CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY

1914-1915



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"Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose." W.W.



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CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY



VARIOUS of the poems in this book have appeared in "Poetry," "Poetry and Drama," "Blast," "Others," "Bruno Chap Books," and in "The Spoon River Anthology," "Children of Love," "You and I," to the editors, authors, and publishers of which magazines and volumes the arranger of the present collection desires to express his thanks for permission to reprint them.

CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY 1914-1915



LONDON
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1915

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Contents

PAGE

W. B. YEATS
THE SCHOLARS 1

T. S. ELIOT
THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK . 2
PORTRAIT OF A LADY 9
THE BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT . . 15
HYSTERIA 16
MISS HELEN SLINGSBY 16

DOUGLAS GOLDRING
CALLE MEMO O LOREDAN 18

ALICE CORBIN
ONE CITY ONLY 20

T. E. H.
POEM: ABBREVIATED FROM THE CONVERSATION OF MR. T. E. H. 22

ORRICK JOHNS
THE SONG OF YOUTH 23
NO PREY AM I 25
OLIVES 31

CONTENTS

PAGE

ALFRED KREYMBORG

DECORATION 33

THE NEXT DRINK 33

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

DOC HILL 35

OLLIE MCGEE 36

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY 36

CARL HAMBLIN 37

ROSCOE PURKAPILE 38

LILLIAN STEWART 39

RUTHERFORD MCDOWELL 40

HORTENSE ROBBINS 42

SEARCY FOOTE 42

THE HILL 44

HARRIET MONROE

A LETTER FROM PEKING 46

M. B.

OLD AGE 54

PASTELS 55

HAROLD MONRO

HEARTHSTONE 56

SUBURB 57

MILK FOR THE CAT 59

THE STRANGE COMPANION 61

CONTENTS

PAGE

CARL SANDBURG

Chicago Poems:

The Harbour 65

The Road and the End 65

ALLEN UPWARD

Chinese Lanterns 67

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

In Harbour 70

The Wanderer: a Rococo Study . . 71

EZRA POUND

Contemporania:

The Garret 86

The Garden 86

Albatre 87

In a Station of the Metro . . 88

Further Instructions . . . 88

The Study in Aesthetics . . . 89

Heather 90

The Gipsy 91

Dogmatic Statement concerning the Game of Chess 92

JOHN RODKER

Twilight. I 93

Twilight. II 94

The Lunatic 95

Fear 96

The Scholars

Bald heads forgetful of their sins,
Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That youug men, tossing on their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair
To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.

They'll cough in the ink to the world's end;
Wear out the carpet with their shoes
Earning respect; have no strange friend;
If they have sinned nobody knows:
Lord, what would they say
Should their Catullus walk that way!

W. B. Yeats.

T. S. ELIOT

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S' io credessi che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piú scosse.
Ma perciocchè giammai di questo fondo
Non tornò vivo alcun, s' i' odo il vero,
Senza tema d' infamia ti rispondo.

LET us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .

Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the spot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate:
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

LOVE SONG OF J. A. PRUFROCK

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"—
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known
them all—
The eyes that fit you in a formulated phrase.
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known
them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown
hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow
streets,
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirtsleeves, leaning out of
windows? . . .

LOVE SONG OF J. A. PRUFROCK

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
ThoughI have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
  Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
    That is not it, at all."

  And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the
    sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts
    that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in pat-
    terns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
    "That is not it at all,
  That is not what I meant, at all."

  . . . . . .

  No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to
    be;

LOVE SONG OF J. A. PRUFROCK

Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince: withal, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trowsers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trowsers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves,
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By seagirls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

. . . . . .

Portrait of a Lady

Thou has committed
Fornication: but that was in another country,
And besides, the wench is dead.
The Jew of Malta.

I

AMONG the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb,
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and fingertips.
"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
Should be resurrected only among friends
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room."
And so the conversation slips

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Among velleities and carefully caught regrets,
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets
And begins:

"You do not know how much they mean to me,
my friends,
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and
ends
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? you
are not blind!
How keen you are!)
To find a friend who has these qualities,
Who has, and gives
Those qualities upon which friendship lives.
How much it means that I say this to you—
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar*!"

Among the windings of the violins
And the ariettes
Of cracked cornets,
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
Capricious monotone
That is at least one definite "false note."

Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
Admire the monuments,
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks.
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you who hold it in your hands";
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."
I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon: padding
"I am always sure that you understand

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

"You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

"But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

"I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?
You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage.
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired
Reiterates some worn-out common song,

With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down; returning as before,
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease,
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door,
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and
knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you
return?
But that's a useless question.
You hardly know when you are coming back,
You will find so much to learn."
My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
"I have been wondering frequently of late
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)
Why we have not developed into friends."
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
They all were sure our feelings would relate
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
We must leave it now to fate.
You will write, at any rate.
Perhaps it is not too late.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance.

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the house tops;
Doubtful, for quite a while
Not knowing what to feel, or if I understand,
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .

Would she not have the advantage, after all?
This music is successful with a "dying fall"
Now that we talk of dying—
And should I have the right to smile?

The Boston Evening Transcript

THE readers of the Boston Evening Transcript
Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn.

When evening quickens faintly in the street
Wakening the appetites of life in some,
And to others bringing the Boston Evening Transcript,
I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning
Wearily, as one would turn to say good-bye to Rochefoucauld
If the street were Time and he at the end of the street,
And I say, "Cousin Harriet, here is the Boston Evening Transcript."

Hysteria

AS she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her laughter and being part of it, until her teeth were only accidental stars with a talent for squad-drill. I was drawn in by short gasps, inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. An elderly waiter with trembling hands was hurriedly spreading a pink and white checked cloth over the rusty green iron table, saying: "if the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden, if the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden . . ." I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end.

Miss Helen Slingsby

MISS HELEN SLINGSBY was my maiden aunt
And lived in a small house near a fashionable
square
Cared for by servants to the number of four.

Now when she died there was silence in heaven
And silence at her end of the street.
The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped
his feet:
He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred
before.
The dogs were handsomely provided for,
But shortly afterwards the parrot died too.
The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantel-
piece
And the footman sat upon the dining table
Holding the second housemaid on his knees
Who had always been so careful while her mistress
lived.

T. S. Eliot.

Calle Memo o Loredan

WE were staying (that night) in a very old palace—
Very dark, very large, and sheer to the water below.
The rooms were silent and strange, and you were frightened:
The silver lamp gave a feeble, flickering glow.

And the bed had a high, dark tester, and carved black posts,
And behind our heads was a glimmer of old brocade.
Do you remember?—you thought the shadows were full of ghosts,
And the sound of the lapping water made you afraid.

Ah! and your face shone pale, in the gleam of that quivering flame,
And your bosom was rich with the round pearls, row on row;

And you looked proud, and jewelled, and passionate
without shame—
Like some princess who stooped to her lover, a
long while ago.

Douglas Goldring.

ALICE CORBIN

In Poetry magazine April (?) 1916

One City Only

ONE city only, of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city belong to me. . . .

I remember the mellow light of afternoon
Slanting across brick buildings on the water-front,
And small boats at rest on the floating tide,
And larger boats at rest in the near-by harbour;
And I know the tidal smell, and the smell of mud,
Uncovering oyster flats, and the brown bare toes
of small negroes
With the mud oozing between them,
And the little figures leaping from log to log,
And the white children playing among them—
I remember how I played among them.
And I remember the recessed windows of the
gloomy halls
In the darkness of decaying grandeur,
The feel of cool linen in the cavernous bed,
And the window curtain swaying gently
In the night air,

And the half-hushed noises of the street
In the southern town,
And the thrill of life
Like a hand in the dark,
With its felt, indeterminate meaning:
I remember that I knew there the stirring of passion,
Fear, and the knowledge of sin,
Tragedy, laughter, death. . . .
And I remember, too, on a dead Sunday afternoon
In the twilight,
When there was no one else in the house
My self suddenly separated itself
And left me alone,
So that the world lay about me, lifeless;
I could not touch it, or feel it, or see it;
Yet I was there . . .
The sensation lingers:
Only the most vital threads
Hold me at all to living . . .
Yet I only live truly when I think of that house;
Only enter then into being.

One city only of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city belong to me.

Alice Corbin.

Poem: Abbreviated from the Conversation of Mr. T. E. H.

TRENCHES: ST. ELOI

OVER the flat slope of St. Eloi
A wide wall of sandbags.
Night,
In the silence desultory men
Pottering over small fires, cleaning their mess-tins:
To and fro, from the lines,
Men walk as on Piccadilly,
Making paths in the dark,
Through scattered dead horses,
Over a dead Belgian's belly.

The Germans have rockets. The English have no rockets.
Behind the lines, cannon, hidden, lying back miles.
Before the line, chaos:

My mind is a corridor. The minds about me are corridors.
Nothing suggests itself. There is nothing to do but keep on.

The Song of Youth

THIS is the song of youth,
This is the cause of myself;
I knew my father well and he was a fool,
Therefore will I have my own foot in the path
before I take a step;
I will go only into new lands,
And I will walk on no plank-walks.
The horses of my family are wind-broken,
And the dogs are old,
And the guns rusty;
I will make me a new bow from an ash-tree,
And cut up the homestead into arrows.

Behold how people stand around!
(There are always crowds of people standing around,
Whose legs have no knees)—
While the engineers put up steel work . . .
Is it something to catch the sunlight,
Jewelry and gew-gaw?
I have no time to wait for them to build bridges
for me;

THE SONG OF YOUTH

Where awful the gap seems stretching there is no gap,
Leaping I take it at once from a thought to a thought.
I can no more walk in the stride of other men
Than be father of their children.

My treasure lured like a bright star,
And I went to it young and desirous.
Lo, as it stood there in its great chests,
The wise men came up with the keys,
Crying, "Blasphemy, blasphemy!"
For I had broken the locks. . . .
And when the procession went waving to a funeral,
They cried it again;
For I stayed in my home and spoke truth about the dead.

Much did I learn waiting in my youth;
At the door of a great man I waited on one foot and then on the other.
The files passed in and out before me to the antechamber, for at that door I was not favoured:
(O costly preferment!)
Yet I watched them coming and going,

And I learned the great man by heart from the
stories on their faces.
When presently the retainers arrived, one above
the other in a row, saying:
"The great man is ready,"
I had long been a greater than he.

This is the reason for myself:
When I used to go in the races, I had but one
prayer,
And I went first before the judges, saying:
"Give everyone a distance, such as you consider
best;
I will run scratch."

No Prey am I

No prey am I of poor thoughts.
I leave all of my followers; I tire quickly of them;
I send them away from me when they ask too
much; for though I live alone
Still will I live, night and day . . .

NO PREY AM I

There is not anything in me save mutation and laughter;
My laughter is like a sword,
Like the piston-rod that defies oceans and grades.
When I labour it is a song of battle in the broad noon;
For behold the muscles of a man—
They are piston-rods; they are cranes, hydraulic presses, powder-magazines:
But though my body be as beautiful as a hill crowned with flowers
I will despise it and make it obey me . . .

Is the old love dead?
Then I shall await the new,
To embrace it more sturdily and passionately than ever the old;
And break it under the white force of my laughter
Until it lies passive in my arms.
There is nothing in me but renewal;
If my friend bow his head over me I soon surprise him with shouts of joy:
For in an instant I am again what I was,
Only with a few moments more of the infusion of Earth;

I tell him, the griever, to follow me and he is a griever no more;
He raises his head and must follow.
Yet it is my battle, not his battle,
For in me I absorb others . . .
I hail parties and partisans from afar;
Not men but parties are my comrades,
Not persons but nations are my associates.
I shake the hand of nations;
For I am a nation and a party, and majorities do not elect me—
I elect myself.
I swam in the sea, and lo!
The continents assembled like islands off my coast.
My talk is with Homer and Bonaparte, with David and Garibaldi, with China and Pharaoh and Texas;
When I laugh it is with Lucifer and Rabelais.
A pathfinder is my mistress, one hard to keep, and unbridled,
I have no respect for tame women.
My friends and I do not meet every day,
For we are centuries apart, our salutations girdle the globe.
I have eaten locusts with Jeremiah;

NO PREY AM I

I invite all hatreds and the stings of little creatures,
They enrich me, I glory in my parasites.

No man shall ever read me,
For I bring about in a gesture what they cannot fathom in a life;
Yet I tell Bob and Harry and Bill—
It costs me nothing to be kind;
If I am a generous adversary, be not deceived, neither be devoted—
It is because I despise you.
Yet if any man claim to be my peer I shall meet him,
For that man has an insolence that I like;
I am beholden to him.
I know the lightning when I see it,
And the toad when I see it. . . .
I warn all pretenders.

Yet before I came it was known of me to the chosen, all that I should do.
Every tree knew it;
Every lion and every leech knew it—
And called out to meet the new enemy,
The new friend. . . .
What power can deny me?

It was known that I should do not one thing but
hundreds,
For I despise my works and make them obey me.
I have my time and I bide it. . . .
It was known that I should turn no whit from my
end, until I had attained it.

Nothing has scathed me,
Nothing ever, nor ever will.
I have touched pitch, I have revelled in it and rolled
in it;
Buried in mire and filth, I laughed long,
And sprang up.
I have loved lust and vain deviltries
And taken them into my heart—
Their dirt and their lies—and my heart was
aflame
With a new fancy. . . .
Not me can pitch defile!
For the Spring, my sister, rose under my feet
And I was again naked and white,
Ready to dive into the deep pool, green and bottom-
less,
The medium for heroes, since it is dangerous and
beautiful—
The pool of To-morrow!

NO PREY AM I

It is because I breathe like fishes and live in the waters of To-morrow that Death fears me. . . .

How often have I intercepted thee, O Death!
O windy Liar!
Thou canst do nothing against me;
If I command thee to stand back thou art afraid and cowerest,
For I have caught thee often and punished thee. . . .

I am the greatest laugher of all,
Greater than the sun and the oak-tree,
Than the frog and Apollo;
I laugh all day long!
I laugh at Death, I hail Death, I kiss her on the cheek as a lover his bride,
But the lover goes not to his bride unless he desire her;
I go not to Death until I am ready.
The strong lover goes not to his bride save when he would people his land with sons,
Then I too, I go not to Death, save it be for the labour greater than all others.
I shall break her with my laughter;
I shall complete her . . .
Only then shall Death be when I die!

Olives

Fingers.

I've ten fingers
Very much admired,
I shall frame them
For they cannot do anything;
They cannot earn dinner
Or even hold a pebble . . .
Pebbles are pretty falling through them.

Shoe-string.

Little old shoe,
You need a shoe-string;
I shall find one for you,
For without it you are helpless
As a man who studies regulations,
But with a yellow one
Like a woman who is bald.

Powder.

She used that powder once
Freely, profusely,
And all the other times
Forgot to use it, which proves
That powder pleased me
As she never did.

OLIVES

Beautiful Mind.

Oh, beautiful mind,
I lost it
In a lot of frying pans
And calendars and carpets
And beer bottles . . .
Oh, my beautiful mind!

A Moon.

It lasted a month,
We had one moon . . .
You took it for a baby
And when it cried
For a bib and a bottle,
All was over.

A Saying.

Men and children,
Do not study Law,
Nor Kipling nor Keats,
Nor the comic papers . . .
This is all I have to tell you.

Orrick Johns.

Decoration

I HAVE only thoughts for you.
And you never wanted anything.

The Next Drink

IT'S a marvellous age that we live in!
(It is, sir!)
In Greece, they fought with mere jav'lins and spears!
(Child's play!)
In later times,—well, what of Bonaparte?
(Waterloo?)
And the poor pretty handful who fell?
(Tin soldiers!)
When you think of the motors and aeroplanes
(The dreadnoughts!)
And the millions of men in the field at one time
(A million dead!)

THE NEXT DRINK

The seas and seas of bullets and blood!
(And the gold!)
Yes, the twenty-two millions a day that it costs!
(Vanderbilt's fortune!)
Why, we're right to be proud, sir, and happy and
gay!
(That we are!)
It's our duty, we should be, we should be!
(We should!)
Come, have the next drink on me!

Alfred Kreymborg.

Doc Hill

I WENT up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor
who were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love
to them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on
the day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railings of the new life
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

Ollie McGee

HAVE you seen walking through the village
A man with downcast eyes and haggard face?
That is my husband who, by secret cruelty
Never to be told, robbed me of my youth and my beauty;
Till at last, wrinkled and with yellow teeth,
And with broken pride and shameful humility,
I sank into the grave.
But what think you gnaws at my husband's heart?
The face of what I was, the face of what he made me!
These are driving him to the place where I lie.
In death, therefore, I am avenged.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

MY father who owned the wagon-shop
And grew rich shoeing horses
Sent me to the University of Montreal.
I learned nothing and returned home,

Roaming the fields with Bert Kessler,
Hunting quail and snipe.
At Thompson's Lake the trigger of my gun
Caught in the side of the boat
And a great hole was shot through my heart.
Over me a fond father erected this marble shaft,
On which stands the figure of a woman
Carved by an Italian artist.
They say the ashes of my namesake
Were scattered near the pyramid of Caius Cestius
Somewhere near Rome.

Carl Hamblin

THE press of the Spoon River *Clarion* was wrecked,
And I was tarred and feathered,
For publishing this on the day the Anarchists were
hanged in Chicago:
"I saw a beautiful woman with bandaged eyes
Standing on the steps of a marble temple.
Great multitudes passed in front of her,
Lifting their faces to her imploringly.
In her left hand she held a sword.
She was brandishing the sword,

Sometimes striking a child, again a labourer,
Again a slinking woman, again a lunatic.
In her right hand she held a scale;
Into the scale pieces of gold were tossed
By those who dodged the strokes of the sword.
A man in a black gown read from a manuscript:
'She is no respecter of persons.'
Then a youth wearing a red cap
Leaped to her side and snatched away the bandage.
And lo, the lashes had been eaten away
From the oozy eye-lids;
The eye-balls were seared with a milky mucus;
The madness of a dying soul
Was written on her face—
But the multitude saw why she wore the bandage."

Roscoe Purkapile

SHE loved me. Oh! how she loved me!
I never had a chance to escape
From the day she first saw me.
But then after we were married I thought
She might prove her mortality and let me out,
Or she might divorce me.

But few die, none resign.
Then I ran away and was gone a year on a lark.
But she never complained. She said all would be well,
That I would return. And I did return.
I told her that while taking a row in a boat
I had been captured near Van Buren Street
By pirates on Lake Michigan,
And kept in chains, so I could not write her.
She cried and kissed me, and said it was cruel,
Outrageous, inhuman!
I then concluded our marriage
Was a divine dispensation
And could not be dissolved,
Except by death.
I was right.

Lillian Stewart

I WAS the daughter of Lambert Hutchins,
Born in a cottage near the grist-mill,
Reared in the mansion there on the hill,
With its spires, bay-windows, and roof of slate.
How proud my mother was of the mansion!

LILLIAN STEWART

How proud of father's rise in the world!
And how my father loved and watched us,
And guarded our happiness.
But I believe the house was a curse,
For father's fortune was little beside it;
And when my husband found he had married
A girl who was really poor,
He taunted me with the spires,
And called the house a fraud on the world,
A treacherous lure to young men, raising hopes
Of a dowry not to be had;
And a man while selling his vote
Should get enough from the people's betrayal
To wall the whole of his family in.
He vexed my life till I went back home
And lived like an old maid till I died,
Keeping house for father.

Rutherford McDowell

THEY brought me ambrotypes
Of the old pioneers to enlarge.
And sometimes one sat for me—
Some one who was in being

When giant hands from the womb of the world
Tore the republic.
What was it in their eyes?—
For I could never fathom
That mystical pathos of drooped eyelids,
And the serene sorrow of their eyes.
It was like a pool of water,
Amid oak-trees at the edge of a forest,
Where the leaves fall,
As you hear the crow of a cock
From a far-off farm-house, seen near the hills
Where the third generation lives, and the strong men
And the strong women are gone and forgotten.
And these grand-children and great grand-children
Of the pioneers!
Truly did my camera record their faces, too,
With so much of the old strength gone,
And the old faith gone,
And the old mastery of life gone,
And the old courage gone,
Which labours and loves and suffers and sings
Under the sun!

Hortense Robbins

My name used to be in the papers daily
As having dined somewhere,
Or travelled somewhere,
Or rented a house in Paris,
Where I entertained the nobility.
I was forever eating or travelling,
Or taking the cure at Baden-Baden.
Now I am here to do honour
To Spoon River, here beside the family whence I sprang.
No one cares now where I dined,
Or lived, or whom I entertained,
Or how often I took the cure at Baden-Baden!

Searcy Foote

I wanted to go away to college
But rich Aunt Persis wouldn't help me.
So I made gardens and raked the lawns
And bought John Alden's books with my earnings

And toiled for the very means of life.
I wanted to marry Delia Prickett,
But how could I do it with what I earned?
And there was Aunt Persis more than seventy,
Who sat in a wheel-chair half alive,
With her throat so paralyzed, when she swallowed
The soup ran out of her mouth like a duck—
A gourmand yet, investing her income
In mortgages, fretting all the time
About her notes and rents and papers.
That day I was sawing wood for her,
And reading Proudhon in between.
I went into the house for a drink of water,
And there she sat asleep in her chair,
And Proudhon lying on the table,
And a bottle of chloroform on the book,
She used sometimes for an aching tooth!
I poured the chloroform on a hankerchief
And held it to her nose till she died.—
Oh Delia, Delia, you and Proudhon
Steadied my hand, and the coroner
Said she died of heart failure.
I married Delia and got the money—
A joke on you, Spoon River?

The Hill

WHERE are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,

One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate
and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

Edgar Lee Masters.

not much in it.

A Letter From Peking

OCTOBER 15TH 1910.

MY friend, dear friend, why should I hear your voice
Over the Babel of voices, suddenly
Calling as from the new world to the old?
Hush!—are you weary? would you follow me?
Would you make dark the house, and shut the door,
Summon steam-pacing trains, wave-racing ships,
To bear you past the high assembled nations—
Past the loud cries, the plucking hands of the age—
Even to the East that drowses on her throne?

Come then—it's good to be alive to-day;
For yesterday is dead, and dim to-morrow
Flits like a ghost before us, threatening
Our peering eyes with mistily flapping wings.
Grandly the streets loom upward; huge sky-scrapers

Catch at the glory of the sunrise, wear
The morning like a mantle, bare their heads
In praise and prayer. And with us on the pavement,
Above us in the air there, and below,
Under our feet, by train and tram and subway,
The people bear the burden of the age—
Each to his work, each to his love, his dream,
The little secret vision of his soul,
Veiled, muffled, trampled, baffled, but agleam:
Our people, eager to work, eager to laugh,
Eager to love—if but to love were easy,
Pausing not for the slow and difficult thing
As they push past their neighbours to the goal.

Now to the ship—down the long, crowded wharves,
The tangle of souls and voices threading thinly
Through the slight gangway. Do you see her there—
Huge, black, incredible, fortress-walled in steel,
Hiding her heart of fire? She has no fear;
The fierce waves leap at her, the arrogant storms
Tease at her flying heels, the boastful winds
Front her in vain. Superb, invincible,
From world to world, over the ravenous ocean

A LETTER FROM PEKING

Grandly she bears the fruitage of the time:
Rich fields of corn, mill-yields of goods, long train-
loads
Of strong machines, man's hope and love and
power
Sealed in a million letters, and at last
Even us, the little human mustard seeds—
Dark earth-specks with the kingdom of heaven
within.

Gaily we tread the deck, softly we sleep,
Lightly we chatter away the idle days,
While strong hands, from dark hold to sunny mast,
Do our enormous tasks. And now at last
The world again, low chalky cliffs, the shore,
Parked England silvery green, her viny casements
And dewy lawns, her iron towns of toil
Smoke-bound, unfree. And London, stony London,
Gray storehouse of the heaped-up centuries,
Of hidden sins and valours, locked-in joys;
London the empire-hearted, grave with cares
Under her tawny sky that dulls the sun.

We linger not—swiftly the new age runs
And he must haste who takes her by the hand.
Over the Channel! Come! the little houses

And patchwork fields of France. Paris full-blown,
The red red rose of the world, whose golden heart
Lies bare to the greedy sun, whose petals droop
Ever so softly to the falling time,
Most lovely at the signal hour of change.
Germany then, the little patterned cities
Of the old time swept, garnished for the new;
The ancient halls hung with the ancient art,
And musical with high-stringed orchestras
Playing melodious prophecies; gay Berlin,
Garish, unmellowed, pale, but full of hope,
And proud desire.

Ah whither do they march,
These nations with the sweat upon their brows,
Huge burden-bearers, panoplied in steel,
Facing bleak mists of doubt? Will they cast down
Their heavy fears and bathe their brows in light
And freely run across the fields of dawn—
Children of joy, blood brothers born in love,
Valiant for peace as once for murderous war?
Nearer they draw, trimly the sharp rails cut
Their boundaries—twin scissor-blades of fate.
Swift steamers tie their ports together, bring
Tourist ambassadors from state to state.
Bold man-birds fly through the unsentineled air,

And cobweb wires invisible, more strong
Than chains of steel, are spun from tower to tower,
Bridging the oceans, linking capitals,
Binding men's hearts. O kings of the peopled earth,
O men, rulers of kings, dare you resist
Warriors of science, who are blazing trails
Your statesmanship must travel to new goals?
Laggards, beware lest the advancing myriads,
Bound for the promised land, trample you down!

Dark Russia, standing at the Asian gate,
Questions us with her eastward-peering eyes.
Proud Moscow from her hundred towers looks out—
Moscow, bejewelled with domes, magnificent,
Out of her past barbaric gazes far
Into the future, swings her Kremlin portal
To show the sad Siberian wilderness,
And bids us follow through the autumnal days.
Softly we slip along the garnered fields,
Past clustered villages, low-thatched and brown,
Each with a gay church gilded; shimmer down
The shining Urals, and salute at last
Great Asia where in solitude she waits
Under the northern star.

Her forest then,
Level and low; dark little pines, thin birches
Their leaves all golden on the silver stems.
And square-faced peasants crowding to the train,
Slow, sleepy-eyed, thick-bearded. Onward still
Through the stark plains; Baikal blue in its moun-
tains,
The home of wheeling birds that dive and soar.
And by and by a dragon-guarded roof
With gay beasts perched along its tips, that lift
Like the slim corner of a pale new moon
Poised in the sky at sunset.

We have come
To the first gate of the world. The still Pacific
Glitters between the hills. Dark crowds astare
Greet us with chatter and laughter—beardless men
With shaven brows and long thin tasseled braids,
Clad in dim blue under the darkening sun.
The obliterating night curtains our eyes,
And when at last the red dawn draws the veil
A heavy wall looms over us grey and stern
With towered gates fortress-guarded. And our
engine,
Steaming and shrieking past the caravans—
The shaggy ponies, little loaded asses,

A LETTER FROM PEKING

The slow processional camels pacing down—
Scatters the dust of time, pierces the wall,
And pauses under the shadow of yellow roofs
Where the Forbidden City, wide and still,
Lies dreaming in her sunrise-slanting woods.

Peking! She faces us with marble eyes
Inscrutable. She hearkens to our noise
And guards her secret. Shall we win her over—
We with our guns, our dark machines, our mansions
High piled above her lowly curving roofs;
We with our loud commands? Will she arise,
Weary of silence, wave her yellow flag,
Summon her myriads for the modern race,
The huge new tasks, the war for love and light?
Hush! If we wait and listen, will she speak,
Wise woman or child, veiled queen of the dragon
throne?

Softly! no steamer, elbowing storms aside,
No engine, nosing through the ancient wall,
No hurrying foot, no soul worn or at war,
Shall penetrate the Circle and the Square,
Set with sweet woods, the green wall and the blue,
And touch the three rings of the Temple of
Heaven,

The terraced marble seat, cloud-carved and fair,
Where, at the Centre of the Earth, in peace,
The tranquil East, contemplative, serene,
Dwells with the sun and moon.

Hush—bare your head
And strip your spirit free. When you have won
The ultimate Wisdom, seek the wingèd portal
Once more. Then she, the sage, may rise to you,
Hold converse with you, pilgrim of the age,
And take you to her heart and bless your gifts,
And be as one with you for evermore.

Harriet Monroe.

M. B.

Old Age

A LITTLE painted square
Bordered by old shops, with gaudy awnings.
Before the shops sit, smoking, open-bloused old men
Drinking sunlight.
I come to them each evening in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat,
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the centre of the square. . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and dripping, squealing children
Stroll past us or into the shops.
They greet the shop-keepers, and touch their hats or foreheads to me. . .
Some evening I shall not return to these people:
I shall be an old man, older than their grizzly shop-keepers.

M. B.

Pastels

I THINK you are a masquerading nun
Who has been lavish with reds, thinking to obliterate
herself.
But you should also
Have kept the cloth over your etched face.

Woman twirling a fan, burdened with many
colours,
I salaam to you.
Your youth has gone, but you have made
An excellent effigy.

You seemed a basket-girl
Bearing huge flowers on your head,
And tripping carefully lest you spill them.
But—alas—my eyes left your face
And—you had not the body of a basket-girl.

M. B.

Hearthstone

I WANT nothing but your fireside now.
Friend, you are sitting there alone I know,
And the quiet flames are licking up the soot,
Or crackling out of some enormous root:
All the logs on your hearth are four feet long.
Everything in your room is wide and strong
According to the breed of your hard thought.
Now you are leaning forward; you have caught
That great dog by his paw and are holding it,
And he looks sidelong at you, stretching a bit,
Drowsing with open eyes, huge warm and wide,
The full hearth-length on his slow-breathing side.
Your book has dropped unnoticed: you have read
So long you cannot send you brain to bed.
The low quiet room and all its things are caught
And linger in the meshes of your thought.
(Some people think they know time cannot pause.)
Your eyes are closing now though not because
Of sleep. You are searching something with your
brain;

You have let the old dog's paw drop down again . . .
Now suddenly you hum a little catch,
And pick up the book. The wind rattles the latch;
There 's a patter of light cool rain and the curtain
shakes;
The silly dog growls, moves, and almost wakes.
The kettle near the fire one moment hums.
Then a long peace upon the whole room comes.
So the sweet evening will draw to its bedtime end.
I want nothing now but your fireside, friend.

Suburb

DULL and hard the low wind creaks
Among the rustling pampas plumes.
Drearily the year consumes
Its fifty-two insipid weeks.

Most of the grey-green meadow land
Was sold in parsimonious lots;
The dingy houses stand
Pressed by some stout contractor's hand
Tightly together in their plots.

SUBURB

Through builded banks the sullen river
Gropes, where its houses crouch and shiver.
Over the bridge the tyrant train
Shrieks, and emerges on the plain.

In all the better gardens you may pass
(Product of many careful Saturdays),
Large red geraniums and tall pampas grass
Adorn the plots and mark the gravelled ways.

Sometimes in the background may be seen
A private summer-house in white or green.

Here on warm nights the daughter brings
Her vacillating clerk,
To talk of small exciting things
And touch his fingers through the dark.

He, in the uncomfortable breach
Between her trilling laughters,
Promises, in halting speech,
Hopeless immense Hereafters.

She trembles like the pampas plumes.
Her strained lips haggle. He assumes
The serious quest. . . .

Now as the train is whistling past
He takes her in his arms at last.

It's done. She blushes at his side
Across the lawn—a bride, a bride.

. . . . . .

The stout contractor will design,
The lazy labourers will prepare,
Another villa on the line;
In the little garden-square
Pampas grass will rustle there.

Milk for the Cat

WHEN the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

MILK FOR THE CAT

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstacy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,
Then she sinks back into the night.

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

The Strange Companion

A FRAGMENT

THAT strange companion came on shuffling feet,
Passed me, then turned, and touched my arm.

He said (and he was melancholy,
And both of us looked fretfully,
And slowly we advanced together)
He said: "I bring you your inheritance."

I watched his eyes; they were dim.
I doubted him, watched him, doubted him . . .

But, in a ceremonious way,
He said: "You are too grey:
Come, you must be merry for a day."

And I, because my heart was dumb,
Because the life in me was numb,
Cried: "I will come. I *will* come."

So, without another word,
We two jaunted on the street.
I had heard, often heard,
The shuffling of those feet of his,
The shuffle of his feet.

And he muttered in my ear
Such a wheezy jest
As a man may often hear—
Not the worst, not the best
That a man may hear.

Then he murmured in my face
Something that was true.
He said: "I have known this long, long while,
All there is to know of you."
And the light of the lamp cut a strange smile
On his face, and we muttered along the street,
Good enough friends, on the usual beat.

We lived together long, long.
We were always alone, he and I.
We never smiled with each other;
We were like brother and brother,
Dimly accustomed.
Can a man know
Why he must live, or where he should go?

He brought me that joke or two,
And we roared with laughter, for want of a smile,
As every man in the world might do.
He who lies all night in bed
Is a fool, and midnight will crush his head.

When he threw a glass of wine in my face
One night, I hit him, and we parted;
But in a short space
We came back to each other melancholy-hearted,
Told our pain,
Swore we would not part again.

One night we turned a table over
The body of some slain fool to cover,
And all the company clapped their hands;
So we spat in their faces,
And travelled away to other lands.

THE STRANGE COMPANION

I wish for every man he find
A strange companion so
Completely to his mind
With whom he everywhere may go.

Harold Monro.

Chicago Poems

THE HARBOUR

PASSING through huddled and ugly walls,
By doorways where women haggard
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

THE ROAD AND THE END

I SHALL foot it
Down the roadway in the dusk,
Where shapes of hunger wander
And the fugitives of pain go by.

I shall foot it
In the silence of the morning,
See the night slur into dawn,
Hear the slow great winds arise
Where tall trees flank the way
And shoulder toward the sky.

The broken boulders by the road
Shall not commemorate my ruin.
Regret shall be the gravel under foot.
I shall watch for
Slim birds swift of wing
That go where wind and ranks of thunder
Drive the wild processionals of rain.

The dust of the travelled road
Shall touch my hands and face.

Carl Sandburg.

Chinese Lanterns

THE CHESSMEN

THESE are the chessmen of Fan-ti the carver. He sings while he carves them. It is the song of his clan, and their home is a thousand miles away up the Yang-tse River. His ancestors came down the river in the days of the Han Emperors, to carve chessmen. He carves as they carved. He does not work fast. He stops often, and feels the soft ivory. He is blind. None of his chessmen are quite alike, not even the pawns. They are not so well made as those made by the steam-saw.

This is Fan-ti. Never having heard of the Christ pidgin he is consequently very wicked. He carves chessmen without clothes, which is forbidden to the Christ-eaters. The honourable persons who come here in the train of the Lord Cook are justly offended. Yet these chessmen, forbidden by the Lord Cook, have delighted many poets and princes.

THE COFFIN

A RICH merchant, irritated by the poverty of the sublime Meng, taunted him with not even having a coffin. He answered: "I will be buried in the earth."

THE WRETCHED PICTURE-DEALER

A VILE picture-dealer had the insolence to complain because the high spirits of his workmen had caused them to distort the features of the Lord Buddha. A neighbour advised him thus: "Wit is the flower of wisdom, youth the flower of life, art the flower of religion. The jests of these young men are worth more than all the contents of your shop." Unable to understand this, the miserable fellow discharged his workmen; after which he was overtaken by poverty, and reduced in the end to enter the Christ-business.

THE TALKING PARROT

A PARROT who had learned to speak was requested to fly from the parrots' wood, because the inhabitants were annoyed by the unusual sounds.

THE UNFORTUNATE SCHOLAR

TERRIBLE was the fate of the foolish Wan. After he had spent ten years in counting the characters in the Confucian Books, he presumed to come before the Board of Literature and inform them of this. Refusing to hear the total they banished him into the West. When last heard of Wan was a professor of poetry among the barbarians.

Allen Upward.

In Harbour

SURELY there, among the great docks, is peace, my mind:
There with the ships moored in the river.
Go out timid child and snuggle in
Among the great ships, talking so quietly.
Maybe you will even fall asleep near them and be
Lifted into one of their laps, and in the morning—
There is always the morning in which to remember it all!
Of what are they gossiping? God knows.
And God knows it matters little for we cannot understand them.
Yet it is certainly of the sea, of that there can be no question.
It is a quiet sound. Rest! That's all I care for now.
The smell of them will put us to sleep presently.
Smell! It is the sea water mingling here into the river—
At least so it seems—perhaps it is something else—but what matter?

The sea water! It is quiet and smooth here!
How slowly they move, little by little trying
The hawsers that drip and groan with their agony.
Yes, it is certainly of the high sea they are talking.

The Wanderer

A ROCOCO STUDY

ADVENT

EVEN in the time when as yet
I had no certain knowledge of her
She sprang from the nest, a young crow,
Whose first flight circled the forest.
I know now how then she showed me
Her mind, reaching out to the horizon,
She close above the tree tops.
I saw her eyes straining at the new distance
And as the woods fell from her flying
Likewise they fell from me as I followed—
So that I strongly guessed all that I must put from
me
To come through ready for the high courses.

But one day, crossing the ferry
With the great towers of Manhattan before me,
Out at the prow with the sea wind blowing,
I had been wearying many questions
Which she had put on to try me:
How shall I be a mirror to this modernity?
When lo! in a rush, dragging
A blunt boat on the yielding river—
Suddenly I saw her! And she waved me
From the white wet in midst of her playing!
She cried me, "Haia! Here I am, son!
See how strong my little finger is!
Can I not swim well?
I can fly too!" And with that a great sea-gull
Went to the left, vanishing with a wild cry—
But in my mind all the persons of godhead
Followed after.

CLARITY

"Come!" cried my mind and by her might
That was upon us we flew above the river
Seeking her, gray gulls among the white—
In the air speaking as she had willed it:
"I am given," cried I, "now I know it!
I know now all my time is forespent!

For me one face is all the world!
For I have seen her at last, this day,
In whom age in age is united—
Indifferent, out of sequence, marvellously!
Saving alone that one sequence
Which is the beauty of all the world, for surely
Either there in the rolling smoke spheres below us
Or here with us in the air intercircling,
Certainly somewhere here about us
I know she is revealing these things!"

And as gulls we flew and with soft cries
We seemed to speak, flying, "It is she
The mighty, recreating the whole world,
This the first day of wonders!
She is attiring herself before me—
Taking shape before me for worship,
A red leaf that falls upon a stone!
It is she of whom I told you, old
Forgiveless, unreconcilable;
That high wanderer of by-ways
Walking imperious in beggary!
At her throat is loose gold, a single chain
From among many, on her bent fingers
Are rings from which the stones are fallen,
Her wrists wear a diminished state, her ankles

Are bare! Toward the river! Is it she there?"
And we swerved clamorously downward—
"I will take my peace in her henceforth!"

BROADWAY

It was then she struck—from behind,
In mid air, as with the edge of a great wing!
And instantly down the mists of my eyes
There came crowds walking—men as visions
With expressionless, animate faces;
Empty men with shell-thin bodies
Jostling close above the gutter,
Hasting—nowhere! And then for the first time
I really saw her, really scented the sweat
Of her presence and—fell back sickened!
Ominous, old painted—
With bright lips, and lewd Jew's eyes
Her might strapped in by a corset
To give her age youth, perfect
In her will to be young she had covered
The godhead to go beside me.
Silent, her voice entered at my eyes
And my astonished thought followed her easily:
"Well, do their eyes shine, do their clothes fit?
These *live* I tell you! Old men with red cheeks,

Young men in gay suits! See them!
Dogged, quivering, impassive—
Well—are these the ones you envied?"
At which I answered her, "Marvellous old queen,
Grant me power to catch something of this day's
Air and sun into your service!
That these toilers after peace and after pleasure
May turn to you, worshippers at all hours!"
But she sniffed upon the words warily—
Yet I persisted, watching for an answer:
"To you, horrible old woman,
Who know all fires out of the bodies
Of all men that walk with lust at heart!
To you, O mighty, crafty prowler
After the youth of all cities, drunk
With the sight of thy archness! All the youth
That come to you, you having the knowledge
Rather than to those uninitiate—
To you, marvellous old queen, give me always
A new marriage—"
But she laughed loudly—
"A new grip upon those garments that brushed me
In days gone by on beach, lawn, and in forest!
May I be lifted still, up and out of terror,
Up from before the death living around me—
Torn up continually and carried

Whatever way the head of your whim is,
A bur upon those streaming tatters—"
But the night had fallen, she stilled me
And led me away.

PATERSON—THE STRIKE

At the first peep of dawn she roused me!
I rose trembling at the change which the night saw!
For there, wretchedly brooding in a corner
From which her old eyes glittered fiercely—
"Go!" she said, and I hurried shivering
Out into the deserted streets of Paterson.

That night she came again, hovering
In rags within the filmy ceiling—
"Great Queen, bless me with thy tatters!"
"You are blest, go on!"
Hot for savagery,
Sucking the air! I went into the city,
Out again, baffled on to the mountain!
Back into the city!

Nowhere
The subtle! Everywhere the electric!

"A short bread-line before a hitherto empty tea
shop:
No questions—all stood patiently,
Dominated by one idea: something
That carried them as they are always wanting to
be carried,
'But what is it,' I asked those nearest me,
'This thing heretofore unobtainable
That they seem so clever to have put on now?'

"Why since I have failed them can it be anything
but their own brood?
Can it be anything but brutality?
On that at least they're united! That at least
Is their bean soup, their calm bread and a few
luxuries!

"But in me, more sensitive, marvellous old queen,
It sank deep into the blood, that I rose upon
The tense air enjoying the dusty fight!
Heavy drink were the low, sloping foreheads
The flat skulls with the unkempt black or blond
hair,

THE WANDERER

The ugly legs of the young girls, pistons
Too powerful for delicacy!
The women's wrists, the men's arms, red,
Used to heat and cold, to toss quartered beeves
And barrels, and milk-cans, and crates of fruit!

" Faces all knotted up like burls on oaks,
Grasping, fox snouted, thick-lipped,
Sagging breasts and protruding stomachs,
Rasping voices, filthy habits with the hands.

" Nowhere you! Everywhere the electric!

" Ugly, venemous, gigantic!
Tossing me as a great father his helpless
Infant till it shriek with ecstasy
And its eyes roll and its tongue hangs out—!

" I am at peace again, old queen, I listen clearer
now."

ABROAD

Never, even in a dream,
Have I winged so high nor so well
As with her, she leading me by the hand,
That first day on the Jersey mountains!
And never shall I forget

The trembling interest with which I heard
Her voice in a low thunder:
"You are safe here. Look child, look open-mouth!
The patch of road between the steep bramble
banks;
The tree in the wind, the white house there, the sky!
Speak to men of these, concerning me!
For never while you permit them to ignore me
In these shall the full of my freed voice
Come grappling the ear with intent!
Never while the air's clear coolness
Is seized to be a coat for pettiness;
Never while richness of greenery
Stands a shield for prurient minds;
Never, permitting these things unchallenged,
Shall my voice of leaves and varicoloured bark
come free through!"

At which, knowing her solitude,
I shouted over the country below me:
"Waken! my people, to the boughs green
With ripening fruit within you!
Waken to the myriad cinquefoil
In the waving grass of your minds!
Waken to the silent phoebe nest
Under the eaves of your spirit!"

But she, stooping nearer the shifting hills
Spoke again. "Look there! See them!
There in the oat field with the horses,
See them there! bowed by their passions
Crushed down, that had been raised as a roof beam!
The weight of the sky is upon them
Under which all roof beams crumble.
There is none but the single roof beam:
There is no love bears against the great firefly!"
At this I looked up at the sun
Then shouted again with all the might I had.
But my voice was a seed in the wind.
Then she, the old one, laughing
Seized me and whirling about bore back
To the city, upward, still laughing
Until the great towers stood above the marshland
Wheeling beneath: the little creeks, the mallows
That I picked as a boy, the Hackensack
So quiet that seemed so broad formerly:
The crawling trains, the cedar swamp on the one side—
All so old, so familiar—so new now
To my marvelling eyes as we passed
Invisible.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

SOOTHSAY

Eight days went by, eight days
Comforted by no nights, until finally:
"Would you behold yourself old, beloved?"
I was pierced, yet I consented gladly
For I knew it could not be otherwise.
And she—"Behold yourself old!
Sustained in strength, wielding might in gript
surges!
Not bodying the sun in weak leaps
But holding way over rockish men
With fern free fingers on their little crags,
Their hollows, the new Atlas, to bear them
For pride and for mockery! Behold
Yourself old! winding with slow might—
A vine among oaks—to the thin tops:
Leaving the leafless leaved,
Bearing purple clusters! Behold
Yourself old! birds are behind you
You are the wind coming that stills birds,
Shakes the leaves in booming polyphony—
Slow, winning high way amid the knocking
Of boughs, evenly crescendo,
The din and bellow of the male wind!
Leap then from forest into foam!

Lash about from low into high flames
Tipping sound, the female chorus—
Linking all lions, all twitterings
To make them nothing! Behold yourself old!"
As I made to answer she continued,
A little wistfully yet in a voice clear cut:
"Good is my over lip and evil
My underlip to you henceforth:
For I have taken your soul between my two hands
And this shall be as it is spoken."

ST. JAMES' GROVE

And so it came to that last day
When, she leading by the hand, we went out
Early in the morning, I heavy of heart
For I knew the novitiate was ended,
The ecstasy was over, the life begun.

In my woollen shirt and the pale blue necktie
My grandmother gave me, there I went
With the old queen right past the houses
Of my friends down the hill to the river
As on any usual day, any errand.
Alone, walking under trees,
I went with her, she with me in her wild hair,

By Santiago Grove and presently
She bent forward and knelt by the river,
The Passaic, that filthy river.
And there, dabbling her mad hands,
She called me close beside her.
Raising the water then in the cupped palm
She bathed our brows wailing and laughing:
"River, we are old, you and I,
We are old and by bad luck, beggars.
Lo the filth in our hair, our bodies stink!
Old friend, here I have brought you
The young soul you long asked of me.
Stand forth, river, and give me
The old friend of my revels!
Give me the well-worn spirit,
For here I have made a room for it,
And I will return to you forthwith
The youth you have long asked of me:
Stand forth, river, and give me
The old friend of my revels!"

And the filthy Passaic consented!

Then she, leaping up with a fierce cry:
"Enter, youth, into this bulk!
Enter, river, into this young man!"

THE WANDERER

Then the river began to enter my heart,
Eddying back cool and limpid
Into the crystal beginning of its days.
But with the rebound it leaped forward:
Muddy, then black and shrunken
Till I felt the utter depth of its rottenness
The vile breadth of its degradation
And dropped down knowing this was me now.
But she lifted me and the water took a new tide
Again into the older experiences,
And so, backward and forward,
It tortured itself within me
Until time had been washed finally under,
And the river had found its level
And its last motion had ceased
And I knew all—it became me.
And I knew this for double certain
For there, whitely, I saw myself
Being borne off under the water!
I could have shouted out in my agony
At the sight of myself departing
Forever—but I bit back my despair
For she had averted her eyes
By which I knew well what she was thinking—
And so the last of me was taken.

Then she, "Be mostly silent!"
And turning to the river, she spoke again:
"For him and for me, river, the wandering,
But by you I leave for happiness
Deep foliage, the thickest beeches—
Though elsewhere they are all dying—
Tallest oaks and yellow birches
That dip their leaves in you, mourning
As now I dip my hair, immemorial
Of me, immemorial of him
Immemorial of these our promises!
Here shall be a bird's paradise,
They sing to rememb'ring my voice:
Here the most secluded spaces
For miles around, hallowed by a stench
To be our joint solitude and temple;
In memory of this clear marriage
And the child I have brought you in the late years.
Live, river, live in luxuriance
Rememb'ring this our son,
In remembrance of me and my sorrow
And of the new wandering!"

William Carlos Williams.

Contemporania

THE GARRET

COME let us pity those who are better off than we
are.
Come, my friend, and remember
that the rich have butlers and no friends,
And we have friends and no butlers.
Come let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet
like a gilded Pavlova,
And I am near my desire.
Nor has life in it aught better
Than this hour of clear coolness,
the hour of waking together.

THE GARDEN

En robe de parade.
Samain.

LIKE a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
She walks by the railings of a path in Kensington
Gardens,

And she is dying piece-meal
of a sort of emotional anæmia.

And round about there is a rabble
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.
She would like some one to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I
will commit that indiscretion.

ALBATRE

THIS lady in the white bath-robe, which she calls a peignoir,
Is, for the time being, the mistress of my friend,
And the delicate white feet of her little white dog
Are not more delicate than she is,

Nor would Gautier himself have despised their contrasts in whiteness
As she sits in the great chair
Between the two indolent candles.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

THE apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

COME, my songs, let us express our baser passions.
Let us express our envy for the man with a steady
job and no worry about the future.

You are very idle, my songs,
I fear you will come to a bad end.

You stand about the streets. You loiter at the
corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.
You do not even express our inner nobility,
You will come to a very bad end.

And I? I have gone half cracked.
I have talked to you so much
that I almost see you about me,
Insolent little beasts! Shameless! Devoid of cloth-
ing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
You are not old enough to have done much mischief.
I will get you a green coat out of China
With dragons worked upon it.
I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
From the statue of the infant Christ at Santa Maria Novella;

Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
Or that there is no caste in this family.

THE STUDY IN AESTHETICS

THE very small children in patched clothing
Being smitten with an unusual wisdom,
Stopped in their play as she passed them
And cried up from their cobbles:
Guarda! Ahi, Guarda! ch'e b'ea!

But three years after this
I heard the young Dante, whose last name I do not know—
For there are, in Sirmione, twenty-eight young Dantes and thirty-four Catulli;

CONTEMPORANIA

And there had been a great catch of sardines,
And his elders
Were packing them in the great wooden boxes
For the market in Brescia, and he
Leapt about, snatching at the bright fish
And getting in both of their ways;
And in vain they commanded him to *sta fermo!*
And when they would not let him arrange
The fish in the boxes
He stroked those which were already arranged,
Murmuring for his own satisfaction
This identical phrase:
Ch'e b'ea.

And at this I was mildly abashed.

HEATHER

THE black panther treads at my side
And above my fingers
There float the petal-like flames.

The milk-white girls
Unbend from the holly-trees
And their snow-white leopard
Watches to follow our trace.

THE GIPSY

" Est-ce que vous avez vu des autres—des camarades—avec des singes ou des ours ?"

A Stray Gipsy—A.D. 1912.

THAT was the top of the walk, when he said:
" Have you seen any others, any of our lot,
With apes or bears? "
—A brown upstanding fellow
Not like the half-castes,
up on the wet road near Clermont.
The wind came, and the rain,
And mist clotted about the trees in the valley,
And I 'd the long ways behind me,
gray Arles and Biaucaire,
And he said, " Have you seen any of our lot? "

I 'd seen a lot of his lot . . .
ever since Rhodez,
Coming down from the fair
of St. John,
With caravans, but never an ape or a bear.

DOGMATIC STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GAME OF CHESS: THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES

RED knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking the board, falling in strong "L"'s of colour,
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one colour.
This board is alive with light;
these pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
Luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with "x"'s of queens,
looped with the knight-leaps.

"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking!
Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the vortex,
Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard colour,
Blocked light working in. Escapes. Renewing of contest.

Ezra Pound.

Twilight

I

COLUMBINE, Harlequin, and Pierrot sit relaxed in armchairs in a wide, white room.

Columbine sits swinging her legs.
It grows gradually darker.
They sit as though waiting.
Creepers swing against the window.
It grows darker.
They sit as though waiting.
It grows darker.
Only the windows and the white linen of Pierrot and Columbine can now be seen.
Harlequin a faint blur.
It grows darker.
Pierrot and Columbine show faintly. The easy-chairs are rocks of shadow.
They sit as though waiting. . . .
The creepers grow larger and swing against the windows.
It grows darker.

Twilight

II

COLUMBINE, Harlequin, and Pierrot sit relaxed in easy-chairs in a wide, white room.

They sit as though waiting.

It grows darker. . . .

The moon rises.

They sit as though waiting.

It is quite dark.

Columbine shudders, rises and walks quickly to Pierrot.

When she is close she turns from him suddenly and walks rapidly back to her chair. . . .

Harlequin leaps across the room, then seats himself and stares intently out of the window.

The moon gradually fills the room and it becomes lighter.

Pierrot has let his head fall on his knees.

Columbine sits relaxed swinging her legs. . . .

Harlequin stares intently out of window.

The Lunatic

COLUMBINE is seated on a kitchen chair before a wide French window, which looks on to a terrace overhanging the edge of the world. The room is very large, but the wallpaper is drab, like a slum room. In a corner is an iron bedstead covered with very white blankets. It is a warm night.

The moon can be seen rising.

Columbine sits still, relaxed and brooding.

The rising moon touches her naked arms.

She looks round, startled and shivering.

Then folds her arms over her breast.

Then rises and walks in front of the window in extreme agitation.

After a while she grows calmer and returns to the chair, seating herself.

She remains quiet a few moments, but the moonbeams pierce her.

They shine on her bare arms.

She trembles, raising them and looking at them curiously . . . and lifts them slowly, suddenly kissing them.

Then falls a-trembling.

She rises and walks up and down in great agitation.

When she grows quieter, she returns to her chair.

The moonbeams fall full on her and again she raises her arms to her lips, kissing them.

She folds her arms tightly across her breast, rocking herself.

She opens the window wide, leaning out as though exhausted.

The moonbeams strike her. She becomes very excited.

She walks in front of the window to and fro.

Then seats herself on the chair.

The moonbeams are in another corner of the room, and she sits relaxed and brooding.

Fear

A LARGE room. At back the wall is semi-transparent, and dimly through this the wall of the opposite corridor may be seen. A figure passing down this corridor would appear shadowy and in silhouette. Everything in the room is very clear in the strong light of a hot summer afternoon. There is a door, back left corner.

Pierrot and Columbine play chess.

They play in silence for many seconds.

Then steps are heard. They commence in the upper parts of the house, moving slowly down a corridor, and very deliberately descending the stairs until they reach the door of the room.

Nobody.

The corridor remains empty.

Pierrot goes to the door, which he opens casually, glances out and seeing nothing, returns to the chessmen. Columbine has sat quietly watching the game.

Again steps are heard.

Pierrot hears them while they are still in the upper part of the house; listening intently as they descend the stairs. He rushes to the door, fumbling at the handle. The steps fade away.

Again he returns to the table.

Columbine trembles when a pawn is put down.

The steps recommence, slowly and very deliberately.

When they reach the door Pierrot flings it open.

Nothing!

Columbine stands trembling.

Both wait behind the door (now open) trembling.

Again the steps are heard descending, but slyly

and maliciously, and lingering as though familiarly on the boards till they reach them.

Nothing.

And they tremble.

Wearily they return to the chessboard.

They hear suddenly two short steps and a tap at the door.

Pierrot rushes to the door.

Columbine has risen. Suddenly she starts as though touched—and again—and again. She begins weeping, but no sound is heard.

The steps, deliberate and very clear, recommence in the upper corridor.

Pierrot returns to the chess.

The steps are not heard.

They recommence playing, often starting as the pieces touch the board.

The steps are heard.

Pierrot rushes from the room. His figure is silhouetted vaguely through the semi-transparent wall as he rushes to and fro. Twilight is in the room.

Columbine stands still.

Suddenly she turns as though touched by someone—and again—and again. Unable to bear the strain she rushes after Pierrot.

Two pairs of feet are heard running through the upper parts of the house.

A door slams.

Occasionally they re-pass each other behind the semi-transparent wall, but as though oblivious of each other, stopping and turning often; bewildered.

They are heard mounting stairs.

The rushing of feet grows fainter, louder, fainter.

Sometimes a third pair of feet seem to be echoing them, sometimes distinct, sometimes mere echo.

Then they seem to be playing, softly and slyly and maliciously, moving over the boards, and after them the feet of Pierrot and Columbine.

In the corridor, behind the semi-transparent wall, Pierrot and Columbine run wildly past each other, to and fro, to and fro.

Sometimes it seems there is another form, more tenuous still, moving with them, in and out, in and out; disappearing sometimes. They are heard mounting stairs. Two pairs of feet, loudly and hurriedly, and after them, softly and slyly and maliciously, a third.

Very suddenly; deep silence.

Night.

John Rodker.



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H.H. Read Ap 10-12. 1916

Review of this in Poetry Journal
April (?) 1916

human emotions susceptible of poetic treatment. Look at the extraordinarily subtle modulations of rhyme and metre which Donne made use of to carry the most exquisite as the most exalted the haughest as the most disillusioned of

The Nation : London
Aug 26. 1916

FRAGMENTA AUREA.

"Catholic Anthology, 1914-15." (Elkin Mathews. 3s. 6d. net.)

THE title of Suckling's book of poems is not inappropriate to this fragmentary volume—much more so, indeed, than to his finished intaglios. Not that the banishment of rhyme has much to do with it. For rhyme is used sparingly but adequately to the rhythm of the verse, at the poet's will. Nor is it the natural association of the anthology with "Imagism," that mistaken theory which has grown such a deal of foliage but such immature fruits. The fragmentary element lies rather in a tentative and stumbling advance beyond Imagism into more secure poetic territory. Everybody knows the causes of the reaction which culminated in the Imagist anarchy. Metrical content had become a dancing slipper for a minute and over-manicured foot; poetic experience had run the whole gamut of conventional forms, and was now painfully retracing its tracks; the tyranny of rhyme had dominated the freedom and spontaneity of inspiration. There was more than a grain of truth in this indictment; but the liberators made the initial error of confusing cause and effect. What was wrong with verse was not its conventions but its conventionalists. The elasticity and fluctuations of rhyme are, as a matter of fact, of such extent and variety that they will satisfy practically all the

"The milk-white girls
Unbend from the holly-trees,
And their snow-white leopard
Watches to fall on our trace."

This, "In a Station of the Metro." :—

"The apparition of these faces in a crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough."

This, from "Dogmatic Statement Concerning the Game of Chess" :—

