
**ANTHOLOGY
OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
VERSE**

*Sponsored by the Verse Writers Club
of Southern California*



Primavera Press · Los Angeles
1930

A Reader's Edition

with editorial introduction
and navigational apparatus

**ANTHOLOGY
OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
VERSE**

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EDITED BY
SNOW LONGLEY HOUSH
ROY TOWNER THOMPSON
LESLIE N. JENNINGS



Primavera Press · Los Angeles

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To the Memory of

GRACE ATHERTON DENNEN

Founder of the Verse Writers Club
of Southern California

Editorial Introduction



This volume, published in Los Angeles in 1930 by the short-lived Primavera Press, preserves a cross-section of the poetic activity that flourished in Southern California during the late 1920s. Sponsored by the Verse Writers Club of Southern California and dedicated to the memory of its founder, Grace Atherton Dennen, the anthology was edited by Snow Longley Housh, Roy Towner Thompson, and Leslie N. Jennings. Only a few hundred copies were printed; the second impression was limited to three hundred.

The year 1930 marked a hinge in Southern California's cultural history. The explosive growth of the 1920s—fueled by oil, real estate, Hollywood, and a massive influx of newcomers—was giving way to the economic contraction of the Depression. Los Angeles remained a city of transplants. Its literary life was correspondingly fluid: clubs and small presses provided the chief venues for poets who had not yet formed a settled regional tradition. The Verse Writers Club, founded earlier by Grace Atherton Dennen, was one of the more active of these groups, offering mutual encouragement and occasional publication to its members.

Primavera Press itself was the creation of the celebrated Los Angeles bookseller Jake Zeitlin and the poet Leslie Nelson Jennings. It began essentially as a vanity imprint for local verse and soon issued a handful of slender volumes, among them this anthology. Jennings, a skilled sonneteer whose work appeared in *The New Yorker*, co-edited the collection and later withdrew from the press; Zeitlin continued under the Primavera name for a time. The press belonged to the earliest phase of what would become a distinctive Southern California fine-printing culture—the same milieu that later produced Ward Ritchie, the Rounce & Coffin Club, and a generation of carefully made limited editions.

Snow Longley Housh (née Nannie Snow Longley, 1879–1963) was the central editorial presence. Born in Ohio and raised in California, she graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1896 and returned there as an English teacher for many years. One of her students was the future science-fiction writer Ray Bradbury, who repeatedly credited her with instilling in him a lifelong love of poetry. Housh had already published her own work, notably *Sonnets of Spinsterhood* (1915). She married Grant S. Housh in 1928. Her poems in the present volume—"The Poet's Wife" and "In Cornwall"—reveal a practiced, reflective voice.

The club's president, Colin Palmerston, contributed both the original introduction and several poems. His preface is striking for its refusal of easy regional boosterism. Writing at a moment when Southern California's population was still overwhelmingly composed of recent arrivals, Palmerston argued that any distinctive local "note" remained embryonic; the anthology's value lay precisely in its candid record of a cosmopolitan, still-forming literary culture.

Among the better-known contributors is Hildegard Flanner (1899–1987), sister of the long-time *New Yorker* Paris correspondent Janet Flanner. A poet, essayist, and early environmentalist, Hildegard settled in Altadena after the 1923 Berkeley fire destroyed her family's home. Her poems here—"High Stream's End," "Summer Vespers," and "Dawn Poem"—already display the precise, nature-attuned sensibility that later made her a distinctive voice of the California landscape. Other participants include Jake Zeitlin himself, the historian and poet W. W. Robinson, Sarah Bixby Smith (author of the classic *Adobe Days*), and a wide circle of club members whose work had appeared in national and regional magazines.

Thematically the collection ranges from traditional sonnets and lyrics of love, loss, and faith to free-verse experiments and explicitly Western subjects—the Mojave, the Sierra, wild mustard fields, pioneer women, and the residual romance of the frontier. Formal range is equally broad: tight quatrains sit beside long, cascading free-verse sequences such as Leetha Journey Probst's "The Steeps of Dawn." The result is less a manifesto of regional style than a group portrait of a literary community caught between the exuberance of the 1920s and the austerities that followed.

This reader's edition presents the complete text of the original volume in a clean, navigable format. An interactive table of contents allows rapid movement among poems. Page numbers in the contents refer to the original 1930 pagination for scholarly convenience; the present layout is newly designed for contemporary reading while retaining the spirit of a period book.

— *The Editors of this Reader's Edition, 2026*

Introduction

(Original, 1930)



WHEN BORDERS ARE rapidly being erased by shadows of passing wings, and when, more and more, individuals are extending their restlessness over continents and seas, it would be fallacious to presume that the poetic voice of one district would vary greatly from that of another, descending from common language and tradition. If this is true of districts old enough to have acquired cultural identity, how much more is it true of Southern California, where the proportion of even first-generation natives is decidedly in the minority, and where adopted voices have come from every community of the world.

Quite naturally it follows that the present expression is broadly cosmopolitan, in an English colored by other language influences. For most poets-by-adoption California is an acquaintance not yet become intimate, and the cautious craftsman should eschew the expression of that superficial familiarity with which the readers of western literature have been thoroughly surfeited.

In another fifty years the Southwestern voice may have acquired a decidedly local note, but this present anthology is frankly representative of the extant cross-section, without straining for arbitrary Westernism or premature individuality. Its value as Californiana rests largely upon the accuracy with which this broader representation is recorded, and compared with which future collections may indicate the trend and effect of early cross-pollenization.

Yet those who seek in this volume some distinctively western melody are not to be disappointed. The minority of natives has not failed to catch the mood of its environment, and this mood is expressed in not a little of the included material. Though it is related in form to all inheritance, and cannot be differentiated therefrom by concrete definition; nevertheless, like an intangible overtone, it gives new color and feeling to an older melody, and will become increasingly perceptible as it gains in consciousness, and as ears become attuned to its timbre.

Since it has been a literary practice to associate with the West certain characteristics of courage and friendliness inherited from pioneers and further engendered by a rigorous and open existence, we might expect to find such characteristics expressed in the poetry of succeeding generations. What facts are discoverable to the disinterested reader? Certainly there is no marked contrast between this and other work, no indication that courage, adventure, or romance can be claimed in preponderance by one district or people. We can only hope that a favorable environment has encouraged the

development of a deeper intellectual courage capable of balancing insight against benightedness, and faith against circumstance; that it will escape over-celebration of disillusionment, and distinguish between shadow and material structure. We would wish it to look life knowingly in the face without the cowardice of submission or the weakness of defiance; that it may understand the fulness of truth, and express it with an art superior to any suggestion of perversion or surrender.

The present choice of material has been made as nearly as possible upon the basis of meritorious work in the widest available types. Without doubt we have failed to reach poets of high standing whose local residence was unknown to us just as we may have erred in the judgment of good verses submitted to our editors. In some instances copyrights have prevented the inclusion of the most representative material. Haste also has been an obstacle to flawless representation. Yet the very evident value of the included verse is sufficient reason for its present publication, and a strong incentive for future compilations.

Perhaps the most encouraging feature of this editorship is the discovery of the surprising volume of poetic impulse expressed in commendable composition. Though competition and space limitations have combined against the inclusion of many of these verses, their writers should be congratulated upon the ability which makes it possible for them to externalize emotion in artistry, and so contribute to a poetic environment in which the genius of the future may be inspired to increased achievement.

We are equally grateful to all who have submitted material as well as to those who have otherwise contributed to the success of this publication, and feel justified in the pride with which we offer to the reading public, a representative collection of Southern California poetry.

COLIN PALMERSTON
President of the Verse Writers Club
of Southern California

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TO A STUDENT

There will be days for verbs,
And yet another day for adjectives,
There will be days for every kind of word,
But this is night,
And the odor of young rain is in the air,
Autumn waits outside the casement—
Autumn with winds that sting and skirling leaves.
There will be days for adjectives—
Yet another day for pronouns,
But such a night as this will fly on the heels of the wind.

— *Jean Baker*

MARY REMEMBERS

Mary can hear them echoing still—
Two cries, a man's whole life apart,
The birth cry that had pierced her heart,
The death cry on Jerusalem's hill.

Mary has seen His face again—
The rose face sleeping at her side,
The white face of the crucified,
Beyond the darkness and the rain.

Mary remembers these things yet—
With God's two hands dividing them!
The long high road to Bethlehem,
The moonlight over Olivet.

— *Eleanor Baldwin*

DAY

She comes on naked feet when Night is gone,
A brown and radiant girl whose sleep is done.
Her anklets glitter, and that burnished jar
Set on one rounded shoulder is the sun.

— *Eleanor Baldwin*

NIGHT

The boundless field of heaven she unbars
To reap therein, and like a scimitar's
The blade of her bright sickle as she moves
Breast-high and gracious in a grain of stars.

— *Eleanor Baldwin*

IRONY

A dime I gave for sterling,
Came back a counterfeit,
I turned my purse out, testing
Each coin, so fearing cheat.
My golden eagle? Sternly
I flung it on a stone,
It slipped from sight forever—
Ringing the truest tone.

— *Mabel Wing Castle*

AUTUMNAL

A bird,
In dawn-mist, gray-blowing,
Screamed once from his crag-high eyrie.
Fled low over sulking surf, his wing-beat
Weary.

— *Ethel Caskey*

MULBERRY MOONS

Watching my trays under mulberry moons,
Working and dreaming above the cocoons,
Yearning for westward breezes, I sing—
“I am a moth with a broken wing.”

Mist hides the sun in her silvery hair,
Amber and jade are caught in the snare.
War gods thunder where wild geese rise—
Over my roof the rainbow dies!

Many the moons that come and go,
Years that run as the Ho Hwang Ho;
Rain and the evening bell and tears
Fall on the land of a thousand years!

— *Pauline Garner Curran*

A LITTLE TUNE O' TEARS

Where can I find that hauntin' tune my father used to play
On all the roads o' Donegal before he sailed away,
A little strain so gay, so sad, a little tune o' tears?
O Donegal, I'm comin' back to hunt behind the years!

I'm wishin' to be seein' all the mists above the moors;
I'm wishin' to be feelin' the gay greetin' at your doors.
Oh, sure, an' I'll be huntin' soon, a-huntin' all my lone
For that cryin', singin', liltin' tune he played beyond Tyrone.

It's too laughin' for a banshee, much too cryin' for an elf;
But I know there would be fairies that had listened to himself!
I'll follow up the bogland, over rocky hills and all,
Just lookin' for his shadow on the roads o' Donegal.

I'll listen to the singin' o' the colleens and old men
That wander up the curvin' paths from Adara to Glen;
Maybe I'll find that achin' song, that little tune o' tears.
O Donegal, I'm comin' back to hunt behind the years!

— *Pauline Garner Curran*

MARJORIE

Suggesting red flannel under the shabby frock,
Wearing cotton stockings and high shoes
While other girls wore silk and pumps,
Marjorie sat among her smarter sisters
With a dreamy abstraction that set her apart.
It was with frank curiosity
That I drove her home
The day she sprained her ankle.
Her dwelling was a tent
Pitched on the canyon-side;
Her mother, a consumptive, fading gently
Into the shadows;
Her father,
Belonging to the earlier days of the pioneers,
Restless and discontent,
Seeking frontiers that have vanished . . .
Without embarrassment Marjorie spoke,
“I’m glad it was you brought me home.
I’ve always wanted you to see my view.
That’s the blue of the ocean over there;
See how the hill is purpled with lupin
And gilded with poppies.
Isn’t it good to be alive?”

— *Virginia Church*

INTERCEPTED

Jimmy sits in the front row;
Across the aisle is Flossie.
Today as I turned from the board
I intercepted a look,
Holy as altar fires,
That flamed from youth to youth.
I caught my breath.
All afternoon I've felt old and lonesome.

— *Virginia Church*

GWEN

I sent for Gwendolyn Hall's mother,
She must be made to understand
That silken hose and spangled gowns
Were not for school.
Other girls could not afford them;
Besides, the lack of taste.
She came,
A shawl over her faded cotton dress.
"I'm a washerwoman,
I never had nothin' pretty.
I mean Gwen shall have the best
If it means rubbing the skin from my knuckles."
Tears came into the old eyes.
I, too, pledged myself that Gwen should have the best—
Though it might mean discarding spangles.

— *Virginia Church*

NOT MELLIN'S FOOD

In the Study Hall today
I took a lurid-back novel
Away from Clarice Ritter.
It was called "The Purple Passion."
I warned her
Not to waste her God-given intellect on such trash,
To spend the remainder of the period
On Pope's Essay on Man.
I was about to consign the Passion
To the waste basket,
When a phrase intrigued me;
I took it home and finished it in bed.

— *Virginia Church*

DEDICATION

If I should die tomorrow
Few there are would care,
But one would taste more sorrow
Than is, by rights, her share.

Though the account I'd render
Held far less good than ill,
Yet fair and sweet and tender,
Her love would friend me still.

And thus, while I am living,
I love and praise and serve
One who does more forgiving
Than I, by rights, deserve.

— *James L. Duff*

CROSSROADS

"They always used to bury a suicide to the crossroads."

— *Dewey Rides*

I never could be learning
Strong strides my fellows strode.
Uncertain at the turning,
Bepuzzled by the road,
I took the wrong direction
And never found the right;
The paths of my selection
Led always into night.
Since night and never morning
Was destined where I went,
The fingerpost of warning
Is fitting monument.
Thus Time, the great unraveler,
Has led me into day—
The man to guide the traveler
Never knew the way.

— *James L. Duff*

OLD GLOVES

Old gloves are tragic things
On women's hands,
With raveled strands
Of cloth, or stain that clings
To faded, outworn kid.
My mother prayed
In hers: the frayed
Old gloves could not be hid
In church or on the street.
And when I find
Gloves of rich kind
On hands my glances meet,
The tears flood to my eyes,
And I too pray:
“Fine gloves, betray
Me not with grief and sighs” —
My mother never had
Fine gloves to make her glad.

— *Ben Field*

THE MOJAVE

Great Desert, mighty brother to the Sea!
Thy burning sands in silver waves unrolled,
Thy distances ablaze with red and gold.
Huge solitude! Lone Western mystery!
For comrade the wide sky bends lovingly,
By day encircling thee with azure fold—
A flawless blue—or flaming tints more bold;
By night lending her stars for company.
Trackless, unmeasured, vast, sublime, thou art!
What healing in thy pure mesmeric air!
Yet, desolate as some large human heart,
That, still unclaimed, unsought, is waste and bare;
Impervious to joy or grief's deep smart,
Waiting the touch of Love, thou liest there!

— *Nancy K. Foster*

A FUNERAL MASS AT SAINT VINCENT'S

"Of the old régime," she whispered,
Kyrie Eleison moaned the choir,
Gold and black the priests' rich vestments,
Servers' cassocks, lilac fire.

Candles glowed about the coffin
Where the gentle Doña slept,
Who had lived past eighty-seven,
"By her deeds the Faith she kept"—

Ave Maria sang the voices—
"A good mother, sore the loss,
Never grudged life's pain and sorrow,
Placed her hands beneath the Cross,

Bore it bravely, down her pathway—"—
Turned the woman at my side:
"Has the Father double purpose,
Comes intentionally to deride

You and me of these cold Thirties,
We whose children never pray?
The nave has very lovely murals;
I regret I came today."

— *Nancy K. Foster*

HIGH STREAM'S END

A place is lost and ghosted that I knew,
There was a brook, and nemoral the shade,
Where shadow stroked the dappled side of light,
And where the ouzel plunged, that brown mermaid.

It was a canyon, and the winterwater
From grooves of mountain snow did straight descend—
An emerald alley in the wilderness
With pillar of fluted water at the end.

And bronze eventual the leopard lily
Or mother-of-gold her light pagoda built,
And stealthy hung her spotted banners out,
A secret queen upon precarious guilt—

For now with hardly whither! all has vanished
And where, in summer's mania, none can tell.
The lily's court is dust, and only remains
The quail, a delirious jester, without a bell.

— *Hildegarde Flanner*

SUMMER VESPERAL

The placid trees are fingering the sky,
The wind is petal-prone to fall away,
And pearly is the prow of evening, gliding
Into the shallow day.

This is the hour when light is pared to silver,
And mortal man is lucent to the core,
Feeling as if he were a vision stared at
By things that never saw a man before.

This is the hour that clears away the flesh
And leaves the spirit heaped to burn so bright
That twilight clings to man, and like a halo,
Will not abate for night.

— *Hildegarde Flanner*

DAWN POEM

Listen—no more with willow-voice
Does owl, that feathered cat,
Prowling with eyes that wax and wane
Share darkness with the bat.
Listen—no more with stilly twist,
Unwinding once and finished,
Do trees flick down a leaf and stand
By one leaf more diminished.
All quiet noises done now, the roosters' blowing
Twice done, their dim horns laid by,
Listen—what lush and sun-going music
Leaps loud into the sky,
As birds shoot upward, just released
From the deep coil of night,
And cannot quite come down, for earth
Has no pull upon delight.
Sky is the gravity toward which
A singing bird must drop,
While swift, too swift for any backward look
Day strips to brightness on the mountain top.

— *Hildegarde Flanner*

THE MINOR POET

I climbed a holy hill
Sheathed in gold frame.
Down from that glory height
Winged I came.
I saw the smile of God
Born of Love's eyes—
Caught in my web of song
Love fainting lies.
I heard the morning stars
Croon to the sea—
Could I but snare in words
That mystery!
Oh, Psyche kissed my heart,
Phoebus my eyes,
But on my eager lips
Dumb magic lies!

— *Ethelean Tyson Gaw*

A NORSE PLOW-BOY OF THE MIDDLE WEST

Brown earth, teeming earth—in my heart the thrall of it—
Endless miring furrows for feet that would be free!
Storm-lash, wave-crash—I hear the luring call of it—
Five hundred leagues toward sunrise is the salt blue sea!

Norse men, Saga men—in their hearts delight of it,
Battling thunderous billows when the wind blows free—
Corsairs, sea-lords glorying in the might of it—
Viking sires call through me to the salt blue sea.

Seed-time, harvest-time, all the ordered calm of it,
Level fields all fenced and trim are prison bars to me!
Heart-tired, soul-worn, with the earthy balm of it—
Oh, I am sick with longing for the salt blue sea!

Some time at dawning I'll heed the luring call of it,
Leave my dragging plowshare in the furrow and go free.
Norse men, Saga men, shall guide me from the thrall of it
Five hundred leagues toward sunrise and the salt blue sea!

— *Ethelean Tyson Gaw*

THE PROVIDER

There's bread in the cupboard,
There's meat on the shelf;
There's a pipe for my man,
There are sweets for myself.

There's broadcloth for him
And I've silk for a frock;
There is fruit on the vine
And corn in the shock.

His wallet is stuffed,
And no lack in my purse;
But oh, in my heart
There's a want that is worse!

There's a hound for the tramps
And a puss for the mouse;
But what for the sly thoughts
That range in my house?

There's a cow in the byre
And a roan in the stall;
But the cruelest need
He sees not at all.

A kiss with the loaf—
The touch of his hand—
The feel of his arm—
But—he can't understand!

— *Julia Boynton Green*

ADAPTABLE EUTERPE

"They're past," I mourned, "the days of ode and lyric—
The Muse has fled offended, sad and hurt."
I vented my dismay by lines satiric
In many a bitter spurt.

"The earth is grown," I cried, "a loathsome welter.
Machines, machine-made men, command the stage.
Who could wax rhythmical upon a smelter?
Oh, dull prosaic age!"

"All inspiration's dying—or diverted."
Just then I glimpsed Euterpe—she was bobbed!
Young Artemis she looked, so briefly skirted;
I gazed and gasped and sobbed.

"In Gotham who could frame a stanza Sapphic?"
I grieved, "who rhyme—in Hell?"
Then spied Euterpe in the maddest traffic
And making for the "L."

"A poet might as well turn blacksmith, hedger!"
I grouched. "No golden age will come again."
Later I saw the Muse perched on a dredger,
And riding a steam crane!

I do an ode to Spring; she lightly scans it,
The pert provoking wench,
Suggests I hymn a T-square, or a transit,
A maul, or monkey-wrench.

"Parnassus!" scoffs the jade. "All gabble, gilding!
Forget that hoary nonsense, and make shift
To attain your vision from the Woolworth Building
Via a speedy 'lift'."

She's far from sad or snobbish then, I take it,

And no provincial. So perhaps, when Greece
Went smash she packed up gamely to forsake it
And revelled in release.

She landed here before the day of quotas,
No doubt a trifle homesick, shocked, surprised.
But she's adaptable—good sports she'd vote us;
Oh yes, she's naturalized!

Well—we are friends again; we're doing a ballad
On Diesel engines. She, at luncheon hour,
Laughs at ambrosia—swears beef, beans, and salad
Have far more staying power.

— *Julia Boynton Green*

FROZEN WOOD

Across the icy waste
I fled with the pack;
His shrill ghost cry followed me;
I turned and ran back,
Back to the frozen wood,
To that high, still place.
Were-wolf to were-wolf spoke,
Out of thin space.
Power welled up in me;
Now, two by two
Back through the frozen wood,
Starlit and blue,
Gaunt shadows we shall ride
Where dim branches blow,
Twisted by bitter winds
Black on the snow.

— *Dorothy Haddox*

MOTH

Light the candle and I shall seek it,
Flutter and spin and turn to the flame—
A million moths have been singed before me;
I shall turn to it just the same!
You cannot teach me, or read me a warning,
Nor try to keep me safe in the dark.
All is useless. The bent of my nature
Curves to the bright descending arc.

— *Dorothy Haddox*

ANXIETY

Dear God, if You should chance to find
A tiny angel, still quite new,
Would You please be very kind?
This is her mother asking You.

If You will hold her precious hand
To keep her, Lord, from missing me,
Until she learns to understand,
You, too, will love her tenderly.

— *Anne Hamilton*

THE NARROW STREET

Love leads me down a narrow street
Where many footsteps mock our feet;
But though the echoes multiply
None walks there but my love and I.

The houses crowd to such a height
They shut out all the sweet daylight,
But in the gloom Love's lantern-glow
Leads where he wishes me to go.

Far at the end, I dimly see
The narrow street shrink narrowly,
So narrowly, I know, alas,
That only one of us can pass.

— *Anne Hamilton*

SAGACITY

You tell me one,
You tell me two,
You tell me three
Of the things you do.

Each evening brings
No new refrain,
But one and two
And three again.

Of four and five
And all the rest,
I will not ask,
In terror lest

Behind disguising
Two and three
I find a stranger
Looks at me.

— *Anne Hamilton*

AUTUMN LEAVES

A flaming leaf slips away from the tree
And drifts toward the ground.
“Red as blood,” thinks the mother,
“Red as a man's blood when his wrist is cut.”
And she smiles a little at her sons:
Carl, whose laughter is a gift from God
To this sad world; and Franz, whose eyes
Are blue as a peacock's breast.

Now as Autumn comes again with flaming leaves,
No smile touches the mother's lips; no smile
Lingers in her eyes. Carl and Franz are far away
Fighting for the Fatherland. Death lies
Just beyond: death, that Carl will meet
With a smile and a laugh that is a gift
From God, and Franz with a steady look
From eyes as blue as a peacock's breast.

Many, many moons have waned and darkened.
Many times have the birds winged westward.
A flaming leaf slips away from the tree
And drifts toward the ground.
“Red as blood,” thinks the mother,
“Red as a man's blood when his wrist is cut.”
And she cries a little.

— *Albert B. Hoxie*

SIERRA NOTES

As the Grass

Granite cliff, with agelessness of gaze,
Pulverizes, dust to dust, our arrogant days.

Aerial

The wind-free deer, talaria-shod, unite
Earth and the air in wide-sprung arcs of flight.

— *Florence Bowen Hult*

THE POET'S WIFE

Yes, I am happy as a flower is happy
That drinks the sun and testifies in bloom
The miracle of light by which it lives.
If once I dreamed that we two, side by side,
Should race our chariot across high heaven,
Sharing all the glories of the sky,
I am content now with the lowlier way.
Poets are human, and the human need—
Man's weakness, woman's strength—is all my claim.
The hearthside fire to come to, quiet hours
When glory fades, the blessing of a child,
These are my gifts; I do not ask the stars.

True I have struggled for serenity.
Like Psyche, I have held the burning lamp
Of doubt above the couch of Love asleep—
But did not spill the oil; have missed perhaps
The passing anguish of unfaith, the trials,
Missed too the crown of immortality.
For I am but an earthly wife, the mate
Of seeking, restless clay; his flaming heart
Will never find its kind this side the stars—
Unless it be in flashes of rare bliss
When all the poet soul, in rapt desire
One with the universe, outflows to taste
The wine of beauty chaliced in a rose,
Or spilt on clouds, deep stained at sunset's gate.

Oh, I had dreamed that breaking of the seal
Of love would weld our spirits to one flame,
The fleshy symbol holding in its cup
The sacrament of union; that the child
Should be the outward bond, visible sign
Of inner wholeness, man and woman one,

Our souls the seamless garment of our love.
But now I know the poet soul, alone,
Lonely and unassailable, must seek
Enraptured heights beyond my powers. I have
No wings; or did I fold them long ago
To keep a still breast for the homing heart?

I climbed a mountain once and found the source
Where clouds distill their whiteness into snows
That crown the peaks with sculptured loveliness,
Till when the slow spring takes the frozen trails,
Breathing desire across the prisoned soil,
A thousand little waterfalls bestir,
And tumble down the canyons and the cliffs,
Singing their way into a mountain lake.
And there I saw my poet and our love.

Little I give to those clear deeps that lie
Beneath star silences, or, whipped by winds
Of passion, leap to foam, or slow congeal
To frozen rhythms of beauty in the night.
But one with starshine and the auroral flash
That visions dawn across the northern sky,
With stir of melting snows and singing streams,
My slender trickle of unswerving love
Feeds poesy and beauty in his heart.

— *Snow Longley Housh*

IN CORNWALL

These are the cliffs where once pale Isolt stood,
Watching with shadowed eyes the white foam crawl
Across black rocks, and heard the sea birds' call
Echo her stifled heart's cry. How the flood
Of rapture had raced singing through her blood,
Even as the tide against the bare sea wall
Uprose to dizzy heights, only to fall
To bitter shallows where dark tortures brood.

Today the sea is still. The passionate surge
Of waves is silenced for a little space.
Isolt and Tristram are a story told
To dulling ears. The white flame of her face
Is dead as in my heart love's youthful urge.
The sea is still today, and I am old.

— *Snow Longley Housh*

REQUITAL

Cavil at the things I say,
Criticize my cheese soufflé,
Fillip crumbs on my bouquet.

Sit before your table spread
With roasted duck and wines and bread
And current jelly gleaming red.

I shall be charming and polite
And not permit one oversight
To impair your appetite.

If for breakfast I am late
There may be an open gate
You did not anticipate.

— *Anne Harley*

RECOVERY

Long red leaves upon this tree
Day by day have solaced me.
Blue beneath a flashing wing
Has persuaded me to sing.
Gusts of wind upon the plain
Set a motion in my brain.
A single twist of blazing light
Reimbues my eyes with sight.
Once again I will resume
The web upon my dusty loom.

— *Anne Harley*

SHADOW

When I remember what a swift sharp hour
Youth lit upon me, like a butterfly
Upon some glowing and unknowing flower,
And with what insolence Youth flew on by;
When I consider with what gallant grace
The grasses dry to dust and disappear,
And how all life is dying to make place,
And how my heart is crying at each year—
I am disconsolate that I should grieve,
That I alone am desolate at decay.
But how can consciousness of doom achieve
A careless rapture in each hour and day?
Why should Death's shadow move across the sun,
Eclipsing day before my day is done?

— *Marion Ethel Hamilton*

TO EMILY DICKINSON

She searched among the flowers
To find the honeyed word.
Her accents pure and silvered
Seem stolen from a bird.

She snared the stars in spider-webs
Of quaint and careless rhyme,
Skeins woven with the frailest thread,
But they shall hold through time.

— *Grover Jacoby*

WOODSMAN

He walked among the leaves without a sound—
Not a twig snapped, no branch whipped back as though
Disputing passage to his chosen ground:
The woods were his, for he had made them so.
Once, where the spring is overrun with brakes,
I saw him standing, and he seemed to be
All of one color, as a hillside takes
The rusty brown of Autumn, tree by tree.

Some people study quiet and make peace
With creatures yet unbroken to the plow,
Their acres only Desolation tills,
Their seeds are at the variant winds' caprice.
He has been gone these many seasons now,
But his gold harvest ripens on the hills.

— *Leslie Nelson Jennings*

LATE FLOWERING

Early the seed was planted in our flesh,
Cradled and warmed and nurtured, till the first
Root came, and then the darkness was a mesh
Of creeping tendrils of enormous thirst.
We bear a double burden, nothing loth:
Our own heart's labor and that secret vine
Growing beyond the vigor of our growth,
Giving of its enduringness no sign.

Perhaps in some unpredictable spring
When the sap rises and the stalk stands tall
We shall be ready for the blossoming,
Briefly to recognize, although it fall
Sweet with a breath of gardens overblown,
The purple flower whose honey drips on stone.

— *Leslie Nelson Jennings*

LOVE'S MOMENT

The later fruit is bitter,
As early fruit was sour,
And none is worth the having
Except in its own hour.

Love flees the hand too eager,
It mocks the hand too slow,
And neither smoke nor ashes
Can answer for the glow!

— *Elinor Lennen*

MARCH LAMB

In the dark fold, night, a lamb keeps crying
With the weak lost wail of loneliness,
Just a day old.

The edged air grips a young ewe lying
With her teeth set tight on feebleness
Against the cold.

And under a rime shroud will soon be found
A ewe's courage fixed in a marble stress
On the hard March ground.

In the gray fold, dawn, the lamb stops crying . . .
Would you suck stone, lamb? Would you try to feed
On milk from a rock?

Is the cold warm, lamb?—Then better early dying
Than to grow for the shears, or bleat and bleed
With the rest of the flock.

— *LeRoy MacLeod*

DRIVEN

Along the yellow road the brown hogs go
Between the thin woods stained with summer's death—
Waving the little banners of their breath
Above their round backs' undulating flow.

Their ears are blinders and their gaze too low
To see how like a lidless bloodshot eye
Pressed to the frosted pane of morning sky
A sly sun coldly watches where they go.

Their ears are blinders and they only see
The road is freedom, where their feet may go.
They nose the dust, the air, and do not know
The gate is shut and latched that set them free.

The road spreads on; the poles hum overhead.
The brown hogs snuff their way and do not know
The leaf-stained roadside brook, that does not flow,
Is no more cold than warm blood quieted.

But no such happy ignorance is given
To us who put our feet upon their tracks!
We know too well how there behind our backs
A gate is shut and we are also driven.

— *LeRoy MacLeod*

SONNETS FROM "ADOLESCENCE"

I

From cool green shadows blown along the ground
You ran with April sunlight over grass—
Hiding behind warm trees to let them pass,
Trembling in mock alarm when you were found.
Again, through blinking fires of dusk and dew
You fled in feigned despair, with wild appeals—
Taunting imagined fear to speed your heels,
Breathless to hear your own heart stalking you.

How still you stand now under sober skies
Watching the wild geese wedging distantly,
And, through their wake of far transparency,
Fate spinning cobwebs to confuse your eyes!
Something you cannot flee has come at last,
Chaining your feet like blown leaves frozen fast.

II

Over a pasture loud with chortled glee,
With gay heels flung to soberness and age,
You raced to gates—not knowing you were free.
Then came that presence to your pasturage
Judging you old enough at last to break;
And on the twitching mane was laid a hand
No leap could lodge, no toss of wild head shake.
A trembling colt, O Boy, wide-eyed you stand
Beneath Time's heavy discipline of soul!

This sudden mystery, this weight, this dread
Is no mere snowfall on a frightened foal;
Not something you can shelter from and shed.
Bridled you are, and harnessed, and must go;
And where, you know not; — why, you do not know.

— *LeRoy MacLeod*

SHOWAIN NEMESHIN

I

Alone,
At the farther edge of midnight,
Facing the colored moth wings of the dawn,
I learned the secret.
Flame-sharpened,
It whirled like a cinder
Into the heart-shaped silence of my breast:
You who have loved me will not come again.

II

I can remember your hands,
Slenderly formal on a glittering evening.
Gathering the silks of the moon about my throat,
You kissed me.
Splashing in the sun-pools of my hair
Your hands have been tender and amazed.
On mine they have rested;
For a moment, paused, and slept.
Like moths they have brushed past me in the dusk.

III

Coming down from the tall mountains
In the honey time of morning,
And gathering sweet wine from flower hearts
That clung to my lips like the warm mouth of a lover,
I stood beside a river,
Which had come, melting with love,
From the tall mountains
To lie upon the brown breast of the prairie.
Taking a stone, I heard its sweet deep laugh
As it went beneath the water,

And was borne away by the cool pulse of the stream.
I laid a leaf upon the river,
And ran with it against the sunny wind,
Until in the warm shade of a cove
That curled around black water
Like an arm,
It was pulled under.
Naked, I followed through the dark
To find the leaf pressed hard against the stone.
I sought the sun,
And crushed my mouth against a white-skinned tree.
Thought of you pressed in upon me
Like a leaf against the smooth side of a stone.

IV

Where tall pines ran measuring the mountain,
I too ran that I might loose the shadow of a memory
that clove to my shadow.
Watching the dark-skinned wind ride by me
On a horse whose wings cut through the air like light,
I sought to hurl myself behind the saddle,
And slash loose the shadow of the memory that clove to my shadow.
But across a thousand chasms
I saw you, with your feet upon a mountain,
And your face against the moon.
Crushing the shadow of your memory to my heart,
I let the wind-sound become silence,
And descended into the first chasm.
I shall not rest
Until my lips have lain against the mark your mouth
has left upon the moon.

V

I am sick remembering how the water bruised its body
on a reed,
Curving around it,

Leaning to it as a woman to her lover,
Crying,
Murmuring:
“Pity me! Showain nemeshin! Pity me!”
And ever the burnished reed stood tall,
Whetting its edges on the sun-sharp wind.
So do you stand within my heart,
Sharp as a young reed.
Showain nemeshin! Showain nemeshin!

— *Geraldine MacLeod*

PORTRAIT

There is a strange slow movement in her eyes
Which may be only memory of leaves in other years
Seeking the grasses—or of waves that rise
Out of a sea, and sink into themselves. Perhaps she hears
Music that we do not know,
Perhaps remembers places where we cannot go.
There is a strange slow movement in her eyes
Like sun-spots on a floating leaf, or butterflies
That lift like sound into the yellow air.

She walks alone on windy paths and sings,
And always in her arms she brings
Bright clouds of flowers from the woody places, where
She's knelt among their bloom. And in her hair
She pins a sumac leaf, or dark anemone,
And scatters haw buds on the table set for tea.

She passes cakes, and butters squares of bread,
Says, "Yellow lemon . . . Sugar" as if it were an art,
(She makes it one)
And turns her head
To watch the sun go down, her thoughts apart
From us, or tea, or sun.

Her hands rest on her knees like sleeping words,
Ready to wake to song
If we should touch her . . .
Two cautious birds
Peck at her slipper heel, she sits quietly so long.

— *Geraldine MacLeod*

WILD MUSTARD

In April

The wild sweet mustard inundates the plain,
A golden flood the grasses cannot stem.
It washes higher with each hour of rain,
Rising where radiant hills, with lifted hem,
Wade out to meet it, laughing each to each
Like children romping on a river-beach.

Its rippled surface catches up the light
And flings it back in softened, shimmering spray;
The young bird dips to taste it in his flight;
The bee, a hardy seaman, steers his way
Athwart the waves, and plies its course between
Its live-oak-shaded banks of swarthy green.

I lave my spirit in that fragrant tide,
And lo, my winter stains are purified!

In August

The gaunt and shriveled mustard starkly stands,
Frail relic of that glorious girl named Spring
Whose transient beauty yesternonth took wing.
It clutches at the heat with bony hands;
It rattles in the wind, but may not sing.

Yet, on those barren stalks the opal air
Has flung a garment of such matchless hue—
So wrought of gold and purple, mauve and blue—
That each pathetic stem is almost fair,
Stirring the heart to wonder sad and new.

April! This vagrant, subtle August grace
Is purchased at the price of your loved face!

— *Neeta Marquis*

THE HOMESTEADER

Firm in her belief that conquest is the meed of toil
She wrenched her homestead from the savage waste,
With bare hands she coaxed fruition from the soil
At once husbanding and mothering it,
And the wild, masculine West
Seemed to sense her sex and to become obsessed
With a rude, unwonted chivalry.
At one with the pride of water, land and air
And the immemorial uses of the earth,
She was diffused across her acres, identical with each clod
Until her fields became parturient with inherent birth.

Hers was the genius of an infinite care,
A Peasant-loving of each inch of sod,
A comradeship with horse and cow and sheep,
A very friendship with the trees.

Her thoughts, though bred of dawn and dew
And the primal stir of morning breeze,
Staunchly stood the test of noonday sun,
And after ardent hours of work were done,
Though muck-stained from the cattle-shed,
She was complacently at home with starlight.
Patiently she bode the seasons, neither dreading snow-fly,
Nor yearning yet too much for spring;
She lay with great winds through the winter night
Unafraid the pressure of the untenanted mile;
One fear alone she stifled in her heart the while—
That she might sometime die in bed
When there was work to do beneath God's open sky.

— *Arthur Truman Merrill*

CONFUCIUS SAID

Confucius said, sitting over rice:

“Who would be a wise man

Let him observe this simple plan—

Before he speak, think twice,

Before he act, think thrice.”

Next day in the public market-place

He noted a well-known scoffer's face

Who sat demurely counting: “Once, twice,”

Then mockingly continued: “Once, twice, thrice.”

Confucius simply said: “Observe how a rule

May be perverted by a fool.”

— *Arthur Truman Merrill*

ENVY NOT GRANITE

Man, brief ditty sung
To a faulty tune;
Man, so very young,
And gone so soon;

Envyng the hills
With fleeting breath—
Earth, alas, who fills
Her middens with death;

Man, a shadow flung
By a dead moon;
Man, so very young,
And gone so soon:

Envy not granite
Nor valley nor hill!
Envy no planet—
Go grinning still!

Grain by grain the hills
Go down to the sea;
Earth, dying, fills
Her destiny.

— *John Russell McCarthy*

ODD!

God made, they say, ten thousand races,
With fins or wings or beaks or faces,
And from them all He chose and blest
A certain species He liked best.

To me it seems a little odd
And just a trifle hard on God,
That those alone He chose as best
Should eagerly destroy the rest!

— *John Russell McCarthy*

CONJECTURE

Lords of the earth, you say,
Men, in the image of God?
I have seen a thousand today—
Peas in a pod!

Chosen to rule the land,
This unclean race?
These to command
In God's place?

When we see Him, then,
Shall we scan
(Complacent men!)
The face of a man?

What a jest it would be
If we found our God
With the form of a tree,
Clean roots in clean sod!

Or if we should see,
Deep-nosed in a heavenly plant,
Our God with the wings of a bee—
Or the brotherly mien of an ant!

— *John Russell McCarthy*

THE HOUSE OF LAURELS

Gray in eternal twilight are its hills,
The country where my house is hidden away,
And melancholy with blind whippoorwills
That cannot fly to hunt their vanished day.

Low somber woods of crimson mulberries
Beckon the desperate traveller to drain
A skin of their rich juice. O, here is peace
For restlessness, for sorrow, and for pain.

The houses are of solid marble-stone
And only large enough for one to sleep.
Hence, fathers from their children live alone;
Lovers are parted as by hatred deep.

I pass the quiet porches of my friends;
The eyeless walls give me no greeting sign.
One more turn to the left, and the road ends—
The house with laurels at the door is mine.

— *Carlyle MacIntyre*

GALATEA GENTLY SLUMBERS

Galatea gently slumbers
In a womb of marble stone.
Cold, austere, the shell encumbers
Prisoned loveliness unknown.

Quick, Pygmalion, with tender
Chisel strike this beauty free—
Softly! lest you mar the slender
Lily of eternity.

— *Carlyle MacIntyre*

THE BRIMMING CUP

I do not drink in sorrow,
But in the purest joy.
Man in holy melancholy
Sits alone with grief.
Only in glorious madness
Am I the drunken boy,
Pouring green flasks of liquid sun,
And dancing like a leaf.

I leap in zenith revelry,
I spit upon my past.
My thundering heels
Strike ringing sparks from cobble-stones,
Like little stars
To nick off the minutes flying fast.
Ah, I am only drunken
When joy laughs in my bones!

— *Carlyle MacIntyre*

THE BEAKER

Come to the garden
Where the poplars grow
Like tall slim sisters waiting in a row
For wistful lads to come
And find them fair
And wreath moon-garlands
In their shining hair.

The frogs are loud tonight,
Green troubadours
On lily barques a-drift;
And while they croak,
Steering to Samarcand with webby oars,
We shall sit like old people here
—and smoke...

That golden pandering moon knows better things.
And if your body
Should reach up to mine
A carved beaker
Full of heady wine,
It's the same stuff
Of which the cricket sings.

— *Carlyle MacIntyre*

JAVANESE NIGHT

Out of the dusk there come dark elephants.

Enormous, gray, with slow and shuffling pace
In wavering procession they advance,
Driven by sepoy. Each long, wrinkled face
Is set into a mask, hieratic, old;
With sleepy eyes, heavy and stern and cold,
Forward they rumble with a steady grace.

Out of the dusk there come dark elephants.

And silver bells lost in some temple high
Up in the hills ring out among the pines
As bearers with lit torches hurry by
The crowded natives, packed in solid lines,
And drum beats pound the air. Without a glance
To left or right, huge swinging forms advance.

Out of the dusk there come dark elephants.

— *Beulah May*

AGE

A little grey ape has come to stay with me,
Sitting close in the shade of my shadow.

Shall I disguise him with a red coat and gold braid
Or introduce him to everybody by his real name?

— *Dorothea Moore*

TO A BOASTER

Benvenuto Cellini, a toast!

— Benvenuto Cellini, a toast! . . .

But, as an artist, can you boast

That you enamelled anything

As perfect as a ladybug's wing?

— *Ruth Clay Price*

THE VIOLINIST

I heard a violinist in the night
Touch bow to string and wake a wondrous strain,
In which were little singing breaths of rain,
The call of wild-bird stirred to instant flight;
Then as the winds redoubled in their might
It rose to grander theme; and not in vain
Was man created who could thus attain
To realms of sound, beyond the realms of sight.

I never learned whose hand awoke the chord,
Or to whose heart its meaning was addressed
In that brief hour in which its tones were born;
Only that the musician's soul was shorn
Of earthly dross and sorrows all confessed,
To make an offering worthy of the Lord.

— *Mabel W. Phillips*

SEVEN JAPANESE BEAUTIES IN AN OLD PRINT

Seven clustered, pale-faced maids of Old Japan:
Nine jointed bamboo stalks: a cloud, dim-lined,
Spread high; they stand within a space confined—
These make a frame for Ladies of the Fan.
And standing there they pose as though a ban
Were on all motion, and from toe to flare
Of thick, black, heavy-ornamented hair—
Without a stir, soft-sighing, as maids can.

O Ladies clad in heavy, brodered gowns,
Impassive, eyes demurely dropping low,
Soft colors, contrasts, like fine inlaid gold;
Did not your hearts, for all your parents' frowns,
Beat like a cymbal when the knights a-row
In lacquered armor passed your cloistered fold?

— *I. D. Perry*

SHADOWS

What is a shadow, Mother?
It's a garment light cuts to our measure,
Sometimes crumpled at our feet,
Sometimes hung upon the wall,
Sometimes stretched across the world.

It's a cloak drawn instantly about us in darkness,
A shroud exactly fitted in the grave.

Like flesh its fulness is eaten by the years,
And shrinks to a ghostly pattern of our bones.

Some shadows are within,
And fit the heart too closely,
Causing pain.

— *Colin Palmerston*

CONSUMING DESERT

The weary night has gone,
Driven by sleepless heat she has gathered her pale stars and departed.
Purple mountains, straining and distorted under the red dawn, upthrust the enormous sun
Whose imminent, insufferable gold is rising against our eyes,
Is assaulting our flesh with its fury;
In the suffocation of its breath the quickness of our senses is consumed.
Beneath protesting feet the sand resumes its torment.
The air is fire, invisible but for quivering.
Shrunk the cacti to torturous flutings—
Hard spines are sharpened to burning pain.
Shriveled sages, suckling a bitter sap from scorching breasts,
Exhale an acrid incense.
Under the lean shade, reptiles, digesting their prey, brew poisonous spittle.
Silence labors heavily with the birth of infrequent sounds,
Sullenly consumed.
Here on this wide altar are the dark races, like insects born of ashes,
Feeding upon fruits whose blossoms were of flame.
Swift winters have come,
Chilling the mad fever for a moment,
But winter and its fruits are fast consumed.
Come charging thunderheads, trailing their dark rain over high battlements—
They are broken and dispersed with fiercer heat,
The green record of their passing is soon consumed.
Here for eternities the years have been consumed,
The ashes deepened.

Here floods the withering light into blue-bordered desolation,
And even desolation is consumed.
Naught but heat and thirst remain—
And thirst is consumed.

Triumphant heat!

A panting, fire-tongued Moloch
Rolls his molten belly in these ashes,
Twists them through livid fingers,
Lifts them high,
And blows their stinging sharpness
On his white-hot breath.

— *Colin Palmerston*

THE STEEPS OF DAWN

I am filled always
With an everlasting longing
Throbbing through my veins,
Girt by my bones,
Tearing at my sinews.
Like a caged squirrel, gnawing,
It gnaws at my brain,
Pats with impatient feet
At the portals of my heart.
I have always heard it—
It is the blood of my forefathers
Pounding through the frail valves of my heart:
The zeal of my foremothers,
The desire of my forefathers
Straining their deep-set eyes
Toward the wilderness.
It is their heartbeats—
It is their footsteps
Stumbling off their Kentucky plantations,
Hewing through the Tennessee mountains,
Emigrating, pioneering,
Onward, onward,
Forever onward.
They too felt the heartbeats—
Out of Normandie,
Out of Ireland—
The wilderness called them
And they answered.

I am caught
In a wire cage;
I am running
In a wire hoop.

Running in the fetid heat,
Running in a closed room.
My heart beats too swiftly,
My breath sobs with a red stain,
But my heart remembers.

Oh! Heartbeats,
West of the Mississippi
On the far outpost—
Settling in St. Charles,
Building log houses,
Building little churches,
Beating through the wilderness—
You were not satisfied,
You must push on,
You must go west
Out to Missouri—
Planting locust trees,
Building clapboard houses,
Planting yellow corn,
Raising big mules
And fine horses.
You had the goad at your heart,
You had the squirrel at your brain.

O prairie mother
Riding in an ox-cart,
Little children with you;
O prairie father
Riding a black mare,
Hunting fords on a river,
Going somewhere,
Just somewhere—
Looking for land,
Watching the earth,
Dipping your fingers in soft loam.
“This is good,

So much timber,
So much prairie.”
Build your house on the prairie
At the edge of the timber.
Gather the wild strawberries,
Break the deep sod
With a new steel plough—
Turn the wild strawberries
Under forever.

Bank up the fireplace,
Put in a sheet-iron stove;
Build big barns,
Raise fat beeves,
Ship them to Kansas City,
To St. Louis.
Watch the corn
Eat into the prairie,
Lose yourself
Among the rustling blades.

There was gold on the prairie:
Gold of yellow wheat,
Gold of red steers,
Gold of fat hogs
Squealing in carloads
Ready for the market.

Gold in a black stallion
Sired from Kentucky,
Black as a black pansy,
One with the family—
Four generations
Owning his black sires;
But the blood ran out,
Only mares,
Only plow-horses.
Summers can be too dry—

Winters too cold;
Even snow-birds starve
And the forked lightning
Zig-zagging the northwest—
A fruitless promise.

Over the little sound
Of the gray squirrel gnawing,
Listen!

There is a wail in the wind . . .
It is beyond the corn-fields,
It is beyond the wheat fields;
It is the beat of far waters,
It is a low voice calling.
It is a woman singing,
Singing in a deep voice—
Singing in a golden contralto;
Calling across the Rockies,
Calling across the prairies,
“I am the West,
I am the Far West;
It is a long while
Since I have been fondled;
I am full grown,
I would be fruitful.
“Ho! Man from Kentucky,
Man from Missouri,
My breasts are high mountains,
My thighs are broad valleys,
I have yellow gold
Beneath the arch of my instep:
The bronze tropic sun
Leans over my left shoulder;
I am fragrant as old wine,
I am wise and mysterious—
I am waiting you now,

I am done with my dreaming.”

That was your day, prairie father,
Yours, prairie mother;
Today is mine.
Through a gray mist
I am peering,
Through a dull thunder
I listen.
Listen to a ghost-wind
Whispering through a tall city.

The caged squirrel is still gnawing,
Your will is still surging.

I have a new thing to do
But no pattern.
All the lanes of the earth
Have been wandered;
All the depths of the sea
Have been plumbed.
I walk with a ghost-wind
Over tall cities.
I sing with a ghost-wind
Over checkerboard plains.
Oh, you who went mutely,
Too dull strained for singing,
I lend you my lips—
The hollow reed of my throat,
My frail, strengthless fingers
And the red mist of my brain;
Before your high altars,
Before the gold coronal
Of the last high mountain—
I make your Æneid,
I voice your fulfillment.

— *Leetha Journey Probst*

HAPPINESS

Wild and fawn-footed as wind on a hill—
Where is the cord that can baffle or bind her?
Swift as the rustle that runs through the corn—
Who can follow or find her?

Quiet as shadows that fall in a wood,
Gentle as breezes that sing of the south—
Sometime you'll waken at midnight to find
Her kiss on your mouth.

— *Roberta Rinear*

JEALOUSY

I have no pride where Beauty is concerned,
Nor care at all who finds me on my knees
Deep in the scented marsh, where, I have learned,
She walks beneath the smooth, grey alder trees.
God, I have worshipped Beauty over long—
Begged for her face to carry on my breast;
For but the faintest echo of her song;
For her white hand upon my own hand pressed.

Yet any fern shut in a rock-walled nook,
Or any poor wind-poppy in the wheat,
Or any stunted willow by the brook
Can touch her throat and feel her wind-pulse beat—
The rudest thistle in the chapparal
Has held her closer than I ever shall.

— *Roberta Rinear*

ROBINSON JEFFERS

Here by the black-mooded sea
He has built him a tower
Whose eye embraces the deep-toned waters,
The gleam of white riot,
And the menace of a mountain
Whose head swirls in dark mists;
From this stone turret
He looks beyond the reef of river rock,
Sculptured by storms sequential,
Toward the rush of waters, the pro-creative,
And Lobos, the far-flinging;
His ears are filled with the
Drumming of the deep
And the cold-blowing winds
That fare forth out of the heart of eternity;
Here he makes his stand
Between the mummery of men
And the malevolence of nature,
Listening ever to the liquid dirge,
His face to the black rhythms of God.

— *W. W. Robinson*

THE SHEPHERD OF SPRING

Rain blows a crystal flute
Sweeter than the reeds of Pan;
Rain from the high door-yard of heaven,
Bright with the laughter of stars,
And wiser than the oldest runes.
Rain is the Shepherd of Spring
Blowing a crystal flute
While watching his flocks,
The fields of clover, wheat and corn;
And a little herd of violets
On the hill!

— *Georgia Minerva Rowles*

FATE

Agatha Morley
All her life
Grumbled at dust
Like a good wife.

Dust on a table,
Dust on a chair,
Dust on a mantel
She couldn't bear.

She forgave faults
In man and child,
But a dusty shelf
Would set her wild.

She bore with sin
Without protest,
But dust-thoughts preyed
Upon her rest.

Agatha Morley
Is sleeping sound
Six feet under
The mouldy ground;

Six feet under
The earth she lies
With dust at her feet,
Dust in her eyes.

— *Sydney King Russell*

PLEDGE

Mother, I shall come back to you at last
When all the world has gone the lonely way,
When stars are dim and heavens overcast
I shall go wisely back and choose to stay
Where we may voice the things we meant to say
So long ago and somehow put aside;
Like gold well stored against a rainy day
We'll mint our dreams and happily confide
The ecstasy and hurt that we have won
Upon our ways, and you will take my hand
More as a friend than mother to her son,
And smiling tell me that you understand
And fear no more lest eager feet should stray,
Mother, when I come home at last to stay.

— *Sydney King Russell*

SUMMER

Curved leaves of shadow on a sun-smoothed pool,
White crystals round a sudden darting fin...
What did I learn while Time was keeping school
And every clock-beat called her pupils in?
Did I seek truth in rooms, where thought is thinned
With words, then poured in books and set in rows?
— And all the while, the bare, athletic wind
Was running over tree-tops on his toes!
Down by my knees his supple younger brother
Slides through the grass, green, waved with silver grey...
What were those words that bothered one another
To prove that God had died—or moved away?
The hours wing by... One drops a shining feather...
God's soul and mine laugh quietly together.

— *Helen Molyneaux Salisbury*

THE REFUGEE

They told me Death had lost its sting, and yet
Their white lips trembled. Though their words were free,
Their tones fell, muffled in mortality.
And I—who thought I never could forget
The voice beneath the leaves of Olivet,
The futile tomb, the tryst in Galilee—
Felt the old fear, with man, the refugee,
And over life and love, Death's ancient threat.

It loomed, a wall across the winding years—
A ponderous breaker roaring through blurred ears—
An aching distance where beloved souls go
With backward looks through long, cold leagues of night.
Then, round a bend, I came on Death, and lo!
A flimsy curtain blowing into light!

— *Helen Molyneux Salisbury*

WIND UPON MY FACE

Give me but a little place
Where wind will blow upon my face
And toss my tousled hair.

I'm sure that there
I will not care
What others do or say
Or fret at what seems wrong.

Oh, wind is fresh and sweet
And strong,
And sweeps from space to space.
It blows my littleness away,
Clean wind upon my face.

— *Sarah Bixby Smith*

GOSSIP

Two idle words
In Monterey
Met each other
And ran away.

Married, they multiplied,
Grew into gossip
And ruined the lives
Of Mina and Ossip.

— *Sarah Bixby Smith*

COLOR PRINT

We heard a little yellow bird
No longer than a willow leaf
Whisper a single shining word;
And comet-swift and brief,
We saw his purple shadow skim
The jade and copper flowers that mass
The quiet water's silver rim;
Then silently as winds that pass
From willow leaf to willow limb,
He slipped between two blades of grass:
That was our last gold glimpse of him.

— *Winifred Gray Stewart*

PANDORA

Eye to eye with pain,
I toss my head,
Smile in disdain of all that bend or quail,
Mock him with heart and tongue and dancing feet,
Asking no anodyne.

— *Helen Walker Truesdell*

EPILOGUE

When I am dead
Stave in the door,
Pull down the roof, and raze the walls.
Let none say, "Here stood her chair,"
Or "So she liked the sunlight on her pewter bowl."
Where once the cabin stood, sow thickly flowers,
Wild as the untamed mood of me,
And scarlet poppies, like the flame that ate my heart.

— *Helen Walker Truesdell*

FINAL

Envy me the cool darkness of death
When I am gone from you,
Beloved.
In the arms of that pale lover of the shadowed cowl,
I shall not feel the piercing sweet desire for yours;
In that unmitigated dark
No pain-deep beauty, or the lift of heart
From one great star above the sea!

— *Helen Walker Truesdell*

CALF IN THE GOLDENROD

I found a calf in the goldenrod,
Beside the sandy river;
I saw it lift its little head,
I saw its nostrils quiver.

The sky above was softly blue,
And the wild ducks were flying;
A lovely place to be born, I thought,
But a sorry place for dying.

For the old cow lay in the goldenrod,
And she would never rise;
She watched her little, new-born calf
With big bewildered eyes.

And the breeze blew through the goldenrod,
And bent and swayed its head;
And the calf called to its mother,
—Nor knew that she was dead.

The sky above was softly blue,
And the wild ducks were flying;
A lovely place to be born, I thought,
But a sorry place for dying.

— *Julia Van der Veer*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT?

Puny little artist,
With your puny little brush
And box of paints,
Your canvas and your easel,
Your theories of art,
Technique, light and shade,
Do you know what?

I saw the westering sun
Paint the cliffs that run
Into the sea.

You petty little poet,
With your pretty little sounds,
Your rhythms and your rhymes,
Do you know what?

I heard the throbbing
Heart of the sea
Beat on the breast of the shore.

You little fiddler,
With your box of tunes,
Your strings and your bow,
Andantes, vibratos,
Allegros and such,
Do you know what?

I heard the evening wind
Through mountain pines
In October.

You little scholar,
With your futile books,
Your pedantic looks on life,
Your little theories

On social problems,
Do you know what?

I saw two lovers
Asleep in the shade
On the side of a haystack.

— *David Weissman*

PRINTS

I

Pelicans

Three white breasted pelicans
Under the thin white moon,
They flap and sail
And sail and wheel,
Under the thin white moon.

II

Surf

Wild white legions of foam!
Ever running and racing and dying,
Legion following legion,
Ever the living pursuing the dying.

III

Hound of the Sea

The wind is the great white hound of the sea,
The wind goes baying through the cories of the waves,
Leaping at the running mountain-tops of foam.

— Winifred Waldron

HOOFS

Beware! Beware!

Hark to the beat! The trampling beat!
Of the satyrs' feet! Galloping feet!
Hark to the sound! The maddening sound!
They stamp the ground! They gash the ground!
The long grass tickles their legs, their heels!
They come in clattering swoops and reels!

Beware! Beware!

Beware their hoofs! Their pounding hoofs!
Like hail on roofs! On rickety roofs!
They scatter the flowers! The fields of flowers!
In petalling showers! Yellow-red showers!
With crashing hammer and thud and pound
The satyrs leap in whirling bound!

Beware! Beware!

Their hoofs will shatter your garden walk!
Their pound will smother your cautious talk!
They'll batter your red-geranium pot!
They'll gut your cabbage and onion plot!

Beware! Beware!

Hark from hill! . . . from forest hill!
Where trees are still! !
Hark to the beat! !
The laughter beat! The echoing beat
Of hammering feet! In the after heat
Of a clattering run, through miles of sun!

Beware! Beware!

— *Winifred Waldron*

A WHISPERED SONG

How women know
The weaknesses of men
Who come to them by darkness
Seeking comfort in their arms,
And yet take back their strength from men—
Shall always be a thing
To sing a little whispered song about.

Low steady voices
Coming out of windows
Late at night
When tired, bruised men confide
The little hurts the day has made
And creep into the shelter
Of their women's breasts—
Shall be an under-tone
For this soft song.

And the firm proud answers
Hinting of cool fingers
Rustling through the nestled hair
Shall be the song's refrain.

— *Jake Zeitlin*

This second edition of the Anthology of Southern California Verse,
designed and printed by Young & McCallister, Los Angeles, California,
was limited to 300 copies.

Reader's Edition · 6 × 9 · 2026
Complete text with new editorial introduction
and navigational apparatus.

Public-domain source text (U.S. publication 1930).