

Selected Poetry

DUSK

A pitchy pine-branch laid against
The rich red-orange of an Autumn moon:
The wild ducks call across the marsh;
And from the purple shadows of the wood
Three spotted deer mince to the water's edge.
—CABALLERO in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

DEW AND BRONZE

Is it worth the dancing,
This mayfly trance of life,
Dreaming, hoeing, yearning,
Taking one a wife?
Frosts and winds, brief roses
Heaped across the world,
Then to long, long sleeping
In the gravestead curled.

Athens in white marble
Says it's worth the pains
And white daisies marching
Down the country lanes,
Candles and brief babies,
The brittle wares of home,
Greek tales of gods unaging,
And that high town called Rome.

—ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN in the *New York Nation*.

DIALOGUE

It is my own door that is shut,
Shut fast within am I,
Since you, who were a guest, are but
A passer-by.

*Was I your guest? Oh, long ago
I did come hurrying by;
We did exchange a word or so—
How the years fly!*

You visited my heart, and took
Welcome I could not spare—
Once only. Did your casual look
Find the house bare?

*By no means! You were more than kind,
But I was called away;
Youth, and the world, and love to find—
How could I stay?*

Youth called you once, and it was I,
Ashamed to call so loud,
Just once—for you made no reply,
And I was proud.

*Were you indeed? Ah, if again
We had our lives to choose!
I thought a voice was calling then,
I wondered whose.*

Oh, why insult the heart you broke?
Where love was, well you knew
Even then the liar in you woke,
The traitor grew!

*Quite right, my fault, as I recall;
Bitter it is but true!
Reason to hate me—none at all
For loving you.*

—JOHN ERSKINE, in *Voices* (Boston).

THE SPANISH DANCER

She moves, a wave upon the sea,
Her fingers are the running foam;
Her body is a shaken tree,
That holds a rifled honeycomb.

The merry wind runs laughing through
The shaken tree, the silken shawl;
Her feet are little doves that woo
Beneath the boughs, and flit, and fall.

Her tresses are a gusty spray
That tumbles on the marble sill
That is her brow. But, look and pray!
She is a shrine now she is still.

—WILFRED THORLEY in *Life and Letters* (London).

THE DREAMER

Another shall furrow and plant the spring;
Another shall sow the seed,
And I shall rise up an-hungering,
Pressed by a mortal need.

Another shall nurture the frail green through
The mellowing tilth of the waking mold,
But I shall have eye on the farthest blue,
Where the mounting wing of the finch burns gold.

Another shall husband the grain, and wrest
From the browning stalk the rust and the blight,
But I shall make song on the highest crest
Of the hills that run to the rim of light.

Another shall garner and bind the wheat—
Another shall come to reap;
But I shall not rise and pluck and eat—
I shall be fed with sleep.

—HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING in *The Buccaneer*.

WIRELESS AT NIGHT

Tall as a village spire
A slender fir-tree set upon the hill
Carries the news—or Chopin—at your will
Along the fine-drawn wire.

Aerial and telephone,,
Batteries, valves (so little for so much),
And half of Europe answers to your touch,
Whispers to you alone.

The dogs of Paris bark
For us; and from our easy-chairs in Spring
We hear the nightingales of England sing
Out of their distant dark.

Perhaps our badger goes
Grunting between the trees and moony sky,
Where the owls call and softly flurry by.
I know the yellow rose.

Nods on the wall; but here
Harmonies sound and rush of violins;
Or it's a play by Molière that begins
And speaks into my ear.

Drenched in their drowsy calm,
Outside the flowers in moon-dipped garden-walks
(Tall shining flowers that sway upon their stalks)
Are scented like sweet balm.

Within a voice comes through:
"Bon soir, Mesdames, Messieurs," I hear it say,
"L'audition de ce soir est terminée
Monsieur, good-night to you.

—Punch (London).

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