MODERN AMERICAN VERSE

C 3Bn

Fernando Pessoa

MODERN AMERICAN VERSE

The varied Book of Life,
How hurriedly we con!
Through pages sown with grief and strife
We reach the colophon.

We would peruse it still
Despite its stress, but nay,
It must be closed, saith the Great Will,
And laid aside for aye!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

MODERN AMERICAN VERSE

COMPILED BY

ROMA CLAIRE

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FOREWORD

THE main purpose of this collection is to give English readers an opportunity of becoming acquainted with American twentieth-century poetry. With the exception of occasional poems appearing from time to time in English magazines, very little is known of the many volumes of really beautiful poetry which have been produced on the other side by the present generation of American poets.

There is also a special significance in the appearance of such a volume at the present time, when so many evidences are forthcoming of the increasing sympathy between the American nation and our own, and it is hoped that "England's Kid Brother" will consider the publication as in some sense a compliment.

As an anthology it is comprehensive in the sense that every poet of distinction is represented, though exception may be taken to Bliss Carman as Canadian, and Richard Le Gallienne as English; but as both these poets are accepted by the Poetry Society of America as worthy of a place in their Library List of American Poets, I felt fully justified in including them in this collection.

In the difficult task of selecting from a vast wealth of poetical material, I was fortunate in securing the valuable co-operation of some of the poets themselves. It is never easy for an anthologist to form an ideal collection if depending entirely upon his own choice, and it is equally certain that "selected by the authors" is no guarantee of a better result. Poets themselves are by

no means always the best judges of their own work, partly, perhaps, because they usually see what was intended rather than what was accomplished, and therefore do not always discriminate between the intention and the performance.

In adopting, therefore, a middle course I trust the volume may prove better than would otherwise be the case, and that, as a result, American poetry may receive that wider recognition and admiration which it assuredly deserves.

ROMA CLAIRE.

September 1918.

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At the World's Heart

CALE YOUNG RICE

I LEANT my ear to the world's heart,
(Beat, beat, beat !)
I leant my ear to the world's heart,
Where all its voices meet.
I heard them sound together,
I heard them surge alone,
The far, the near, and the nether,
The known—and the unknown.
From desert they rose and mountain ;
From city and sea and plain ;
And the voices, all, to one voice
Blent in the bitter pain :

We are the people of Sorrow,
Haled from the silent earth.
Happy is it,
Happy is love—
Happier should be birth !
We come to the land of the living,

We go to the realm of death,
We bide for a day
And then . . . Away!
O why are we given breath!

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Leant, more nigh!)
A saddened ear to the world's heart,
Fain for a sweeter cry.
Then came the murmur of nations,
With languor loud, or need,
The sighing of devastation,
Of deed and dark misdeed;
There came the moan of millions
Against their tyrant kind,
But in it I heard great Hope's word
Groping, a way to find:

We are the people begotten
Between Delight and Pain;
Certain is birth,
Certain are they
To breed our like again.
But though we have filled the valleys
And the sea and the hills with death . . .
It shattered there
Into the prayer,
O why are we given breath!

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Long, then, long!)
A closer ear to the world's heart,
And lo—it beat more strong!
And the building of human beauty,
The crushing of human crime,
The music of human duty
Outclarioned fate and time.

Yet over the cry of sorrow
And doubt that is ever brief
There rose the lay of a New Day,
The high voice of Belief:

We are the people of Patience,
Who wait—and look before.
Silent is birth,
Silent the tomb,
But silent Life no more!
Our Gods are becoming One God,
And tho' there is ever death,
We yet shall learn,
At some day's turn,
Why—why we are given breath!

The Inn of Earth

SARA TEASDALE

I CAME to the crowded Inn of Earth,
And called for a cup of wine,
But the Host went by with averted eye
From a thirst as keen as mine.

Then I sat down with weariness
And asked a bit of bread,
And the Host went by with averted eye
And never a word he said.

While always from the outer night
The waiting souls came in
With stifled cries of sharp surprise
At all the light and din.

"Then give me a bed to sleep," I said,
"For midnight comes apace"—
But the Host went by with averted eye
And I never saw his face.

"Since there is neither food nor rest,
I go where I fared before"—
But the Host went by with averted eye
And barred the outer door.

A Spring Blessing

G. S. Viereck

Spring's blessing be upon you, dear!
  Such is the prayer most meet for one
Whose eyes look up so starry-clear—
  With all his flowerets new-begun
Still may he bless your pathway, dear,
  Who weaves his golden threads around
  Your heart and mine together bound!
Because your eyes are starry clear—
Spring's blessing be upon you, dear!

Spring's blessing be upon you, child,
  When all the earth with longing swells,
  And lilies ring their silver bells
For joy that he is nigh,
  And open wide their lord to greet,
  Adoring humbly at his feet
  ("Ah, Spring has come, and Spring is sweet!")
Their inmost pageantry,
And all the earth with love is wild—
Spring's blessing be upon you, child!

Waiting

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

I THOUGHT my heart would break
  Because the Spring was slow.
I said, "How long young April sleeps
  Beneath the snow!"

But when at last she came,
  And buds broke in the dew,
I thought of my dead love,
  And my heart broke too!

Mysteries

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

LIFE holds unmeasured sanctities,
  Immortal glories—sun and moon,
The quiet stars, the western skies,
  And the deep wonder of ripe June.

The hills, the hosts of flowers; the mood
  Of Autumn, and the rippling rain;
Beauty no heart has understood,
  Passion that makes no moment vain.

It is so strange—this gift of breath,
  This pageant of the earth and sea;
Yet stranger far than Life or Death
  Is this, O Love—your need of me.

Fulfilment

Louis V. Ledoux

Happy: yea, happy for ever and aye!
Scarlet bursts through the eastern gray
And the night is past;
For a woman's lips and a woman's hair,
And the soul of her womanhood, wonderful, fair,
Are mine at last.

Dawn was near, but no whisper told
Why the stars went out and the world grew cold
As the void above;
When suddenly out of the darkness sprang
My passionate rose, and the whole world sang
Of love, of love.

Now happy, yea, happy for ever I stand,
The rose of passion within my hand,
And the day may close
With the dust of worlds on the midnight strown,
For I hold forever, forever my own,
The passionate rose.

The Queen's Fleets

THOMAS AUGUSTUS DALY

TAKE for thy throne, my queen, this niche my hand
Hath carved for thee,
Here in the gray breast of this dune of sand
That afronts the sea.
In sovereign state aloof, the solitude
Hedging thee round, as once thy maidenhood,
Make me no partner of thy thought or speech
This hour when day and darkness meet,
But count me merely jetsam of the beach,
Here at thy feet.

It is mute beauty's hour. No late bird sings;
Voiceless, serene,
The sea dreams; silence holds all lovely things—
And thou art queen!
For Silence, in the twilight's gold and red
Behind thee, sets a crown upon thy head.
Send forth, O Queen! thy fleets upon the main,
Send forth thy daring fleets of thought,
And let me wait to hail them home again
With riches fraught.

But fancy captained, send thy fleets afar
To win the sea;
Send them to know what spoils in ocean are,
What mystery.

What beauty in all things that " suffered change "
In coral caves to " Something rich and strange."
Then bring them home, and I with kingly might
  Will take their treasure, as it lies
Safe-harboured in the starlit, purple night
    Of thy dear eyes.

A Statue in a Garden

Agnes Lee

I was a goddess ere the marble found me.
Wind, wind, delay not,
Waft my spirit where the laurel crowned me!
Will the wind stay not?

Then tarry, tarry, listen, little swallow,—
An old glory feeds me:
I lay upon the bosom of Apollo!
Not a bird heeds me.

For here the days are alien. O, to waken
Mine, mine, with calling!
But on my shoulders bare, like hopes forsaken,
The dead leaves are falling.

The sky is gray and full of unshed weeping,
As dim down the garden
I wait and watch the early autumn sweeping,
The stalks fade and harden.

The souls of all the flowers after have rallied.
The trees, gaunt, appalling,
Attest the gloom, and on my shoulders pallid
The dead leaves are falling.

Via Amorosa

Cale Young Rice

(to a. h. r.)

When we two walk, my love, on the path
The moon makes over the sea,
To the end of the world where sorrow hath
An end that is ecstasy,
Should we not think of the other road
Of wearying dust and stone
Our feet would fare did each but care
To follow the way alone?

When we two slip at night to the skies
And find one star that we keep
As a trysting-place to which our eyes
May lead our souls ere sleep,
Should we not pause for a little space
And think how many must sigh
Because they gaze over starry ways
With no heart-comrade by.

When we two then lie down to our dreams
That deepen still the delight
Of our wandering where stars and streams
Stray in immortal light,
Should we not grieve with the myriads
From east of Earth to west
Who lay them down at night to drown
The longing for some loved breast?

Ah, yes, for life has a thousand gifts,
  But love it is gives life,
Who walks thro' his world alone e'en lifts
  A soul that is sorrow rife.
But they to whom it is given to tread
  The moon path and not sink
Can ever say the unhappiest way
  Earth has is fair to the brink.

The Hunting of Dian

GEORGE STERLING

IN the silence of a midnight lost, lost for evermore,
I stood upon a nameless beach where none had been before,
And red gold and yellow gold were the shells upon that shore.

Lone, lone it was as a mist-enfolded strand
Set round a lake where marble demons stand—
Held like a sapphire-stone in Thibet's monstrous hand.

And there I beheld how One stood in her grace
To hold to the stars her wet and faery face,
And on the smooth and haunted sands her footfall had no trace.

White, white was she as the youngest seraph's word,
Or milk of Eden's kine or Eden's fragrant curd,
Cast in love by Eve's wan hand to her most snowy bird.

Fair, fair was she as Venus of the sky,
And the jasmine of her breast and starlight of her eye
Made the heart a pain and the soul a hopeless sigh.

Weak with the sight I leaned upon my sword,
Till my soul that had sighed was become an unseen chord
For stress of music rendered to unknown things adored.

Surely she heard, but her beauty gave no sign
To me for whom the hushéd sea was odorous as wine,—
To me for whom the voiceless world was made her silent shrine.

And she sent forth her gaze to the waters of the West,
And she sent forth her soul to the Islands of the Blest,
Below a star whose silver throes set pearls upon her breast.

But chill in the East brake a glory on the lands,
And she moaned like some low wave that dies on frozen sands,
And held to her sea-lover her sweet and cruel hands.

Then rose the moon, and its lance was in her side,
And there was bitter music because in woe she cried,
Ere on the hard and gleaming beach she laid her down and died.

I leapt to her succour, my sword I left behind;
But one low mound of opal foam was all that I could find,
A moon-washed length of airy gems that trembled in the wind.

I knelt below the stars; the sea put forth a wave;
The moon drew up the captive tides upon her shining grave,
As far away I heard the cry her dim sea-lover gave.

The Gift

BLISS CARMAN

I said to Life, " How comes it,
With all this wealth in store,
Of beauty, joy and knowledge,
Thy cry is still for more ?

" Count all the years of striving
To make thy burden less,—
The things designed and fashioned
To gladden thy success !

" The treasures sought and gathered
Thy lightest whim to please,—
The loot of all the ages,
The spoil of all the seas !

" Is there no end of labour,
No limit to thy need ?
Must man go bowed for ever
In bondage to thy greed ? "

With tears of pride and passion
She answered, " God above !
I only wait the asking,
To spend it all for love ! "

I Will be Worthy of It

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

I MAY not reach the heights I seek,
My untried strength may fail me ;
Or, half-way up the mountain path,
Fierce tempests may assail me.
But though that place I never gain,
Herein lies comfort for my pain—
I will be worthy of it.

I may not triumph in success,
Despite my earnest labour ;
I may not grasp results that bless
The efforts of my neighbour.
But though my goal I never see,
This thought shall always dwell with me—
I will be worthy of it.

The golden glory of Love's light
May never fall on my way ;
My path may always lead through night,
Like some deserted by-way.
But though life's dearest joy I miss,
There lies a nameless strength in this—
I will be worthy of it.

Song of a Queen of Lombardy

Agnes Lee

Only an hour, and his heart was beating.
Now he laughs in a ghostly sheeting,
Still in his dream the sin repeating.

Sea, sea,
Quiet me.
Wash off my crown and my dress.
Throw the weight of your wave,
Cover me with forgetfulness,
And let me sleep in my grave!

This is the night the trees were shaken.
This is the night of the souls forsaken.
This is the night he shall not waken.

Sea, sea,
Quiet me.
Cool of the infinite,
Over my forehead roll!
Bury my body's hands of white,
And the crimson hands of my soul!

Converse of Angels

HERMANN HAGEDORN

LISTEN, Ithuriel. Do you hear the sound of weeping ?
It riseth from the earth, it riseth night and day.
The noble hands, the noble eyes have gone astray,
The noble spirits, born to fly, in dust are creeping.
Hark ! 'Tis their hunger. Thus they cry, awake or sleeping.
Desire for shells and bells hath made their souls its prey ;
It burns their youth, their dreams, their loves, their lives away ;
And of a burnt field, lo, no man shall make a reaping.

Ithuriel, I would that one day from this throne
The Lord would let me go down to the dusty plain,
Crying : " All's well, oh, rebel man, save you alone !
Be still, tumultuous soul ; fold those hot hands that strain
Forever against God ! " Ithuriel, might their moan
Not yield to ecstasy, and unto peace the pain ?

Up a Hill and a Hill

FANNIE STEARNS DAVIS

Up a hill and a hill there's a sudden orchard slope,
And a little tawny field in the sun;
There's a gray wall that coils like a twist of frayed-out rope,
And grasses nodding news one to one.

Up a hill and a hill there's a windy place to stand,
And between the apple-boughs to find the blue
Of the sleepy summer sea, past the cliffs of orange sand,
With the white charmed ships sliding through.

Up a hill and a hill there's a little house as gray
As a stone that the glaciers scored and stained
With a red rose by the door, and a tangled garden way,
And a face at the window, checker-paned.

I could climb, I could climb till the shoes fell off my feet,
Just to find that tawny field above the sea!
Up a hill and a hill—oh, the honeysuckle's sweet!
And the eyes at the window watch for me!

A Song of the Sunrise

Grace Denio Litchfield

The night breaks. The light shakes
Down from the sky.
The darkness trembles : shivers, dissembles,
Unwilling to die.
And facile and fleet, on dusky feet,
Out of the dripping sunlight tripping,
Shadows pass by,
All sprinkled and spattered
With golden rain,
All shivered, all shattered, like dream-ghosts scattered
By the waking brain.

The light dawns. The night mourns,
And the stars shiver.
The moon pales. The loon wails
Far down the river.
And strong in the might of the perfect delight,
Fearless and bold with its wealth of gold,
Stronger than sadness,
Brighter than gladness,
Mad with the madness
Of victory won—
Above night's gloom, above life's bloom,
Higher and higher, like a passioned desire,
To the highest height of earth's blinded sight
Rises the Sun,
And the battle's done.

Yet afar, unforgetting,
Hid by the hill,
Night awaits the day's setting,
Revengeful and still.

Motherhood

Agnes Lee

Mary, the Christ long slain, passed silently,
  Following the children joyously astir
Under the cedrus and the olive-tree,
  Pausing to let their laughter float to her.
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,
  She saw a little Christ in every face;
When lo, another woman, gliding near,
  Yearned o'er the tender life that filled the place.
And Mary sought the woman's hand, and spoke:
  "I know thee not, yet know thy memory tossed
With all a thousand dreams their eyes evoke
  Who bring to thee a child beloved and lost.

"I, too, have rocked my little one.
    O! he was fair!
Yea, fairer than the fairest sun,
And like its rays through amber spun
    His sun-bright hair.
Still I can see it shine and shine."

"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways,"—
    And Mary smiled,—
"So soft, so clinging! Glad relays
Of love were all his precious days.
    My little child!
My infinite star! My music fled!"

" Even so was mine," the woman said.

Then whispered Mary : " Tell me, thou,
Of thine." And she :
" O, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, sent, somehow,
To bloom for me !
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Within my breast that warms me still."
Then gazed she down some wilder, darker hour,
And said, when Mary questioned, knowing not :
" Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower ? "
" I am the mother of Iscariot."

A Song in April

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

SUN !—and the rush of the rain
Swift through the lilac lane ;
  The joy o' the world and the grief o' the world
Beat at my window-pane.

Love !—and the ancient tears ;
Hope !—and a hundred fears.
  The light o' the world and the dark o' the world,
They follow us down the years.

To a Tenant

THOMAS AUGUSTUS DALY

You found this house, dear lady, overrun
  With noisome things that wait upon decay,
  All pent within it mouldering in the gray,
Sick gloom of long disuse whose webs were spun
Through all its halls. You entered, and the sun
  And God's air coming with you, swept away
  All ugliness and squalor, on that day
When first your life-long leasehold was begun.

You tell me now your house, this heart of mine,
  Is warm and ever-beautiful and fair,
And call me benefactor, nor divine
  How little debt you owe, how much I bear
To you who made this shabby place a shrine
  On that sweet day when first you entered there.

The Fog

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD

I AM the reek of the days that were and the breath of the days to be.
All the ghosts of the ages swarm and stir when my hosts march in from sea ;
Till they sink as the twilight falls afar, and a deeper shade is laid
On the sodden sands, and the stricken lands grow still and sore afraid.
And I muffle the siren's warning note, and I baffle the lighthouse beam.
And the greasy rails down their long blind trails feel the slackening strength of steam,
And the wheels turn slow and the fires grow low. City and countryside
Choke in my grip, and sea and ship, where my still gray squadrons ride.

And I pearl the long gray grasses by the buried seamen's graves.
Incense of unseen masses I lift from my lone sea caves,
To the sound of a sigh that passes in the hush of the winds and waves.
And I brood in the silence, lingering under the shroud of night,
As a widowed mother waits for the birth that brings her babe to light,

On earth till the birth of the flowers of spring and the
blue birds nesting call.
And I crouch till the stars grow clear again, till the bars
of the morning fall ;
Till I kiss the cheek of a child that smiles e'en the sun
stands lord of all.

For I am the darkness, the doubt, the dread that stifle
your hopes and prayers,
I am the fears of your father's dead, and their mother's
tears and cares.
I am the lives that start and lurk when the brightest
moon burns dim
In the shadows cold, in the mist and murk of the slum's
blind menace grim.

I am the strong man's well of strength, and the ford
where the coward falls,
And the gate that shall wait for all at length through the
everlasting walls.
Spores as of hoarfrost sifted o'er the fruitful field of night ;
Shreds of a banner rifted where dying heroes fight,
Or a curtain caught and lifted when you wake to a world
of light.

To the Unknown Love

ELSA BARKER

SLOWLY the seasons come and go,
And we are still apart!
We know not each the other's face,
Though deep in the lone heart
Burns evermore the flame of hope—
The fever and the smart.

Sometimes within the nether mind
Vague memories arise
Of other times and other climes,
Of lips and brow and eyes.
Sometimes it seems the murmuring breeze
Is heavy with our sighs.

I hear your voice whenever a bird
Pours out its wild love song,
And in the moaning of the sea
When nights are drear and long
My eyes look restlessly for yours
Through every passing throng.

Somewhere you lie alone to-night,
Calling me wistfully.
Oh! that the earthly veil might fall
And let the spirit see!
It may be only yonder wall
Separates you and me.

The Mystic Rose

ELSA BARKER

I, WOMAN, am that wonder-breathing rose
  That blossoms in the garden of the King,
  In all the world there is no lovelier thing,
And the learned stars no secret can disclose
Deeper than mine—that almost no one knows,
  The perfume of my petals in the spring,
  Is inspiration to all bards that sing,
Of love, the spirit's lyric unrepose.

Under my veil is hid the mystery
  Of unaccomplished æons, and my breath
  The Master Lover's Life replenisheth.
The mortal garment that is worn by me
The loom of Time renews continually,
  And when I die the universe knows death.

When I go Walking in the Woods

Richard Le Gallienne

When I go walking in the woods
I take one thought with me,
    And, unaware,
    I find it there
Beside me in the sea ;
    Yea ! could I fly
    I doubt not I
Would find it in the air ;
Companion of all solitudes—
It is the thought of her.

And when I fall asleep at night,
But for one thing I pray :
    The power that stole
    Away her soul
To bring it back some day ;
    And all my dreams,
    Till morning gleams,
That through the day console,
Smell sweet of her, with her are bright
As with an aureole.

And, sometimes in the afternoon,
When all is strange and still,
    When sunshine sleeps
    In the sea's deeps,
And loiters on the hill,
    I seem to hear
    A footstep near,
A sound of one who creeps
Softly to listen—then, too soon,
The sound of one who weeps.

The Stars before the Dawn

FRANCES DORR SWIFT TATNALL

How warm and near the stars before the dawn
That silent keep the last dim watch ere day;
How close to earth their tender light is drawn,
To earth so still and gray!

To them no lover cries in fond appeal,
No reveller's songs their watchful silence break,
No piteous phantoms of the night but steal
Away when they awake.

Where weary mothers stumble half asleep
To still with comfort warm a baby's cry,
Where little children dream, their watch they keep
As waning night goes by.

But most of all, I think, they light the way
For little ones who slip beyond our hold,
Who, spite of all our anguish, cannot stay,
But leave our arms a-cold.

For them their tender shining, as alone
Across the misty silences they fare,
Beyond our touch, beyond our fondling gone,
O God! beyond our care!

A Song for March

THOMAS AUGUSTUS DALY

WHO sings of March must sing the mad,
Lone man-at-arms, the straggler clad
In motley white and brown—
Who in the wake of Winter's flight
Turns now to caper, now to fight—
Half hector and half clown.
One moment from a cloud-capped hill
He blares his slogan, wild and shrill;
The next, with gusty laughter,
Outsteps the sunbeams as they dance,
And leers, and flouts with backward glance,
The maid who follows after.
O! sing the maid,
The light-heart maid,
Who follows, follows after.

He flees her down the lengthening days;
She follows him through woodland ways,
O'er hills and vales between,
And sets for mark of victory
On every bush and hedge and tree
Her flag of tender green;
And when her breath hath spiced the night
With promise of the warm delight
Of young June's love and laughter,

No other song may true hearts sing
But "Speed thy passing, March, and bring
The maid who follows after;
The light-heart maid,
The lily maid,
Who follows, follows after."

The Kiss

SARA TEASDALE

BEFORE you kissed me, only winds of heaven
Had kissed me, and the tenderness of rain—
Now you have come, how can I care for kisses
Like theirs again?

I sought the sea, she sent her winds to meet me,
They surged about me singing of the South—
I turned my head away to keep still holy
Your kiss upon my mouth.

And swift, sweet rains of shining April weather
Found not my lips where living kisses are;
I bowed my head lest they put out my glory,
As rain puts out a star.

I am my love's and he is mine for ever,
Sealed with a seal and safe for evermore—
Think you that I could let a beggar enter
Where a King stood before?

The Armor-bearers

J. C. Underwood

Lord of the levelled lightnings, of battle's thunder-cloud;
Thou that dost shake the hearts of men and make and break the proud,
Granting each race and nation grace, each in its space allowed:

War in the East is rising, War in the West is rife,
And the nations gird their armor on to grapple for the life,
Nor shall we stand aloof for long in a world o'erwhelmed with strife.

Yellow or brown, or black or white, one race shall lead the van,
And the old gods wake, and the false gods quake, Buddha, Mohammed, Pan,
Come side by side to conquer Christ in the last crusade of man.

And the restless city sends us forth to sentinel the seas;
And the iron lusts that spur the North, through peril and unease,
Shepherds of fleets and ocean lanes and lives and liberties.

Harlot and thief and money-king, their burdens all we bear,
Pander and felon, faithless wife, the price we pay they share,
They that dare take their profit from a starving child's despair.

Therefore we war with sea and storm that we may war
with men,
Because the blind must lead the blind, the brute be
mastered when
The vials of wrath are emptied out and judgment comes
again.

We are Thine armor-bearers, Lord of all power and
might,
Guarding Thine arms till Thou shalt leave Thy last
frontier of light
And turn to earth to summon us to Armageddon's fight.

Then if our quarrel be unjust when we put out to sea,
Scapegoats the mob before them thrust their shield
defaced to be,
Our navies are as drifting dust, and crimsoned clay
are we.

The Man-Child

ELSA BARKER

O WONDERFUL small being that my Love
Made of his dreams before he dreamed of me.
Trembling I bend above
Your terrifying softness, for I see
Something in you that made the stars afraid
Before their moons were made.
Strong is my soul to dare resistant things,
But with the pressure of your powerless hand
My will is like a bird with broken wings,
And all my words are written in the sand.

And she who bore you is the sacred vase
That held the wine of Love's high sacrament,
The still Madonna, to whose bower was sent
The Angel of God's grace.

No other worshipper will come like me,
O Man-Child with such offerings for your sake,
For I know all the secrets of the sea,
And of men's souls that ache;
I know the mystery in women's eyes,
The mute word never said,
The laws that are the wonder of the wise,
And why they smile so strangely who are dead.

The Prison

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

I WENT through a crowded city—
A city within my own—
Whose houses were of iron
And terrible gray stone.

I saw each awful doorway
With clanging lock and key,
And faces white behind them,
Most pitiful to me.

There was a patient silence
Within this town of tears,
That told me more than lips could
Of long, bleak, maddening years.

That silence . . . and those faces!
They haunt me all the while;
Yet why should dead men whisper,
And why should dead men smile?

In Excelsis

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

Spring!
And all our valleys turning into green,
Remembering—
As I remember! So my heart turns glad
For so much youth and joy—this to have had
When in my veins the tide of living fire
Was at its flow;
This to know,
When now the miracle of young desire
Burns on the hills, and spring's sweet choristers again
Chant from each tree and every bush aflame
Love's wondrous name;
This under youth's glad reign,
With all the valleys turning into green—
This to have heard and seen!

And Song!
Once to have known what every wakened bird
Has heard;
Once to have entered into that great harmony
Of love's creation, and to feel
The pulsing waves of wonder steal
Through all my being; once to be
In that same sea
Of wakened joy that stirs in every tree
And every bird; and then to sing—
To sing aloud the endless Song of Spring!

Waiting, I turn to Thee,
Expectant, humble, and on bended knee;
Youth's radiant fire
Only to burn at Thy unknown desire—
For this alone has Song been granted me.
Upon Thy altar burn me at Thy will;
All wonders fill
My cup, and it is Thine;
Life's precious wine
For this alone: for Thee.
Yet never can be paid
The debt long laid
Upon my heart, because my lips did press
In youth's glad Spring the Cup of Loveliness!

Destiny

PERCY MACKAYE

WE are what we imagine. And our deeds
Are born of dreaming. Europe acts to-day
Epics that little children in their play
Conjured, and statesmen murmured in their creeds;
In barrack, court, and school were sown those seeds,
Like Dragon's teeth, which ripen to affray
Their sowers. Dreams of slaughter rise to slay,
And fate itself is stuff that fancy breeds.
Mock, then, no more at dreaming, lest our own
Create for us a like reality!
Let not imagination's soil be sown
With armèd men, but justice, so that we
May for a world of tyranny atone,
And dream from that despair—democracy.

The Givers of Life

Bliss Carman

Who called us forth out of darkness and gave us the gift of life,
Who set our hands to the toiling, our feet in the field of strife?

Darkly they mused, predestined to knowledge of viewless things,
Sowing the seed of wisdom, guarding the living springs.

Little they reckoned privation, hunger or hardship or cold,
If only the life might prosper, and the joy that grows not old.
With sorceries subtler than music, with knowledge older than speech,
Gentle as wind in the wheatfield, strong as the tide on the beach.

Out of their beauty and longing, out of their raptures and tears,
In patience and pride they bore us, to war with the warring years.

Who looked on the world before them, and summoned and chose their sires,
Subduing the wayward impulse to the will of their deep desires?

Sovereigns of ultimate issues under the greater laws,
Theirs was the mystic mission of the eternal cause.

Confident, tender, courageous, leaving the low for the higher,
Lifting the feet of the nation out of the dust and the mire.

Luring civilisation on to the fair and the new,
Given God's bidding to follow, having God's business to do.

Who strengthened our souls with courage, and taught us the ways of earth ?
Who gave us our patterns of beauty, our standards of flawless worth ?

Mothers, unmilitant, lovely moulding our manhood then,
Walked in their woman's glory, swaying the might of men.

They schooled us to service and honour, modest and clean and fair,—
The code of their worth of living, taught with the sanction of prayer.

They were our sharers of sorrow, they were our makers of joy,
Lighting the lamp of manhood in the heart of the lonely boy.

Haloed with love and with wonder, in sheltered ways they trod,
Seers of sublime divination, keeping the truce of God.

Who called us from youth and dreaming, and set ambition alight,
And made us fit for the contest,—men by their tender rite?

Sweethearts above our merit, charming our strength and skill,
To be the pride of their loving, to be the means of their will.

If we be the builders of beauty, if we be the masters of art,
Theirs were the gleaming ideals, theirs the uplift of the heart.

Truly they measure the lightness of trappings and ease and fame,
For the teeming desire of their yearning is ever and ever the same.

To crown their lovers with gladness, to clothe their sons with delight,
And see the men of their making lords in the best man's right.

Lavish of joy and labour, broken only by wrong,
These are the guardians of being, spirited, sentient and strong.

Theirs is the starry vision, theirs the inspiriting hope,
Since Night, the brooding enchantress, promised that day should ope.

Lo! we have built and invented, reasoned, discovered, and planned,
To rear us a palace of splendour, and make it a heaven by hand.

We are shaken with dark misgiving, as kingdoms rise
and fall,
But the women who went to found them are never
counted at all.

Versed in the soul's traditions, skilled in humanity's
lore,
They wait for their crown of rapture, and weep for the
sins of war.

And behold they turn from their triumphs, as it was in
the first of days,
For a little heaven of ardour, and a little heartening of
praise.

These are the rulers of kingdoms beyond the domains of
state,
Martyrs of all men's folly, over-rulers of fate.

These we will love and honour, these we will serve and
defend,
Fulfilling the pride of nature, till nature shall have an
end.

This is the code unwritten, this is the creed we hold,
Guarding the little and lonely, gladdening the helpless
and old.

Apart from the brunt of the battle our wondrous women
shall bide,
For the sake of a tranquil wisdom, and the need of a
spirit's guide.

Come they into assembly, or keep they another door,
Our makers of life shall lighten the days as the years
of yore.

The lure of their laughter shall lead us, the lilt of their
words shall sway,
Though life and death should defeat us, their solace shall
be our stay.

Veiled in mysterious beauty, vested in magical grace,
They have walked with angels at twilight and looked
upon glory's face.

Life we will give for their safety, care for their fruitful
ease,
Though we break at the toiling benches or go down in
the smoky seas.

This is the gospel appointed to govern a world of men,
Till love has died, and the echoes have whispered the last
Amen.

Prayer

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

GOD, though this life is but a wraith,
  Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
  Give me the heart to fight—and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
  Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
  And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
  With beauty, and with wonder lit—
But let me always see the dirt
  And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music—let
  Me thrill with spring's first flutes and drums—
But never let me dare forget
  The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half done
  Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
And when at last the fight is won,
  God, keep me still unsatisfied.

Sometimes

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

Across the fields of yesterday
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
The man I might have been.

To Song

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

HERE shall remain all tears for lovely things,
And here enshrined the longing of great hearts,
Caught on a lyre whence waking wonder starts,
To mount afar upon immortal wings;
Here shall be treasured tender wonderings,
The faintest whisper that the soul imparts,
All silent secrets and all gracious arts
Where nature murmurs of her hidden springs.

O magic of a song! here loveliness
May sleep unhindered of life's mortal toll,
And noble things stand towering o'er the tide;
Here 'mid the years, untouched by time or stress,
Shall sweep on every wind that stirs the soul
The music of a voice that never died!

The Young Moses

DON MARQUIS

THE world was at his feet . . .
But overhead, the stars!

From Luxor's roof he saw their light on pillared Karnak fall,
And knew what gods and ghosts of monarchs,
Alien to his blood,
Kept guard among the shadows there . . .
While far upon the breathing plain
Hushed Memnon brooded, holding at his heart
A golden cry that trembled for the dawn. . . .
Upon a temple's roof at Thebes the young Moses stood
In commune with his dreams. . . .

A kingdom at his feet . . .
Fostered of Pharaoh's daughter,
And a prince in Egypt:
In statecraft, priestcraft, lifecraft, skilled:
Wise in his youth, and strong, and conscious of his powers:
Dowered with the patience and the passion that are genius:
Ambitious, favored, subtle, sure and swift—
Already Prince in Egypt!
And later, anything he willed . . .
Fledged early, with a soaring instinct in his wings.

He mused, and for an infinite moment
All the world streamed by him in a mist . . .
Cities and ships and nations,
Temples and armies, melted to a mist, and swirling past beneath the stars ;
And a faint tumult filled his ears of trumpets and the clash of brazen arms,
The wind and sound of empire,
And he felt the mighty pulse of his own thought and will transmuted to the tread of marching hosts
That shook the granite hills,
And saw chained kings cringe by his chariots, lion-drawn . . .
And felt himself on Seti's throne and crowned with Seti's crown,
And all earth's rhythms beating to his sense of law,
And half earth's purple blood, if so he would, poured out to dye his robes with deeper splendour . . .
And all the iron delight of power was his . . .
This Egypt was a weapon to his hand,
This life was buoyant air, and his the eagle's plume.
For one measureless moment this vision moved and glittered,
Rushing by . . .
Master of men he knew himself ; he thrilled ;
There was an empire at his feet.

But overhead, a God . . .
Implacable divinity that, as he looked, was of a sudden manifest
In all the burning stars . . .
Relentless, searching spirit,
Cruel holiness that smote him with the agony of love,
Stern sweetness piercing to the soul,
Silence articulate that turned the universe to one unspoken word,

Violent serenity that plucked at his roots of being . . .
And a voice that answered him before he questioned it. . . .
For one eternal instant Moses stood,
The cup of empire lifted to his lips,
And struggled with the God that is not if we are not He. . . .

And then . . . descended from the temple's roof,
And took his slow way through the shadowed town
Unto the quarter where an outcast people and oppressed
Labored beneath the lash
And put their lives and hopes into the bricks because there was no straw,
And cast his lot in with those sickly slaves,
To lead them, if he might, from bondage . . .

The Weed's Counsel

Bliss Carman

Said a traveller by the way
Pausing, "What hast thou to say,
Flower by the dusty road,
That would ease a mortal's load?"

Traveller, hearken unto me!
I will tell thee how to see
Beauties in the earth and sky
Hidden from the careless eye.
I will tell thee how to hear
Nature's music wild and clear—
Songs of midday and of dark
Such as many never mark,
Lyrics of creation sung
Ever since the world was young,
And thereafter thou shalt know
Neither weariness nor woe.
Thou shalt see the dawn unfold
Artistries of rose and gold,
And the sunbeams on the sea
Dancing with the wind for glee.
The red lilies of the moors
Shall be torches on the floors,
Where the field-lark lifts his cry
To rejoice the passer-by,
In a wide world rimmed with blue,
Lovely as when time was new.

And thereafter thou shalt fare
Light of foot and free from care.

I will teach thee how to find
Lost enchantments of the mind,
All about thee never guessed
By indifferent unrest.
Thy distracted thoughts shall learn
Patience from the roadside fern,
And a sweet philosophy
From the flowering locust tree—
While thy heart shall not disdain
The consolation of the rain.
Not an acre but shall give
Of its strength to help thee live.

With the many-winter'd sun
Shall thy hardy course be run,
And the bright new moon shall be
A lamp to thy felicity.
When green-mantled spring shall come
Past thy door with flute and drum,
And when over wood and swamp
Autumn trails her scarlet pomp,
No misgiving shalt thou know,
Passing glad to rise and go.

So thy days shall be unrolled
Like a wondrous cloth of gold.

When gray twilight with her star
Makes a heaven that is not far,
Touched with shadows and with dreams,
Thou shalt hear the woodland streams
Singing through the starry night
Holy anthems of delight.

So the ecstasy of earth
Shall refresh thee as at birth,
And thou shalt arise each morn
Radiant with a soul new-born.

And this wisdom of a day
None shall ever take away.

What the secret, what the clue
The wayfarer must pursue ?
Only one thing he must have
Who would share these transports brave.
Love within his heart must dwell
Like a bubbling roadside well
For a spring to quicken thought,
Else my counsel comes to naught.
For without that quickening trust
We are less than roadside dust.
This, O traveller, is my creed—
All the wisdom of the weed !

Then the traveller set his pack
Once more on his dusty back,
And trudged on for many a mile
Fronting fortune with a smile.

Worth While

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

It is easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent
When nothing tempts you to stray,
When without or within no voice of sin
Is luring your soul astray;
But it's only a negative virtue
Until it is tried by fire,
And the life that is worth the honour on earth
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,
Who had no strength for the strife,
The world's highway is cumbered to-day—
They make up the sum of life;
But the virtue that conquers passion,
And the sorrow that hides in a smile—
It is these that are worth the homage on earth,
For we find them but once in a while.

The Inn of the Beautiful Star

May Riley Smith

Among the places where you have been,
In your wanderings near and far,
Have you ever slept in the world's great inn,
The Inn of the Beautiful Star ?
It is down at the end of Poverty Lane,
In the country of everywhere ;
The way to it is straight and plain,
A newsboy will guide you there.

No landlord tells you your rent is due,
No matter how long you stay ;
No lackeys attend you, but *qui voulez-vous ?*
There is nothing at all to pay ;
No housemaid knocks at your chamber door,
No matter how long you dream ;
You eat what was left from the day before,
And drink from the nearest stream.

Its walls are ample, full wide its beds,
Its ceilings are blue and gold ;
There is turf, sometimes, for the sleepers' heads,
And sometimes leaves for the cold.
The stars that shine in the heavenly space
Are the only lamps there are ;
So the poet who slept there named the place
The Inn of the Beautiful Star.

Hotel of Beautiful Star! all claims
To prestige thou dost defer,
But the world would stare could it read the names
On thy ponderous register;
For poets, artists, and fleeing kings,
And statesmen of great renown,
Have sought the shelter thy blue roof flings,
And slept on thy pallets brown.

"Oh, well! with your struggle and want and stress
The world has little to do;
And when you have climbed your way to success,
It makes obeisance to you!
What matter? At last, though you fail or win,
You shall sleep whoever you are,
In a little underground room of this inn,
The Inn of the Beautiful Star."

Hymn before Birth

JOHN NEIHARDT

Soon shall you come as the dawn from the dumb abysm of night,
Traveller birthward, Hastener earthward out of the gloom!
Soon shall you rest on a soft white breast from the measureless mid-world flight;
Waken in fear at the miracle, light, in the pain-hushed room.

Lovingly fondled, fearfully guarded by hands that are tender,
Frail shall you seem as a dream that must fail in the swirl of the morrow:
Oh, but the vast, immemorial past of ineffable splendour,
Forfeited in the pangful surrender to Sense and to Sorrow!

Who shall unravel your tangle of travel, uncurtain your history?
Have you not run with the sun-gladdened feet of a thaw?
Lurked as a thrill in the will of the primal sea-mystery,
The drift of the cloud and the lift of the moon for a law?

Lost is the tale of the gulfs you have crossed and the veils you have lifted:
In many a tongue have been wrung from you outcries of pain:
You have leaped with the lightning from thunder-heads, hurricane-rifted,
And breathed in the whispering rain!

Latent in juices the April sun looses from capture,
Have you not blown in the lily and grown in the weed ?
Burned with the flame of the vernal erotical rapture ?
And yearned with the passion for seed ?

Poured on the deeps from the steeps of the sky as a chalice,
Flung through the loom that is shuttled by tempests at play,
Myriad the forms you have taken for hovel or palace—
Broken and cast them away !

You who shall cling to a love that is fearful and pities,
Titans of flame were your comrades to blight and consume !
Have you not roared over song-hallowed, sword-stricken cities,
And fled in the smoke of their doom ?

For, ancient and new, you are flame, you are dust, you are spirit and dew,
Swirled into flesh, and the winds of the world are your breath !
The song of a thrush in the hush of the dawn is not younger than you—
And yet you are older than death !

The Old Road to Paradise

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Ours is a dark Eastertide, and a scarlet spring,
But high up at Heaven's gate all the saints sing,
Glad for the great companies returning to their King!

Oh, in youth the dawn's a rose, dusk an amethyst,
All the roads from dusk to dawn gay they wind and twist,
The old road to Paradise, easy it is missed!

But out on the wet battlefields few the roadways wind,
One to grief, one to death—no road that's kind—
The old road to Paradise, plain it is to find.

(*St Martin in his Colonel's cloak, St Joan in her mail,*
King David with his crown and sword—oh, none there be that fail—
Along the road to Paradise they stand to greet and hail!)

Where the dark's a terror-thing, morn a hope doubt-tossed,
Where the lads lie thinking long, out in rain and frost,
There they find their God again, long ago they lost.

Where the night comes cruelly, where the hurt men moan,
Where the crushed forgotten ones whisper prayers alone,
Christ along the battlefields comes to lead His own.

Souls that would have withered soon in the world's hot
glare,
Blown and gone like shrivelled things, dusty on the air,
Rank on rank they follow Him, young and strong and fair!

Ours is a sad Eastertide, and a woeful day,
Yet high up at Heaven's gate the saints are all gay,
For the old road to Paradise—'tis a main travelled way!

Summons

Louis Untermeyer

The eager night and the impetuous winds,
The hints and whispers of a thousand lures
And all the swift persuasion of the Spring,
Surged from the stars and stones, and swept me
on . . .
The smell of honeysuckles keen and clear,
Startled and shook me, with a sudden thrill
Of some well-known but half-forgotten voice.
A slender stream became a naked sprite,
Flashed around curious bends, and winked at me
Beyond the turns, alert and mischievous.
A saffron moon, dangling among the trees,
Seemed like a toy balloon caught in the boughs,
Flung there in sport by some too-mirthful breeze . . .
And as it hung there, vivid and unreal,
The whole world's lethargy was brushed away;
The night kept tugging at my torpid mood
And tore it into shreds. A warm wind blew
My wintry slothfulness beyond the stars;
And over all indifference there streamed
A myriad surges in one rushing wave . . .
Touched with the lavish miracles of earth,
I felt the brave persistence of the grass;
The far desire of rivulets; the keen
Unconquerable fervour of the thrush;
The endless labors of the patient worm;

The lichen's strength ; the prowess of the ant ;
The constancy of flowers ; the blind belief
Of ivy climbing slowly toward the sun ;
The eternal struggles and eternal deaths—
And yet the groping faith of every root !
Out of old graves arose the cry of life ;
Out of the dying came the deathless call.
And, thrilling with a new sweet restlessness,
The thing that was my boyhood woke in me—
Dear, foolish fragments made me strong again ;
Valiant adventures, dreams of those to come,
And all the vague, heroic hopes of youth,
With fresh abandon like a fearless laugh
Leaped up to face the heaven's unconcern . . .
And then—veil upon veil was torn aside—
Stars, like a host of merry girls and boys,
Danced gaily round me, plucking at my hand ;
The night, scorning its ancient mystery,
Leaned down and pressed new courage in my heart ;
The hermit thrush, throbbing with more than song,
Sang with a happy challenge to the skies ;
Love, and the faces of a world of children,
Swept like a conquering army through my blood—
And Beauty, rising out of all its forms,
Beauty, the passion of the universe,
Flamed with its joy, a thing too great for tears,
And, like a wine, poured itself out for me
To drink of, to be warmed with, and to go
Refreshed and strengthened to the ceaseless fight ;
To meet with confidence the cynic years ;
Battling in wars that never can be won,
Seeking the lost cause and the brave defeat.

This is Another Day

DON MARQUIS

I AM mine own priest, and I shrive myself
Of all my wasted yesterdays. Though sin
And sloth and foolishness, and all ill weeds
Of error, evil, and neglect grow rank
And ugly there, I dare forgive myself
That error, sin, and sloth and foolishness.
God knows that yesterday, I played the fool;
God knows that yesterday, I played the knave;
But shall I therefore cloud this new dawn o'er
With fog of futile sighs and vain regrets?

This is another day! And flushed Hope walks
Adown the sunward slopes with golden shoon.
This is another day; and its young strength
Is laid upon the quivering hills until,
Like Egypt's Memnon, they grow quick with song.
This is another day, and the bold world
Leaps up and grasps its light, and laughs, as leapt
Prometheus up and wrenched the fire from Zeus.

This is another day—are its eyes blurred
With maudlin grief for any wasted past?
A thousand thousand failures shall not daunt!
Let dust clasp dust; death, death—I am alive!
And out of all the dust and death of mine
Old selves I dare to lift a singing heart.
And living faith; my spirit dares drink deep
Of the red mirth mantling in the cup of morn.

A Golden Lad

Don Marquis

(d. v. m.)

"*Golden lads and lasses must*
Like chimney-sweepers come to dust."—
Shakespeare.

So young, but already the splendour
Of genius robed him about—
Already the dangerous, tender
Regard of the gods marked him out.

(On whom the burden and duty
They bind, at his earliest breath,
Of showing their own grave beauty,
They love or they crown with death.)

We were of one blood, but the olden
Rapt poets spake out in his tone;
We were of one blood, but the golden
Rathe promise was his, his alone.

And ever his great eye glistened
With visions I could not see,
Ever he thrilled and listened
To voices withholden from me.

Young lord of the realm of fancy,
The bright dreams flocked to his call
Like sprites that the necromancy
Of a Prospero holds in thrall.

Quick visions that served and attended,
  Elusive and hovering things,
With a quiver of joy in the splendid
  Wild sweep of their luminous wings ;

He dwelt in an alien glamour,
  He wrought of its gleams a crown,—
But the world, with its cruelty and clamor,
  Broke him and beat him down ;

So he passed ; he was worn, he was weary,
  He was slain at the touch of life ;—
With a smile that was wistful and eerie
  He passed from the senseless strife ;—

So he ceased (is their humor satiric
  These gods that make perfect and blight ?)—
He ceased like an exquisite lyric
  That dies on the breast of night.

The Road to Tartary

Bernard Freeman Trotter

I left the dusty travelled road the proper people tread—
Like solemn sheep they troop along, Tradition at their head;
I went by meadow, stream, and wood; I wandered at my will;
And in my wayward ears a cry of warning echoed still:
"Beware! beware!"—an old refrain they shouted after me—
"The road that thou art going is the road to Tartary."

I clambered over dawn-lit hills—the dew was on my feet;
I crossed the sullen pass at night in wind and rain and sleet;
I followed trains of errant thought through heaven and earth and hell,
And thence I seemed to hear again that unctuous farewell,
For there I dreamed the little fiends were pointing all at me:
"The road that thou art going is the road to Tartary."

From all the pious wrangling sects I set my spirit free;
I own no creed but God and Love and Immortality,
Their dogmas and their disciplines are dust and smoke and cloud,
They cannot see my sun-lit way; and still they cry aloud,
From church, conventicle, and street, that warning old to me:
"The road that thou art going is the road to Tartary."

I found a woman God had made, the blind world tossed aside—
It had not dreamed the greatness hid in poverty and pride.
I left the world to walk with her and talk with her and learn
The secret things of happiness—and will I now return
To that blind, prudish world that shrugs and lifts its brows to me :
" The road that thou art going is the road to Tartary."

Nay ; we will go together, Love—we two to greet the sun.
There are more roads than one to heaven, perhaps more heavens than one.
Here on the lonely heights we see things hid from those who tread
Like sheep the dusty trodden way, Tradition at their head.
We sense the common goal of all—in Mecca we shall be,
Though the road that we are going seem the road to Tartary.

On the Upward Road

Cale Young Rice

Within a city I paused, in pity
  Of human sorrow and human wrong;
Of bitter toiling, of sad assoiling,
  Of fatal foiling to weak and strong.

I paused where centred on sin throngs entered
  A door of evil and lust and greed.
I saw dark faces whereon disgraces
  Had writ their traces for all to read.

I said: *It is human, nor man nor woman*
  Is worse or better than men before.
Since time's beginning there has been sinning,
  While time is spinning there shall be more.

For spite of sages that search the ages
  Back to the Mammoth and Saurian,
That find a growing, an upward flowing
  Of Good all-knowing, man is but man.

In spite of heavens, in spite of leavens,
  Of yeastly yearnings to run and climb,
He is no surer that life is purer,
  Or that a Juror sits over time.

He takes the seasons, each with its treasons,
Of heat or tempest, of sun or snow,
Half doubtful whether a better weather
Would work together with one so low.

His gods are many, or one, or any ;
He must have worship to hush his fear.
So all the spaces through which thought races
He fills with faces that hide—yet hear.

Or when death sickens his heart it quickens
His need, so lonely for love's applause,
That of his dreamings—the merest seemings
Of deathless gleamings, he makes him Laws.

And with repentance will serve their sentence—
In hopes of gaining again one breast.
The universes that doom disperses
His faith immerses in Life all-blest.

He is so little that his acquittal,
Of all great Nature impels him to,
He cries for bravely : yet ever gravely,
Or sad, or suavely, the skies will woo.

But doubts while wooing, so keeps pursuing
Two roads—one starry and one of earth.
Nor ever clearer seems one, or nearer
His goal—or dearer in weal or worth.

Thus, in a city, impelled by pity
More than despair I paused and cried.
But in my being a deeper seeing,
A truer pleaing to me replied :—

You speak in passion—in the dark fashion
Of those who suffer because they grope ;
To whom despairing seems the true daring
When doubt long-faring no door can ope.

For 'tis not certain that sin's dark curtain
Of imperfection hangs still so black ;
That man has lifted no edge, nor rifted
No fold, or sifted light through no crack.

He stumbles ever, in his endeavour,
And seems no better than he has been.
But life is vaster, and he more master
Now, if no faster he sinks in sin.

And, too, his duty is not mere beauty
Of moral being, he is a Child
Of higher station, of all creation—
Whose aspiration runs thro' him wild.

A thousand courses on him life forces,
A thousand visions that bring a need.
To search abysses for all he misses :
From all he wisses to frame a creed.

So all the wages that thro' the ages
He, Nature's vassal, with toil has won,
All secrets looted, all lies refuted,
Must be computed as good well done.

Praise then be to him that strongly thro' him
There flows the effort to find the goal
That faith defeated, by false gods cheated,
And oft unseated, still rules his soul.

The Factories

MARGARET WIDDEMER

I HAVE shut my little sister in from life and light,
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair,)
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who roamed the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing-time is done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood,
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark,)
Shut from Love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sunlit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have shut my sister in her mating time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn,)

Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest,
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone ?
I, who took no heed of her, starved and labour-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life ! Creator ! It was I ! It was I !

Gipsy Feet

FANNIE STEARNS DAVIS

OH, gipsy hearts are many enough, but gipsy feet are few!
Many's the one that loves to dream night-long of stars and dew;
Many's the one that loves the scent of wood-smoke by the way,
And turns a leaping, longing heart to every dawn of day.

Gipsy hearts are many enough, but gipsy feet are few—
Ah, how ill it is to bide unloosed the long year through!
Up and down the loud gray streets, stared at, staring back,
Through tarnished trails of the staggering sun and soot-fog ochre-black;

Dressed in heavy and sober togs, eating of heavy fare,
Hailed by only the screaming street, "Mind! step lively there!"
Crook-backed over a dusty desk,—bothering to and fro
There in the dull and airless house,—Ah, to cut and go!

Up the hill-roads into the day! Over the seaward fells,
Watch the thistle-down dip, and hear the thin sheep's huddling bells;
Run like fire along the field, worship the heart of the wood,
Kneel by the spring that splits the rock, and find the white rain good.

—Oh, gipsy hearts are many enough, but gipsy feet are few,
And secret gods must we worship still, if we worship fire and dew;
For we must bend at the dusty desk, and over the counter lean,
Toil and moil in the sun-starved house, though leaves blow red or green.

God, great God of the wind's caress, God of the sea's salute,
Why are we chained and muzzled and meshed more than our brother the brute?
Shall there be never a day that all of the gipsy hearts may greet,
Laughing out at the lure of the sun for the lift of the gipsy feet?

But oh, though that day is far to come, and the feet forget to go free,
Pray God that the hearts may not forget the hurt and the ecstasy!
Pray God that never the fret may fail while the Spring comes over the year,
That never the thin gay Autumn dawns may seem less wild and dear.

For shall it not be height of Heaven, wonderful, swift and sweet,
If into the paths of perilous death may wander the gipsy feet?
May wander free with the risk of the road, the road that the glad Dead know,
Out where the fires of God flame high, and the winds of God lean low!

Pro Patria Mori

RICHARD BURTON

As a gold and scarlet sunset
  Glories a sombre day,
That else were all unmemoried,
  Dying in dusk away.

Great acts man's day emblazon,
  God's lilies out of life's mud;
The splendid flower of heroes
  Out of a soil of blood.

The date of the deed? Who recks it?
  Such moments are timeless things.
Of old, Leonidas thrills us,
  He travels on Fame's wide wings;

Or, blithe through the Russian bullets,
  Rushes the Light Brigade
To death—and the whole world echoes
  The sound of the charge they made.

And now,—with the ancient valour,—
  In the clutch of a tropic sun,
Our own Rough Riders conquer,
  Though the foe be four to one.

The date of the deed? 'Tis nothing!
  Count it by tears or cheers,
For the men who die for Country
  Have naught to do with the years.

The Real Thing

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD

YES, you're down, you're dazed, you're sore,
But you'll get up again.
Take the count and watch his arm if you've got head enough.
If the girl's gone and she never will come back, alive,
There're as good as she on earth still. On my word there are.
If it's money, you'll make more. The world is full of it,
Full of people simply waiting to give up to you.
If it's drink, there's time to sidestep till the final round.
If you're sick and sad, the better times are bound to come.
If you're hungry, there are others that are hungrier.
If you've lost a friend forever, you'll get next to him
Just by making other friends like him and keeping them.
If it's death itself you're facing, so's the world as well.
If he can't be countered longer, every one of us
Soon or late must go against the big black heavy-weight.
He's your sparring partner merely. If he knocks you out,
It's because your trainer simply thinks you need a rest.
So it's up to you to show him you're no quitter yet.
Other rings in heaven or hell there are you're scheduled for
Where you've got to go against the real thing, some time, soon or late.
Men like you have landed knockouts in defeat's own face.
Get one blow in first. Last one round more, for God's sake, man!

Landscapes

Louis Untermeyer

(to clement r. wood)

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
  Made every little blade of grass appear
Vivid and startling—everything was there
  With sharpened outlines, eloquently clear,
  As though one saw it in a crystal sphere.
The rusty sumac with its struggling spires;
The golden-rod with all its million fires
(A million torches swinging in the wind);
A single poplar, marvellously thinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword;
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord;
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces;
Little old ladies cackling over laces;
The quaint, unhurried road that curved so well;
The prim petunias with their rich, rank smell;
The lettuce-bords, the creepers in the field—
How bountifully were they all revealed!
How arrogantly each one seemed to thrive—
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive.

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a sharp and kindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed;
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .

Oh ! what a liberal power that made them thrive,
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.
And now I saw the slender willow tree
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall,
As though it danced in some sad ritual ;
But rather like a young athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made a sober tree seem such a rover—
Or made the staid and stalwart apple trees
That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace
  Turn all their fruit to little worlds of flame
And burn the trembling orchard there below.
What let the heart of every golden glow—
  Oh ! why was nothing weary, dull, or tame ?
Beauty it was, and keen, compassionate mirth,
That drives the vast and energetic earth.

And with abrupt and visionary eyes
I saw the huddled tenement arise ;
Then where the merry clover danced and shone
Sprang agonies of iron and of stone ;
There where green silence laughed or stood enthralled
Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled,
The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills ;
Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
The menace of these things swept over me ;
A threatening, unconquerable sea. . . .

A stirring landscape and a generous earth !
Freshening courage and benevolent mirth—
And then the city, like a hideous sore. . . .
Good God, and what is all this beauty for ?

The Modern Saint

Richard Burton

No monkish garb he wears, no beads he tells,
  Nor is immured in walls remote from strife,
But from his heart deep mercy ever wells ;
  He looks humanely forth on human life.

In place of missals or of altar dreams,
  He cons the passioned book of deeds and days ;
Striving to cast the comforting sweet beams
  Of charity on dark and noisome ways.

Not hedged about by sacerdotal rule,
  He walks a fellow of the scarred and weak.
Liberal and wise his gifts, he goes to school,
  To justice ; and he turns the other cheek.

He looks not holy, simple is his belief,
  His creed for mystic visions do not scan,
His face shows lines cut there by others' grief,
  And in his eyes is love of brother-man.

Not self nor self-salvation is his care ;
  He yearns to make the world a sunnier clime
To live in, and his mission everywhere
  Is strangely like to Christ's in olden time.

No mediæval mystery, no crowned
  Dim figure, halo-ringed, uncanny bright,
A modern saint : a man who treads earth's ground,
  And ministers to men with all his might.

The Child in Me

MAY RILEY SMITH

SHE follows me about My House of Life—
(This happy little ghost of my dead youth!)
She has no part in Time's relentless strife,
She keeps her old simplicity and truth,
And laughs at grim mortality—
This deathless child that stays with me—
This happy little ghost of my dead youth!

My House of Life is weather-stained with years—
(O Child in Me, I wonder why you stay?)
Its windows are bedimmed with rain of tears,
Its walls have lost their rose—its thatch its gray:
One after one its guests depart—
So dull a host is my old heart—
O Child in Me, I wonder why you stay!

For jealous Age, whose face I would forget,
Pulls the bright flowers you give me from my hair
And powders it with snow—and yet—and yet
I love your dancing feet and jocund air,
And have no taste for caps of lace
To tie about my faded face:
I love to wear your flower in my hair!

O Child in Me, leave not My House of Clay
Until we pass together through its Door!
When lights are out, and Life has gone away,
And we depart to come again no more,
We comrades, who have travelled far,
Will hail the twilight and the star,
And gladly pass together through the Door!

A Song for Healing

CALE YOUNG RICE

(ON THE SOUTH SEAS)

WHEN I return to the world again,
The world of fret and fight,
To grapple with godless things and men,
And battle, wrong or right,
I will remember this—the sea,
And the white stars hanging high,
And the vessel's bow
Where calmly now
I gaze to the boundless sky.

When I am deaf with the din of strife,
And blind amid despair,
When I am choked with the dust of life
And long for free soul-air;
I will recall this sound—the sea's,
And the wide horizon's hope,
And the wind that blows,
And the phosphor snows
That fall as the cleft waves ope.

When I am beaten—when I fall
On the bed of black defeat,
When I have hungered, and in gall
Have got but shame to eat,
I will remember this—the sea
And its tide as soft as sleep,
And the clear night sky
That heals for aye
All who will trust its deep.

Portrait of an Old Woman

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

SHE limps with halting, painful pace,
  Stops, wavers, and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face,
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand like bundled cornstalks holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
  She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
  From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
  Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
  Abandoned to the final night.