmly amid the argumentative stress of a meeting of "The Poetry Society of America," of which he is the Honorary President. I like best, however, to think of him as he stood recently talking to the children of "The Poetry Society of Greater New York." It had undoubtedly been an effort for him to come to them at all. Yet the author of "The Man with the Hoe" was there; gentle always, wise, with a personality so magnetic that one forgets the perhaps more popular than lasting quality of his work, in the picturesque majesty of the man. I should like to have seen him at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. He, together with Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert, would have made an interesting study. There is something of the simplicity of the Age of Lincoln in him, expressed in his own lines:

Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridge–poles up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place ––
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

A Song to a Tree

Give me the dance of your boughs, O tree,
Whenever the wild wind blows;
And when the wind is gone, give me
Your beautiful repose.

How easily your greatness swings
To meet the changing hours;
I, too, would mount upon your wings,
And rest upon your powers.

I seek your grace, O mighty tree,
And shall seek, many a day,
Till I more worthily shall be

Your comrade on the way.

Milton Raison

One day not long ago, there walked into the office a dark−haired boy with large, grey eyes. He appeared twenty years of age. He proved to be only eighteen. He put down a sheaf of poems and said, "I've just come back from a trip at sea as a mess boy. I hope that you'll like these poems. If I don't find something else to do, I'll have to go to sea again." The poems were unusual in their directness, simplicity and frank treatment of a boy's life at sea. Several magazines have already published examples of them, and Raison's first book has now been issued. Born in Russia, educated in the New York City public schools, having followed the sea from the years of sixteen to eighteen, he is perhaps wiser in the ways of sea−ports than in the technique of his art. Yet there is a curious maturity and finish about some of his verses that challenges attention. Irony is not usual in one so young. As a writer on the New York Sunday World, he is at present exploring the city, as he formerly explored the manner of ships. In his spare time, he tells me, he is writing a novel; but boys of eighteen do not spend all their spare time writing novels, and if some day we wake to find this young poet has fled the roar and rattle of New York for the quiet of the ocean, we shall not be surprised.

Baffled

There was a dreamer and he knew no jest,
His mind was dull to bantering and quips −−
But those black eyes of his that flashed like whips,
Curled out to beauty; he was beauty−blest,
And his two feet could only find a rest
When they had brought him out to watch the ships,
To lick the salt that clustered on his lips,
And breathe the ocean−wind with newer zest.

So he went off to sea to flee the laughter
On land, and soon on ship there spread a rumor,
"The new kid hasn't got a sense of humor,
Let's fool with him" −− and teasing followed after;
And so the dreamer, baffled at his duty,
Jumped overboard in search of mirthless beauty.

Sara Teasdale

This quiet, red–haired lady from the Middle West, born in St. Louis in 1884, has written some of the best–known love lyrics of the past decade. There is little in her gentle and genial manner and penetrating wit to betray the warmth and rich beauty of her verse. Married not so long ago to Ernest B. Filsinger, a business man with an appreciation for art, who himself writes on economic subjects, she lives in a large and quiet apartment overlooking one of the leafier of New York's squares, sees a few friends, reads well–selected books, and writes with a good deal of slowness and care. She is a normal, well–bread woman who draws her inspiration from the rich heritage of that normality, with a dexterity that lifts many of her lyrics to distinction, and an occasional flash of deeper understanding that lifts others to real power.

Places

I: Twilight
Tucson

Aloof as aged kings,
Wearing like them the purple,
The mountains ring the mesa
Crowned with a dusky light;
Many a time I watched
That coming on of darkness
Till stars burned through the heavens
Intolerably bright.
It was not long I lived there,
But I became a woman
Under those vehement stars,
For it was there I heard
For the first time my spirit
Forging an iron rule for me,
As though with slow cold hammers
Beating out word by word:
"Take love when love is given,
But never think to find it
A sure escape from sorrow
Or a complete repose;
Only yourself can heal you,
Only yourself can lead you
Up the hard road to heaven
That ends where no one knows."

II: Full Moon
Santa Barbara

I listened, there was not a sound to hear,
In the great rain of moonlight pouring down,
The eucalyptus trees were carved in silver,
And a light mist of silver lulled the town.

I saw far off the grey Pacific bearing
A broad white disk of flame,
And on the garden–walk a snail beside me
Tracing in crystal the slow way he came.

III: Winter Sun
Lennox

There was a bush with scarlet berries,
And there were hemlocks heaped with snow,
With a sound like surf on long sea–beaches
They took the wind and let it go.

The hills were shining in their samite
Fold after fold they flowed away;
"Let come what may," your eyes were saying,
"At least we two have had today."

Effigy of a Nun
(Sixteenth Century)

Infinite gentleness, infinite irony
Are in this face with fast–sealed eyes,
And round this mouth that learned in loneliness
How useless their wisdom is to the wise.

In her nun's habit carved, carefully, lovingly,
By one who knew the ways of womenkind,
This woman's face still keeps its cold wistful calm,
All the subtle pride of her mind.

These pale curved lips of hers holding their hidden smile,
Show she had weighed the world; her will was set;
These long patrician hands clasping he crucifix
Once having made their choice, had no regret.

She was one of those who hoard their own thoughts lovingly,
Feeling them far too dear to give away,
Content to look at life with the high insolent
Air of an audience watching a play.

If she was curious, if she was passionate,
She must have told herself that love was great,
But that the lacking it might be as great a thing
If she held fast to it, challenging fate.

She who so loved herself and her own warring thoughts,
Watching their humorous, tragic rebound,
In her thick habit's fold, sleeping, sleeping,
Is she amused at dreams she has found?

Infinite tenderness, infinite irony,
Hidden forever in her closed eyes,
That must have learned too well in their long loneliness
How empty their wisdom is even to the wise.

Amy Lowell

With the inheritance of the Massachusetts Lawrences and Lowells, the undubitable traditions of New England, Amy Lowell has yet been a vigorous and brilliant experimenter in verse technuque, and one of the strongest influences in molding the work of the younger poets of America. Whether she is writing a book on John Keats, a critique of modern poetry, a racing poetical legend of Indian or New Englander, or a delicate translation from the Chinese, she is whole–hearted about it. A startling person is Miss Lowell. I have heard her speak many times, yet she never fails to interest and often electrify her audiences. As a conversationalist, seated in her own rooms, among a small group, she will talk and listen half or all of the night, and her talk reminds one that the art of conversation is not entirely lost in America. The cause of poetry as she sees it means more to her, I believe, than any one other thing, and though ill health often makes traveling difficult for her, she moves constantly from one end of the country to another, interesting audiences in new tendencies and old in modern poetry. I can think of no other single figure among contemporary American writers so vivid in manner, so clear in purpose and so consistent in achievement.

Purple Grackles

The grackles have come.
The smoothness of the morning is puckered with their incessant chatter.
A sociable lot, these purple grackles,
Thousands of them strung across a long run of wind,
Thousands of them beating the air–ways with quick wing–jerks,
Spinning down the currents of the South.

Every year they come,
My garden is place of solace and recreation evidently,
For they always pass a day with me.
With high good nature they tell me what I do not want to hear.
The grackles have come.

I am persuaded that grackles are birds;
But when they are settled in the trees
I am inclined to declare them fruits
And the trees turned hybrid blackberry vines.
Blackness shining and bulging under leaves,
Does not that mean blackberries, I ask you?
Nonsense! The grackles have come.

Nonchalant highwaymen, pickpockets, second–story burglars,
Stealing away my little hope of Summer.
There is no stealthy robbing in this.
Who ever heard such a gabble of thieves talk!
It seems they delight in unmasking my poor pretense.
Yes, now I see that the hydrangea blooms are rusty;
That the hearts of the golden glow are ripening to lustreless seeds;
That the garden is dahlia–coloured,
Flaming with its last over–hot hues;
That the sun is pale as a lemon too small to fill the picking–ring.
I did not see this yesterday,
But today the grackles have come.

They drop out of the trees
And strut in companies over the lawn,
Tired of flying, no doubt;
A grand parade of limber legs and give wings a rest.
I should build a great fish–pond for them,
Since it is evident that a bird–bath, meant to accomodate two goldfinches at most,
Is slight hospitality for these hordes.
Scarcely one can get in,
They all peck and scrabble so,
Crowding, pushing, chasing one another up the bank with spread wings.
"Are we ducks, you, owner of such inadequate comforts,
That you offer us lily–tanks where one must swim or drown,
Not stand and splash like a gentleman?"
I feel the reproach keenly, seeing them perch on the edges of the tanks, trying the depth with a chary foot,
And hardly able to get their wings under water in the bird–bath.
But there are resources I had not considered,
If I am bravely ruled out of count.
What is that thudding against the eaves just beyond my window?
What is that spray of water blowing past my face?
Two –– three –– grackles bathing in the gutter,
The gutter providentially choked with leaves.
I pray they think I put the leaves there on purpose;
I would be supposed thoughtful and welcoming
To all guests, even thieves.

But considering that they are going South and I am not,
I wish they would bathe more quietly,
It is unmannerly to flaunt one's good fortune.

They rate me of no consequence,
But they might reflect that it is my gutter.
I know their opinion of me,
Because one is drying himself on the window−sill
Not two feet from my hand.
His purple neck is sleek with water,
And the fellow preens his feathers for all the world as if I were a fountain statue,
If it were not for the window,
I am convinced he would light on my head.
Tyrian−fethered freebooter,
Appropriating my delightful gutter with so extravagent an ease,
You are as cool a pirate as ever scuttled a ship,
And are you not scuttling my Summer with every peck of your sharp bill?

But there is a cloud over the beech−tree,
A quenching cloud for lemon−livered suns.
The grackles are all swinging in the tree−tops,
And the wind is coming up, mind you.
That boom and reach is no Summer gale,
I know that wind,
It blows the Equinox over seeds and scatters them,
It rips petals from petals, and tears off half−turned leaves.
There is rain on the back of that wind.
Now I would keep the grackles,
I would plead with them not to leave me.
I grant their coming, but I would not have them go.
It is a milestone, this passing of grackles.
A day of them and it is a year gone by.
There is magic in this and terror,
But I only stare stupidly out of the window.
The grackles have come.

Come! Yes, they surely came.
But they have gone.
A moment ago the oak was full of them,
They are not there now.
Not a speck of a black wing,
Not an eye−peep of a purple head.
The grackles have gone,
And I watch an Autumn storm
Stripping the garden,
Shouting black rain challanges
To an old, limp Summer
Laid down to die in the flower−beds.

Florence Ayscough, who made the translations for "The Lonely Wife," and the rest of the poems in the volume, "Fir−Flower Tablets," is Mrs. Francis Ayscough and lives in Shanghai. She is one of the eight honorary members of the Royal Asiatic Society, and the only woman who has ever been accorded such an honor.

The Lonely Wife
Translated from the Chinese of Li T'ai−po by Florence Ayscough. English Version by Amy Lowell

The mist is thick. On the wide river, the water−plants float smoothly.
No letters come; none go.
There is only the moon, shining through the clouds of a hard, jade−green sky,
Looking down at us so far divided, so anxiously apart.
All day, going about my affairs, I suffer and grieve, and press the thought of you closely to my heart.
My eyebrows are locked in sorrow, I cannot separate them.
Nightly, nightly, I keep ready half the quilt,
And wait for the return of that divine dream which is my Lord.

Beneath the quilt of the Fire Bird, on the bed of the silver−crested Love Pheasant,
Nightly, nightly I drowse alone.
The red candles in the silver candlesticks melt, and the wax runs from them,
As the tears of your so unworthy one escape and continue constantly to flow.
A flower face endures but a short season,
Yet still he drifts along the river Hsiao and the river Hsiang.
As I toss on my pillow, I hear the cold, nostalgic sound of the water−clock:
Shêng! Shêng! it drips, cutting my heart in two.

I rise at dawn. In the Hall of Pictures
They come and tell me that the snow−flowers are falling.
The reed−blind is rolled high, and I gaze at the beautiful, glittering, premeval snow,
Whitening the distance, confusing the stone steps and the courtyard.
The air is filled with its shining, it blows far out like the smoke of a furnace.
The grass−blades are cold and white, white, like jade girdle pendants.
Surely the Immortals in Heaven must be crazy with wine to cause such disorder,
Seizing the white clouds, crumpling them up, destroying them.

George O'Neil

A young man from St.Louis, George O'Neil has recently spent much of his time in Europe. It is unusual for a poet

from the Middle West to rely so much on formal rhymes and rhythms, one is led to expect the the subtle cadences of a Sandburg or the pounding dissonances of a Lindsay. In young O'Neil, however, we find easy, flowing lines of beauty which, if at times conventional, at others exhibits a rare quality of tender color and phrase. O'Neil is a youth who appears well in a dinner jacket and is fond of dancing. He dresses not at all like a poet; in face, none of these young men who write have long hair or collars open at the throat. This may not be so much a matter of taste as of self−protection. However, George O'Neil has rare Gaelic features and the eyes of a dreamer. If it were not for his obvious social graces he would look more the poet than most of them.

The Bather

There is no beauty surer than your own,
Clear as a carving from the cleanest stone.
A curve of life upon the dead white sand,
You are a vibrant tone's whole quivering,
The full flash that a flaring torch can fling.
Your beauty is a thing too sharp to bear
In the hour's fierce torridness and vivid glare.
I stare for the relief that it will be
When you are covered by the flat cold sea.

Jeanette Marks

Head of the department of English literature at Mount Holyoke College, a student of literature, the author of many books for children, of short stories, novels, essays, one act plays, and, lately, of a volume of lyrics, Jeannette Marks has an unusual breadth of interest for a teacher. Her work, too, is far from academic in form or content; nor are her varied pursuits limited by literature. On a committee of the American Public Health Association she worked vigorously to combat the sale and use of habit−forming drugs, and her essays on "Drugs and Genius" are a result. Her enthusiasms for the out−of−doors have led her to numerous tramping excursions in Wales. She is an active and resourceful woman, a southerner by birth, yet to me, somehow typical of a certain energetic variety of New England culture and expression.

Cobwebs

My thoughts are like cobwebs:

Sometimes my fingers are all feathered with them
And they play tanglefoot with death;
Sometimes they spread a canopy to dew and sun
Where love may find a home beneath their tented shade;
Again, they fling a line of silk, ––
A lariat will noose the furthest star!
Sometimes my thoughts are bags of flaccid grey,
Traps for the joy that glittering, drifts;
Again, they catch the wind of enterprise
And, bellying sails of dream, dart out to sea,
With coasts beyond the world for port!

John Dos Passos

The young man whose novel, "Three Soldiers," caused so violent a discussion when it appeared, was born in 1896 in Chicago. The place of his birth will come as a surprise to those who have associated him, through his father who was a well–known corporation lawyer, with New York City. John Dos Passos was graduated from Harvard and immediately enlisted as an ambulance driver in the Morgan–Harjes unit. He served in France and Italy, then later, as a member of the U.S. Medical Corps. Long before he wrote his sensational war novel he had been known as one of the young Harvard poets. His verses were rich in color and dramatic effect. Now, his studio on Washington Square is covered with his own half–finished paintings on which he works as relaxation from his writing, and they display the same love of deep tone and violent contrast. He is a restless artist; for since I have known him, which is little more than a year, he has travelled widely in Europe and the East. He does not care for the ordinary literary social life; but prefers to work quietly on his novels and verses, varying the writing with painting and with satisfying his wide taste in reading.

Quai de la Tourelle

I

In the dark the river spins,
Laughs and ripples never ceasing,
Swells to gurgle under arches,
Swishes past the bows of barges,
In its haste to swirl away
From the stone walls of the city
That has lamps that weight the eddies
Down with snaky silver glitter,
As it flies it calls me with it
Through the meadows to the sea.

I close the door on it, draw the bolts,
Climb the stairs to my silent room;
But through the window that swings open
Comes again its shuttle–song,
Spinning love and night and madness,
Madness of the spring at sea.

II

The streets are full of lilacs,
Lilacs in boys' buttonholes,
Lilacs at women's waists;
Arms full of lilacs, people trail behind them through the moist night
Long swirls of fragrance,
Fragrance of gardens,
Fragrance of hedgerows where they have wandered
All the May day,
Where the lovers have held each other's hands
And lavished vermilion kisses
Under the portent of the swaying plumes
Of the funereal lilacs.

The streets are full of lilacs
That trail long swirls and eddies of fragrance,
Arabesques of fragrance,
Like the arabesques that form and fade,
In the fleeting ripples of the jade–green river.

George Sterling

George Sterling is one of those easterners who has been for so many years in the West that he has come to be known as a poet of the Pacific Coast. Though his present address is a certain picturesque club in San Francisco, he was born, nevertheless, in Sag Harbor, New York. He has published a profusion of books, most of them containing lyrics of poise and distinction. A metrist and a lover of the sounding phrase, Sterling has little in common with the modern mood of poetry. His poems, at their most elaborate moments, are often merely grandiloquent, but at his best he presents vigorious and simple beauty in the manner of the 'nineties.

Careless

Beyond the purple bay
The drowsy winds awaken to delay.
Spring, a world–spirit, dips
In pure turquoise her lips,
And blows the bubble of a cloudless day.

Poppy and rose declare
Our kinship in the league of earth and air.
The petals pushed apart
Are somehow in my heart,
And the far bird sings passionately there.

Now for awhile I blend
With all that sea and skies and land may lend,
Accepting at its worth
The dear mirage of earth ––
Too wise to question here its aim or end.

David Morton

The sonnet, with its dignity and smoothness, has been used with understanding and technical skill by this quiet southerner who teaches English in the high school at Morristown, New Jersey. David Morton was born in Kentucky in 1886. After a decade of newspaper work, he became a teacher. He seldom comes to New York City, and then only for an afternoon or evening. He has written often of ships, or ships that move, somehow, through misty and visionary seas, whose sails are more beautiful than real. These sonnets of his, however, for sheer melody, are not often equalled in these days, and the combination of simplicity and richness in his word choice, is rare.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
   Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
   And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

In an Old Street

The twilight gathers here like brooding thought,
Haunting each shadowed dooryard and its door,
With gone, forgotten beauty that was wrought
Of hands and hearts that come this way no more.
Here an intenser quiet stills the air
With old remembering of what is not:
Of silver slippers gone from every stair,
And silver laughter long and long forgot.

Deeper and deeper where this dusk is drifted,
Gathers a sense of waiting through the night,
About old doors whose latch is never lifted,
And dusty windows vacant of a light . . .
Deeper and deeper, till the grey turns blue,
And one by one the patient stars peer through.

Harbor Talk

More lonesome than a lonesome ship at sea,
The sailing moon rides beautifully by,
Blown from such purple harbors as may be
In unimagined corners of the sky.
She is not careless where she gazes down
On sleepy streets the silver silence fills,
But thoughful ever of a little town,
And foolish–fond of little, wooded hills.

Sea–folk are given so to telling tales,
I think the moon, when she puts in at last,
May spin a story where she reefs her sails, ––
And there her talk of shorelands that she passed,
Is all of glimmering meadows, ghostly still,
A sleepy town . . . a lonesome little hill.

Maxwell Bodenheim

Grotesque, whimsical, satirical, Maxwell Bodenheim grins through the mists of American poetry with a grin that occasionally approximates a leer. His tongue is often as sharp as his verses. Young, born in Mississippi in 1892, for three years an enlisted man in the army, and an uncompromising artist in his work, he writes and talks with no

concessions to any mood but his own which is at all times that of crisp and penetrating wit. I have seen him at a meeting of "The Poetry Society of America" rising to criticize a poem, analyzing it with a dry tone and a slight lisp, while his words seemed to burn the very paper on which the poor verse was written. Yet he can also be brilliantly funny, with an impudence which seems calcluated, but is in reality heart−felt. His mannerisms, both in writing and in life, are not posed. They are the man and the poet. In the midst of much that is sentimental in American writing, his carefully cerebrated, often exaggerated irony, proves an interesting antidote, and makes him one of our most distinctive poets.

Negro Criminal

From the pensive treachery of my cell
I can hear your mournful yell.
Centuries of pain are pressed
Into one unconscious jest
As your scream disrobes your soul.
The silence of your iron hole
Is hot and stolid, like a guest
Weary of seeing men undressed.
The silence holds an unused bell
That will answer your lunging yell
When your flesh has curled away
Into the burning threshold of a day.
Like the silence, I listen
Because I seek the glisten
Of a hidden humour that strains
Underneath the stumble of all pains.
Brown and wildly clownish shape
Thrown into a cell for rape,
You contain the tortured laugh
Of a pilgrim−imbecile whose staff
Taps against a massive comedy.
Melodrama burlesques itself with free
And stony voice, and wears a row of masks
To hide the strident humour of its tasks.
Melodrama, you, and I,
We are merely tongues that try
To loosen an elusive dream
Into whisper, laugh, and scream.

Aline Kilmer

The first night that I met Aline Kilmer was at her house in Larchmont, just before the children, Michael, Deborah and Christopher, went to bed. Kenton was away at school. It was these unusual children who moved with quaint grace through her early poems. Fair–haired, wide–eyed, with the movements of an elf and the shyness of a faun, little Michael is like a cherub stolen for an earthly visit. I had only just met the father, Joyce Kilmer, shortly before he entered the army, and had just missed seeing him in France shortly before he was killed in action. The children have inherited their mother's gentleness and wistfulness, and their father's dreaming eyes. It is a family over which there seems to fall the beauty, mysticism and faith of the Roman church, with an especial benediction.

TRIBUTE

Deborah and Christopher brought me dandelions,
    Kenton brought me buttercups with summer on their breath,
But Michael brought an autumn leaf, like lacy filigree,
    A wan leaf, a ghost leaf, beautiful as death.

Death in all loveliness, fragile and exquisite,
    Who but he would choose it from all the blossoming land?
Who but he would find it where it hid among the flowers?
    Death in all loveliness, he laid it in my hand.

Light Lover

Why don't you go back to the sea, my dear?
I am not one who would hold you;
The sea is the woman you really love,
So let hers be the arms that fold you.
Your bright blue eyes are sailor's eyes,
Your hungry heart is a sailor's, too.
And I know each port that you pass through
Will give one lass both bonny and wise
Who has learned light love from a sailor's eyes.

If you ever go back to the sea, my dear,
I shall miss you –– yes, can you doubt it?
But women have lived through worse than that
So why should we worry about it?
Take your restless heart to the restless sea ––
Your light, light love to a lighter lass
Who will smile when you come and smile when you pass.
Here you can only trouble me.
Oh, I think you had better go back to sea!

William Rose Benét

The Benét family, whose forebears, chiefly military, have numbered one Chief of Ordnance in the U.S. Army, have now turned to more amiable tasks. It is a long path from machine guns to iambic hexameters. William Rose Benét, the best known of this clan of writers, is poet, editor, essayist and novelist. He is a close friend of Christoper Morley's, and their work together on the New York Evening Post has attracted much attention. Benét's poetry is most striking in ringing ballads like "The Horse Thief," though some of his later lyrics have been characterized by a poignancy and a philosophical melancholy that promise an even greater depth. The surface characteristics of his work are the dazzling and somewhat brittle use of color, the chice of exotic and elaborate words, and the use of a dramatic method that tends to be Browningesque. He is one of the ablest technicians writing verse in America, and at his best has genuine poetic power.

The South Wind

I'm as full of wisdom as a tree of leaves,
But the South WInd flows, blows and grieves,
Quivers every leaf with bewildering desire
Till a pallor of blossom ripples forth like fire,
Till I'm as full of color as a spring cherry tree
With a miracle of moonlight spilled over me,
And on the branches gnarled and boughs they ought to prune
Memory s dancing fantastic to the moon!

Laura Benét

Slight, quiet, looking somewhat like both of her brothers, Laura Benét has written charming verses in the invervals of a strenuous life in Army Posts, in Settlement Houses and factories, teaching, inspecting foods, placing orphans and editing. She is connected now with the New York office of that curious and decorative international publication, "Broom," issued by Americans from Italy, where the paper is cheap and living is simple. Now that Colonel Benét, father of this tribe of poets, has retired from the army and is writing his reminiscences, they have purchased a house in Scarsdale, where the famous garage in spite of summer heat has already seen the writing of two novels by the two brothers, and, we understand, is soon to be occupied by the sister. Surely the task

of adjusting this temperamental family, including three grandchildren, is one which even as calm a mother as Mrs. Benét must find difficult, and Miss Laura proves an able assistant.

Enemies

I am afraid of the dark
That it will not let me alone;
The intimacies of its silence
Would kindle a stone.

But I'm more afraid of the light
For its spaces snatch my breath,
And make me question the time
I shall travel with death.

Stephen Vincent Benét

Soon after I came back from vacation, my sophomore year at college, I heard that there was a boy in the freshman class who was about to publish a book of poems. That seemed odd for one so young; and he is still young, this Stephen Benét, younger than anyone represented in this book, Hilda Conkling and Milton Raison excepted. I found him pitching pennies in the hall of a dormitory. After that we talked together, wrote poems and plays together, acted in plays together, and played together. For this reason, perhaps, I shall not attempt a critical estimate of his work; but he was already well known as a poet before he was graduated from Yale, and has since made a reputation as a novel and short–story writer. He spent last year in France, on a prolonged honeymoon, and has now returned to write a play and a new novel. It does not matter how much prose he may write, however, Stephen Benét is always the poet, with a richness of imagination, a command of rhetoric, a crispness of phrasing, that, while it reminds one of his brother, has a peculiar brilliance of its own.

Azrael's Bar

He stood behind the counter, mixing drinks;
Pride for the old, who like their liquor tart,
Green scorn frappé to cheer the sick–at–heart,
False joy, as merry as a bed of pinks.

He had the eyes of a sarcastic lynx
And in his apron was a small black dart
With which he stirred, secretive and apart,
His shaker, till it rang with poisonous clinks.
I fumbled for the rail. "The same, with gin?
Love –– triple star –– you like the velvet kick?"
I shook with the blind agues of the sick.
Then, through lost worlds, his voice, "Fini, old friend?"
He poured black drops out, cold as dead men's skin:
"So? This is what we always recommend ––"

Lizette Woodworth Reese

A shy, gay, sprightly little person is Lizette Woodworth Reese. "You wouldn't think that I taught school forty–five years, would you?" was the first question she asked me. No, I wouldn't. Her eyes are so young and her walk so brisk. She was born in 1856 in Waverly, Maryland, then a suburb of Baltimore, but now included within its districts. Her first volume of poems, "A Branch of May," appeared in 1887, her latest, "Spicewood," in 1920. Perhaps the best known of all her poems is the sonnet "Tears"; but there are others among her lyrics which have the same rare quality of deep beauty. It was only last year that she retired from her position of teacher in a Baltimore high shcool, yet this unusual woman, one of the finest of our lyricists, has preserved through these arduous years an extraordinary breadth of understanding, and unflagging vitality.

> When I consider Life and its few years ––
> A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
> A call to battle, and the battle done
> Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
> A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
> The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
> The burst of music down in unlistening street, ––
> I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Three Lyrics

Brambles and Dusk

Turn me to fagot, dusk,
To heap your fire!
O, pierce me through and through,

WHite daggers of the brier!

I may not keep you long;
Before I go,
Oh, fill me fullof you;
I shall not miss you so!

White Flags

Now since they plucked them for your grave,
And left the garden bare
As a great house of candlelight,
Oh, nothing else so fair!

I knew before that they were white,
In April by a wall,
A dozen or more. That people died
I did not know at all.

Loneliness

Such old, experienced things they look,
The hollyocks mauve, lemon, red,
As they had read in every book,
And theirs the last word to be said.

Back to the house I turn again;
The hearths are strange, the chairs apart,
Poignant with women and with men
That stare me to the very heart.

Pascal D'Angelo

Pascal D'Angelo once herded goats in Italy on the ancient and quiet lands near the garden of Ovid, with its wild roses and clear springs. Coming to America as a youth, he carried water and learned the use of pick and shovel. The desire for self−expression moved him learn English, so he bought a Webster's dictionary for a quarter and started the struggle. Still young, shaggy, often shabby, but proudly naï.ve, he brings you that worn and torn dictionary wrapped in an old newpaper, to show you how he started. Convinced that he is a poet, excited and pleased by each new bit of public acknowledgement, he will come to you displaying his trophies: a picture in an Italian newspaper, an article in a Sunday Magazine, a new poem in "The Century." He considers it only proper that those more affluent than he should help him to go on with his writing; for does he not give them beauty? He is part of a new phenomenon in American letters, this Pascal D'Angelo, the fusing of the old−world peasant mind

brooding over centuries of loveliness, with the action and articulateness of new America.

Songs of Light

I

The wind strikes the pyramids of silence
And they fall into fragments of glistening melody,
And drift beyond the forests and hills
Into sudden distant pyramids of gold.
The wind serpents around their glimmering pinnacles of silence,
And whirls off into outer blue,
And perhaps goes ruffling and panting
To where the loose–tressed maidens of space
Are floating on the winds of centuries.

II

The sun robed with noons stands on the pulpit of heaven,
Like an anchorite preaching his faith of light to listening space.

And I am one of the sun's lost words,
A ray that pierces through endless emptiness on emptiness
Seeking in vain to be freed of its burden of splendor.

III

The mountains! The great mountains lift up their million cups
Filled with the fermenting wine of heights
Where the aspiring souls may drink and stand gazing upward
In the blue daze of altitude!

Below heaves disgusted wrath,
Growling for the hour to break over the dazzling pinnacles,
Like a lost storm, that in shrilling thunders
Calls its mate out of the azure cavern of time.

Charles Wharton Stork

At present the editor of "Contemporary Verse," an enthusiast for poetry, a translator of Scandinavian verse, and a writer of lyrics, is Charles Wharton Stork, born in 1881. Like Miss Rittenhouse and Marguerite Wilkinson, Mr. Stork has attempted to cultivate a popular interest in American poetry, and his magazine is broader in its appeal than the perhaps more discriminating "Poetry." For some years a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, now devoting himself entirely to his writing, Mr. Stork is often the academician in his approach to art. His translations, however, are powerful and swift–moving. That they are appreciated abroad is clear from the fact that he was decorated by the King of Sweden in 1921.

Green Fire

You are April,
Green fire,
A flame that flickers, glitters,
But never glows.

You are a ripple on the sea of Beauty
That clasps and cradles the light
On the bent mirror of its emerald bosom
With an eager gesture of dancing.
Then tosses it lightly away
Like a silver veil.

And you are the upward lilt
Of a delicious voice.
A flutter of lark–sweet laughter
As light as floating thistle–down.

Do I wish, I wonder,
That you should be May.
Should send out a bud of golden passion,
Should rise and break in a billow of foaming ecstasy?
Or would I have your music sound more deep
As from the wounded breast of lyric pain?

I cannot tell,
I cannot see past you now,
Because I must always look at you as you are,
My April,
My flame that flickers, gleams, but never glows.

Stirling Bowen

A young newspaper man born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, still living there and working in Detroit, Stirling Bowen has had a background curiously similar to that of many of the young men poets represented in this volume, a background of unconventional and highly formative labor. Bowen has worked as reporter, as shophand, and in a construction gang, although he is the son of a professor. His verses were first called to my attention by Carl Sandburg. They are unusually powerful along lines of regular techique and show the masculine grip and clarity that characterizes him personally.

Cages

Four walls enclose men, yet how calm they are!
They hang up pictures that they may forget
What walls are for in part, forget how far
They may not run and riotously let
Their laughter taunt the never–changing stars.

In circus cages wolves and tigers pace
Forever to and fro. They do not rest,
But seek nervously the longed–for place.
Our picture–jungles would not end their quest,
Or pictures of another tiger's face.

On four square walls men have their world, their strife,
Their painted, framed endeavors, joys and pain;
And two curators known as man and wife
Hang up the sunrise, wipe the dust from rain
And gaze excitedly on painted life.

Hazel Hall

Hazel Hall has lived for many years in Portland, Oregon, though she was born in St. Paul, Minnisota. Her first volume of verse, "Curtains," appeared last year and contained lyrics of compressed wisdom, sadness and beauty. An invalid, she has perhaps been able peculiarly to understand the intimate household problems of women, and to see in the walls and windows of rooms, escape of pleasure and beauty from acquaintanceship with pain.

White Branches

I had forgotten the gesture of branches
Suddenly white,
And I had forgotten the fragrance of blossoms
Filling a room at night.

In remembering the curve of branches
Who beckoned me in vain,
Remembering dark rooms of coolness
Where fragrance was like pain,
I have forgotten all else; there is nothing
That signifies ––
There is only the brush of branch and white breath
Against my lips and eyes.

William Alexander Percy

Quietly but determinedly southern, William Alexander Percy is that unusual type, a lawyer who both writes and publishes poetry. Intensely interested in the problems of the South and in his own profession, he yet finds time in Greenville, Missippi, to fashion exquisite lyrics of a classical form and tone, which he occasionally varies with a more rigorous note. Once or twice a year he escapes to New York for an orgy of music–hearing. It is an unusual experience to talk with him of American poetry; for even in Greenville, Missippi, it is possible to gain more perspective on current literature than is given to most of us in New York City, or even in Chicago; and this prematurely gray, soft–voiced gentleman from the south has a keen power of criticism and a command of the trenchant phrase.

A Brittany Love Song

My only love is a sailor lad
Whose home is the fickle sea,
To other girls he gives his smiles,
But his mouth he gives to me.

On Sunday morning after mass
When he is dressed so fine,

He stops before their open doors,
But at night he comes to mine.

O Mary, bless all sailor lads
Whose loves are two, and three,
But mine keep safe from other girls ––
Or let him die in the sea!

Clement Wood

Once a lawyer, now a schoolteacher, Clement Wood is, however, primarily the poet and novelist. He was born in Alabama and lives now, most of the year, in New York City. Violent in his opinions, never hesitant in expressing them, hard–working, and filled with energy, he makes poetry a flowing and vital subject for discussion. Like Maxwell Bodenheim, his provocative discourses in poetic gatherings frequently cause a burst of adverse feeling. There is something pre–eminently masculine and dominating about his verses. They are powerful, vigorous and often undisciplined, yet they are often marked by a tone of satire which, being not so deep–rooted as Bodenheim's, is not so striking. He is greatly interested in various psychological problems, and it is this that has guided him in writing his two novels, the last of which is a serious attempt to analyze the Negro.

Sparta to Troy
(With thanks to the forgotten wit who first found the thirteenth line)

Young rose that budded by Eurotas's stream
(I've thumbed through Rand McNally, and –– I know!),
All ages headline your shy April dream,
And whisper, "Helen . . . Paris . . . Yes, it's so!"
Homer retailed the rhythm of the oars
That scarred the sea of time in that wild ride;
Poets have peered and peeped of those old shores
Where you –– and war –– splashed in Scamander tide.

Your posthumous publicity fills reams
And reams of incandescent lyrics, whirled
Wherever man desires, or woman dreams

Of love, with cheeks on fire, and lids half furled . . .
How far that little scandal sheds its beams!
So shines a naughty deed in a good world.

Babette Deutsch

A remarkably forceful critic and writer of crisp intellectual prose, Babette Deutsch, who is now married to Avrahm Yarmolinksy, is also a poet of unusual sensitiveness and skill. She was born in New York City and was graduated from Barnard College in 1917. The quick bird–like quality of her speech and action is shown in her poetry. It is vivid, alert, cerebrated, and yet at the same time filled with feminine subtlety and understanding.

In August

Heat urges secret odors from the grass.
Blunting the edge of silence, crickets shrill.
Wings veer: inane needles of light, and pass.
Laced pools: the warm wood–shadows ebb and fill.
The wind is casual, loitering to crush
The sun upon his palate, and to draw
Pungence from pine, frank fragrances from brush,
Sucked up through thin grey boughs as through a straw.

Moss–green, fern–green and leaf and meadow–green
Are broken by the bare, bone–colored roads,
Less moved by stirring air than by unseen
Soft–footed ants and meditative toads.
Summer is passing, taking what she brings:
Green scents and sounds, and quick ephemeral wings.

Genevieve Taggard

Waitsburg, in the state of Washington, and Hawaii combined, form an unusual background. Genevieve Taggard, born in the former, went to Hawaii at the age of two, where she lived with her missionary mother and father for

eighteen years on plantations with Portuguese, Porto Ricans, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, natives and Filipinos. Later, she was graduated from the University of California; and she considers it of first importance that she studied prosody there under Leonard Bacon. I met her when she was in New York, one of the editors of "The Measure." How can one say, tactfully, that a young lady is exceedingly beautiful? She married Robert Wolf, a writer, and they are now living and working in California. Her poem "Ice−Age" is, perhaps, her best. She is one of that group of young women poets in which Winifred Welles, Amanda Hall and Elinor Wylie are the increasingly important figures.

Just Introduced

Only a few hours!
We danced like wind,
Our faces like noon flowers,
On one slim stem were lifted, turned aside.
You flew, I followed, matched your stride,
And held your pause, and swung and parted wide . . .

Only a few hours!
We danced like wind,
Thirsty as blown flowers,
Heavy−lidded, fearful−eyed.

Christopher Morley

A roving figure in American letters is Christopher Morley. Poet, essayist, story−writer, columnist, and founder of the small but famous "Three Hours for Lunch Club," he is best discovered in one of the second hand bookshops in the neighborhood of Park Row, or just after he has chanced upon a new café. Morley is the chief exponent of the Coffee House tradition in American letters. His post−graduate work at Oxford has given him the genial manners, and nature has added the appearance, of an English country squire. He has many violent enthusiams and only a few strong prejudices. A bookish man in his conversation, a family−man in much of his light verse; yet, in spite of his strong leaning toward sentiment, a keen wit and one of the few poets who is at the same time both popular and authentic.

Keats

(1821 – 1921)

When sometimes, on a moony night, I've passed
A street–lamp, seen my doubled shadow flee,
I've noticed how much darker, clearer cast,
The full moon poured her silhouette of me.

Just so of spirits. Beauty's silver light
Limns with a purer ray, and tenderer too:
Men's clumsy gestures, to unearthly sight,
Surpass the shapes they show by human view.

On this brave world, where few such meteors fell,
Her youngest son, to save us, Beauty flung.
He suffered and descended into hell ––
And comforts still the ardent and the young.

Drunken of moonlight, dazed by draughts of sky,
Dizzy with stars, his mortal fever ran:
His utterance a moon–enchanted cry
Not free from folly –– for he too was man.

And now and here, a hundred years away,
Where topless towers shadow golden streets,
The young men sit, nooked in a cheap café,
Perfectly happy . . . talking about Keats.

Robert J. Roe

Born in New York City and living there now, having spent part of his life in Paris, Robert J. Roe, still under thirty years of age, has been lineman, factory hand, a sailor in sailing vessels, a soldier, a newspaper hack (according to his own phrase), and a rancher in Arizona. Perhaps it was during that last period, when he was alone for months at a time, that he gained the curious psychological detachment which marks so many of his verses; but his poems have appeared in many of the magazines, and his oddly phrased, penetrating "Sailor's Notebook" was an original and striking piece of work. Showing the influence of Whitman strongly, he adds to it a modern sense of rhythm and the peculiar charm that seems to have resulted from his desert and sea wanderings.

Mountains at Sunset

These drinkers lie
Sprawled,
Drunk on the sun
And blinking
In old, stained corduroys.

Green Logs

Wood piled on the fire
Makes the little god angry.
He withdraws into himself.
He hisses curses.

He swells -- I can see him.

When no longer able to contain himself
He squirts laughter like fire
From every pore.

Franklin P. Adams

F.P.A was born in 1881. As a parodist, light-verse poet, columnist and a critic of letters and morals, he is well known in American journalistic and literary circles. A native of Chicago, he started his newspaper career there, but has since migrated to New York where he now conducts "The Conning Tower," a daily satirical column in the New York World. Often forbiddinly critical in print, he is, in person, shy and filled with boyish enthusiasms. With a genuine hatred for emotional theatricality, with a meticulous regard for the fine points of grammar and verse construction, with a keen eye for the pungent line in the daily news, and the odd event in passing life, he is one of the most unusual and most popular figures in contemporary journalism. I prefer to think of him in his apartment, surrounded by odd musical instruments which he is fond of collecting, than in his office at the World where he seems to be in continual vocal difficulty with a telephone operator

To a Lady Troubled by Insomnia

Let the waves of slumber billow

Gently, softly o'er thy pillow;
Let the darkness wrap thee round
Till in slumber thou art drowned;
Let my tenderest lullabies
Guard the closing of thine eyes;
If hese fail to make thee weary,
Then I cannot help thee, dearie.

Elinor Wylie

To something of the delicacy of Emily Dickinson, and some of the exotic imagination of William Blake, Elinor Wylie adds a peculiar warmth that is like the warmth of snow melting under concentrated sunlight. Her reputation has been quickly made and firmly established over a period of only a little more than a year. Her sparse lyrics are to be found in practically every magazine where verse is published. Her rooms near Washington Square are filled with poets, essayists, and novelists. Since Edna St. Vincent Millay, no Amiercan woman writer has so suddenly and brilliantly impressed her work and her personality on the public consciousness; and without visible effort, for this slender, pale woman is modest, withdrawn and shy. It is a quality of almost mystic vision that illumninates her work and gives it power and magic.

Pretty Words

Poets make pets of pretty, docile words:
I love smooth words, like gold−enameled fish
Which circle slowly with a silken swish,
And tender ones, like downy−feathered birds:
Words shy and dappled, deep−eyed deer in herds,
Come to my hand, and playful if I wish,
Or purring softly at a silver disk,
Blue Persian kittens, fed on cream and curds.

I love bright words, words up and singing early;
Words that are luminous in the dark, and sing;
Warm lazy words, white cattle under trees;
I love words opalescent, cool, and pearly,
Like midsummer moths, and honied words like bees,
Gilded and sticky, with a litle sting.

Zona Gale

Zona Gale of Portage, Wisconsin, is better known for her Friendship Village stories and for her realistic novel and play, "Miss Lulu Bett," than for her poetry. Thd first time I met her was at one of the late rehearsals of that play, where she was sitting, quietly, and with poise, while one boy after another failed to give satisfaction in the juvenile part. I cannot imagine Zona Gale exasperated. Her career has been an unusual one and, in spite of her graceful acceptance of its events, spectacular. From a writer of sensational reviews on the New York Evening World, she became a creator of somewhat sentimental and popular stories. Then, after a period of years, was again found in the "best–seller" lists, hailed as a fine realistic novelist, and awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best play of 1920. Her interest in young writers is great. She has helped them materially as well as spiritually, and her life, which she divides between Portage and New York City, is filled with adventures in discovery and kindness.

New Notes of Portage, Wisconsin

I: Violin

Of late, on some light errand, I sat beside
The cooking–stove in Johann's sitting–room.
Within there was the cheer of lamp and fire,
The stove–draught yawning red and wide,
The table with its rosy cotton spread,
A blue chair–cover from a home–land loom,
A baby's bed.
And in that odor of cleanliness and food
Johann, the laborer worthy of his hire
For seven days a week, twelve hours a day,
At some vague toil "down in the yard."
Hard?
What of that? Look at the luck he had to keep the place
And draw his pay.

He had been strong
And still his body kept its ruggedness.
Yet he was old and stiffened and he moved
As one who is wrapped round in something thick.
But O his face
His face was like the faces that look out
From bark and bole of trees, all marred and grooved,
All load about
With old varieties of silence and of wrong.
Such faces are locked long

In men, in stones, in wood, in earth
Awaiting birth.
And Johann's face was less
Expectant than the happy dead awaiting to become the quick.

His wife said much about how hard she tried.
She chattered, high and shrill,
About the burden and the eating ill.
His mother, little, thin, half blind and cross,
With scarlet flannel round her throat,
Put in her note,
Muttered about the cold, the draught, her side ––
Small ineffectual chants of little loss,
With never a word
Of the great gossip which she had not heard:
That life had passed her by.
The little room beset me like the din
And prick of scourges. All
At once I looked upon the spattered wall
And saw a violin.

A hall
Vast, bright and breathing.
In the upper air
A chord, a flower of tone, a quiet wreathing
Along the lift and fall
Of some clear current in the blood
Now delicately understood
Till all the hearing ones below
Are where
The voices call.
O now they know
What music is. It is that which they are
Themselves. Infinite bells
Of silence in a little sheath. Deep wells
Of being in a little cup. Star upon star
Veiled, save one reaching ray.
And see! The people turn
And for a breath they look
Out into one another's eyes
And shine and burn
Wise, wise
With ultimate kowledge of the goal
That seeks one whole.
And how
Eternity begins
And ever is beginning now
A thousand hearts learn from the violins.

. . . My back ain't right. My head ain't right. I'm almost dead.
Fill the hot water bag. I'm goin' to bed. . . .

Ten pairs fo socks I've darned tonight. I try
To do the best I can. . . .
I put the women by:
Johann, I said, you play? He shook his head:
I lost it, loggin' –– he held up a stump of thumb.
I took six lessons once, he said.
I sat there, dumb.

From out the inner place of music there had come
Long, long ago,
Some viewless one to tell him how to know
What waits upon the page
To beat the rhythm of the world. He heard; and tried
To stumble toward the door, graciously wide
For other feet than his.
I took six lessons once, he said with pride.
This, this
Was all we have him of his heritage.

II: North Star

His boy had stolen some money from a booth
At the County Fair. I found the father in his kitchen.
For years he had driven a dray and the heavy lifting
Had worn him down. So through his evenings
He slept by the kitchen stove as I found him.
The mother was crying and ironing.
I thought about the mother
For she brought me a photograph
Taken at a street fair on her wedding day.
She was so trim and white, and he so neat and alert
In the picture, with their friends about them ––
I saw that she wanted me to know their dignity from the first,
And so she brought me this picture, at their best.
But afterward I thought more about the father.
For as he came to the door with me I could not forbear
To say how bright and near the stars seemed.
Then he leaned and peered from beneath his low roof,
And he said:
There used to be a star called the Nord Star.

Amelia Josephine Burr

Occasionally there is a popular lyricist, whose work yet flashes with genuine poetic feeling. Of these is Amelia

Josephine Burr, who was born in New York City, was graduated there from Hunter College, has travelled widely and was recently married to the Reverent Carl H. Elmore of Englewood, New Jersey. Her novels, too, are filled with warmth and poetic feeling. Her adventures in the Orient have colored her work, and with energy and charm she succeeded in getting to know much concerning the natives and their customs wherever she went. Much of her verse must, of course, be classed as balladry, and it is as a balladist that she has gained a wide audience, but, especially in her later work, there is much more than graceful appeal.

Typhoon

We shall not shiver as we vainly try
To stir cold ashes once again to fire,
Nor bury a dead passion, you and I.
The wind that weds a moment sea and sky
In one exultant storm and passes by,
Was our desire.

Karle Wilson Baker

Nacogdoches, Texas, is a fitting name for the home of a poet, and Mrs. Karle Wilson Baker writes me that twenty years of East Texas have made her a tree−worshipper and a "desultory but ardent" student of birds. She was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and studied for some two years at the University of Chicago. Bot her one book for children, "The Garden of the Plynck," and her many lyrics, show the same genius for deftness of pattern and delicacy of imagery. Her moods are many, and she has a faculty for portraying deep emotions with an airy touch.

Storm Song

My bosom with the beat of wings is troubled as the day is falling;
Within my bosom hungry birds are circling on the wind and calling.

My breast is blinded by the rain and buffeted by weary flying.
My bosom with the beat of wings is troubled, and with bitter crying.

Prisons

Masters have wrought in prisons,
At peace in cells of stone:
From their thick walls I fashion
Windows to light my own.

Charlotte Mew

With one volume of poems published in her native England and reprinted here under the title "Saturday Market," Charlotte Mew immediately received wide critical recognition last year. Her dramatic poems, with their simplicity and force, her carefully–constructed and yet poignant lyrics, were impressive even though their volume was slender. When I read this book, I wrote to a friend in England to see if he could secure a poem for me. Miss Mew replied, cordially, and this fine lyric was the result. She has the Englishwoman's distaste for revealment of biographical detail; but her strong, peentrating, strikingly original work speaks tellingly of her.

To a Child in Death

You would have scoffed if we had told you yesterday
Love made us feel, or so it was with me, like some great bird
Trying to hold and shelter you in its strong wing: ––
A gay little shadowy smile would have tossed us back such a solemn word,
And it was not for that you were listening
When so quietly you slipped away
With half the music of the world unheard.

What shall we do with this strange summer, meant for you, ––
Dear, if we see the winter through
What shall be done with spring –– ?
This, this is the victory of the grave; here is death's sting.
That it is not strong enough, our strongest wing.

But what of His who like a Father pitieth?
His Son was also, once, a little thing,
The wistfullest child that ever drew breath,
Chased by a sword from Bethlehem and in the busy house at Nazereth
Playing with little rows of nails, watching the carpenter's hammer swing,

Long years before His hands and feet were tied
And by a hammer and three great nails He died,
Of youth, of spring,
Of sorrow, of loneliness, of victory the King,
Under the shadow of that wing.

John V.A. Weaver

A southerner, yet strongly identified with Chicago because of his newspaper work there, John V.A. Weaver has become known as a poet, critic and short−story writer, in a remarkably short time. Young, agile, enthusiastic, his love poems in the "American Language" and his short stories reflect his active knowledge of youth, and, while they sometimes approach the sentimental, his sense of humor usually saves him from mawkishness. Although his present popularity lies in his ability to poetize the common speech, I have a feeling that the only enduring medium for his abilities must be words that are more the language and less the dialect.

Two Ways

Oncet in the Museum
We seen a little rose
In a jar of alcohol −−
You turns up your nose:
"That's the way people think
Love ought to be −−
Last forever! Pickled roses!
None o' that for me!"

That night was fireworks
Out to Riverview
Gold and red and purple
Bustin' over you.
"Beautiful!" you says then,
"That's how love should be!
Burn wild and die quick −−
That's the love for me!"

Now you're gone for good . . . say,
Wasn't they no other way? . . .

Mary Carolyn Davies

A native of Oregon, a graduate of and a former teacher at the University of California, Mary Carolyn Davies, after a sojourn in Greenwich Village, wrote a novel about it. She also wrote children's poems, which together with the lightness of her other lyrics, have a charm that has an undoubted child appeal. Her verses belong in the group which, with varying individual traits, contains Margaret Widdemer, Sara Teasdale, Jessie Rittenhouse, Marguerite Wilkinson and Leonora Speyer. They are throroughly feminine, and without that curious mixture of masculine brittleness and feminine twist of phrase that characterizes the work of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie, and several less well known women poets. Miss Davies' lyrics are direct translations of mood and experience rather than poetic abstractions.

Pine Song

Like a young pine
May I grow:
Only feel
But never know.

Feel the wind
And rain and sun,
See dusk dead
And day begun,

Feel the touch
Of needles fine
Of a swaying
Neighbor pine,

Feel the forest
Awe and wonder
Only never know
That under
Beauty lieth woe.

Vincent Starrett

A Canadian, living in Chicago, and editing "The Wave," Vincent Starrett has at least one enthusiasm, and that is his admiration for Arthur Machen, the English novelist and essayist. Until I met them both in Chicago, I had frequently confused Vincent Starrett with Lew Sarett. Unfortunately I saw them at the same time, and have a fear that ultimately I shall again confuse them. Mr. Starrett was born in Toronto in 1886 and has been engaged in newspaper work practically all of his life. In 1914–15 he was war correspondent for the Chicago Daily News in Mexico. He has published books of essays, criticism and poetry, and has edited volumes in both the Modern Library and Everyman's Library.

Picture

Brown for the autumn leaves,
Green for the tree;
White for the flying sail,
Blue for the sea.

Grey for the solemn priest,
Red for the lass;
Black for the silent boy
Dead in the grass.

"H.D."

Hilda (Doolittle) Aldington, one of the early imagist poets, and the wife of Richard Aldington, the English writer, is the daughter of an American professor, was born in Pennsylvania, and is a graduate of Bryn Mawr. She lives, for the most part, in England, though she often visits Greece, from which she draws much of the special beauty of her work. A true imagist, in technique and spirit, her vivid verses bear the mark of an inherited inspiration. When she was in America last year, I found her to be one of the few people who seem bodily a perfect expression of the spiritual quality of their writing. Tall, dark, nervous, slender, with quick hands and deep restless eyes, she has that same delicate firm quality that makes her work almost a perfect modern translation of the mood of Greek Art and Culture.

Hippolytus Temporizes

I worship the greatest first ––
(it were sweet, the couch,
the brighter ripple of cloth
over the dipped fleece;
the thought: her bones
under the flesh are white
as when sand along a beach
covers but keeps the print
of the crescent shapes beneath.
I thought: so her body lies
between cloth and fleece.)

I worship, first, the great ––
(ah sweet, your eyes ––
what God, invoked in Crete,
gave them the gift to part
as the Sidonian myrtle–flower,
suddenly wide and swart;
then swiftly,
the eyelids having provoked our hearts ––
as suddenly beat and close.)

I worship the feet, flawless,
that haunt the hills ––
(ah sweet, dare I think,
beneath fetter of golden clasp,
of the rhythm, the fall and rise
of yours, carven, slight
beneath straps of gold that keep
their slender beauty caught,
like wings and bodies
of trapped birds.)

I worship the greatest first ––
(suddenly into my brain ––
the flash of sun on the snow,
the edge of light and the drift,
the crest and the hill–shadow ––
ah, surely now I forget,
ah splendour, my goddess turns:
or was it the sudden heat ––
on the wrist –– of the molten flesh
and veins' quivering violet?)

Jessie B. Rittenhouse

No one person in America has done more over a long period for spreading an interest in poetry and the writers of poetry than Jessie B. Rittenhouse. As a lecturer, as a maker of anthologies, as a critic and as a poet, she has long been a notable figure in America. I remember the first of her "Poet's Parties" I ever attended. There were Edith M. Thomas, Clinton Scollard, Witter Bynner, John Hall Wheelock, Edwin Markham and many more –– the old guard of "The Poetry Society," so to speak. Yet she has endeavored to encourage the young writer, too, and her advice and assistance has aided many who would otherwise have been discouraged. Her love songs and other lyrics have always been popular, and, although they are perhaps not so important as her anthologies, they have a special and quiet grace. Born in the East, at one time a teacher and later a competent newspaper woman, she has brought to the development of American poetry a conservative enthusiasm which has peculiarly aided the knowledge of native writing.

Vision

I came to the mountains for beauty
And I find here the toiling folk,
On sparse little farms in the valleys,
Wearing their days like a yoke.

White clouds fill the valleys at morning,
They are round as great billows at sea,
And roll themselves up to the hill–tops
Still round as great billows can be.

The mists fill the valleys at evening,
They are blue as the smoke in the fall,
And spread all the hills with a tenuous scarf
That touches the hills not at all.

These lone folk have looked on them daily,
Yet I see in their faces no light,
Oh, how can I show them the mountains
That are round them by and and by night?

Marion Strobel

Assisting Harriet Monroe in the editing of "Poetry," Marion Strobel writes criticism, short stories, and verse in her

spare hours. She is a young woman of varied interests, plays a better game of golf than most, dances, swims, rides and takes her part in the normal social life of Chicago with more than ordinary verve. Yet she has not collected her poems in a volume. Just as the young men of today who write poetry do not adopt the long hair and open collar of the 'nineties, so the ladies do not languish in scented boudoirs. The new group of women poets is active, vivid, normal and keen. Marion Strobel is one of the most active of them all.

Your Sadness

Not because beauty is as thin and bright
In you as the white outline of a tree
In winter, but because I find delight
In the curved sadness of your lips. (I see
Pleasanter things each day, each day recall
Happy faces, laughter that knew a way
To spin senses to oblivion.) . . . All
Your words are swift upon your lips and grey
As swallows, yet I stay to listen, yet
I cannot tear myself away from you:
For in a little while you may forget
Your sadness. O no matter what I do
You may forget your sadness –– O my dear
And even smile, and make the mystery clear!

Mary Austin

Few people in America understand native rhythms as does Mary Austin. Born in Illinois, she has divided her life between the Far West and the East, making it her special effort to understand the country as a whole. She has written plays, essays, novels and studies of American life. Her work among the Indians has given her not only an unusual mastery of subtle cadences in prose and poetry; but a certain mystic sense of the trend of national feeling that approaches the visionary. A commanding presence, an intuitive understanding and a discriminating tolerance makes Mrs. Austin a truly vital force in American life and literature.

Going West

Someday I shall go West,
Having won all time to love it in, at last,
Too still to boast.

But when I smell the sage,
When the long, marching landscape line
Melts into wreathing mountains,
And the dust cones dance,
Something in me that is of them will stir.

Happy if I come home
When the musk scented, moon–white gilia blows,
When all the hills are blue, remembering
The sea from which they rose.
Happy again,
When blunt faced bees carouse
In the red flagons of the incense shrub,
Or apricots have lacquered boughs,
And trails are dim with rain!

Lay me where some contented oak can prove
How much of me is nurture for a tree;
Sage thoughts of mine
Be acorn clusters for the deer to browse.
My loving whimsies –– Will you chide again
When they come up as lantern flowers?

I shall be small and happy as the grass,
Proud if my tip
Stays the white, webby moons the spider weaves,
Where once you trod
Or down my bleaching stalks shall slip
The light, imprisoning dew.
I shall be bluets in the April sod!

Or if the wheel should turn too fast,
Run up and rest
As a sequoia for a thousand years!

Joseph Andrew Galahad

Joseph Andrew Galahad died in Oregon in April of this year. He was a young man who started life as a soldier in the ranks of the U.S. Army. Shortly after he finished his enlistment he sickened with tuberculosis. At this time he began reading poetry and, gradually, began writing it. Several editors in the East became very interested in his

work and it was the encouragement of acceptance, and the enjoyment of writing that made it possible for him to struggle through three years of bitterness, during which time he produced a large volume of poetry, some of which shows a finess and strength in the midst of a mass of cruder stuffs. His work appeared in many places, in "Life," in "The North American Review," "Poetry," "Contemporary Verse," etc. Those of us who corresponded with him, and knew his spirit, respected him mightily. His influence was becoming wider at the time of his death. It was the influence of a brave and a creative spirit, fighting against a trying and an inevitable fate.

He Who Hath Eyes . . .

I saw three wondrous things today ––
I saw an apple tree in bloom:
I saw the sun set in the sea:
I saw a spider spin his loom.

And when I saw the apple tree ––
There were no cities built by man:
There were the blooms of all the worlds
That ever blew since time began.

And when I saw the sun go down ––
There was the color of that sphere
Which whirls about our little earth,
Blown in a web about me here.

And when I saw Arachne's son
Go spinning, spinning in the fern ––
There was the beauty of old toil
Which filled my poor soul's empty urn.

You bore me back, oh slave of man,
With whirring wheels on shining rails;
With such relentless, binding power,
That all resistance fails.

Yet –– all I saw the long night through
Within my four walls dull and smug,
Was sun and sea, and apple tree,
And gossamer spinning bug.

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter

Over a dinner–table in Buffalo, I met a tall reserved woman, who seemed, perhaps, a trifle withdrawn. She talked of books and plays with intelligence; but with detachment. Then, later in the evening, when the conversation turned to poetry, she became animated and keenly a part of it. Florence Kilpatrick Mixter, the wife of a prominent American business man, occupied with her family and social duties, a club woman and an active participant in various charitable enterprises, has yet found opportunity to contribute her fragile verses to many of the magazines and to publish a collected volume.

A Print By Hokusai

Of what avail
The tiny winds that call
To the indifferent sea? To ships a–sail
The twilight's silver pall
Whispers of night
Without one ripple stirred.
But on the shoals three fishermen in white
Are watching . . . . They have heard . . .
How still the ships! ––
So soon to feel the breath
Of winds that rush to meet the sea's cold lips
And fill the night with death!

Thomas Moult

The founder of "Voices," an English monthly magazine primarily for young writers, Thomas Moult is a poet (one of the Georgians), a novelist and a critic of many moods. He writes music criticism for the Manchester Guardian, theatre criticism for the Athenæum and book criticism for various English periodicals. His first novel, "Snow Over Elden," was given the highest type of critical praise in London, and his collected poems were well received. His is a delicate fancy in verse and a quiet handling of homely beauty in prose. Not a one–sided, nor yet a two–sided gentleman. In some ways he seems almost to be a British counterpart of our Mr. Heywood Broun; since ever Saturday for the Northcliffe appers, Moult writes an article either on cricket or football!

Heedless the Birds . . .

By this same copse in spring I came,
The birds sang round me cheerily.
In that wild dancing world of flame
Mine was the one wild heart made tame;
I hearkened wearily.
Fain would I share
With them my care;
But they would have no heed of me.

Now, while the wan year wanes more dim,
My heart grows joyous–wild again;
But where black trees the bleak skies limn
Those birds do pipe a doleful hymn,
Yet though, gladmost of men,
I'd fain rewake
Spring in the brake,
They heed no more than they did then.

Hervey Allen

William Hervey Allen, Jr., was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1889. An infantryman during the war, both in Mexico and in France, he was wounded in action. He is now an Instructor of English at the High School of Charleston, South Carolina, and becoming interested in the legend and temper of the South. His verse has been published widely and collected in several volumes. "Blindman," a war poem, attracted attention, and his first book, "Wampum and Old Gold," was considered by many critics the most noteworthy production in "The Yale Series of Younger Poets." Conservative and melodious in his technique, he is yet modern in feeling and content.

Dead Men
To a Metaphysician

If they were shadows walking to and fro
Upon a screen you call reality,
Then, when the light fails, where do shadows go?
This boy enigma rapes philosophy.
But if they really occupied three–square,

And now are only shadows on a screen,
How can the light still cast a shadow there
From shades of shadows that have never been?

Such questions are a mimic pantomime
Of ghosts to utter nothings in dream chairs,
Myopia squinting in a mist of time,
An eye that sees the eye with which it stares.
Your light too clearly shows the ancient stigma
Of questions solved by posing an enigma.

John Hall Wheelock

Notably eastern in his education and tendencies, John Hall Wheelock was born on Long Island, was graduated from Harvard where he was class poet, and later studied in the universities of Göttingen, Berlin and Vienna. Since then he has been on the staff of one of the large New York publishers. His verses are musical, sweeping and often vociferous, though in his later moods he has lapsed into quieter measures. An almost passionate love of life and beauty is apparent, contrasting with his tall, brooding, silent figure.

What of good and evil,
Hell and Heaven above ––,
Trample them with love!
Ride over them with love!

Anne

Belovèd –– O adorable and false ––
Whom have you taken now in the dear toils?

By what pale margins do your footsteps stray,
Or what enchanted wood? What valleys hold
The lily of your loveliness? What hills
Have known your weight upon them, what far shores?

Twilight comes tenderly, while evening lifts
Along the pallid rim her lonely star ––

O happy heart on which your heart is laid!

Glenn Ward Dresbach

A native of Illinois, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, who lives now in El Paso, Texas, and has lived practically all of his life in the West, Glen Ward Dresbach is that rarest of persons, a businessman and poet. His present connection is with a packing company. He was at one time in governmental service in the Canal Zone. He has worked in mines. From this vigorous background we might expect the swinging rhythms of a Sandburg: but instead of that we find that Dresbach has a positive aversion to free verse, writes conventional lyrics with technical care, and long narrative and dramatic poems which have none of the vagaries in metre characteristic of much poetry which has come to us from the West.

Song

Like some impatient lover
In some forgotten June
The Wind below dark windows
Sings coming of the Moon.

And like a fair proud lady
Too sure of love she waits.
At last the Wind goes singing
Beyond the shadow–gates.

He fondles hair of willows
And sings a lovely tune ––
Lo! smiles from her high window
The wistful, jealous Moon!

Lola Ridge

With her wiry energy and her frail determination, Lola Ridge has crystallized her power of Celtic imagination and made herself a poet when she had formerly been a writer for the popular magazines. She was born in Dublin, but spent most of her life in Australia and New Zealand. It is curious that so assorted an environment should have

produced a poem so thoroughly of New York as "The Ghetto," though it is, perhaps, her very understanding of the alien that gives this, her best performance, its peculiar vividness. She has been occupied in various ways during recent years, but has now settled as head of the American offices of "Broom."

Child and Wind

Wind tramping among the clouds
That scatter like sheep ––
Wind blowing out the stars
Like lights in open windows ––
Wind doubling up your fists at the tall trees
And haling fields by the grass ––
Keep away from the telegraph wires
With my kite in your hand!

Bees

Bees over the gooseberry bushes,
Bees with golden thighs
Climbing out of pale flowers
(Bees singing to you for a long while,
You sitting quite still,
Holding the sun in your lap),
Bees, take care!
You may catch fire in the sun,
If you venture so high in blue air.

Louis Untermeyer

One of our few critics of poetry, and an expert parodist, Louis Untermeyer is a serious and acknowledged poet as well. He was born in New York City in 1885, studied to be a professional musician, and ended by entering his father's jewelry manufacturing establishment. I have never discussed the designing of jewelry with him, largely because he has always been so busily talking of poets or poetry. A brilliant analytical mind, a zealous interest in social problems, and a growing ability to handle his lyrical medium characterize this forceful, able, astute man of letters. His anthologies, particularly "Modern American Poetry," are fine examples of taste in selection and

penetration in presenting biographical and critical facts. Strongly race–conscious, he yet has a broad understanding of the psychological problems of the Jew. More forceful than most critics, and a more honest workman than most poets, he is conspicuously a healthy influence in a American poetry.

Dorothy Dances

This is no child that dances. This is flame.
Here fire at last has found its natural frame.

What else is that which burns and flies
From those enkindled eyes . . .
What is that inner blaze
Which plays
About that lighted face . . .
This thing is fire set free ––
Fire possesses her, or rather she
Controls its mastery.
With every gesture, every rhythmic stride,
Beat after beat,
It follows, purring at her side,
Or licks the shadows of her flashing feet.
Around her everywhere
It coils its thread of yellow hair;
Through every vein its bright blood creeps,
And its red hands
Caress her as she stands
Or lift her boldly when she leaps.
Then, as the surge of radiance grows stronger
These two are two no longer
And they merge
Into a disembodied ecstasy;
Free
To express some half–forgotten hunger,
Some half–forbidden urge.

What mystery
Has been at work until it blent
One child and that fierce element?
Give it no name.
It is enough that flesh has danced with fame.

Daniel Henderson

Of Scotch parentage, but born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1880, Daniel Henderson began his literary career there by writing short stories and poems for various publications. Coming to New York City, he joined the staff of McClure's Magazine, where he remained until recently, when he left that publication to take up work with the New York Evening Post. His children's books, his verses, and his "Greatheart: The Life Story of Theodore Rooseveldt," are well known. His touch is light and his lyrics, occasionally dangerously pretty, are nevertheless melodious.

Repentence

Come, mad March!
Do you repent
Tempers so incontinent
Vented on each darling bud
That dared to lift through mist and mud
To see you wavering in the hold
Of Spring's warm arms and winter's cold?

Yea, wild month ––
It must be so!
For see –– the last fierce swirl of snow
That was the symbol of your wrath,
Has melted by the garden path,
And bathes the jonquils' shivering spears
In a very flood of tears!

Jean Starr Untermeyer

When she was seventeen, Jean Starr Untermeyer came to New York City from her birthplace in Zanesville, Ohio, to attend boarding school. In 1907 she married Louis Untermeyer, the poet and critic. She is much interest both in music and in poetry, and her careful lyrics, both in regular and free rhythms, show keen intellectual integrity and a passion for the judicously selected phrase. More colorful and whimsical than most of the younger women poets, she allows her rich imagination to play without repression over the varying moods of ripening womanhood.

The Passionate Sword

Temper my spirit, oh Lord,
Burn out its alloy,
And make it a pliant steel for thy wielding,
Not a clumsy toy,
A blunt, iron thing in my hands
That blunder and destroy.

Temper my spirit, oh Lord,
Keep it long in the fire;
Make it one with the flame. Let it share
That up–reaching desire.
Grasp it thyself, oh my God;
Swing it straighter and higher!

Helen Santmyer

Xenia, Ohio, is the "Prairie Town" of Helen Santmyer, who was graduated from Wellesley College in 1918, and is returning there now to teach as an assistant in the English Literature Department. For a time she was secretary to the editor of a magazine in New York City, then she went back to school teaching in her native town. This one sonnet is all that I have seen of her work; but it seems to me one of the most satisfactory poems I have been fortunate enough to secure.

The Prairie Town

Lovers of beauty laugh at this grey town,
Where dust lies thick on ragged curb–side trees,
And compass–needle streets lead up and down
And lose themselves in empty prairie seas.

Here is no winding scented lane, no hill
Crowned with a steepled church, no garden wall
Of old grey stone where lilacs bloom, and fill
The air with fragrance when the May rains fall.

But here is the unsoftened majesty

Of the wide earth where all the wide streets end,
And from the dusty corner one may see
The full moon rise, and flaming sun descend.

The long main street, whence farmers' teams go forth
Lies like an old sea road, star−pointed north.

Carl Sandburg

There is no man writing today more characteristic of a certain type of American thought and rhythm than Carl Sandburg. To call him the poet of the proletariat would be absurd. Yet, in that phrase would lie something of the truth. Born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878, with Swedish ancestry, his life has been a succession of occupations which have brought him close to the soil of America. He has been dish−washer and scene−shifter, harvester and porter, and soldier in the Spanish−American war. This was before he entered Lombard College, where he became editor−in−chief of the undergraduate newspaper. It was from those earlier days, rather than from later ones as advertising man, newspaperman or political organizer, that he learned the love of the hobo, the intimate sounds of the railway yards, the fierce brutal coarseness and ugliness together with the tender wisdom of massed humanity. His success was long in coming; but his poems appearing in "Poetry" in 1914 attracted wide attention and his "Chicago Poems" clinched the matter. Sandburg himself, an impressive slouching figure with white hair and deep eyes, can best teach an appreciation of his own poetry by his reading of it. Of all his work, "Cool Tombs" and the recent "The WIndy City" are my favorites. I shall not quarrel with those who say that his work is prose rather than poetry. Sandburg, the noblest inheritor of the tradition of Whitman, the strongest intrepreter of the emotional core of America, is above a matter of definition. At his worst, he is sometimes impossible to understand; at his best he is so vital, so rich, so broad in his approach to life, that he stands as the people's great visionary.

> Take any streetful of poeple buying clothes and groceries,
> cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing
> tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . .
> tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the
> dust . . . in the cool tombs.

Hiker at Midnight

Memories, you can flick me and sting me.
Memories, you can hold me even and smooth.

A circle of pearl mist horizons
is not a woman to be walked up to and kissed

nor a child to be taken and held for a good−night
nor any old coffee−drinking pal to be smiled at in
the eyes and left with a grip and a handshake.

Pearl memories in the mist circling the horizon,
flick me, sting me, hold me even and smooth.

Ambassadors of Grief

There was a little fliv of a woman loved one man
and lost out. And she took up with another and
it was blank again. And she cried to God the whole
layout was a fake and a frame−up. And when she took
up with Number Three she found the fires burned out,
the love power, gone. And she wrote a letter to God
and dripped it in a mail box. The letter said:

O God, ain't there some way you can fix it up so the
little flivs of women, ready to throw themselves in
front of railroad trains for men they love, can have
a chance? I guessed the wrong keys, I battered on
the wrong panels, I picked the wrong roads. O God,
Ain't there no way to guess again and start all over
back where I had the keys in my hands, back where
the roads all came together and I had my pick?

And the letter went to Washington, D.C., dumped into a
dump where all letters go address to God −− and no house number.

Robert Hillyer

Born in 1895, an easterner and a graduate of Harvard in 1917, Robert Hillyer now teaches there as an instructor. During the war he was overseas with the French Ambulance in 1917 and later a Lieutenant of Ordinance in the A.E.F. As a versifier, he is a vigorous classicist, and his work shows a marked tendency to draw from Greek and Elizabethan springs of beauty.

Threnody

I made a slow lament for you, lost magic
Of schoolboy love and dreams in shadowed places,
Where passed in visible parade, the tragic
Desires of vanished gods and women's faces.

On violins beneath long, undisputed
New England orchards sombred by the spirit
Of endless autumn, I awoke the muted
Strings of your lament, but none could hear it,

Except, perhaps, one passerby, who skirted
The upland fields in that avoided spot;
And, marveling at the music in deserted
Orchards, hurried on, and soon forgot.

Leonora Speyer

Born in Washington, D.C., of a New England mother and Count Ferdinand von Storsh, a young Prussian officer who fought in the Union Army during the civil war, Leonora Speyer has led a wandering existence. Now, it is only occasionally in her Washington Square home that friends are permitted to hear her violin playing. Yet she once made a brilliant début with the Boston Symphony orchestra and for three years played over the country in concert. After her marriage she lived and travelled widely in Europe. It was not until 1915 that she started to write. Her short stories were unusual and successful; but she gave them up when she found that poetry was her favorite method of expression. Filled with emotional power and swinging rhythm, her first volume of verse and her later lyrics fully justify her decision.

Measure Me, Sky!

Measure me, sky!
Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars;
I have been little so long!

Weigh me, high wind!
What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,

Joy by the weight of a word!

Horizon, reach out!
Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world;
Widen my eyes by a thought!

Sky, be my depth,
WInd, be my width and my height,
World, my heart's span;
Loneliness, wings for my flight!

The Pet

Hope gnawed at my heart like a hungry rat,
Ran in and out of my dreams high−walled,
I heard its scampering feet:
"Pretty rat −− pretty rat −− !" I called,
And crumbled it songs to eat.

Hope peeped at me from behind my dreams,
Nibbled the crumbs of my melodies,
Grew tame and sleek and fat;
Oh, but my heart knew ease
To feel the teeth of my rat!

Then came a night −− and then a day −−
I heard soft feet that scuttled away −−
Rats leave the sinking ship, they say.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Considered by many critics America's foremost poet, with the publication of his collected poems, the awarding to him of the Pulitzer Prize and the decreeing of a doctor's degree by Yale University, Edwin Arlington Robinson has achieved something of the popularity he has so richly deserved for years. He was born in 1869 in Head Tide, Maine. One of the few American poets to receive the direct patronage of a President, Robinson was given a post in the New York Custom House by Theodore Roosevelt, and held it from the year 1905 to 1910. It was natural that Roosevelt should have admired the strong, subtle, tender, ironical measures of Robinson's verse. In his concise, measured lines there is a deep faith and a quiet progression toward a fine vision. I remember the first time I went to see him in his Brooklyn room, sitting quietly in the midst of paintings by a friend of his, smoking,

reading, working steadily. He is a quiet, brooding, unusual figure. Poetry, he has made his life work, and he plies his craft with a determination and a skill that one might expect to find in the work–room of a Benvenuto Cellini. His most distinguished volume, "The Man Against the Sky," appeared in 1916, yet there is no lapse of rigorous maintenance of his own standards in such later books as "The Three Taverns," or his dramatic poem, "Avon's Harvest."

Recalled

Long after there were none of them alive
About the place –– where there is now no place
But a walled hole where fruitless vines embrace
Their parent skeletons that yet survive
In evil thorns –– none of us could arrive
At a more cogent answer to their ways
Than one old Isaac in his latter days
Had humor or compassion to contrive.

I mentioned them, and Isaac shook his head:
"The Power that you call yours, and I call mine
Extinguished in the last of them a line
That Satan would have disinherited.
When we are done with all but the Divine,
We die." And there was no more to be said.

Witter Bynner

Exhibiting his collection of Chinese jade in a room filled with Chinese paintings, the President of "The Poetry Society of America" is completely at home. He is an appreciator of the odd and the exotic, a characteristic which is often displayed in his verses. Witter Bynner was born in Brooklyn in 1881, was graduated from Harvard and started his literary life as an editor. He has published several volumes of poems, an excellent translation of "Iphigenia in Tauris," and several original plays. It was he who, collaborating with Arthur Davison Ficke, fooled the public with the free–verse hoax, "Spectra," and later followed it with "Pins for WIngs." He is a graceful speaker, has an unusual sense of humor, and a large amount of tact. This being a somewhat unusual combination in so excellent a poet, makes him a particularly able executive in his relations to organized temperament as represented by the notoriously quarrelsome "Poetry Society."

The New Whistle

See him cut a whistle
Not like the rest ––
Yours is easy, mine is stupid,
His is the best.
He lets the hole come anywhere,
He makes the pipe long,
He ties a berry on the end
Before he plays the song . . . .

There he has cut his whistle
And is ready –– so ––
Not for you to listen
But just to watch him blow.

Chinese Lyrics
Translated from the Chinese of Tu Mu
by Witter Bynner
and Kiang Kang Hu

I Climb to Look–Out Cemetery[1] Before Leaving For Wu–Hsing
I could serve in a good reign, but not now.
The lone cloud rather, the Buddhist peace. . . .
Once more –– and then off beyond river and sea ––
I climb to the Tomb of Emperor Chao.

By the Purple Cliff[2]

On a part of a spear undecayed in the sand
I burnish the sign of an ancient kingdom. . . .
Spring, if the wind had not aided Chou Yü,
Would have fastened both Ch'iao girls in Copper–Bird Palace.

The Morning on the Ch'in–Huai River[3]

Mist veils the cold stream and moonlight the sand
As I moor in the shadow of a river–tavern,
Where girls, unminding a perished kingdom,
Echo the Song of the Courtyard Flowers.[4]

A Letter to Han Cho, the Yang–chou Magistrate

There are faint green mountains and far green waters,

And South−River grasses unfaded with autumn,
While, clear in the moon on the twenty−four bridges,[5]
Girls, white as jade, are teaching flute−music.

A Statement

With my wine−bottle, looking by river and lake
For an exquisite lady to dance on my palm,
I wake, after dreaming ten years in Yang−chou,
Known as fickle, that's all, in the Street of Blue Houses.[6]

In the Autumn Night

Silver shines the candle on my chill bright screen
And my little silk fan is for fireflies,
While I watch, from my moon−soaked ice−cold steps
The River of Heaven parting two stars.[7]

Parting

I

She is slim and supple and just thirteen,
The young spring−tip of a cardamon−spray.
Ten li to the wind the Yan−chou Road
Opens all its pearl−screens; but none are like her.

II

How can a deep love seem deep love,
How can it smile, at a farewell feast?
Even the candle, feeling our woe,
Weeps, as we do, all night long.

The Garden of the Golden Valley[8]
Stories of passion make sweet dust,
Calm water, grasses unconcerned.
At sunset, when birds cry in the wind,
Like a girl's robe fall the petals.

A Night at an Inn

With no companions at the inn,
I concentrate my lonely pain
And under the cold lamp think of the past
And am kept awake by a lost wild−goose[9] . . .
Out of a misty dream at dawn,
I read, a year late, news from home
And remember the moon like smoke on the river
And a fisher−boat moored there, under my door.

Notes on the Chinese Lyrics

[1] Literally, Pleasure−Walk Cemetery (see Li Shang−yin's Look−Out Cemetery).

[2] In what is now Hu−Peh Province, this cliff on the Yang−tze eash of Han−kow was teh scene of a famous historical event in the time of the Three Kingdoms. A fleet from the Wêi Kingdom had come down the river to attach the Wu and Shu Kingdoms. The two generals, Chu−Kêl; Liang of the Shu Kingdom (See Tu Fu's The Eight−Sided Fortress) and Chou Yü of the Wu Kingdom (see Li Tuan's On Hearing Her Play the Harp) combined forces and destroyed this fleet by setting it afire. The King of Wêi, if he had won this battle, whould have been able to bear captive to his Copper−Bird Palace the two famously beautiful girls of Ch'iao, one of the them wife the King of Wu and the other the wife of General Chou Yü. These girls are celebrated in Chinese poetry, like Helen of Troy in European poetry, as a romantic source of war. In Tu Fu's poem, The Eight−Sided Fortress, is sung Chu−Kêl; Liang's grief that he had not conquired the Wu Kingdom; yet here are seen the Wu and Shu Kingdoms allied agains the Wêi Kingdom. Changes in the political and military alignment of nations have always been rapid.

[3] Along this river at Nan−King, girls are still singing in the flower boats and taverns.

[4] Composed for a favorite, by the Later King of the Ch'en Dynasty, who was afterward overthrown on account of his love of wine, women and song (see Li Shang−yin's The Palace of the Sui Emperor and Ch'eng Tien's On the Ma−huai Slope).

[5] There is stil a place in Yang−chou called Twenty−Four Bridges. It may have meant arches.

[6] The harlots' quarter.

[7] In the original two stars are named −− the Cowherd and the Spinning−girl (Ch'ien−niu and Chih−n¨): the reference being to a well−known story, the conclusion of which is that two sweethearts, having been changed into stars, are able to see each other across the Milky Way but are allowed to meet only once a year, on the seventh night of the Seventh−Month. Lafcadio Hearn has translated from the Japanese a long poem on this subject.

[8] The man who owned this garden, Shuh Ch'ung of the Chin Dynasty, was the richest man of his time. The last line of this poem alludes to one of many stories about him. A certain general coveted a favorite of his, a girl named Lu−Chu, whom Shih Ch'ung refused to surrender. Presently the general, charging him with treason, sent troops to seize the girl. But she would not come down from her high chamber; and, when they took Shih Ch'ung, she threw herself from the window to her death.

[9] It was a poetical belief that the cry of the wild−goose came never from pairs but only from the solitary.