

..... art may be the supreme hypocrisy of an
information-cultured people without

Contact

..... justifiable perhaps if it becomes at last actually
the way sensitive people live.

CONTACT.

December, 1920 Edited by William Carlos Williams,
Robert M. McAlmon
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issued

in the conviction that art which attains is indigenuous of experience and relations, and that the artist works to express perceptions rather than to attain standards of achievement: however much information and past art may have served to clarify his perceptions and sophisticate his comprehensions, they will be no standard by which his work shall be adjudged. For if there are standards in reality and in existence if there are values and relations which are absolute, they will apply to art. Otherwise any standard of criticism is a mere mental exercise, and past art signifies nothing.

We are here because of our faith in the existence of native artists who are capable of having, comprehending and recording extraordinary experience; we possess intellect sufficient to carry over the force of their emotional vigour; who do not weaken their work with humanitarianism; who deal with our situations, realizing that it is the degree of understanding about, and not situations themselves, which is of prime importance; and who receive meagre recognition.

Attainment is meaningless unless there be some basis of measurement. . . . Wishing to be open-minded toward all experiment — ourselves feeling that many literary forms, the novel, the short story, and metrical verse, are mannered, copied and pretentious technique, — we still do not intend becoming spokesman for any movement, group or theory, and as thoroughly dislike a modern traditionalism as any manner of perceiving the arts. That artists are sophisticated beings who utilize their own contacts in art creation, and erudition incidentally as it has been assimilated, is an assumption of ours. They will be scientific insofar as medium is concerned, but their substance is no more scientific than is that of existence.

We will be American, because we are of America; racial or international as the contactual realizations of those whose work we publish have been these. Particularly we will adopt no aggressive or inferior attitude toward "imported thought" or art.

Our only insistance are upon standards which reality as the artist senses it creates, in contradistinction to standards of social, moral or scholastic value — hangovers from past generations no better equipped to ascertain value than are we. Assuming sufficient insight and intellect to convey feeling valuably, we are interested in the writings of such individuals as are capable of putting a sense of contact, and of definite personal realization into their work.

Letters of Rex Slinkard

Following are excerpts from letters of Rex Slinkard, artist, to G.W. and C.S., respectively his fiancée, and his most intimate friend. Rex Slinkard was born in 1887 in Indiana, but went early in his life to California with his parents, where his youth was spent on a ranch, and making trips into Mexico to buy and sell horses with his father. He was from 1908-1911, a student at the Art Students League in New York City, following which he instructed in art in Los Angeles, which work he left to go on a ranch at Sangus, Cal. While in the army, during 1917-18 he contracted pneumonia and died Oct. 18, 1918.

Memorial exhibitions of his work have been held in Los Angeles, and in New York City, (January 1920). Artists and critics, of whatever school, have recognized that his was a very real and important personality, and that in spite of his youthful death, his work makes a distinct place for itself amongst the achieved art of the country.

The letters are not arranged in chronological order as few of them are dated we will endeavor later to reproduce some of his paintings.

To G.W. The Ranch. I stand looking across the new, improved soil, where trees of the Peacock tail move and talk to the cool air which I breathe. Night, that I love like nothing else. I own air, night air that creeps down my breast and send cool quivers over my skin, my skin that's covered. The night of air, that makes me feel like the breeze itself -- the air of the ground and trees, that is more than ground and trees. And then the mountains that make me feel like my first loss. The world so large, mine, and all mine for tonight. What wonderful thoughts night has. They belong to the air -- so methink -- breezes. How clean I feel. So unlike myself of the day. How sensitive I am. How everything is banished, but Beauty. The music of the night. I sing. I want to tell everybody everything. How wonderful I am -- how wonderful the day makes me -- but most wonderful the night.

The Great Ones are covered with snow. Wish you could see them. I like the open air, the clear air, the free air. The air between me and the snow mountains. The snow air. I like the breeze air between me and the pine tree on the ridge top. I think the big open mountains wonderful. The freedom of the open. High above the rest of things. The horses that are wild, and the work horse that tries to be after being out on the hill top a while. The bunch grass, and the soft ground in the mountain, small meadows where horses sink to their bellies. And the canyon that I had never been in before. The big boulders and the small water through them. Its hot sides and its rock ground. The ranger's cabin that he had left and which had fallen in. I got off and looked inside. I liked the noise of the wind moving the limbed bed, hung from the rafters by wires. I got on the horse and rode up the canyon till I thought I could not get out unless I turned around. Then I came to a mine, or mines -- nobody about. All gone. I did not know how long, but years. The holes had sunk in the cabin. The cabin had made the same mistake. The gold washing outfit had rusted to pieces. And everything else, all but the hills. They were! But the rain came. O it was great. A new state of mind. It's great. I got on again and rode by. This time I could see I would have to go to the top of the canyon or its mouth all the same. All up. Gee! It was rough. And I lost the trail. I took the hillside. And led the horse. Too steep to ride.

Got on top and found I was off, way off. Had to go down again. Got down and lost it again. Climbed the other side leading the horse. At last I found it (the trail). And started new. Got on top. And there was the roughest bunch of hills you ever saw, and all big bouncing kings. Then great stretches and mountains, then snow. Wonderful. I left this and went still higher till I could see almost all the grassie meadows. And at last I made up my mind which way to ride. I found them -- meaning horses. And down we came by the trail over the ridge. Well, have to turn in. Good night. Hope you feel better by this time. Don't let things bother you. Yours, R.

Another day gone and this is another night. The red top is a wonder. She looks the part of one red top. She is as fine as any painted and like Goya. And still not. Not at all alike. The wonderful hair and the wonderful full of life thing, the line scarf around her neck and the little body underneath the dress. The little arms and the dignified child of Henri. All of this ----- are. Isn't it unconscious of itself. Good bye Redtop Henri. I got the Colliers. Had seen the painting of Luks "Man and Baby". Interested in Matisse. Did not the Bellows at all. A big hollow canvass of paper dolls and washy trees and ground. Not art. Was really glad to get it. I asked Carl to come up Sunday. One letter is as much as I can write and say anything. Can't see you so I write you. Can tell him more than I can write. Listen!

The woodpile. Dark night, black. But not black. Clear sky. One big dark tree, can hardly see. And one great woodpile of wonderful warm colour. Light on pile from lantern I am holding. Pile designed against air sky. With one great cool diamond lighting air sky. And it is in the right place. Just saw it. Great thing. Good bye, Rex.

Jan. 29 - 1917 Los Angeles.

To C. S.

Hello! Out of the Blue Sky. Hello!

I was out in the snow-covered mountains yesterday. Gee! But it was cold. At 6 o'clock (P.M.) we were 93 miles from home and at 20 minutes to 9 P.M. we were home. It was a cold fast ride. How are you by this time? You said something about money in the east. War money and such. Well I'm sure it's all in the east. I was never so hard up in my life. But I don't care much. Since Sept. 1916 I've got 3 or 4 canvasses. (Here is an insertion of 3 drawings in pencil. In the Memorial Exhibit catalogue they are called: 1- Christmas; 2- My Song; 3- The Young Priest.) The Young Priest I am painting now. And will send you some drawings soon. My deer picture, the one I spoke of in the other letter is finished.... I am going to School a great deal and out to G.W's the rest of time.

The old Florentines! -- Giotto! seem to interest me most. In him I find a reason, a moving reason, back of all. A before and after. A belief in something. I tell you, Sprink the world needs something finer than it's been getting of late years. Something the young men of our age can give. You, I am sure are one of the givers. After one's still-lives, landscapes, portraits, etc. there comes something else. That something interests me most. That Something Else I found in your drawings up at San Francisco. And didn't find in the ones you just sent. On the large paper of drawings you sent I found two little nudes. They were like what I speak of. They were like you, the you I love most. The you I've always found you, a mountain of Love and Religion. And this is strength and the only one. It's you and the only you. It's you and not New York. You're right when you want to get away from it all. I would be there now for all of it. The people get money from this war -- and the way they spend it, etc! Sprink, people are finer than that. Why do they do it. I want to

know how mountains grow, trees, real people. Color. How the day comes and goes. Night and rest. And all the things Great, Fine, Beautiful. I want to forget the rest. This world was for something finer than the way it's being used. Not that everything is bad. But it can't have too much good. I would like to see churches and buildings with wall space. And these spaces filled with beautiful, uplifting things. Something that would demand more than a mere glance.

Note from C.S. (Here are two excerpts from letters to G. W.; No. 1 covering one page with a pen and ink drawing at the top, of a young man, naked, lying on his back, - head in the foreground, his body stretched out into the picture to ward the sky. In the sky one solitary sky -- dark all around. This as I remember it.)

Camp Lewis, American Lake, Wash.

I'm in a place so wonderful. I'm far away where people spring from an unknown where, and glisten in the shining light where the trees are placed by the hand of a god -- by a god so young, by a youth so fair, that mortal cannot see the placing hand. And my body wanders in a blinding cave. Soul of light, O Glistening Sun leave thy corpse behind.

To the whole world, and a summer fullspent, I love you! To the South I bend my head. My body moves, and my soul, all red, touches you, and in touching, I am born again.

(The above, drawing and writing, is it not a post mortem letter?)

Marianne Moore.

Will not some dozen sacks of rags
observant of intelligence
conspire from their outlandish cellar
to evade the law?

Let them, stuffed up, appear
before her door at ten some night
and say : Marianne, save us!
Put us in a book of yours.

Then she would ask the fellow in
and give him cake
and warm him with her talk
before he must return to the dark street.

by William Carlos Williams.

LITHOGRAPHS.

Wallace Gould.

I.

I used to go early to church,
there to sit in the twilight,
and to watch the brother
light the candles,
which, as they were lighted,
slowly,
devoutly,
one by one,
twinkled about the monstrance
as stars do,
at evening,
about the monstrance of the heart ----
the moon.

I sat once
near the spot
to which the pulpit was wheeled.
As an old priest mounted the steps to the pulpit,
I looked up under his robes.
He wore a union suit that sagged.

II.

At the dance, tonight,
there was the naval recruiting officer.
During one dance ----
a contra dance ----
we chatted, he and I.

He is one of the lonely people.
Sometimes I see him
talking with loafers
about the streets.
Sometimes I see him at the boxing matches.
Sometimes I see him
tacking placards
on telephone poles.
During our chat,
he remarked ----
"The Department allows me nothing for postage,
in sending my reports,
and so I put the expense
under the head of tacks."

At the dance, tonight,
he was a wall flower ----
blue centaurea.

SUMMER NIGHT IN A FLORENTINE SLUM.

I leaned out of the window--looking at the summer-strewn street; late in heat--lit with lamps, and mixed my breath with the tired dust.

The dust was hot, the dust was dry -- it lay low, it travelled about; and among it, Latin families lay on the lousy stones, in what they could manage of an earthy abandon.

They sprawled among each other, lightly ragged--heavy breathing--men, with their offspring flung into sleep across their pelvises--blowing the life out of their Toscani cigars--among their messy curls--and the lubricous eyes of their women waited on them from the darkness.

The dwarf news-vendor from the Ponte Vecchio offered his surplus papers to the inopulent neighborhood---ladies from windows arraigning him as furnishing no fit decoration for amorous couches--his answer as he juggled soldi in his distorted pockets---

I have a woman at home with four children--and she is big again. A hair-strewn fury--swished down past them--accusing with a back-flung gesture--purest operatic--a hungry tram conductor--expecting supper--of being unfaithful--"By God the executioner!--I'll eat your heart".

Higher up the hill-- an argument was in travail, involving the rhetoric of a woman far gone in heart-disease--and her daughter, a handsome half of a lady, who lived on a board, having been born without legs; groups of grey soldiers, watched--their eyes intrigued.

The crowd pressed on the gasping witch--Ashy-- her pulled muscles pushing on the rail of a wooden chair--while the alarmed semi-effigy--slippelled about on hands and board--gelatinously shaking her tears out of herself--amazingly quick about it; round door lintels and out again screaming at variegated Madonnas scooping the air for alast gasp of a mother's love and hairpins.

Nothing but the flamboyant passage of Carrabinieri could put a stopper on this.

Sophia came up to the window, with her husband, and a large wicker perambulator some goddess had showered philanthropically upon her, in which descent it had lost all upholstery, so babies fell about in it, on the wooden bottom.

Sophia was lovely and ran like a spider, curls and skirts behind her--and her husband for all his ophthalmia--very beautiful indeed.

"Why doesn't he get them medicated?--I asked. "Medicate?" the wife gaped offended "I can't see anything wrong with his eyes."

The babies' pinafores wouldn't do up at the back: "Look", said the Italian beggar as he ran his filthy palm along dorsal muscles--"Have you ever seen such a torso in your life--Donatello--Hey?"

These were friends of mine; they lived in a room--with a cobweb and a bed--sofa--under which they stored the family valuables; and a cardboard box full of a rich little boy's pajamas, and the photo of a gruesome wisp, their first baby--dead of starvation.

Sophia was gentle with it--but her eyes glistened to the treasure, a newspaper cutting from which she read, how her husband had hanged himself in a doorway--cut down at the critical moment by the police.

"He often does that," she said proudly--"He's so neuraesthetic."

At their hungriest their passion had not waned, yet she had never loved him so much as when she saw his name in print.

They passed--In the shadow of a wall, that all day long a maddened woman had leaned against--holding a knife behind her back--She was waiting for revenge to the hooting of neighbors--who refrained from other interference, being of a race with consummate social tact.

Under the incessant sun--she clung to her purpose--in a fanatical cramp.

"Is the game fair?" I wondered. "Nature umpires!"

Not till the long heat attenuated to dusk, at the hour the man she was looking for, really must come home from work--had she slunk away to the imminent maternity hospital.

In the house opposite, the carpenter stretched a lean arm across the table, and pawed his young wife's breast--the table he had beaten her with the same morning--and she smiled at the alcove--and the Sun-god painted on the ceiling--darkened to the removal of the light.

While I drew in my head and pulled the English chintz curtains scattered with prevaricating rosebuds; and Beardsly's Mlle. De Maupin drew on her gloves at me from the wall.

O HELL

To clear the drifts of spring
Of our forebear's excrements
And bury the subconscious archives
Under unaffected flowers

Indeed --

Our person is a covered entrance to infinity
Choked with the tatters of tradition

Goddesses and Young Gods
Carress the sanctity of Adolescence
In the shaft of the sun.

Mina Loye.

**

Aperatifs

To be forced to sit on the edge of the crevasse, discovering oneself perpetually, is a kind of frozen pathos yet how else is one to proceed with a phrase *raison d'etre*? Shed your pink tears upon this brave funeral. Asses' tears are pink.

October, magisterial spendthrift of the multi-millions of feuilletons so highly praised in summer. The mind is magisterial likewise when it shakes its ashen inhibitions to the ground. October is regal, because it gives the hint sublime. Shake all your leaves and prepare for the lashing of the North. The North will bite the vertebrae of everyone, with phosphorescent teeth. The North is always amicable.

I have been gathering simples for my long-wished for herbpot. Toads thoughts are wrapped around the leaks tightly, as the wrapper on the cigar. There is many a disappointment of *Papilio* in the heart of a carrot. I could not seek for cabbages in upper ethers. The best there is in cabbages goes to white butterflies and floats away to midsummer lazy times. Something terrible had happened to the beets. They would not bleed. Had they suffered premature martyrdom. I couldn't keep the bleat out of the lambjoint. I had to give the pot up as a bad job. There was always too much scandal in the garden.

Marital felicity. There is the scum of saccharinity. Harmony has soured in itself. Physiognomies change as hips and abdomens change. There is the child to show the probable aspect. Sauce piquant is vanished. The romance under the tree at midnight. They know each other thoroughly from epidermis into every sub-strata of soul. Hence no curiosity. No surprise. Only tenderness toward each other for too much of inanition. Voila, the baby's milk pasteurized.

Reverse the medal. There is the rendez-vous in the tearoom of the largest and most flagrant hotel. The midnight tree is revived. Fresh cherises are plucked in pairs. Pulses waver under a thawing moonlight. Letters are saved in profitable fascicules. Relieving the great boredom is expensive, as everyone knows. The long-interminable sit-out, each with his and her own table of *solitaire*. The clock does not gain as it use to do. The log sizzles with dampness. There has been so much fog of late years, *nicht wahr, du ezel*.

The mosquito on my hand wants blood in September. Who can afford a needle full of blood in September? The attack was accomplished in the manner of friends with excessive delicacy. The situation was therefore friendly - not economic, owing to the very attenuated costs. He died for his delicate ideas, which is merely the etiquette of any gentlemen.

At last the sunset is angular. If you had watched it in the harbor where the *metier des singes* is pursued, you would have seen that it was the one sunset worth watching. One sunset that did not die on one as the lady Chopin dies on one; Moussourgsky sunset shall one be allowed. The irrepressible wave of the irrepressible monkey in art was sacrificed on the altar of exquisite rebellion. There is good fortune in tails. For monkeys. They may hang themselves on their own branch.

One must never quite give anything. Or else, one must give to the conspicuous and fashionable charity. Mademoiselle will play and sing "partly" for the benefit of the maternity ward. The art evoked will have an ambidextrous quality. Charity is in the state of shameless nudity, *n'est pas? Welches wort willst du dann?*

Well, don't you like the pictures then, said the wife of the artist. Why attack me? Why not attack nature? Why submit with humble good will? Is not everything something to be met with trojan delicacy? There is no such thing as an ethical picture. Fight or fall - or listen to the mocking bird all the rest of one's years. Remember the mocking bird does not imitate. He listens and transcribes, leaving the notes different from how he found them.

The roseheart is a good heart. The cerise heart is pardon craving the heart that has been bitten by the glaciers' teeth. Will you drop the pill in the thin sea, watching how sad those fish are who comprehend its coating? Is there no bait left but the roses, or - is this why fish have bullseyes? Can it be because there is so much of thickness -- UNDER?

Experience is a horizontal of great severity, crossed in the center by a hypnotic vertical, with a tendency towards spiral. The rest is nerve. How do spiders get where they go across the ominous vacuity? How few there are who really reverence a silk thread shimmering across the hueless reach of diffidence. The angle leads one away and back again. The circle keeps one as a bee at a hopeless hive. Shall we not all be happy since the illegitimate wave of rose was sunk from shore. Purple has come for children. But their wondrous red heads shall save them.

A Portrait

Rapture. Is the confession of the leaf -- at the brave moment of trembling. The white virginal one runs long thin fingers through the mystic's fiery hair. It gives a slight twinge to the gelid existence of the virgin, about to perish. This virgin is male. Is the spiral eligible, when it comes too late? Take me with you, upward fire of the man - swirl me away from ethical ethers. Swirl me from this arterio sclerosis of the soul. I am not known here. I am not known there. I am not in reality known outside myself. God does not covet originality. The virgin twirled a bit of lace that festooned his illicit mind, and settled down to more of opinionating at the rusty gate. The university whispers the mind is carried in another bag, and weighs too heavily with mystic themes on hands not made for work. The lunchroom notes the bookworm fattening its lean body with the flesh of other minds. The lunch-room notes the pity of faggot-gathering brains. The classroom loves its bag and worm as arums loved the sickly tropic shade. The white hands turn the leaves of other minds and wander whitely in the world of other men's appraisals. They never redden with their own incisions in the flesh of proud experience. A gathering of words of other fondled words begotten is called investigation, and this in turn is called cerebral rapture. Asceticism is a virtue in itself the boyish virgin says. It saved a lot of trouble.

Further Announcement

In the course of the next few months we will set down fully in these pages what we are proposing as a magazine. It would be idle to attempt to do so now when we have nothing to show but a beginning.

For native work in verse, fiction, criticism or whatever is written we mean to maintain a place, insisting on that which we have not found insisted upon before, the essential contact between words and the locality that breeds them, in this case America.

It is our object to discover, if possible, the terms in which good taste can be stated here. We find that whatever "good taste" is exhibited now in the one or two decent magazines we have is as a matter of fact extremely poor taste being provincial in the worse sense because wholly derivative and dependant upon nothing that could possibly give it authenticity. We call attention, at the same time, and acknowledge our debt to all importation of excellence from abroad.

We would limit our effort not only to give it force but to give it universality, that which cannot be bought by smearing a lick of borrowed culture over so many pages.

There is no money with which to pay for MSS. We want no work that can be sold to other magazines unless the artist sees an advantage in appearing upon these pages that would outweigh all other considerations. I suppose I had better add that no one need expect us to publish his things simply because they happen to have been written in United States.

What more? We intend no course in literature. Nor do we aim to make ourselves the objects of posthumous praise. We wish above all things to speak for the present.

Why not in that case have devoted ourselves to Dadaism, that latest development of the french soul, which we are about to see extensively exploited in New York this winter without there being - we venture to say - any sense whatever of its significance, and fulfil Rodker's prediction?

Here one might go into the nature of faith which we take to be no more than knowledge of the earth which in certain ages decomposes and leaves the intellect to itself, barren. And we might go on to the effect that the conventional, Tolstoian, mystical concept of faith has never been more than a superficial decoration permissible in ages of great knowledge of the earth and its uses.

Well America is a bastard country where decomposition is the prevalent spectacle but the contour is not particularly dadaesque and that's the gist of it.

We should be able to profit by this french orchid but only on condition that we have the local terms. As it is we should know what is before us, what it is and why. Or at least we should know our own part in the matter: which amounts to the same thing. Not that dadaism is particularly important but - there it is. And where are we?

We do not seek to "transfer the center of the universe" here. We seek only contact with the local conditions which confront us, We believe that in the perfection of that contact is the beginning not only of the concept of art among us but the key to the technique also.

. adrift, finding a place in abstraction sensually
realized through

Contact

with his loose world. a vast discharge of energy
forced by the impact of experience into form.

25c each.

\$1.50 for six issues.

January 1921.

We want subscriptions, subsidy funds, and Ms.

CONTACT

January 1921

Edited by: William Carlos Williams
Robert McAlmon

25¢ ea. 6 issues \$1.50 Address G.P.O.89, New York City.

Writing that reveals a high type of discovery is literature. Its form is of expression and conveyance rather than of structure. Some may refuse to call a work poetry because it lacks "emotion" and is analytical and intellectual. What the force is back of the intellect we cannot say if it is not emotion. We are quite ready to believe the intellect the complex, refined and proven emotion. In spite of a Whitman, windy-prairie tradition it is possible to rate a threshing machine lower than more delicate mechanisms, and to find that gusto, bigness, and splurge lack force through not being able to withstand diagnosis. ...We compliment ourselves upon publishing Marianne Moore, than whom no writer has more definitely established a form, based on perceptivity, that individualized also achieves universality.

MARIANNE MOORE

reprint from Bryn Mawr Lantern.

Those Various Scalpels

Those

various sounds consistently indistinct, like intermingled
echoes

struck from thin glass successively at random -- the
inflection disguised: your hair, the tails of two
fighting-cocks head to head in stone - like sculptured
scimitars re-

peating the curve of your ears in reverse order: your eyes,
flowers of ice

and

snow sown by tearing winds on the cordage of disabled
ships: your raised hand

an ambiguous signature: your cheeks, those rosettes
of blood on the stone floors of french Chateaux, with
regard to which guides are so affirmative:

your other hand

&

bundle of lances all alike, partly hid by emeralds from
Persia

and the fractional magnificence of Florentine
goldwork -- a collection of half a dozen little objects
made fine

with enamel in, gray, yellow, and dragonfly blue: a lemon a

pear

and three bunches of grapes, tied with silver: your dress, a
magnificent square

cathedral of uniform

and at the same time, diverse appearance - a specie of
vertical vineyard rustling in the storm

of conventional opinion. Are they weapons or scalpels?
whetted

to
brilliance by the hard majesty of that sophistication which
is su-
perior to opportunity, these things are rich
instruments with which to experiment but surgery is
not tentative: why dissect destiny with instruments
which
are more highly specialized than the tissues of destiny
itself?

In the Days of Prismatic Color

not in the days of Adam and Eve but when Adam
was alone; when there was no smoke and color was
fine, not with the fineness of
early civilization art but by virtue
of its originality, with nothing to modify it but the

mist that went up, obliqueness was a varia-
tion of the perpendicular, plain to see and
to account for: it is no
longer that; nor did the blue red yellow band
of incandescence that was color, keep its stripe; it
is also one of

those things into which much that is peculiar can be
read; complexity is not a crime but carry
it to the point of murki-
ness and nothing is plain. A complexity
moreover, that has been committed to darkness, instead
of granting it-

self to be the pestilence that it is, moves all a-
bout as if to bewilder with the dismal
fallacy that insistence
is the measure of achievement and that all
truth must be dark. Principally throat, sophistication
is as it al-

ways has been -- at the antipodes from the init-
ial great truths. "Part of it was crawling, part of it
was about to crawl, the rest
was torpid in its lair." In the short legged, fit-
ful advance, the gurgling and all the minutae -- we have
the classic

multitude of feet. To what purpose! Truth is no Apollo
Belvidere, no formal thing. The wave may go over it if
it likes.

Know that it will be there when it says:

"I shall be there when the wave has gone by."

REX SLINKARD.

Extract from Letters

Snowing -- flakes about the size of half dollars, a
silver sky with pines, and the white snow lining it
between, making a marvelous blue. It is twilight and the
wonderful trees look like a flock of white snowbirds.
The more I see the more I think the picture of heads
in colour was a find, (His picture "Reflections.")
and I want to try again, only in a land picture. The
outside is mellow, soft and strong, beautiful, blue
and in all of that wonderful red, yellow green,
purples and other colours.

Some forms look icy. Some warm, and all like a
mysterious pale child!

I am sending the drawings. They are not as alive
as the others but are notes. Some have something.
I am going outside for a few minutes. Just outside the
door for you. (G.W.) Be back in a minute... Almost dark
now. It's not snowing. There's a new moon in an
exquisite clear sky that is around with copper clouds,
and one, and a few floating. There -- and I stand and look
into the heavens - in the cool fresh air I almost rise.

I paint again for you. I am thinking of the universe.
What a wonderful morning. Cool and gray -- with
the sun shining. Thinking of you. The birds are singing
and the Peace of this Sunday morning is Bliss. Well the
things that go on inside of one, go on forever and ever.

If I were to try and tell you in words what I most
feel -- it would be the sinking of the sun, the rising of
the moon, worlds smashing together and making the sun
cold instead of hot. Moving the mighty Hudson into a
mountain top and winding it around its point. Taking an
earthquake and pounding it until it quaked more, removing
the East and smothering it in the mighty West.

To C.S. Hello! I've just finished my bath. My bath of the
air. The bath of the setting sun. The bath of the running
stream, the branch of the fruit tree, loaded, the fruit
itself, turning from green to gold-red, against a blue gold
sky, with the mountains of their velvet blue gray showing,
through. The bath of my dog coming through the air of the
setting sun. The air of the edges, trimmed in gold, moving
up and down as he comes to meet me. "Me", sitting in the
orchard, of the Oasis of Brown, watching the moths floating
through the gold, the green bug, with the gold red stripe
on a green blade of grass. The two streams of water, flowing
down the gentle slope of the apple tree. O S----! the
summer is really here. The mountains are bathed in gold and
the air is gold itself. The sun is setting. Yours O Youth,
yours, -- Slinkard.

WALLACE STEVENS

Invective against Swans

The soul; O ganders, flies beyond the parks
And far beyond the discords of the wind.

A bronze rain from the sun descending marks
The death of summer, which that time endures

Like one who scrawls a listless testament
Of golden quirks and Paphian caricatures,

Bequeathing your white feathers to the moon
And giving your bland motions to the air.

Behold, already on the long parades
The crows anoint the statues with their dirt.

And the soul, O ganders, being lonely, flies
Beyond your chilly chariots, to the skies.

Infanta Marina

Her terrace was the sand
And the palms and the twilight.

She made of the motions of her wrist
The grandiose gestures
Of her thought.

The rumpling of the plumes
Of this creature of the evening
Came to be sleights of sails
Over the sea.

And thus she roamed
In the roamings of her fan,

Partaking of the sea,
And of the evening,
As they flowed around
And utter their subsiding sound.

From "Patterns" by Virgil Jordan:

There is no such thing as "life", and no such thing as "art". There is a vast discharge of energy in innumerable patterns.

The individual is not a source but a transformer of energy.

The total pattern of discharge in individual or group as a whole is such as will carry off the whole energy involved, without loss. If certain patterns or channels are not effective others will be used.

All discharge of power is a satisfaction, and patterns of discharge are types of satisfaction.

Discharges fall into two classes: creative discharges, in which resistance is overcome, form given to material, and the individual is in actual contact with the obstacle; mere transmissions, in which energy is carried off via an old pattern or type of satisfaction. In the first the creative act is completed and the energy discharged is bound up in a new form or pattern; in the second the pattern serves merely as a carrier off.

It is doubtful whether the two classes of discharges are equally effective as discharges of energy. The movement of energy is apparently toward creative discharge, and it is forced back into used channels only when the obstacle to be overcome is too great.

Most of the human discharge of power has been in economic patterns, which are part of the biologic patterns of the group. . . . Cultural institutions, science, philosophy, art, religion, are a series of type patterns in which human energy is discharged, sometimes creatively and sometimes not, depending on the character of the discharge in biologic patterns. The importance of these "psychic" patterns varies inversely with the effectiveness of discharge in biologic patterns and are the effort of the individual or group organism to find a way out - - to achieve its total discharge of power.

The present is preeminently a period of creative frustration in discharge through biologic patterns. The frustrated energy is discharged through a great variety of psychic carriers and behavior, most of which are old patterns. This discharge accounts in detail for the phenomena of the times.

2.

There is no essential way in which the use of words, color, form or sound can be distinguished from any other

type of human discharge of power . . . The use of art patterns is mixed up with the use of all other patterns of discharge in the individual, the group and the period in question. Art as a type of discharge may serve a great variety of purposes, depending on the situation with regard to discharge through other patterns. In most periods art is a mere carrier off of individual or group energy frustrated by biologic obstacles. In a few periods art has been the essential mode of life, the chief type of discharge.

In those periods when art is a mere carrier, . . . artistic patterns may . . . serve as patterns may . . . serve as prestige types of satisfaction for frustrated individual. .

Such artistic discharge will use the easiest patterns and not come into direct contact with material.

In those periods artistic patterns become "art" ---- a type of discharge sharply and jealously guarded against other patterns of discharge, and resulting in symptoms of behavior in artists --- sadism, arrogances, etc.; --- comparable to nationalistic group behavior in times of sensed national insecurity.

When art becomes a free and direct and not a sublimatory channel of discharge it inevitably results in patterns which are moulded to the material regardless of all other considerations of energy discharge in the group.

Art in most periods represent an effort somewhere in the group system of discharge to escape direct contact with reality. Patterns of artistic discharge based on contact develop when most of the group energy is forced into artistic patterns of frustration elsewhere. When this takes place all formal patterns of artistic carriers are found inadequate and tend to break up.

3.

For the individual nearly all patterns are acquired by chance and what patterns he shall use is largely influenced by social situation regarding energy discharge.

An authentic artistic pattern is the result of a direct discharge of energy upon material.

. . . and every man who at any point in his discharges of power meets, forms contact with and gives form to reality is an artist.

(Author's Note): This is of course unintelligible, since everything is left out but a few bones, and only Cuvier could recognise Mr Jones by his tibia and coccyx. But. . Sundays should be devoted wholly to phallic worship.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

A Matisse:

On the french grass, in that room on Fifth Ave., lay that woman who had never seen my own poor land. The dust and noise of Paris had fallen from her with the dress and underwear and shoes and stockings which she had just put aside to lie bathing in the sun. So too she lay in the sunlight of the man's easy attention. His eye and the sun had made day over her. She gave herself to them both for there was nothing to be told. Nothing is to be told to the sun at noonday. A violet clump before her belly mentioned that it was spring. A locomotive could be heard whistling beyond the hill. There was nothing to be told. Her body was neither classic nor whatever it might be supposed. There she lay and her curving torso and thighs were close upon the grass and violets.

So he painted her. The sun had entered his head in the color of sprays of flaming palm leaves. They had been walking for an hour or so after leaving the train. They were hot. She had chosen the place to rest and he had painted her resting, with interest in the place she had chosen.

It had been a lovely day in the air. - What pleasant women are these girls of ours! When they have worn clothes and take them off it is with an effect of having performed a small duty. They return to the sun with a gesture of accomplishment. - Here she lay in this spot today not like Diana or Aphrodite but with better proof than they of regard for the place she was in. She rested and he painted her.

It was the first of summer. Bare as was his mind of interest in anything save the fulness of his knowledge, into which her simple body entered as into the eye of the sun himself, so he painted her. So she came to America.

No man in my country has seen a woman naked and painted her as if he knew anything except that she was naked. No woman in my country is naked except at night.

In the french sun, on the french grass in a room on Fifth Ave., a french girl lies and smiles at the sun without seeing us.

John Dewey:-
We are discovering that the locality is the only universal.

Maurice Vlaminck:-
Intelligence is international, stupidity is national, art is local.
(from The Dial)

MCALMON

The Blue Mandrill

is high color, harsh blue, vermillion, with liquid fire-ball eyes. He does not know Dada, but Dada should take up with him. without a doubt his grrrhs and gnashings would have greater value recorded, as art, than anybody's intellectual sterilities. He is full of passion, rage, rebellion! Faint instinct and forest memories, lightning nights, treetops, battles, savage warfare for preservation of self, paint kaleidoscopic half images in the evanescent shadows that the light of brute intelligence casts upon his subconscious. Poor brute. Poor Dada. He cannot rebel against the rational, cannot be tired-minded, and know that he is weary of the tyranny of forms in nature. Poor Brute! should he attempt to record his emotions he would become awkward and self-aware! The medium of conveyance would force him to selection - destroy the primal urge of vicious resentments - cripple his vigour -- My God! My God! Poor brute. Poor Dada. Ugh! Ack! Ack! Grrrrh! Ugh! Huh! O hell! Poor Dada! ! !

Superwoman

She lives at least by God, she lives at least, she has experience, goes out and has experience, she lives, she doesn't have ideas about life, she lives. She is high tension -- as is many a highstrung race horse that breaks and loses every race so insensitive is he to experience -- -- she would smash carved ivory lovers - passion utilized is not to her passion -- -- but everything interesting as a spectacle does not inspire intimacy -- -- she will have what she will have, wills to with all her sensual, mercenary and physical impulses -- -- and cannot understand that such will is mere adding of lusts to mind without discrimination so that actual will does not enter into the discussion -- -- there is nothing pathologic about her - a definite awareness of her desires and insensitivity to all but ultras - -- with mawkish sentimentality where unconquered language is not a barrier that lends strained force -- -- and a quite ordinary inward rage at restrictive natural forces - economic, social, and sensibilities that are barriers -- -- like all imperialists unaware that aggression is the insistence of the lower organisms -- -- she would gasp at the thought that energy is not most forceful when visibly in action; that experience does not require muscular movement; -- that strength consists in using the situation about you rather than in searching world's end for situations you can enjoy.

The penetrating eye sees colour in the sky on cold clear days -- white, being a composite colour, chemically, is more colourful than vermillion.

ROBERT MCALMON

Modern Artiques

Civilization, never a more than a system for handling group needs has now given up all pretense of an autocratic organization, or any organization, and is an economically accumulated society in which various sophistications of ideas combat for supremacy.

Art, the source of which was impulses akin to the religious, and which intellectualized refined into a search for life justification other than self - and specie-preserving ones, has degenerated into a profession, into which all artists enlist to compete, or remain unknown.

Here too the warfare between sophistications of ideas is waged. More information and less knowledge about art and its impulses and elements are abroad today than less industrialized ares could permit. Art, particularly, literature, has developed professionally two ways: one the way of popular appeal, which we are not concerned; the other the way of schools, the product of which member's depend largely upon mere erudition and information for appreciation, and which possesses little significance to sensitive and informed beings who do not possess specified information. As with Jules LaForgue in France, whose literature has keen irony and beauty, but whose force is decreased for all readers who have not read the literature of writers whom he satirizes - such as Flaubert. There can be only acceptance of any style, however mannered, provided the insight and other content of the matter is sufficient to justify its existence. No literature, however, dependent upon information that is literary alone, rather than perceptive of reality, is a clear art. Such work is a type of deified parodism, and its basic element is a cleverness about ideas, rather than poignant feeling, or penetrating perception.

Such writing as Cabell displays in "Jurgen" has nothing to do with literature. This collection of literary grandiloquencies, rejuvenated philosophies, and derived stylisms, mixed with cosmic thinking such as men who step seldom from their libraries always indulge in, is second hand literary furniture, upholstered. Cabell's progress as a writer is indicative of the information provincialism which so dulls the sensitivities, while informing the mind, of the average "cultured" American. It is regrettable that in America, a county of young energies and unused resource such work should be foisted upon a public soul-burdened with unassimilated knowledge.

T.S. Eliot, who before he was twenty one, had written as fine poetry as this generation has produced, is a victim of the culture via ideas regime, more insistently the autocrat of the English mind than it is of the American. A being of

acute and sensitive abilities as an observer, he was at one time sufficiently active cerebrally, and artist enough, to understand within himself the impulses of art, and to discern its quality. Having however written some fine poetry, and having gained acclaim as a critic because of this, and his evident erudition, he got stagefright, and whether it be because he fears not to equal his youthful poetry in quality, has produced no poetry for several years, and has fallen to writing catalogues of literary ratings, and academic essays on "Second Rate Minds" - itself a third rate pastime.

In a frantic effort not to be caught misinformed by the English, he spends his days and nights reading, failing to realize that information is so abundant, so personally perceived and prejudiced, that the process of selection is more difficult and confusing to an impressionable being, and at the same time permits less personal conviction, than the location of judgments through one's own psychologic processes. Eliot, who once studied philosophy with Bergson, should discern that in literature as in philosophy, fashion places ephemeral judgments upon all things; and that in a world where all information is old, all discovery old or predicted, the one quality that gives any art a reason for being is the exuberance and impact behind it, of a personality discovering reality for itself, reaffirming, with the force of experience giving added conviction, if it has known, or stating with the joy of invention, if it has not known, each discovery.

T.S. Eliot will not be a critic in any worthy sense, as was Taine, or Ruskin, or even Remy de Gourmont, for he continually relates literature to literature, and largely overlooks the relation of literature to reality - age, age-qualities, and environment. He remains too long within his library, dependent overmuch upon other men's philosophies of art, which no artist needs more than to recognize in passing; His array in all art discussion is that of erudition, which is, after all, easily penetrable. Still Eliot was -- and if acclaim has not ruined him is -- as incisive a perceiver and less a literary "clever man" than the LaForgue whose influence he wrote his best poetry under, which had quite as clutching a quality as any of LaForgues. (In France, LaForgue's forte, ideas and brilliant satires upon ideas and literary manners have the background of the country whose only evident reality has been idea and manners for the last few generations. There a tired spirited, weary-bodied culture has accepted the futility of existence with whimsical cynicism. Eliot, an American, is less a genuine being dealing with these materials.)

LaForgue, who died at twenty seven, remains a big figure in the literary world - somewhat for what he might have done; Eliot at an age a few years in advance of twenty seven? -- Has he died a literary death? or is he slowly committing a literary suicide smothering fine sensitivities by being a professional litterateur?

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Comment:

In answer to all criticisms we find the first issue of Contact perfect, the first truly representative American magazine of art yet published.

I should like to make St Francis of Assisi the patron saint of the United States, because he loved the animals. The birds came to him not for wheat but to hear him preach. Even the fish heard him.

The columns of the trees in his forests were a lesson to him; he looked up between them and mingled with the animals as an equal.

How then are we to love France? There young men of daring and intelligence move into the arts as naturally as our brood moves through football into business. If we are to love or to know France, or any France, or any country it will be through the mature expression of these men in whom France has physically realized herself for better or worse. In their mastery of the art of expression France is expressed. There alone France exists in a mode capable of serving for international exchange. We may buy their pictures but money has a cat's mask. Or it wears the blank face of armies.

But in the arts the features appear full of movement and passion. France becomes a man with whom we can talk.

What then? A patron saint is one thing but in the intercommunications of art there should be something more than conversations between men on the one hand and beasts on the other. The farmer, weary of his cows, is glad when a neighbor hails him. If men are to meet and love and understand each other it must be as equals. Nor will it serve, when our good saint turns his back, for the monkey to take up the Bible and pretend to read from it while the lion roars and the ass brays.

In the work of James Joyce the underlying fact which has impressed me is that by the form of his thought he has forced the reader into a new and special frame of mind favorable to the receipt of his disclosure. By his manner of putting down the words it is discovered that he is following some unapparent sequence quite apart from the usual syntactical one. That is of course the power behind all good writing but Joyce has removed so many staid encumbrances that his method comes like stroke of sunlight today. He forces me, before I can follow him, to separate the words from the printed page, to take them up into a world where the imagination is at play and where the words are no more than titles under the illustrations. It is a re-affirmation of the forever sought freedom of truth from usage. It is the modern world emerging among the living ancients by paying attention to the immediacy of its own contact; a classical method.

And in proportion as a man has bestirred himself to become awake to his own locality he will perceive more and

more of what is disclosed and find himself in a position to make the necessary translations. The disclosures will then and only then come to him as reality, as joy, as release. For these men communicate with each other and strive to invent new devices. But he who does not know his own world, in whatever confused form it may be, must either stupidly fail to learn from foreign work or stupidly swallow it without knowing how to judge of its essential value. Descending each his own branch man and man reach finally a common trunk of understanding.

The only possible way that St Francis could be on equal footing with the animals was through the word of God which he preached with fervent breath of understanding. Here was a common stem where all were one and from which every paired characteristic branched. It is the main body of art to which we must return again and again. Nor do I think it is especially recorded that St Francis tried to make the Sparrows, Christians. When the service was over each beast returned to his former habits.

America is far behind France or Ireland in an indigenous art. If there is no genius who can make a sermon of understanding deep enough and gentleness of sufficient catholicity to include all our animals, birds and fishes than those who must write, those who will create their own imaginative world as best they can with what they have, those who would meet the best in Europe with invention of their own must go down into the trunk of art, which is their word of God, where conversation can take place.

In France there are special reasons for every phase of an art. Americans are still too prone to admire and to copy the very thing which should not be copied, the thing which is French or Irish alone, the thing which is the result of special local conditions of thought and circumstance. And on the other hand, *Marduk!* we fail to learn anything at all. Yes, I prefer the man who will be influenced a trifle indiscriminately by the new, I prefer Hueffer to Wells, I prefer him to the man who is too solid to that it is a common language we are seeking, a common language in which art itself is our St Francis, we all meanwhile retaining our devotional character of Wolf, Sheep and Bear.

We, Contact, aim to emphasize the local phase of the game of writing. We realize that it is emphasis only which is our business. We want to give all our energy to the setting up of new vigors of artistic perception, invention and expression in the United States. Only by slow growth, consciously fostered to the point of enthusiasm, will American work of the quality of Marianne Moore's best poetry come to the fore of intelligent attention and the ignorance which has made America an artistic dessert be somewhat dissipated. We lack interchange of ideas in our country more than we lack foreign precept. Every effort should be made, we feel, to develop among our serious writers a sense of mutual contact first of all. To this also we are devoted.

CONTACT

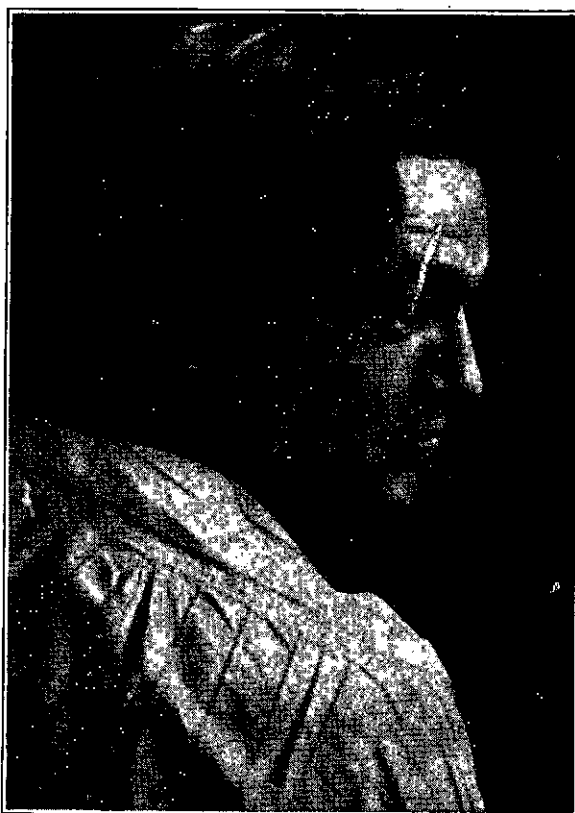
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Robert McAlmon

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Rex Slikard's Letters

My Dear C:- It's in September. The day of the month I don't know. I'm working in a cement room 14X20 underneath the house—the ceiling of rafters. I've nailed some strips of wood across them and in between them I have my canvasses rolled up, so they are out of the way and will keep alright. There's four or five trunks in the corner with some boxes. The light comes from three little windows that are a foot wide by three feet long and about four feet apart. Over one edge of the wall I have bunches of stretchers, and in another corner some stretched canvasses. And hanging from one rafter some Indian blankets and skins of deer. My easel is a combination of an old dresser and two wooden strips six foot long nailed on the back. My paintboard sets on top, about three feet off the floor. (It's the best I can get now and paint all I want to. And I find it better than most would think. It is

quiet and I can think down here.) Between the blankets, hanging and my easel, against the wall I have a still life setting on a wooden box. The still life is a Chinese vase, magnolia leaves green and brown—a yellow flower and an orange one—with a violet one hanging one side of the vase. The Chinese vase is *Blue, Red, Red-Violet, White* and *Yellow*, and all a beautiful design. This sets against a green-blue Pearl-diver picture of mine. And in all a beautiful thing in colour which I am painting. I have three canvasses going now. The still-life, one of some men and women against water and a tree beyond—this is all outside light, figures, trees, all warm colors of *Orange, Red Blue-green, Purple, Purple-blue, Yellow-green* and *Yellow* and a rich blue sky all in design with a reflected light of *Blue-violet, Green-blue* and *Violet-*



blue-green. This canvass I've been working on for six to seven days. On my easel I have a canvass 48X40. This canvass I've been working on with lashing ability that surprises me and it's general colour is *Gray-green*. All this green is made up of *Blue, Purple, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red, and Violet*. My intention in this canvass is far from my surroundings. For a long time I've realized that I am working on a flat surface. This painting is a decoration. Its background—top is of green bushes, waterfalls and pools, and rock. Then coming on down, more rocks, water running between the water-smoothed rocks which are oval-shaped everywhere—with pools of cold, clear water, some above some below one another. And all coming down and moving to the right. In the center of the canvass, moving up and down, and to the right are two white boys on two white boy-horses, then two boys moving across, and a little

up. And then a white deer with long listening horns, and he is listening, hesitating, and moving down, one foot in a pool of purple water, which is hesitating, but running. And then a little up, and down, a girlish boy—a back view, arms folded above and in back of head. Head is turned sideways and looking directly out of canvass to the right. The legs and back are stretched up and forward. Then moving on down, there are rocks and water that are of the same quality as all above. Then comes a large pool of clear blue water and at the left a goat running and jumping the pool. And the pool has the same movement as the figures and water above. And then at the extreme left is a 3-stemmed, stripped bush which takes the gesture of the girlish boy above, at the extreme right. And, you have the picture. (Younr



The Young Priest

Rivers) I have never been so interested in painting a thing before.. I've been working on this for weeks, every day but one, from 9:30 to 4. By that time the light gets dim. Then I get out the other canvasses which I am working on. These are stronger in colour and which the light doesn't bother till it gets almost dark. And at night I read, draw, go to see G. W. or maybe down to the old school once in a while..

M. sent you a card from Chicago. He wanted your address. And I've lost yours so could not give it to him. The card is one of the Whistlers and the boys say they are going to keep it.. I am going to write M. right away and tell him you are in New York. I don't know when I will get to send you this. Not till I hear from you and get your address.. My last letter I sent you I addressed to Mrs. B. That was a week ago, and not hearing from you I guessed she might be out of town, or you had tried sea-going again. I often think of Mrs. B. I always will remember her as the Beautiful dear Mrs. B.

and her kindness to a boy away from home. Dear Carl I love you. You're fresh air to me every time I think of you. Yours, Rex.

Well! You dear old fellow. A print of a string of young naked Greeks. One of the Greek Gods. A print of German. By John. And a little wooden man of mine. Some heather from across the sea. And myself. All thinking of you. Night.—I linger on the same. It sounds fine. . . . Another night. Weeks after. I've been lying here with nothing on. Looking at myself. Seeing nothing but my legs. How sincere the working. How beautiful the muscles, the bones and the running together of it all. I've been painting. I have it here before me. How I've enjoyed doing it. And with two chickens and a bug. I have'nt painted for months and now I'm working again. Oh! It's wonderful to work. To work with the inside of oneself. For months and months I've just thought.

I can't find words to tell you how much I care for you. Well, S., I've got a good many canvasses since you left—and they are all different in every way. I do wish you could see them. It seems I painted them for you and G. W. She has seen them, you haven't, my disappointment. I got your letters and all your cards. *Beautiful.* The Beautiful is my *all.* I don't care what it is, only, it must be beautiful. Just now the only ones I can remember are the Puvis de Chavannes. It's just what I love in things.

Today has been Sunday. And the day has been like the Sun itself. Hot, *hot!* and now—the cool of the after-sundown, is the soul itself. I was under the large oak, where we painted. And I could see you in the branches, only you wouldn't answer me.

The Greek Paintings—and figure in stone—Chavannes and Botticelli have me. I find more beauty in these people than in all of the others put together. More than that. And, also, you're beautiful. I remember canvass after canvass of yours. I paint on Sundays—before work, and after work. And S., I've got one moonlight picture, painted out in the white moonlight. Wish you could see it. It's very high in key, pink, lavender, and gold-blue. I wish you could have some of the wild flowers I have here. The most beautiful things you can think of. I do hope you feel fine and well. I feel great.

G. W. gave me this letter that I am sending you, a month or so ago to send you when I wrote. But I could not write. But will try again in a short while.. I hate to say goodbye—But,—Goodbye, Rex.

From Pier 58:—Here I have it.. The parting and the sad way of duty. Two great boats are leaving this morning from our pier. The women! How fine. The touch, the look, the throb of the inside parting. Sometimes just a touch or a look, but the world is back of it all. The Germans can't stand against these men and women. The women for a backing. I have looked from my window this morning and it impressed me more than ever. O—how I understand this parting. The parting from each other. The boats are being loaded night and day with everything you can think of. But the Woman and the Man. We will win.. Nothing can stop a country like ours. And when it is over, the West, Our West. You and myself to give. Give to you all that I have to give, keeping nothing. All yours, Rex.

From Fort Niagara:—All the time the thunder outside. I have just come in. But last night, Gladys! And yesterday afternoon! About four to nine. There is a small park outside the fort, full of trees.. It's a summer resort on the lake.. Girls, wonderful girls, and boys, and three beautiful girls. All at a dance on the lake's bank with wild music. And Gladys, a lazy lake

Ultimate Reunion





Young Rivers

and the sun setting. Lavender water, lavender sky, copper sun, and a wild land dance. With, out way out,—two steamers, with their trailing smoke stringing out in back for miles—no air—Gladys, it was most wonderful. Well, so many things ran through my mind. O Damn! I got homesick, first time in my life I believe. It's getting so dark I can hardly see and thunder all the time.

Rex.

The Ranch:—The out of the air made me feel as if I would like to hit something as hard as I could just to see if I could'nt hit harder than the pain would be. I have a new job. Drilling a well. I am a helper and they have a man to do the brain work. All I have to do is sit on a plank thirty feet in the air and try to keep from being killed. Some job. It doesn't take any brains, that's the funny part of it. O yes if you don't like labor have a little work. It will give you some feet and make you rich, and when you are rich you can buy new feet maybe.. Night:—I have El Greco's St. Maurice in front of me. It's a great and beautiful thing.. There is something here that is skin to skin, a heart full of blood, and so strong that the blood flows from head to feet. I am almost wild tonight. Wish I were painting. Didn't feel like it all day. Well, that's part of my lot. Imagination—that's the one thing I can paint with.. I am lost without it. Tonight I could break everything and all the mountains to get it. My arms and legs are like things with strings and something pulling. The sunflower blossomed in a green garden and a young man

came and went away again! For the air was full of its fragrance, but lo!—on the next time coming the flower of the north had dissappeared.. The youth hung his head and his skin dried. My sorrow at missing you. Dear Nick:—Just got your letter. Mighty fine. Like you too. The picture of you and the horse is beautiful. Next time you have trouble getting on why take him by the head, with foot not too far in the stirrup. In taking him by the bridle just above the bit you pull his head sidewise, and with the foot, not too far in, he can't pull you on the ground by one leg.

To G. W.:—I don't know just what I am going to do but I must have freedom or burst. I must paint. The kind that moves along without seeing what moves it. Why shouldn't I try to express myself. Whatever I do I believe it will be for the best. I am only interested in the best.—You know one has only a few friends in life. S. one. I never found him when he wasn't trying for art. I do love him. How wonderful, wonderful things are. I feel hopeless right this second, but not for long.. Something starts things anew. 4 O'clock. Jan., 31st.

Hello!

S., I wish you were here to see what I am painting. I wish you were here to see and say what you would think. You know there's a time when a fellow needs someone to say something. I'll tell you more about the Young Priest. Just finished another day of the Young P. I'm trying for rich colour, and trying to keep

the painter out of it. That is, the brushwork, that attracts so many. And to get at facts in a simple way. To make one see this young man as he is, without regard for me. To make him a sad young man. And a good one. Not too good. But good enough. The background is a large rich room with a suggestion of decorations on the walls and ceiling. And he is above, and the floor below. Am not painting along the lines of our old school. That is, the brush of the old school. Dear Mr. . . . I like him as well as I used to but his pictures are not for me. I mean they don't hold me long enough. I'll paint different. I wish he could come on the ranch. I wish he could lie on his back and look into the sky till he became sleepy—and lie there and sleep. I wish he could see the Polish boy. Kiss this little calf, and his moist hand touch its wet nose. And grab it and almost strangle it with love. Oh! S.—love is the strongest thing. It makes one beautiful, and all things beautiful. Botticelli I love—and another—Teppo Tiffi—that's not right, but maybe you will know who I mean. Ill send you a print of his. Puvis de Chavannes. I love, and Arthur Davies. These Greek things you've sent are made lovers. This Apollo, the one you mounted. I've made a few drawings lately I like. Wish you could see—after a while I'll send you some. I cannot draw it, but the "Tete Virile Archaïque" 3064 B. C. . . . well it's a portrait of love.

Father and mother often ask for you. Father says "a fine boy." G. W. and I are going to have a home by

next year. I don't know where—but some place or other. By the way I'm sending, with drawings, one for Miss D. and one for Mrs. B.—Feb. 23. I'll send your canvasses right away. I've been up to the ranch. Just got back. I'll try to write sooner next time. Yours as ever, Rex.

Camp Lewis, American Lake, Wash. Jan., 27th 1918.

Sunday Night..

Dear, Dear C.:—Dear old boy, 3300 miles apart—and still not an inch. Today has been a wonder. I've looked, I've listened—I've longed—I've loved. And am loved. How rich I am! And you. . . . Boy of the Sun. We will not part. The colour here is beyond me. But in reach. I'm touching it. It's not too heavy—and its not too light. And I'm finding out—and in. I'm feeling fine. My mind is right. My body is not near as good. There's a great many things I could say but what's the use. I'm using what I have—and if a time comes when I can do—and attend to a weak spot, all the better. Im thinking of the ones I love, and the things I care for most. If a man should paint it's you. And when you're gone, and left your works of art, you've done your part for the world. I touch you and as a man you're the warmest. And when you reach out you're like the sunrays. Paint, Paint, it's all yours. As you know—the art of owning the world. G. W. sent me your letter. How wonderful you both are, and S., she's the world to me. I'll write again soon, when the right day comes,

Yours, Rex.

My Song



Saugus, California.

The ranch, 1913.

Come! Take a trip with me, Fair Greek. Gee! I wish I could sing. Say—I went to the train, but you did not come. I guess I know why. Say, young boy! When you've got enough of it, let me know. There's always a way out. I'm up here where nothing bothers me. The air great, and also the earth. Three years I spent in the city, trying my best to help, but the country out here is new and out here they don't know how much it means to live. S, I love you. You don't know how many times I think of you and yours, your pictures. I threw my energy into that school. I thought out so many things. But about the time I got a fellow living and being himself he became a follower of me, or someone else. I don't know how many times I rolled that stone up the hill, only to see it come down again. (They were not all that way; maybe 3 or 4 weren't). But I am glad I did it and I got ever so much out of it. But I'm glad I'm out. When you want to get out, we will fix it for something else. Don't get blue. Keep the clean colour. Oh, yes, that note of mine you found at the studio was my own. I think I will call it "my moon." I wonder if you kept it. It meant a lot to me at the time. I can't remember it now. Here are some of the things that help me paint, and I am gathering from day to day. I have written some of them down, thinking maybe you, Potter and W. might be interested; Sensations of things happening from time to time.

Youth.

The pastured, nurtured sides of the mountains I roam, and find the things that bubble inside, and overflow with joy.

Painting Pictures.

Learning to live one, clean, dignified life.

Pictures I have seen—

Make me strive for myself—Know myself.

The Horse Lot.

The Horse Lot, my home, has beauty wherever I look.

The Day's Work Done.

The day's work done and the supper past I walk through the horse lot, and to my shack. Inside I light the lantern, and then the fire, and sitting, I think of the wonderful inhabitants of the Earth, and the World, my Home.

The Outcast.

He was young and not yet fat. The old thought him just a kid. He was just one child of the earth. But to himself he was a child-man. And for himself he worked, helping those that helped themselves. For himself he worked.

The Dead, Undead Thing.

One human Hog, with a sneer and an abuse for everything.

Pulling the Load.

I want to be pulling the load. I want to. Pulling that first appear seem like moles of the after. I pull

my load. Woman, the "Lovely Thing." Mountain, the through trouble and happiness. I want to. Mountains Lovely Thing. Horses, Cattle, Hogs, are wonderful. Sunrise and sunset, in the East. Night approaching, and then night with the crescent moon turned up to meet the sky. I pull my load, because—my reason: *I want to.*

P. S. Say C., were you ever kissed by a cat? Tom just did it, came up, purred and kissed me and now he is trying to keep me from telling you.

Camp Greene, N. C.

After raining all night, well! The country is a wonder. The colour is that wonderful mixture of the Puvis de Chavannes we saw at San Francisco. It's cloudy, with the sky showing through in places and the sun coming out—but not really doing it. Across the rolling flat hills, a beautiful tree here and there, with a background of blue trees in the distance and amongst them tall buildings of C—N. C. The buildings don't make me think of business blocks, but other things. Oh how I could paint this morning. I am writing at the Y. M. and walking over here I looked and looked and thought of you, and of all your friends, the New, and the very Old ones, and the old ones of hundreds of years ago.

Saugus, California.

The Ranch.

May 24th 1915. C. S.:—One and all the time, at heart a Californian, lover of magnolia, and new tropical growth. Dear Carl! We're thinking! Yours, C. W. Rex.

To. C. S.:—I'm through. I'm resting. This is the most beautiful place in the world. I love it. I would like to tell you what I like about it. But I can't. It's too close to my heart. Maybe some day I'll have it on canvass, so you can hear and also see. I miss you as I would miss all this if I should go away. And I know I will go someday, and I'll miss them. This place, has become a part of me. I've got several new canvasses and each one has a step. I'll stay as long as I can walk. I must get these curls of the fair youth before I leave. I guess the curls of the lighthaired youth is the nearest thing to the way I feel about things here, on the ranch. I wish you could have seen C. W. when I gave her the Degas. She looked like a little child. *Now!*—I want to say something.—No.—Ha! Ha!—

I was sitting at the dinner table when the three prints of the Greeks were handed to me. They were all sitting there. And I opened. "My God" were the words that came to my lips. And they came aloud. I guess everybody thought I'd got some bad news, but those that know me would have distinguished the difference. You're part of my skin, you're part of my soul. You're so warm. These are among the most beautiful things I ever saw. I'm picking them up now. The young man with the two fingers in the air. I can't say anything. Later on when my breath comes back.

Mr. Henri is here. I haven't seen him. He's down at San Diego: H. P. and I have broke. You're not surprised. It should have taken place long ago. The Chavannes you sent me are most beautiful. After I've had them awhile I want to write again. Wish you were here. Yours, Slinkard. Goodbye.

P. S. Your Greek God with the two fingers in the air is driving me mad. I've got to get up and go outside. I breathe as if I were carrying a mountain. You're my friend. I'm going for cold water.

It's almost fall and your summer letter I still have. You're too good—all these beautiful things you've sent me. The mountain top, I well remember, and this Greek God Apollo. The live skins. Oh! He's the beauty And can fly. And the mountain will never get too high for him. He's the most beautiful young thing. I wish I could talk to you—10 minutes. Writing is never right. . . . I don't know when you will get this. Its bedtime for me now. Dear old C. good night.

S:—Shimata is back. Came to see me, baggage and all before he found rooms. Mighty fine don't you think! He talked of you a great deal. Said he would have written you, only your card had no address. Dear Shimata. He's mighty fine. I gave him your address.

By the way, this is another day. I've been working on the Young Priest. It's getting stronger—and talks of you all the time.—I am going to draw my darned head off till I can. There's a few men that make me realize what it means. I haven't been up to the ranch for a long while. Feel the need of it now, so will go just as soon as I can get through painting. I had a picture in an Exhibition here. I called it "Peace." Not Peace before or after war. But the peace that comes to mind and body when all is well. When we love and rest and also feel. A great many liked it. People that did not know anything about art. And those that did, found God standing right in front of everything. Well, I wish you could have seen it. You will sometime. I've never painted until the last year. All the other is nothing. But the last year's work has something to it. I only got 6 or 7 canvasses and can't send you one now. But will next year. There's nobody I would rather have one of my pictures than you. Boy, you don't know how much you mean to me. I meet people all the time, but not your kind. One Doesn't. Maybe one or two in lifetime—then one's mighty lucky.. You're too fine for a big city. The country's the place for such as you. The country where you're all alike. I mean the mountains and you.. Don't underestimate yourself and I don't think you will. When I got your letter I thought maybe you would come to California, but now I know you can't. But get out of that hell-hole. Not that a man make fine things there. I remember your western things, and you are not for a large city. S. don't think I'm becoming old—and weak. For I'm not. I'm younger than when you saw me last. But, I'm finer, that's all. Now coming to how I got down to Los Angeles and left the ranch. I got sick and stayed that way for over a year—weighed 127 Lbs—all bones. Dr. said "Too much work of a kind." He was right. I weigh 160 lbs now and never felt better in my life. Only my hair is gray. Well I'll try to finish this tomorrow at 5 o'clock. Rex.

Strength is a great thing. So is weakness.

C. W.:—This morning the sun shines and at getting up time my eyes opened and G. home, C. and the others were my guests. I did not get up until later. My soul

was filled full of that and you. I think of the garden, of your home life, and your family and how fine to know you are just there.—I have made two drawings today. You are all the time. I have been thinking of you for some time. I am going to try and make one of America and thinking on I see three more, the last is only maybe. What I am thinking is something new, new to me. It is a large thing. I don't know when I can start or how long it will take but I believe I can make something more than a painting.

Pier 58, N. River, N. Y. C., Sept., 9th 1918.

Sunday, on duty. More maps, and yet tonight more maps. And tomorrow Governors Island and then more maps. Now then today, a rainy one. Ships loaded. O—my—westerners, everyone of them. Singing—Oh! such songs. So young, so strong, so American. Another bunch of wonders. There goes the westerners whoop. O they are fine. My West, and you. And there, still lined up—ready for the boats.. And here come the nurses. And how they sing. And now the they are one. And the bands plays "America.. And now my eyes are full. I can't write more. Yours G., west whoops. And now their hearts mingle. For now I am, just Rex.

May 3rd 1918, Camp Green, N. C.

My Dear C.:—

Thanks, oh, thanks! Your drawing was so beautiful. The head of it was wonderful, so strong, young and fine. And the book—well, so much like you—me—and so many others—and Beautiful. I haven't written before because I've been all upset. I'm in the Casual Co., here now with a bunch of fellows that are now right to go with their company. Some go to farm, and others to a branch of the service that best fits them. I'm trying to get into the ship building camouflage. Hope I make it. I was examined in the base hospital and marked limited service. Carl, your last letter is fine—and the letters of the book (Walter Pater's Emerald Uthwart and Child in the House) Well they're everything. And pictures—all pictures—a Mountain of colour. Everything that we know and care for. And the papers you sent me. Well, one of the finest presents I ever received. Sometimes a little book or even a single scrap of paper with nothing on it—from the right person, means more than a bank of gold. S., you're so fine—you've always been so. I haven't heard from G. W. for several days. Gee, I wish I would. I'm lost when I don't hear.

The country is most beautiful here—and right now is wonderful. C., C., C., Well, you know how I feel—the revelations of the New Testament are wonderful color pictures. I got a letter from Miss D. She's the real thing, too. Wonderful. I'm putting a little drawing in with this letter, that I made while over at the base hospital after I read your little book.

Dear C., I wish we could paint together away off from the world—for months. To think of nothing, and still nothing. My friend S. is in France. I wish this war was over. Over for the whole world. It's a crime. But what can America do, but give them Hell. Yours, with my love.

P. S. Here's a little picture taken in Camp Lewis when I was in my best when in the army. I'm feeling pretty good. The scarlet fever is gone. But my nerves are not very good. But if they give me the job I want I can make good I know. Dear old C. How upset everything is—Wonder when things will be normal again. Goodbye old Boy, Dear young C. Rex.

May 7th 1918.

Dear C.:—Some flowers G. sent me. They are wild. I thought maybe—and knew, you would like them. I hope you are getting things straightened out for yourself. How I wish you could paint all the time and think of nothing else. I walked through the woods yesterday. It was wonderful. And down on the ground wild strawberries. I wished for you and G. There's the wish. Goodbye this time, Rex.

My Dear C. Of course I know one of the friends. Isn't it beautiful. You, you, all the way through. I saw all of this in you, too. I've read, and re-read it. And have got something for the beauty. But S., Dear C., my mind is so . . . that I am sending it back to you today. There's no place to keep things here. I've been carrying it and some letters of Gladys' in my pockets—next to my heart. But am sending it back to you this morning. (speaking of an unpublished poem by Marsden Hartley on C. S.) I would like to tell you my innermost. But I can't now. I think of you very, very often. More than that. The drawings C. W. sent you, I can't remember them—that's my mind. Only I see things and try to make notes of them. That's all. I am glad you like them, also that Henri saw and liked some of them. I think I know what I want. Just to paint, paint, what I care for.

And Dear C.:—I care for much. Before long I hope to tell you all. Until then, dear boy, Goodbye, Rex.

P. S. Here's a wild flower—Red Orange.

How do you feel? I hope you're well. You had such a time when you went back. Be sure you're alright and stay that way. It's the only way. To always feel fit. Seems there's so many things to say. But I can't get to them. The world is a wonderful place. I don't see why more people don't think so. I'll write again before long. I want to say more. But later on. Yours, Rex. . . . Another night! Nine o'clock.

Wallace Stevens

Lulu Gay

Lulu sang of barbarians before the eunuchs
Of gobs, who called her orchidean,
Sniffed her and slapped heavy hands
Upon her.
She made the eunuchs ululate.
She described for them
The manners of the barbarians
What they did with their thumbs.
The eunuchs heard her
With continual ululation.
She described how the barbarians kissed her
With their wide mouths
And breaths as true
As the gum of the gum-tree.
"Olu" the eunuchs cried. "Ululalu."

Lulu Morose

Is there a sharp edge?
Is there a sharp edge?
On which to lean
Like a belly puckered by a spear.

The cliffs are rough.
Are rough
And not all birds sing cuck
Sing coo, sing cuck, cuckoo.

Oh! Sal, the butcher's wife ate clams
And died amid uproarious damns.
And mother nature sick of silk
Shot lightning at the kind cow's milk.

And father nature, full of butter
Made the maelstrom oceans mutter.
Stabbing at his teat-like corns
From an ottoman of thorns.

H. D.

Simaetha

Drenched with purple,
drenched with dye, my wool,
bind you the wheel-spokes—
turn, turn, turn my wheel!
Drenched with purple,
steeped in the red pulp
of bursting sea-sloes—
turn, turn, turn my wheel!
(Ah did he think
I did not know,
I did not feel—
what wrack, what weal for him:
golden one, golden one,
turn again Aphrodite with the yellow zone,
I am cursed, cursed, undone!
Ah and my face, Aphrodite,
heside your gold,
is cut out of white stone!)
Laurel blossom and the red seed
of the red vervain weed,
burn, crackle in the fire,
burn, crackle for my need!
Laurel leaf, O fruited
branch of bay,
burn, burn away
thought, memory and hurt!
(Ah when he comes,
stumbling across my sill,
will he find me still,
fragrant as the white privet,
or as a bone,
polished in wet and sun,
worried of wild beaks,
and of the whelps' teeth—
worried of flesh,
left to bleach under the sun,
white as ash bled of heat,
white as hail blazing in sheet-lightning,
white as forked lightning
rending the sleet?)

Prayer

White, O white face—
from disenchanting days
wither alike dark rose
and fiery bays:
no gift within our hands,
nor strength to praise,
only defeat and silence;
though we lift hands, disenchanting,
of small strength, nor raise
branch of the laurel
or the light of torch,
but fold the garment
on the riven locks,
yet hear, all-merciful, and touch
the fore-head, dim, unlit of pride and thought,
Mistress—be near!
Give back the glamour to our will,
the thought; give back the tool,
the chisel; once we wrought
things not unworthy,
sandal and steel-clasp;
silver and steel, the coat
with white leaf-pattern
at the arm and throat:
silver and metal, hammered for the ridge
of shield and helmet-rim;
white silver with the dark hammered in,
belt, staff and magic spear-shaft
with the gilt spark at the point and hilt.

The Armour of Jules Laforgue

Kenneth Burke

In one of those astonishing tender letters to his sister, Laforgue tells of a time when he shrank from entering a delicatessen shop; he saw the two salesgirls smiling and talking so interestedly together that he couldn't intrude here where he was so evidently outside of it all. He moved on to another shop . . . Yet in his writing, Laforgue is nothing if not "competent."

This simple discrepancy between his life and his works is at the root of Laforgue's genius. He was a distinctly lunar mentality pale in a world of smiting daylight. Tubercular, he was unnecessarily conscious of the literary banality of tuberculosis. He was made for the period which swooned over "Die Leiden des Jungen Wertens," and was by no means proud of it. He praised Baudelaire as "two nostrils dilating to everything," and yet he felt that it was no longer enough to be dilating nostrils:

Life is but a dream; death conquers all; man is nothing in the vastness of space . . . certainly most disconcerting elements to handle unless one has the blunt courage to wallow in platitudes. Yet that was the type of impression he spontaneously emphasized. A clock striking in the night, the moon through a mist, the far-off barking of a dog, the irregular jet of a fountain, Chopin being played in an unknown house . . .

such things are gone into seriously in his posthumous notes. Yet they are never found in such a direct form in any of his finished works. D'Aureville has been called a belated romantic; no doubt the same could have been said of Laforgue if he had not sneaked out the back door with the connivance of his medium.

Laforgue, sensitive to any hint of the hackneyed, found his solution in dilettantism. The dilettante is always one remove from his emotion. He has discovered that by the simple expedient of a gesture he can say what he wants to say and at the same time apologize for it. The dilettante is embarrassed by any immediate reaction. If a writer, under the inspiration of melancholy, sits down to write melancholy, and calls his poem "An Ode to Melancholy," and begins his first line "O melancholy!" he may or may not be a poet according to the purity of his impulse and the felicity of his medium. But in any case, he would not be a dilettante. A dilettante, feeling a melancholy which, let us say, was chill and dead, would pull down his technical dictionaries two days later and write on "The Climate, Flora and Fauna of the Moon."

It was his gesture, then, which gave Laforgue the courage of his emotions. He has dealt with the common denominators of life, debanalizing them by a comic opera approach. Laforgue was the first artist to exploit the expressive potentialities of the *désinvolture*, the bow of the cavalier sweeping his feathered hat to his left foot. As a consequence, we have a queer mixture of metaphysics and society verse. Although he does not usually come out frankly with a poem *au large*, the generality is felt in nearly all of his work. His clowns are all philosophers his *ingénues* are the essence of girl—sweet mouth, a firm breast, an ankle—the plots of his stories are based on Hamlets and Salomés and Lohengrins, while the themes of his poems are, at their best, things like "The Complaint of the Poet's Foetus," as it swims *a travers maman*.

Of course, Laforgue was an adolescent. The metaphysical interest, when it is emotional rather than intellectual, is quite the common thing with adolescence. The metaphysical interest may be a tender faculty of the mind which later becomes calloused in self-defense, that the quick be protected from the rubbing raw of outward life. Or it may be a mere refuge for the weakened adolescent whose powers of aggression are paralyzed by the passive attitude of receiving outward impressions. In any case, the metaphysical interest is quite often found in the immature, especially the sexually immature.

In Laforgue, this is most malignantly true. In contrast to the highly utilitarian attitude towards women that is characteristic of the French intellectual classes, Laforgue was not at all fit for the necessities of conquest and domination. "To be loved," we find tucked away in his posthumous fragments, "is to please, to not be rejected. To be loved is to be preferred before others." Laforgue was one of those sensitive, incompetent martyrs whose weakness is an unconscious flattery to other men. Such people will invariably find friends to do the world and all for them. Laforgue was nursed on all sides. Thus, to a great extent, the "rubbing raw of outward life" was avoided. He was not forced to "outgrow" his supersensitiveness.

On the other hand, he was determined to be contemporaneous. As much as he was inclined to dismiss Americans, he had our mania for the up to date. In writing to Charles Ephrussi, who had got him his post as reader to the Empress of Germany, he said as a defense of his interest in *décadisme*, "Great heavens, yes, everything you say there is quite right, but lord, one has to belong to his age and even be a bit in advance of his age, under pain of passing as an antediluvian gentleman and of being recommended to the paleontologists of literary criticism." Wherefore, the invention of his armor.

This armor was in a great part handed down to him from Baudelaire and Corbière. Both of these men exemplified the value of the vocabulary *mélange aduultère de tout*, scientific terms, slang, obsolete words, "unpoetic" words: In this way, he could give a marionette nuance to his emotions. This artificial glibness was a fit refuge for his 1820'ism. He, the most moony of poets, indeed, the only poet who ever wrote an entire collection of poems on the moon, could turn on himself, then, and write,

Penser qu'on vivra jamais dans cet astre,

Parfois me flanque un coup dans l'épigastre.

On the other hand, the same spirit behind his work could produce such a full and rounded line as

Sous la Lune méditerranéenne!

Or, to quote a quatrain further along in the same poem:

Au delà des cris choisis des époques,

Au delà des sens, des larmes, des vierges,

Voilà quel astre indiscutable émerge,

Voilà l'immortel et seul soliloque!

The last line might be translated into an English pentameter:

There is the deathless, lone soliloquy.

It is no wonder that Laforgue saw the moon as a soliloquy. For it was he who invented the word "hamletism." Laforgue has restored the proscenium speech to literature. To quote another source on hamletism, in a work that is not yet published—the *raisonneur* is discussing the futility of his existence and his irremediable weakness for living in the consciousness of this futility!

But what can I do? Flap and flutter and squak myself over the hedge. Go on stirring the brew to keep it from stieking. Rattle at my brain with words until I've numbed it. Thank God, there's always some satisfaction in a precise diagnosis. So long as I can chart my deflections, I at least have the intellectuality of the chart to encourage me. And when I die, I'll know exactly how I'm dead. Hamletism is a remedy worth talking of. Especially hamletism on the proscenium. For the hamletically inclined, there is always pause enough between the wound and decease to drop a cosmogony and a couple of attitudes on life. And how conciliatory it must be to pass away with a properly modernized *adsum*.

Laforgue's prose is an alternation of two soliloquies, the soliloquy of his hero and the soliloquy of the author. He has gone back to the fountain head of literature, the spoken word. One is distinctly conscious of the quality of his sentences. He writes in arias and recitations. This, for instance, from the opening paragraphs of "Le Miracle des Roses":

Ah! Everything is comic opera! . . . and evolves in time with that English valse *Myosotis*, which was heard all during that year (with me overwhelmed in obscure corners, so to speak) at the Casino, a valse so properly melancholy, so irreparably last, last lovely days! (This valse, oh! if some word of mine could inoculate you with the feeling of it, before allowing you to begin this story!)

O gloves never renewed with benzines! O brilliant and melancholy coming and going of these existences! O appearances of happiness that are so pardonable! O beauties destined to grow old in black silks, in a corner of the fire, without understanding the conduct of those worldly and muscular sons they once brought into the world with such a chaste melancholy! . . .

. . . The good sun, the friend of adders, and cemeteries and wax dolls, has also attracted here, as elsewhere, a number of consumptives, a slowly moving people, but loved of the dilettante.—

In his verse, this tendency manifests itself in a tendency to incorporate various voices into a poem. Sometimes these voices are frankly labeled, like Echo, or Choir. At other times they simply exist as a tangent, a change in metre or stanza. Hamletism and its phases offered peculiar possibilities for "elegance," which is only another word for dilettantism.

The broad aspect of Laforgue's work, then, is the attempt to deal with the eternal verities in terms of the preposterous and the grotesque. Surely, there is nothing more characteristic of him than his Pierrot the bricklayer, who when leaving the church with his brand-new bride, sticks out his neck and crows, and who halts the entire marriage train while he buys his daily paper, the "Illustrated Pornographer." Or his "Complaints des Formalités Nuptiales," perhaps the falsest dialogue ever written, and the most delicately just. Laforgue writes in an endless succession of smirks, grins and grimaces, since the superadolescent does not have the courage of his tragedy.

All the great publishing houses of the Occident can slobber out their glut of A Stark Laying Bare of the Human Soul, A Powerful Drama of the Mighty City, A Narrative that Tears at the Fibres of Your Heart, A Truly Epic Production. The Romain Rollands can ossa-and-pelion their Himalayas of letters. The inexorable democracy of the intellect can shout its dithyrambs to the L trains of Vibrant With Life. Laforgue has answered imperturbably:

Oh, fine linen! No one has sung of you.—To live this way or that, to be tragic or skeptical, to go here and there, to travel, to eternize oneself in holes, to make scenes or suffer scenes to be made, and so forth . . . and carry a cambric handkerchief, supple and yielding to the fingers, and in the evening think over one's day on a pillow of some fine streaky material, between fine sheets—stiff muslin, like paper, and not used enough to have lost its square creases from the clothes chest—and a cover cappadined with jonquil buds . . .

Marsden Hartley

CANTICLE FOR OCTOBER

with responses for the coming of the magical Tenth wave.

There is piping on the hills of Caledonia,
This morning!

In the aromatic efflorescence of this clear
Warm enfoldment, exists my most eminent delight.
The morning, is multi-hued.

There are soft grey taverns to sit in.
Taverns in the depths of these orbits
Where golden spots gleam through lattices,
Bound with happy vines.
I gathered up flexible baskets of the delicate
Abundance of this new fruition.
The edges were lined with fresh sprigs of heather.

There is piping on the hills of Caledonia,
This morning!

Shall the word Amour—be permitted?
A thousand annuities of praise then,
For the permission.
Love is the talisman for the unspoken bliss
Between two having the signature of the dayshine
Upon their highest wave.

I strive with all the white tentacles of my mind
To wrap myself around each delicate offering
Tendered so exquisitely by one, who having looked
Into the dark mouth of cataclysmic ambition,
Smiles with the old cognizance of this incipient
Humanism.
Death softens the steel shell heart struggling
With conspicuous largesse toward belief.
Death has for once been decent in behavior.
The plant, so avid of the ascending years, blooms
Toward the new sunlight with zest of illumined
Impatience.
Smile then for me, cognizant one, if for no other,
Comprehensive of the immutable heroisms
Inherent in the day's demesne.
I would be aware of these smiles for an eternity
Of moments, turn from perishable gossamer
To lustrous entities shrouded with radiant
Persistence and duration,

There is piping on the hills of Caledonia,
This morning!

Yellow bees humming deliriously over the heathertops,
That was the cadence rising from the hills of Caledonia
When the ninth wave receded, majestically making room
For this supreme Tenth of ours.
It was fair for me emboldened with belief
The oldest legend of the years.

There was no impatience with the rain.
The breath of many an almost beatless hour
Was made palpitant again.
Frost bloomed on frozen windows like spectral gladioli
At dawn.
Tendrils with a chance will climb on any trellis
Of the wind;
Their grace, to them, is indispensable.
Shall we then, strip the pristine tendrils of delight
Together,
For the elusive agencies to come.
Incredibly sliding years?

Responses—with delicate diapason.

Salt of the sea on my lips, lifted from the shoulders
Of this night,
So brave with comprehension, crowned
With eloquent simplicity.
Voluminous, phosphorescent SILENCE leaned
With her new-washed salted cheeks;
Young planets dawdled iridescently around
Around our tingling feet,
Radiantly in unison.
Will she breathe the old deliciously tortuous way
Again,
This mistress of the ancient, inexplicable
Fantasie?

Give me the years, as they are fancifully called,
To inhale the fragrance of these new, effulgent
Ardours.
Eyes—
That may collect like magpies
The golden spots gleaming through lattices
Bound with happy vines,
Finding them there as lanterns, for the many
Incommensurable dusks to come.

Lips,
That shall lift the bright coinage
Of the new morning
From these soft, heatherblown gateways
Pouring their redundant cadences
Upon my grasping, eager ears.
Hands,
That may hold those fragments, shaken
From wires of stiff winds,
Words from the kindest days that pass
Onward,
Into the dominion of the far
Austerity.

October will bear no other burden
Than multi-hued feuilletons flying with windy rapture
Toward winter, relieved of its white and stark
Uncharitableness.
All that is perfect, is cool and sweet and beautiful
To the aftersense.
These words are therefore, not dangerous words;
Cool, and sweet, and beautiful.

There is piping on the hills of Caledonia,
This morning!

So sings the golden chewink, upon the edges
Of the last sunflower, emblazoned with the flame
Of noon.

A flagon of the sun shall be drained.
Seeds are his special quest.

Seeds, with the heart of splendid germination
Bursting them.

Hours when the moths do not gather,
Awake, with their pollen,
Celestial fertilization.

There is always the bee of heaven
For these superior cross purposes.

I make pact with you then.

Pact for the great appointment

Upon the highest wave of the world.

Shall we ride the eminent apex of it

With the quality of togetherness,

Which planets indicate in their manifold savannas

On a wide, cool, evening?

There is piping on the hills of Caledonia,
This morning!

Portrait of the Author

William Carlos Williams

The birches are mad with green points
the wood's edge is hurning with their green,
burning, seething—No, no, no.

The birches are opening their leaves one
by one. Their delicate leaves unfold cold
and separate, one by one. Slender tassels
hang swaying from the delicate branch tips—
Oh, I cannot say it. There is no word.
Black is split at once into flowers. In
every bog and ditch, flares of
small fire, white flowers!—Agh,
the birches are mad, mad with their green.
The world is gone, torn into shreds
with this blessing. What have I left undone
that I should have undertaken?

O, my brother, you redfaced, living man
ignorant, stupid whose feet are upon
this same dirt that I touch—and eat.
We are alone in this terror, alone,
face to face on this road, you and I,
wrapped by this flame!
Let the polished plows stay idle,
their gloss already on the black soil.
But that face of yours—!

Answer me. I will clutch you. I
will hug you, grip you. I will poke my face
into your face and force you to see me.
Take me in your arms, tell me the commonest
thing that is in your mind to say,
say anything. I will understand you—!
It is madness of the birch leaves opening
cold, one by one.

My rooms will receive me. But my rooms
are no longer sweet spaces where comfort
is ready to wait on me with its crumbs.
A darkness has brushed them. The mass
of yellow tulips in the bowl is shrunken.
Every familiar object is changed and dwarfed.
I am shaken, broken against a might
that splits comfort, crushes my house
and leaves me—with shrinking heart
and startled, empty eyes peering out
into a cold world.

In the spring I would drink! In the spring
I would be drunk and lie forgetting all things.
Your face! Give me your face, Yang Kue Fei!
your hands, your lips to drink!
Give me your wrists to drink
I drag you, I am drowned in you, you
overwhelm me! Drink!
Save me! The shadbush is in the edge
of the clearing. The yards in a fury
of lilac blossoms are driving me mad with terror.
Drink and lie forgetting the world.

And coldly the birch leaves are opening one by one.
Coldly I observe them and wait for the end.
And it ends.

Extract

W. Bryher

Is anything sweet as death? Spice, lily, peachflower?
Is any touch flame as the lips of death, fire of light, fire
of the earth?

You are the swift welcome of a body. You are the
passionate Aphrodite of the poppies.

It is no use pretending; I hate it all, all of it. I want
Tyre, Carthage, Athens; I want the age that has never
been known in the world.

Is there anything in the world sweet as your white lips,
Death?

I have loved life as no other. I have loved it as the
warrior that is *life* and so throws it away. Take the
light, flame, fire of my limbs but I ask at the end

"Is anything sweet save death?"

Love is a poppy. There are dreams, seeds of the
poppy. Beauty is slash of bud-scarlet in the green. But
you are the soul of the flower . . . you are sleep.

Must bitterness drain all the colour from the saffron
leaf before you come?

I—the liar—I that pretend I would fight and love—I
ask at the end

"Is anything sweet save death!"

Surf of the Dead Sea

R. McAlmon

Apotheosis to Extinction.

He much admired LaForgue
And Remy de Gourmont.
His admiration clung leachlike to him
Feeding upon his learned gestation
To reverence of exceeding avoirdupois.
I believe he "almost" sensed my meaning—
Indeed it was not intelligible to me,
More of protective intuition
In one insistent upon self-value—
When I remarked:
Any reverence is akin to superstition.
Insistant sublimate
Kept his mind swiveling
Upon erudite spiritualities.
The germs of hope for new moon-usages
Curdled with his pedant irritations,
But—what atrocities his intellect
Committed with its eternal rapes of his
Emotional chastities.
A libertine intellect, knowing
With the intimacies of countless
Literary unions—perhaps interruptus,
But the poor man did his best—
There were no sequestered spots
To which his dominating impulses
Would not force a husbandly entrance.
Therefore his impregnated desires
Pallored to a febrile birth
In the eternal abdomen of abysmal futility,
And clung to existance
Hovering despondently in the vicinity
Where those of divine malady are incarcerated.
He could write reviews of critiques at least.
His rancours fused with the misery accords
Of other men, thus vitalizing the species
Of his artificially refreshed morbidities.
Sharp protestation did not serve to
Make the surgical incision necessary to
Purge his moribund spirit of pus.
The palingenetic tendency of any realization
At least caused all emphasis of emphatic experience
To ebb into his protective doctrine of futilism,
Individualized à la—various authors—:
No man exactly expressing himself
Would be understood by anyone else:
Insistent yet his spirituality retrod
The circle path of inevitably repititious convictions
Which just as inevitably perished within him.
Still he yielded no point to temperamental discovery,
But attempted by the intensification
Of his literary idolizations
To create for himself an *esthetic* raison d'être.
Only when he was no more capable of recognizing it so—
For sensitivities have a suture that closes to discovery
As surely as has any negroid brain—
Others of more vigorous restlessness,
Malcontents of object-subjectivity,

Completed his metamorphosis to extinction
By their indifferences.

Americanique.

An embroidered situation sewn
With borrowed ideation
—and pubescent unhappiness
Does not harden its subtleties of insight
To irony sufficiently adamant
To impale the pallid sky's vapour
Of industrial smoke—
—while spun into the tapestry beside
Swine guzzling cornfield ensilage,
Enroute to the stock yards
And the big Swedes, brothers to us all,
Who will make sausages of them,
Is the esoteric design
Of an ascetic non-esthetic, and—
rather protesting—monastic line.
—derivatives accumulated, imported dyes,
Over which penchant readers sigh—
And the pens of subjugated culture-tortured men
Dip, seeking perhaps to brood here,
Enough to give a show of intense realization.
—The self-trickery of thought torturing
Insistent against ultra-insistance
Of mid-regional proclamation—
And Semetic despondency—or is it enthusiasm
Of morbidity
Mentalized to give the quality of search intellection?
—O soft, sensuous and gorgeous, sogging
But without cosmopolite amalgam or emotional integrity.
Art, artico, artices, artiquet—
And what's in our arteries—
Here in the room an unsubiding gloom
Dominates my intricate intriguings
But forever confusing designs.

Evocation to Intellectuals.

Cerebral excitants cease at last
To emanate from or dominate the cerebellum.
Paracletes summoned to evoke
Art emotion
Make cutaneous incisions
But the subjective cancer remains.
Dying, upon the wavery precipice
Of extinct cultures, sipping
With learned ceremonial
From recorded cognizances of travail
Cerebral monstrosities drift atomlike
Somewhere between literary lunas
And disrupted council chambers of inner misery.
Dissect our cervical cords
To grant cessation of inutilizable informations.
Cereous images of culture
Melt quickly before the flame of our lusts.
Bathe us in the clear freshness of nothingness,
And the throb of our bodies veins
Will spurt the spectric fluid
Of gangrened blood upon the converged precipitate
That our heads so contumaciously idolize.

Sacre bleu! there is no Zodiacal path
 In the illuminance of which one's feet must tread.
 Gaze in the polished mirror
 Upon your willowy nudeness
 When moonlight through the leaded glass
 Of Christ-befigured altar windows
 Makes flickering blots of gleam.
 Perhaps, despite the tedium of any view
 Blasphemous—to whom since we have no religion?
 Fetid-erotic, or purple,
 The acrobatic vermiculation
 Of your unique soul in aggression
 Will yet permit you to preside
 Over that intensified space grown wan
 With the ennui of your dis-respected presence.
 And, juvenility of impulse with you,
 Let you be sequester of your egos
 Exalted inhalations.—
 Civilization needs perhaps be treated
 With salvarsan—and you?—
 Who knows?—iralgia
 May have come from too intent gazing
 Upon your own desires.—
 But if phallic dreams and acts fail to penetrate
 Maybe with weeping, cerebral tears of course,
 Stalactite crystals will erect themselves
 To a hardness that survives, and
 In reflection, procreates. But why?
 Some visions have clotted the arteries
 In their fresh sanguiferous flow.
 We are at best ventriloquists
 Speaking for mute yearnings possessed of ironical wisdom
 Kabalistic impalpabilities form a clarity
 Outside of lugubrious loyalties to learning.
 But come. We will walk erect, super-conscious
 Of our frozen contempts and indifferences.

Yours, O Youth

William Carlos Williams

It is difficult, apparently, to make clear that in stating contact with experience, as evidenced in a man's work, to be the essential quality in literature, we do not mean to state and have never stated that contact is literature. Neither have we stated or implied that contact ensures everything written under its influence to be literature. We have definitely declined to start a school; and must we repeat, how many times? our refusal to be responsible for teaching anyone how to write.

We have said simply and as frequently as possible and with as many apt illustrations as we could muster that contact with experience is essential to good writing or, let us say, literature. We have said this in the conviction that contact always implies a local definition of effort with a consequent taking on of certain colors from the locality by the experience, and these colors or sensual values of whatever sort, are the only realities in writing or, as may be said, the essential quality in literature. We have even given what seem to be definite exceptions to the rule: unattached intelligence (the Jewish sphere), virtuosity (Russian violinists). But apparently we do not work in a fluid medium.

We have not stated that an American in order to be a American must shut his mind in a corncrib and let the rest of the world go hang. We see no advantage in being ill informed when one might be well informed. We see every advantage to a man in up to date information made his own through experience of its significance in his own environment. This is knowledge. Spurious information is that which is unrelated to the contacts of experience. Out of it literature is NOT made. Except—

There are those who have a taste for words and ideas, like the Jews, and who are able to appraise them, themselves remaining wholly detached from the affair. But actually these figures too, if they are of any importance, deal wholly with the real literary values defined above. It is to say that the cooks too may be artists and that they are known first by their choice of potatoes. It is only to prove that these men (de Gourmont) supported by the basic pyramid of tradition are the proof of its foundation. These do not show the intelligence to be a disease. They prove only the existence of a structure of sufficient reality to bear all fevers without catastrophe. True historians, they are the infamous Pappas of us all. But what of it? They are there and we are here. It is a battle arrayed, a battle that must be in the end yours, O Youth, yours!

To which the hounds will set up a baying: Verbiage! very pretty but show us work of the quality of that which you condemn.

If "immediate" in the following sentence is taken to mean a man's objective world at some one moment of perception we agree that "the artist is (not) limited to the range of his immediate contact with the objective world." We agree moreover that "his material is vast and comprehensive: it is influenced by every sentient moment; it is the aggregate of all those experiences which have taken form in his imagination." We take pleasure in giving the rest of Mr. Craven's paragraph: "Were it not for the immeasurable mass of adaptable form stored in the mind, art would be a shallow and poverty stricken affair."

Yet the artist is limited to the range of his contact with the objective world. True, in begetting his poem he takes parts from the imagination but it is simply that working among stored memories his mind has drawn parallels, completed progressions, transferred units from one category to another, clipped here, modified there. But it is inconceivable that, no matter how circuitously, contact with an immediate objective world of actual experience has not been rigorously maintained. By "artist" is meant nearly this thing alone.

But if by the use of "immediate" as underscored above it is implied that an artist is not limited to his direct contacts with certain definite environmental conditions through which alone he can know other "outside" worlds—in that case, one continues the search for an American critic.

Of any work the important thing to ask is: What are its contacts? One may almost say there is nothing else of importance to be asked. There will be established thereby—what? A color; something in any case ponderable in the experience of other men.

What is it I see in Rex Slinkard's letters? Surely not what Harriet Monroe saw: another untrained enthusiasm stabbing emptiness and achieving—what might have been expected. In these letters there is evidence of the man's critical attitude toward his art of painting; for this reason they have a distinct literary value. As criticism they present the unironic, the unbent vision of youth. And in this case it is a full release without sacrifice of intelligence. There is an abundance of fresh color but presented without the savage backbite of a Degas using pinks and blues. It is all very young, this man's writing about his painting; it is what I recognize as in some measure definitely and singularly American.

This same quality was the secret of Pound's early success in London with his "Personae." God help me for suggesting such a thing.

The American critical attitude! it is that we are seeking to establish. It is young. It is not necessarily in expert, as the hollow wits would have us believe, but it is necessarily young. There is no long chain of sophistication to engage us, "part of it crawling, part of it about to crawl, part of it torpid in its lair." Our processes are for the moment chaotic but they have the distinct advantage of being able to claim no place of rest save immediacy.

Not that Americans today can be anything less than citizens of the world; but being inclined to run off to London and Paris it is inexplicable that in every case they have forgotten or not known that the experience of native local contacts, which they take with them, is the only thing that can give that differentiated quality of presentation to their work which at first enriches their new sphere and later alone might carry them far as creative artists in the continental hurley-burley. Pound ran to Europe in a hurry. It is understandable. But he had not sufficient ground to stand on for more than perhaps two years. He stayed fifteen. Re-reading his first book of poems it is easy to see why he was successful. It was the naive warmth of the wilderness—no matter how presented. But in the end they played Wilson with him.

Unfortunately for the arts here, intelligence and training have nearly always forced a man out of the country. Cut off from the dominant of their early established sensory background these expatriates go a typical and but slightly variable course thereafter.

The few among us who might write well in any generation, however they will be trained, fear to believe that in writing it will be exactly as it has been in other spheres of inventive activity, that the project has not grown until precedent has been rendered secondary to necessity or completely ignored. It has been by paying naked attention first to the thing itself that American plumbing, American shoes, American bridges, indexing systems, locomotives, printing presses, city buildings, farm implements and a thousand other things have become notable in the world. Yet we are timid in believing that in the arts discovery and invention will take the same course. And there is no reason why they should unless our writers have the inventive intelligence of our engineers and cobblers.

Can Princess White Deer train herself to reach a distinguished perfection in her dancing without loosing her environmental individuality. In short can she avoid becoming a Russian. Every American activity in the arts is a phase of this problem.

Of course the lady in question will probably remain a mediocrity but should she prove a genius it will be discovered to have been because she consciously noted and turned to her advantage the detail of her local contacts. She would do well to study the masters. The master is he whom one may approach without prostituting himself. It is because in the masters work all things go back to the ground. But the thing that continually baffles men is that this ground is a peculiarity. May I suggest again that Contact has not been devised as a means to teach anyone how to write.

Kenneth Burke's LaForgue article in the present issue of Contact gives me the sense of an American critical attitude working with foreign material. It is this milligramme of radium that I have been seeking. Hearing others mention LaForgue I have never been tempted to read him. But from Burke I begin to feel myself in another atmosphere more congenial to my sense. I begin to feel that there is in LaForgue a something, a very simple and direct thing, without which his ironic talent would have gone for nothing. It is his clear use of sensation. It is a building upon the basis of what is observed what is proved, what is of value to the man in the welter as he found it, and a rigid exclusion of everything else. It makes the efforts of an Eliot to "escape the influence of LaForgue" most silly. Why escape influences unless one has imitated the wrong thing?

Burke at least makes me feel, more than any writing at me from abroad can do, that LaForgue existed and was a real person. This ability on Burke's part lies not only in his intimate knowledge of everything LaForgue has written but in his knowledge of my world. He, Burke, is of my own environment and he has found the writings of LaForgue greatly applicable to it. Therefore Burke has written criticism. And feeling this to be true I say criticism must be first in contact with the world for which it is intended. That contact alone can give it life, reality. Nothing from abroad would have the reality for me that native writing of the same quality would have. Eliot or Pound might say to me today: "Read LaForgue!" I might even be tempted to read because I had respect for their intelligence. But their words could not tempt me, force me, accompany me into the reading. I object to appreciative articles on foreign work being written at me from Europe. The environment gets into the writing every time and it is inimical to me. I resent the feel I get from such exercises.

Criticism must originate in the environment it is intended for if it is to be of fullest value. LaForgue in America is not the same man he is in France. Our appreciation recreates him for our special world if it is genuine. His ability to exist under universal conditions is the proof of his genius. Burke has taken what he wanted from the master in order to satisfy his own needs and his needs are the product of his world.

This illustrates again what we mean by contact. The quotation at the end of Burke's present article is a well nigh perfect example of our attitude. LaForgue here tells how he has taken what he finds most suitable to his own wants, what at least he has, and made it *the* thing. It is what the man of force will always do. He can't do anything else either in America or out of it. It is scarcely a matter of the will. It is fate. We are here under certain general conditions, run from them they remain the same. Together they form the only unity we possess. On this basis alone can we afford dispersion of effort, the modern individualistic dispersion. We can afford it under no other condition.

Wind and Fire

R. McAlmon

Azure Gale.

Cold night, with little gusts of winds between my teeth, gulped in my throat, cold night of wind. Cut me! Cut me! Pierce me to the heart and freeze its expectancy to hardness. Do not leave me wind. Do not leave me Darkness.

I can never, never—but I will—I do not want to, I shall refuse—but go—back to the desultory dullness of my warm room—and I shall not sleep. All night long thinking will cut me deeper than your chill—and I will hear you rebelling—I too will be rebelling—

No I am not afraid. I have always been afraid to be one of the timid ones, the uncertain, the cautious ones. No one outside is interested in terror. I am as hard as you wind.

But hardness does not suffice,—there is nothing I would not blaspheme—but Wind, wind, what does blasphemy accomplish for either of us. We must subside. We are no better off than the wailers, and the humble ones—

Nevertheless keep your vicious arrogance. Wear yourself to stillness, to death—do not listen to the careful ones. That is not wisdom they speak. They will too, succumb—

I am cold, cold, so cold that I am frozen to clarity—cold with contemptuous indifference. Your blast breaks into thin sheets of shattered ice—repeatedly in staccato continuousness—unrhythmed, wind—kissing me, clamoring into my skin, biting frantically into my blood.

I know the madness of you, the coldness of you, the resistant insistence—

Wind! Wind! Do not subside. You inevitably shall be made to, but never degrade yourself with ingratitude.

Poor Old Dear

Reality! she's the last word in that, really. You should have heard her the other day when I went into her shop. She was dozing on one of the side benches because no customers came in during those hours of the day, and said she had been thinking of the rats over in Paris, and how they swarmed the street and over peoples bodies in the Bastille. Poor old dear! she has never been in Paris and has no more idea than a spider what a bastille is. Can't read a word. Somebody had told her a story about the rats.

And then right after she exclaimed "O these people round here and their eternal talk, and ideas about life! Life! well, dearie it existed before there were any ideas."

O she's the reallest thing you'll find around that bunch, and that vermilion shock of hair; and the contraptions she calls jewelry that she collects. An eye for colour. She does get things together that should be that way. You must have heard about the time she came romping in one morning laughing and singing out "Hurrah, hurrah, I'm young again; I've been raped." and told about the policeman she had let take her to a dance because life was so dull amongst "us intellectuals".

Poor old Dear! always declares she is an accident; an accident of an old apple orchard that happened one of these moonlight nights.

Village

The saloons are all closed now. Boards are across their doorways. Spiderwebs hang across the broken panes of glass.

Al Wilson would not have cared though if he were alive today. Long before prohibition was ever considered his wife had him blacklisted at all the saloons, and told the grocers not to sell him extracts of any sort; not to sell him anything in fact. She forced him to the cornsilos.

Poor gentle Mrs. Wilson! She had no cornsilo to make her forget her straits. She was a desolate figure, not made for desolation either. To the last she would wear gloves, neatly patched; would go to church every Sunday and march with dignity up the aisle to sing with her quavery soprano in the choir. To the last she would make calls and ask ladies to call upon her. She at least could do the correct thing if Alfred was a town character.

Other men—the tobacco chewers spitting from their benches at the livery stable, the church Deacon Davis whose walk home was ceremonial with hat lifting and circumspect gallantry, and with talks about the new minister for there was never a time when there was not a new minister—the other men, drinkers too but not "addicts" would, between their pool games, and talk about getting a new postoffice for the town, reminisce about the time when the Wilsons were first married. Everybody was so sure Alfred would make congress—so fine a gentleman, and so brilliant a young attorney, "promising, Ha, Ha, Ha, but promises ain't allus kept" Gus the horseshoer would blow out over his tongue of snuff. Poor Al! no getting around the fact that Mrs. Wilson was a charming woman, soft voice and so accomplished a musician—too nice; the ruination of Al!

Now all the Wilsons had was five children, and one of them not quite right. Alfred drunk, it was said, when—O yes, a sad case, a sad case.

The saloons are closed now. Last summer one young attorney shot himself because life was so dull in the old town, and a living so hard to make. "He didn't have liker to cheer him oop like Al Wilson did in his young days" Gus told me, as always, over his cud of Copenhagen snuff.

There may be other restless ones. One boy used to tell me that I was the only one "to understand." Understand? I could see that he was becoming one more of the restless ones—to what end?—but what is the end of an end?

Cobwebs and dusty broken window panes are in so many deserted buildings in the old town. Even the mud-hole in which I learned to swim is dry, life is so dry, dusty dry there.

Jazz Opera Americano

Come now, come now. For Gawd's sake, shiver your spine. Syncopate the spectrum. French horn blast, potato whistle shriek.

One ancestor was a boar tusked dog wolf who howled mad bayings at the moon—a lonely wolf—a vicious hound—a sad brute—but a hellhound for noise:

Show us how you spend the money, spend the money. God man, feel my pulse, dear God—I'm a liar—it is spurting Semitic blood. Niagara rush in my veins with Semitic caution. Show me how the money is spent. Magnificently gorgeously. Highcolours. Peacocks, hummingbirds, pheasants? Nature bah! Spend big money.

In the line was a bull moose who bellowed mating calls forever and ever, mate or no mate, he still had hungers deep as impalpability not to be torn from him however he bellowed—tom tom, a hunters horn, with a high yodel and the rattle of a string of missionary teeth—all in the high wind shriek and the moon splintered to white and vermilion orange dripping, green swirling and a dizzy spectrum and I fainting but never fainted in a swirling vortex of colored rhythms, uneven dissonant and tragic—wild, wild, wildman, why are you shouting wild man? Dance jazzo, swirl me—my legs are bouys on an unsteady ocean of sound.

Young, young—hell no, not youth but energy, and what, sweet blood tattooed Jesus do we do with energy? Strong rushing red blood—what'hell's to be done with it? Desire? Grow sophisticated? . . . My thoughts will not be suppressed however. Set that to music kid. Reality. Give it a shivery tune. Jewish, Chinese, East Indian. Shakety shake, shakety shake—Jazz, Jazz, whirl, wild women, whirl.

Sucked into sound—thrilled voluptuous—and the waves of rhythm carry me away, lap sensuous rhythm tongues about me soul-body-mind, push me, seduce me. And I am willing—anxious for the seduction. Jazzo, Jazzo, swirled and swung into the vermilion, the purple, swinging, swaying, bending, tones—not in the feet moving, not in the body bending, but in the blood leaping to a syncopated rhythm.

High recklessness. What comes after what comes after? Be careless. Sensible cautious—damnfoolishness—with a half pint bottle for six—O yo ho—O yo ho—my ancestors were savage brute vicious ones—the line's diluted—Crack—crackle—lights out—the bulls.

Insistences

There is nothing old in the world because there is no absolute of anything. No two people will see or record a nude in the same way, nor will they anything else. But, what many "artists" do not realize is that we do not have to go on painting nudes, or recording the same conventional subjects. Fashion is not a bad thing at all. But it's hard to conceive of a person's writing worth reading which is not of a different quality than the one suf-

ficiently acclaimed to be fashionable. I suspect that Russianisms, realism, brooding intensities, à la Lawrence Waldo Frank—are passe' for the alert. Thought torturings! Sullen brooding among sophisticated ideas! but cerebration and intelligence have little in common. To cerebrally brood upon reality does not prove the ability to discern it; it may result in a withdrawal which simply punishes the spirit of the withdrawer. Intelligence, perhaps, protects the organism it resides in, and increases its sensitivity to high class experience. Art I suspect is the intelligent effort to express energy in some form, rather than an intellectual effort to be imaginative or "esthetic."

The drama served a day; metrical verse served a day; perhaps also did the novel. But what service does it do at the moment for esthetic impact, psychological insight, sociological clarification, impassioned sweep, or intelligent recordation of reaction to experience. An art form must discover; the novel plot form is wearisome as well as untrue to real eventfulness.

Well, we like magnificence in this country; we like to see the money spent. The "infinite capacity for labor" nail will not rust away. Volume of opinions weight more than quality. For the perception one would hardly read why select from the innumerable novels written by persons who felt compelled to produce a trilogy of a novel every so often, as writers. The impulse back of them all is social unrest, life-protest that does not drive toward discovery or any expression but frustration. If these impulses managed to express themselves in some terms other than those of lostness amid the brutish crush of societary forces, and tedious, dull, lostness, they would justify their expression perhaps. But we do want either esthetic discovery, clarification, or impassioned sweep, and think vainly to locate a novel written in the last ten years that possesses any of these.

That is not an over-sophisticated viewpoint either. Of the vast reading public there is not one per cent that would read most contemporary novels were it not a fashion—to have something to talk about through cigarette smoke while the tea is getting cold along with ideas on the social revolution. Dell, Lewis, Anderson, Gale, Lawrence—Why do people read their books? Not for wit, humour; not for beauty; not for intelligent content. And how soggy some of them are, particularly Frank who adds jewish softness to Russian cringe.

The moon, lilies, mysticism, and rhapsody are not the only things that are outfashioned in art. Certain things having been done, cannot be done over and over again by "artists."

Fire Bug

Ho, you Christmas Tree burning in the street, casting the light of your flames upon the carcass of that horse which died of the cold or of old age—or just died perhaps because he wanted too—you are burning clear and clean. How does it happen? Green needles snap to bright orange flames—pale bright orange—or is it blue, or purple, who knows what the colour of a flame is—or of a flame's aura—and of all auras of its heats irradiations that force the cold out and away from all sides of it.

Fir tree on fire, I wish your conflagration would spread catch the buildings around you, leap to the church spires run along the telephone wires to the skyscrapers—burn, burn, burn, keep burning clean and clear and let me stand. Your bright flames burning all civilization to clean ashes. All moralities, and all non-moralities; all traditions and all rebellions. I want to be clear with emptiness—to be bending over where the fire has been burying my hands in clean ashes that blow away in the cold air when I lift my palms opened upward to the sky. Ashes—beautiful ashes—and around me, nothing, nothing, nothing—and the wind will sweep even the sky away. Then there will be only I with my wishes, and they will be the reality and the only reality, and I will be cleansed.

O there is nobody else I care about, fir tree on fire. Burn and with your clear fire, bring me that desire for a Christmas present and whenever—it will not be belated.

The Accident

William Carlos Williams

Death is difficult for the senses to alight on. There is no help from familiarity with the location. There is a cold body to be put away but what is that? The life has gone out of it and death has come into it. Whither? Whence? The sense has no footspace.

After twelve days struggling with a girl to keep life in her, losing, winning, it is not easy to give her up. One has studied her inch by inch, one has grown used to the life in her. It is natural.

She lies gasping her last: eyes rolled up till only the whites show, lids half open, mouth agape, skin a cold bluish white, pasty, hard to the touch—as the body temperature drops the tissues congeal. One is definitely beaten.

—Shall I call you when it happens or will you come again?—Call me.

It is the end!

It is spring. Sunshine fills the outdoors, great basins of it dumped among factories standing beside open fields, into back lots, upon a rutted baseball field, into a sewage ditch running rainwater, down a red dirt path to four goats.

What are you stopping here for! To show him the four goats. Come on. No? Ah!—She blushes and hides her face. Down the road come three boys in long pants. Good God, good God! How a man will waste himself. She is no more than a piece of cake to be eaten by anyone. Her hips beside me have set me into a fever. I was up half the night last night, my nerves have the insulation worn off them. But—Fastened in her seat because three boys may pass near her! They may even look at her. She knows that they will. She will pick one and play him against the rest. They will try to remain three; she will try to make them one and one and one. And I? Am I mad or starved—or tired out? What is fatigue but an opportunity for illuminating diversions? It is like sickness, a sign of normality. Like death a sign of life.

The path follows above the gully, red in the flamy green of the new grass. The goats are tied by long cords, one to each of two solitary old trees at the path's end, one to the right one to the left. The others, a white and a black one are in the rough ground beyond. The white one, has its tether fastened to a circular block of turned steel with a hole in the center—the railroad is hard by; the other's is tied to an irregular brown stone.

—See the nanny goats!—I approach the smallest goat timidly. It is the one fastened to the large tree to the left of the path. It has small but sharp black horns. It draws away beginning to wind its tie rope around the tree. It's hair is long, coarse, fawn-colored, fading into white over the face and under the belly where the udder hangs; the two pinkish teats pointing slightly forward. I back the creature around the tree till it can go no further, the cord all wound up. Gingerly I take it by the ear. It tries to crowd between me and the tree. I put out my right knee to stop it. It lowers its head. I seize a horn. It struggles. I find I can hold it. I call the baby.

He isn't afraid. He lays his face against the goat's hairy cheek. Ah! I warn him away watching the sharp point of the free horn. I think of the child's moist gelatinous eyes. I look at the goat's eyes. They are round, large and grey, with a wide blue-black slit horizontal in the center, the striae of the iris folded into it like threads round a buttonhole.

The child strokes the goat's flanks. The hair is not smooth, there is straw and fragments of dried leaves between the horns, an awkward place for a goat to get at. The nozzle is hairy, the nose narrow, the moist black skin at the tip, slit either side by curled nostrils, vibrates sensitively. A goat.

I push the baby away and drive the goat around the tree again until the rope is entirely unwound. The beast immediately finds new violent green tufts of grass in some black mud half under some old dried water-soaked weedstalks. Thrusting down her slender face she starts to crop away unselectively at that which a moment before she did not know how to achieve.

To the right of the path the other goat comes forward boldly but stops short and sniffs, stretching out its neck: prop for the nose. It ventures closer. Gna-ha-ha-ha-ha! (as in hat). Very softly. The small goat answers. Also grey eyes but the body is marked in a new fashion. Zebra-like two black stripes down the two jowls between which, tawny and black bands down forehead and muzzle. Ears black fringed. A broad and shaggy black stripe down the backbone to the tail. Starting down from this on either flank a broad white band round and under from side to side. Behind and in front of which the flanks are the same tawny yellow as the face.

The baby goes up to the goat and pats its face before I can get to him to draw him back. The goat is impassive, her eyes fixed on me. I take the baby's hand and draw him away. He strains to touch the goat.

The two other goats look up from time to time from a distance then go on nibbling, pulling at the grass with short jerks of the head.

I grip the child's wrist and hand and drag him back between the fields of green flames and the painted gully along the red dirt path.

As we approach the car the baby stumbles on a flange of the gutter. He falls forward on his hands. For a moment his feet leave the ground and he remains poised with feet and buttocks in the air as if he were about to stand on his hands as a circus performer would. Then his arms give way and his face goes to the dirt.

He cries. His mouth is circled with grit. Fortunately the front of his heavy wool cap has spared his brow from injury.

I sit on the step of the car and taking out my clean handkerchief I wipe his face. In the windows of the Franco American Chemical Co. across the way six women have appeared in two windows, four in one and two in the other. They watch the baby, wondering if he is hurt. They linger to look out. They open the windows. Their faces are bathed with sunlight. They continue to strain out at the window. They laugh and wave their hands.

Over against them in an open field a man and a boy on their hands and knees are planting out slender green slips in the fresh dirt, row after row.

We enter the car. The baby waves his hand. Good bye!

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WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

ROBERT MCALMON

EZRA POUND

CREDIT POWER AND DEMOCRACY, by Maj. C. H. Douglas, and A. R. Orange. Pub. by Cecil Palmer, Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London W. C. 1; price 7/6.

A moderate reform is necessary if any civilization is to be kept up. I don't care if so moderate a system as Douglas' go through in its entirety, so long as his ideas become known, and thereby act as a deterrent, i. e., prevent those who now hold the credit power, from flagrant use of it—war making, etc.

The symbolist position, artistic aloofness from world affairs, is no good *now*. It may have assisted several people to write and work in the 80's, but it is not, in 1921, opportune or apposite.

Pour la Patrie, comme tu veux, mais pour une societe anonyme de Petrole : mourir! Pourquoi?

In a world politically governed by imbeciles and knaves, there remain two classes of people *responsible*: the financial powers and the men who can think with some clarity.

(Don't imagine that I think economics interesting—not as Botticelli or Picasso is interesting. But at present they, as the reality under political camouflage, are interesting as a gun muzzle aimed at one's own head is "interesting," when one can hardly see the face of the gun holder and is wholly uncertain as to his temperament and intentions.)

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

ANNOUNCEMENT AND SAMPLE POEM.

Henceforth the writings of William Carlos Williams will be offered for sale at prices fixed by the author. Prospective purchasers will apply through CONTACT which at present is the sole agent. A minimum price of fifty dollars will be charged for all poems, those of most excellence, as in all commercial exchange, being rated higher in price. Critical essays, imaginative prose and plays will be offered at prices varying according to the length and success of the work. The artist will however continue to contribute his work gratis to whatever publication, in his own opinion, furthers the interests of good writing in the United States.

ST. FRANCIS EINSTEIN OF THE DAFFODILS.

In March's black boat
Einstein and April
have come at the time in fashion
up out of the sea
through the rippling daffodils
in the foreyard of
the dead Statue of Liberty
whose stonearms
are powerless against them
the Venusremembering wavelets
breaking into laughter—

Sweet Land of Liberty,
at last, in the end of time,
Einstein has come by force of
complicated mathematics
among the tormented fruit trees
to buy freedom
for the daffodils
till the unchained orchards
shake their tufted flowers—
Yiddishe springtime!

At the time in fashion
Einstein has come
bringing April in his head
up from the sea
in Thomas March Jefferson's
black boat bringing
freedom under the dead
Statue of Liberty
to free the daffodils in
the water which sing:
Einstein has remembered us
Savior of the daffodils!

A twig for all the dead!
shout the dark maples
in the tearing wind, shaking
pom-poms of green flowers—
April Einstein has come
to liberate us
here among
the Venusremembering daffodils
Yiddishe springtime of the mind
and a great pool of rainwater
under
the blossomy peachtrees.

April Einstein
through the blossomy waters
rebellious, laughing
under liberty's dead arm
has come among the daffodils
shouting
that flowers and men
were created
relatively equal.
Oldfashioned knowledge is
dead under the blossoming peachtrees.

Einstein, tall as a violet
in the latticearbor corner
is tall as a blossomy
peartree! The shell
of the world is split
and from under the sea
Einstein has emerged
triumphant, St. Francis
of the daffodils!

O Samos, Samos
dead and buried. Lesbia is
a black cat in the freshturned
garden. All dead.
All flesh that they have sung
is long since rotten.
Sing of it no longer.
Sing of Einstein's
Yiddishe peachtrees, sing of
sleep among the cherryblossoms.
Sing of wise newspapers
that quote the great mathematician:
A little touch of
Einstein in the night—

Side by side the young and old
trees take the sun together,
the maples, green and red
according to their kind,
yellowbells and the
vermillion quinceflower together—
The tall peartree with
foetid blossoms
sways its high topbranches
with contrary motions and green
has come out of the wood
upon them also—

The mathematics grow complex:
there are both pinkflowered
and coralflowered peachtrees
in the bare chickenyard
of the old negro
with white hair who hides
poisoned fish-heads
here and there
where stray cats find them—
find them—find them.

O spring days, swift
and mutable, wind blowing
four ways, hot and cold.
Now the northeast wind,
moving in fogs, leaves the grass
cold and dripping. The night
is dark but in the night
the southeast wind approaches.
It is April and Einstein!
The owner of the orchard
lies in his bed
with the windows wide
and throws off his covers
one by one.

It is Einstein
out of complicated mathematics
among the daffodils—
spring winds blowing
four ways, hot and cold,
shaking the flowers!

MARIANNE MOORE

KORA IN HELL, by William Carlos Williams.

“The unready would deny tough cords to the wind because they cannot split a storm endwise and wrap it upon spools.”

This statement exemplifies a part of what gives to the work of William Carlos Williams, “a character by itself.” It is a concise, energetic disgust, a kind of intellectual hauteur which one usually associates with the French.

The acknowledgment of our debt to the imagination, constitutes, perhaps, his positive value. Compression, colour, speed, accuracy and that restraint of instinctive craftsmanship which precludes anything dowdy or laboured—it is essentially these qualities that we have in his work. Burke speaks of the imagination as the most intensive province of pleasure and pain and defines it as a creative power of the mind, representing at pleasure the images of things in the order and manner in which they were received by the senses or in combining them in a new manner and according to a different order. Dr. Williams in his power over the actual, corroborates this statement. Observe how, by means of his rehabilitating power of the mind, he is able to fix the atmosphere of a moment:

“It is still warm enough to slip from the woods into the lake’s edge . . . and snake’s eggs lie curling in the sun on the lonely summit.”

“Calvary Church with its snail’s horns up sniffing the dawn—
o’ the wrong side!”

“Always one leaf at the peak twig swirling, swirling and apples rotting in the ditch.”

“By the brokenness of his composition,” he writes, “the poet makes himself master of a certain weapon which he could possess himself of in no other way.” We do not so much feel the force of this statement as we feel that there is in life, as there is in Sir Francis Bacon—in the ability to see resemblances in things which are dissimilar; in the ability to see such differences, a special kind of imagination is required, which Dr. Williams has. Despite his passion for being himself and his determination not to be at the mercy of “schoolmasters,” it is only one who is academically sophisticated who could write:

“Fatigued as you are, watch how the mirror sieves out the extraneous,”

and:

“Of what other thing is greatness composed than a power to annihilate half truths for a thousandth part of accurate understanding.”

“Often,” he says, “a poem will have merit because of some one line or even one meritorious word. So it hangs heavily on its stem but still secure, the tree unwilling to release it.”

Such an observation certainly is not the result of pure intuition or of any informally, semi-consciously exercised mental energy.

It is not, after all, the naive but the authentic upon which he places value. To the bona fide artist, affectation is degradation and in his effort to "annihilate half truths," Dr. Williams is hard, discerning, implacable and deft. If he rates audacity too high as an aesthetic asset, there can be no doubt that he has courage of the kind which is a necessity and not merely an admired accessory. Discerning the world's hardness, his reply is the reply of Carl Sandburg's bol weevil to threats of sand, hot ashes and the river: "That'll be ma HOME! That'll be ma HOME!"

"Where does this down hill turn up again?" he says:

"Driven to the wall you'll put claws to your toes and make a ladder of smooth bricks."

Though restive under advice, he is resigned under the impersonal, inevitable attrition of life.

"One need not be cast down," he says, "because he cannot cut onyx into a ring to fit a lady's finger. . . . There is neither onyx nor porphyry on these roads—only brown dirt. For all that, one may see his face in a flower along it—even in this light. . . . Walk in the curled mud crusts to one side, hands hanging. Ah well."

To discuss one's friends in print may or may not be necessitated by fealty to art but whether there is beauty or not in Dr. Williams' discussion of persons as there is in his discussion of life—in citing the idiosyncracies of friends, note his calmness:

"B. pretends to hate most people, . . . but that he really goes to this trouble I cannot imagine."

Additional marks of health are to be found in his use of idiom. He says:

"If a woman laughs a little loudly one always thinks that way of her."

"Throw two shoes on the floor and see how they'll lie if you think it's all one way."

The sharpened faculties which require exactness, instant satisfaction and an underpinning of truth are too abrupt in their activities sometimes to follow; but the niceness and effect of vigor for which they are responsible, are never absent from Dr. Williams' work and its crisp exterior is one of its great distinctions. He again reminds one of the French. John Burroughs says of French drivers of drays and carts, "They are not content with a plain matter-of-fact whip as an English or American labourer would be, but it must be a finely modeled stalk, with a long tapering lash, tipped with the best silk snapper."

"It is silly to go into a "puckersnatch," Dr. Williams says, "because some brass-button-minded nincompoop in Kensington flies off the handle and speaks openly about our United States prize poems."

In the following passage, the words "black and peculiar" would seem to be the snapper:

"A mother will love her children most grotesquely. . . . She will be most willing toward that daughter who thwarts her most and not toward the little kitchen helper. So where one is mother to any great number of people he will love best perhaps some child whose

black and peculiar hair is an exact replica of that of the figure in Velasques' Infanta Maria Theresa or some Italian matron whose largeness of manner takes in the whole street."

Despite Dr. Williams' championing of the school of ignorance, or rather of no school but experience, there is in his work the authoritativeness, the wise silence which knows schools and fashions well enough to know that completeness is further down than professional intellectuality and modishness can go.

"Lamps carry far, believe me," he says, "in lieu of sunshine."

"What can it mean to you that a child wears pretty clothes and speaks three languages or that its mother goes to the best shops? . . . Men . . . buy finery and indulge in extravagant moods in order to piece out their lack with other matter."

"Kindly stupid hands, kindly coarse voices, . . . infinitely detached, infinitely beside the question . . . and night is done and the green edge of yesterday has said all it could."

"In middle life the mind passes to a variegated October. This is the time youth in its faulty aspirations has set for the achievement of great summits. But having attained the mountain top one is not snatched into a cloud but the descent proffers its blandishments quite as a matter of course. At this the fellow is cast into a great confusion and rather plaintively looks about to see if any has fared better than he."

Dr. Williams' wisdom, however, is not absolute and he is sometimes petulant.

"Nowadays poets spit upon rhyme and rhetoric," he says. His work provides examples of every rhetorical principle insisted on by rhetoricians and one wonders upon what ground he has been able to persuade himself that poets spit upon rhyme? Possibly by rhetoric, he means balderdash; in this case then, we are merely poorer by one, of proofs for his accuracy.

"It is folly," he says, "to accept remorse as a criticism of conduct."

One's manners, good or bad, are conventionalized instincts and conduct as a combination of manners and volition, predicates whatever is the result of it, so remorse is automatically a criticism of conduct; but Dr. Williams is essentially a poet. It is true, as he says, that "by direct onslaught or by some back road of the intention the gifted will win the recognition of the world." His book is alive with meaning; in it, "thoughts are trees" and "leaves load the branches." But one who sets out to appraise him, has temerity, since he speaks derisively of the wish of certain of his best friends to improve his work and, after all, the conflict between the tendency to aesthetic anarchy and the necessity for self imposed discipline must take care of itself.

As for leaving nothing unsaid—or to be accurate, something unsaid—there is no topic which a thoughtful person would refuse to discuss if gain were to result; but so far as one can see, the peculiar force of Dr. Williams' work does not gain by an allusion to topics

of which the average person never thinks unless inescapably for humanitarian reasons. Dr. Williams is too sincere to wish to be fashionable and that one so rich in imagination should have to be thrifty in the use of poetic material is preposterous. One's perspicacity here meets a stone wall.

So disdainful, so complex a poet as Dr. Williams, receives at best half treatment from the average critic or from the ambitious critic, such untruthful, half specific approbation as, "Ah, quite deep; I see to the bottom." This is to be expected. There is in Dr. Williams an appetite for the essential and in how many people may one find it? How many poets, old or new, have written anything like "January Morning in *Al Que Quiere*," like the second paragraph of Improvisation XVII in the present volume, and pre-eminently, the "Portrait of the Author" in a recent number of CONTACT? Withholding comment upon the title, this poem is a super-achievement. It preserves the atmosphere of a moment, into which the impertinence of life cannot intrude. In the sense conveyed, of remoteness from what is detestable, in the effect of balanced strength, in the flavor of newness in presentation, it is unique.

KENNETH BURKE

VER RENATUS ORBIS EST.

No, I shall not go and look out of the window;
A city of five million mucous excitements;
I know of a pond now in Ohio
Where before bed some students are sitting
Spring! calling us to the major cycle of conception.

Timor mortis versus taedium vitae;
Noises from a distance without clarified meaning;
Hot flesh massed dissatisfied in the movies
Accepting the used-up breath in silence;
Spring! calling us to the major cycle of conception.

Deep buried wombs growing restless;
Dark sperm pressing against its prison;
Halleluia! let cathode and anode be united.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

SAMPLE PROSE PIECE.

THE THREE LETTERS.

America, since his boyhood, had stood before the heated imagination of Evan Dionysius Evans as a virginal young woman—inclined, of course, to grant important favors to certain individuals of special distinction. She was of about his own age and appeared often to him at night gleaming and naked. To Evan Dionysius Evans America meant one thing: the United States. For her his feet touched the ground. Never once did he associate his madly erotic adventures among the girls of the seventh and eighth grades with this figure. Though baffled by stupidity and coquetry at every new sally he made, in the woods, in the rye-field—blinded by deceit, tortured by vulgarity at its emptiest, he had the hardihood to smile at the thwarting he got:

Once he saw Georgie, the black cook, through a crack, bathing before a white china basin on the floor in the attic.

At seventeen Evans was thoroughly disgusted with everything, thoroughly schooled in the dangers from syph, maternity, heart-break and the clap and wrote a long love poem, about the Passaic River and an old woman, which Orick Johns, dear Orick, called great and Ezra Pound printed in his Catholic Anthology. The Wanderer, it can be found also in my book, *Al Que Quiere*, Four Seas Co., Boston.

At thirty-five Evan Dionysius Evans met, in the flesh, the Old Woman he had praised. It seemed to him like the Old Testament come true. She was in the Tombs at the time on a charge of petty larceny and wrote to him out of a clear sky asking for help. On the day he visited her she was acquitted. He took her to breakfast at a small restaurant on Sixth Avenue just off Eighth Street. Quietly they ate their first and only meal together. As always in such places the coffee was very poor but the old creature before our hero filled his soul with a strange rest. He looked into her eyes and she into his across the Atlantic Ocean-white porcelain table while she talked and he listened till their heads melted together and went up in a vermillion balloon through the ceiling drawing Europe and America after them.

She earned a pittance rolling cigarettes in a factory, rolling out the words with a strong foreign accent. Her front teeth had been broken by a woman who had quarreled with her second husband whom she had bet her first she would get, having lost her virginity behind the scenes of a vaudeville house, not wishing to be different from the rest nor like her sister who stayed at home where the family doctor used to come and predict genius, but without training one cannot be a thief and get away with it, so when there is no posing to be done—America being a bastard country that knows nothing

of its debt to the artist—cigarettes amuse the fingers with pennies and that's why the heavy rings, though she struck so unexpectedly, over the corpse of Marcel, who probably did it.

She lived in the most unspeakably filthy tenement in the city. Romantically, mystically dirty, of grimy walls, dark, gaslit halls and narrow stairs, it smelt of black waterclosets, one to a floor, with low gasflame always burning and torn newspapers trodden in the wet. Waves of stench thickened on each landing as one moved up. She was a Bohemian and went by the name of La Baronne. Close up, a reek stood out purple from her body, separating her forever from the clean muslin souls of Yankeedom. It was that peculiar, pungent smell of dirt and sweat, strong of the armpit. La Baronne had filled her room with bits of glass, wood, metal, paper and other decorative refuse collected from the street.

There she lived with three dogs and her clean soul. Let America be damned or do better. Protected by a barrier of filth and refuse against the spoiling grey bath of Methodist-Episcopal sunlight, flaming and flaring about the virginal spirit of Vesta Bottomly, given in the bonds of holy matrimony this day to Arthur J. Friggard of Schenectady, N. Y. The bride lost the heel of her left shoe at the tube station; lost, it becomes a jewel, a ruby in La Baronne's miscellany.

To the eye of Evan Dionysius Evans La Baronne had about her a strong charm. She was the fulfilment of a wish. Even the queen she held herself to be in her religious fervors of soul, so in actuality she was to him: America personified in the filth of its own imagination. This led to the first letter:

With a mind prone upon the sands of his native New Jersey he wrote to the poor lady: I love you.

It was his habit to do this sort of thing. Against so many he would rub his match without lighting it that at the unexpected flare he would cry out when he did. To her kind only could his mind go to be kindled. It had always been so. (See, *Portrait of a Woman in Bed*, in *Al Que Quiere*.) In the same manner he had cried out, I love you, in the direction of his own unbelievable grandmother, the wolf of the family. (See, *Dedication for a Plot of Ground*, *Al Que Quiere*.)

La Baronne gulped at his note like a church at the sunlight, trying to drink it in through her colored windows. She too loved!

O America, sweet land of liberty, Evan Dionysius Evans licked down the fragrant *poi* with a huge relish. Into the pits in the ground it had gone sweet and creamy and out it had come suited to famine until the taste had superseded all others—rancid. Well, it expressed what he had to say of his own country and the more so the better. It was in any case true of La Baronne and all men seek the truth. He, Evan D. Evans, felt what it means to be happy. Everything about the other gave him joy: her broken teeth, her syphilis, everything; it was part of it, the more so the better. She was.

One day he went to see her and said he liked peaches. She was furious but said if he would kiss her it would be alright. He did. She was very sober and breathed deep. It was the trade wind that bellied out her sails. The old sloop leaned far over once again

until her scuppers were awash and began to regain headway, first paralleling the sands, then jibing with a crash out to sea. Evan Dionysius Evans was conscious, on his part, of two things: the very jagged edge of La Baronne's broken incisor pressing hard upon his lip and the stale smell rising from her body. Drawing back a little he outlined his emotion in two accurate phrases. She, appearing to fall in with his desire, though confessedly aheat, agreed to hunt beside him. It was agreed.

They sat and watched a heavy summer rain fall in the paved court outside her window, making a flicker of grey, oblique lines on the brick wall opposite. To Evans it appeared that heavenly acacia flowers were falling. He, like all good Americans, was an excellent listener; he listened while she spoke long and well of her past and future.

A month later he went again to see her—for the last time. She was not in. He left a basket of peaches at her door. It was not what she wanted. She wrote him an infuriated letter. On phallus wings the letters began to rain on Evan Dionysius Evans. All soberness had left the now maddened old lady. She had suddenly become completely doubled up. Gripping her own shoulders from behind she made a ball of herself and rolled from side to side of her narrow room, bumping against the walls, meanwhile managing to seize paper and scribble down her bloodygreen sensations from awkward positions. The flux was continuous. Infused with a desperate agility La Baronne filled the mails with literature. It was indeed love. Hundreds of letters and cards attested it. But Evan Dionysius Evans opened none of them. Why should he, of all men, break in upon God's work? One cleverly disguised packet he did unseal quite unconsciously. It was a full length portrait of La Baronne in moth-eaten furs.

High into the air the old lady bounced herself, turning and turning head over heels in the dawn and at noon as at night till dripping with holy nectar from the stars, naked as the all-holy sun himself, she mocked the dull Americans. Little had Evan Dionysius Evans realized the power in one kiss of his lips but he was contented with the work he had done and stood and waited. With a terrific swing she tried to strike him in the face but dizzy from spinning her fist bounced from his neck. He wondered why she had struck him with her left hand. It maybe that she is left-handed, he thought and asked her if she wanted to be struck too. But she said that she was a weak woman. Evan Dionysius Evans had his fist all doubled up ready to lift it toward the stars to carry up there anything it might chance to meet on the way but God sent a messenger between the two boxers.

In her room, the first day, she had shown him an article she was preparing for some monthly, to come out monthly. She wanted to quote a certain very old Latin proverb about Jove and a cow. She asked him to look it up for her, which he did, asking his brother who had a friend who had a classical dictionary to do it for him: *Quod licet Jovi non licet bovi*. He copied it out neatly and sent it to her.

This was the second letter.

The final letter came long after. I want you, Evan Dionysius Evans, she had hissed. Well, you can't have me, he said, like that. Then I'll publish the letters, she whispered. Be sure you don't miss any, he rejoined. You said you loved me, she replied. What a good memory you have, he answered. It flashed across his mind that they might possibly get the act put on at The Palace. Then she bounced herself from his neck. In this way the Greek gods would sometimes get themselves created out of each other's thighs or shoulders. Eve, too, from Adam's brisket.

Ah, well, sighed Evan D. Evans, it is the same old world. And he went in to finish his supper. But it's always well to find out what the women want, he chewed, at no matter what cost. Bouncing, bouncing over the swamps and fills! Surely his desires were scattered and varied. Or is the recoil that sends the ball into the air anything more than the sphere regained? Flattened on one side by the impact of the fall it suddenly reasserts itself. And the only alternative is to fall down the watercloset—Kodak as you go, he commented to himself reflectively.

Bouncing from the neck of our hero the old lady returned to a spiritual union with her first husband, composing several pretty poems to him. Deeply she regretted his death. Her desires grew even more imperious. Seizing a pen, her whole body bouncing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, her imagination bodied forth her lust, or whatever it was that moored up out of her soul, and she called on Evan Dionysius Evans to leave the world of his private life and come to her. The stench of her chambered slum arose like the smell of a rose to her nostrils. Filth stopped back in the pipes rose to her throat, bolted from her ears and her eyes like livid fountains from a broken sewer main. Once more, in a final outburst, she compelled her wellworn pen to set down an abusive letter to our hero, that opened and closed like a roundshell clam in the mud, throbbing, quivering, protruding and withdrawing its obscene neck—

What in God's name *does* Europe want of America, pondered Evan D. Evans after reading this letter. God knows, the old lady does herself credit, he continued admiringly. She knows what art means.

But a great light had broken in Evan's turgid soul. Showers of yellow and purple sparks fell from him and strewed his earth for at least five minutes. A rocket had gone up and was descending. His soul had burst in midair, he saw a pair of hands dropping below the horizon, one to the east and one to the west. A phoenix was singing—

The third letter was composed in a moment: You damned stinking old woman, it ran, you dirty old bitch—or something of the sort.

At least, ventured Evan D. Evans to himself, the American hussey has a great future before her.

ALVA N. TURNER

TO TWO MOTHERLESS KITTENS.

You have slipped from the barn
Into the potato patch
To cry on my heart with hunger
While you trample my foot
And get in the way of my hoe.

I see your dead mother
At the foot of the hill
Where I left her yesterday.
I refused to bury her;
For I preferred that her grave
Be of grass and flowers and sunshine
On the brink of the waterbrook.

My hermit-home misses the presence
Of your young mother;
For she caressed the loneliness
With companionship
And became the living sound
Of a dead silence.

You remind me of her
When she was a kitten,
And I laugh at you with a sob;
For you are the comedy of a cat
And the tragedy of a man.

The sugar-water with melted lard
Which I gave you,
With a spoon,
Is not sufficient:
Your brother is already dead.
Why did God give you an existence
And deny your young mother life
And perplex you with her absence?

Why has he put you on my heart
Which was already burdened
And perplexed?

THE ITALICS ARE GOD'S

"Kora in Hell: Improvisations." William Carlos Williams. Boston: Four Seas Company.

" . . . What does Dr. Williams say in effect? That literature is a bad job and humanity in a bad way. This has been said before, ever since Solomon. Any novel way of putting it is merely a dodge for wrapping up platitudes in a different kind of statement. *Literature, however, depends not on the kind but on the degree of statement . . .*"

The Freeman, 18 May, 1921

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

ROBERT McALMON

CONTACT AND GENIUS.

Contact, is, like most words, subject to narrow interpretations of meaning. However, it is as suitable as many another for the name of a publication. The editors of *Contact* can shoulder no responsibility for assumptions regarding their meaning not based on what they, with a fair degree of clarity, have said. Before a writer "arrives" he establishes his own particular apprehension of life which, utterly apart from his manner of writing, is strictly personal, temperamental and rooted within him as an individual so that no literary influence can obliterate it. An idea which we have held uppermost is that a man's chief significance as a writer is wrapped up in his maintenance of a conscious contact with this sense of "locality." An organism sufficiently independent to produce creative work is not partly expressed by de Gourmont, partly by Huysmans, partly by Whitman.

But having predicated the contact idea we may prefer in literature certain things: apprehensions of experience that have not the clouded exuberance, the romantic pessimism or the sentimental-intelligent quality which marks much contemporary work. Lady lyricists urged to spontaneous and inevitable expression; boys with gusto; morbid and ecstatic rhapsodists; misery yowlers; grey mediocratists; tedious realists; tiredly cynical adolescents and Oxfordian but nevertheless devilishly subtle satyrists—may or may not have established their individual apprehensions of life but one fears for many of them that they have been otherwise incapacitated. They are too interested in being poets or literary figures or keeping the public informed to have time to clarify their own perceptions. It is not improbable that because of the vogue or psycho-analysis and the quick efflorescence of feminism—also Semiticism—many have confused sentiency and "sensitivity" with religious emotionalism, psychoanalytical inhibition prodding and feminine-hysterical fetishism.

We may be quite in sympathy with experimentation—use of lower case letters in place of capitals; we approve of embroidery, tapistry and bead-work and yet we hardly believe that such experimentation will force poesy to any forward leaps, though the new forms are no less to be respected than the older ones, the sonnet, etc., if any form must be in itself the cause for respect.

There are any number of ways to state *Contact*'s "theory": One writes to discover rather than to write; one attempts to clarify one's intelligent understanding of things in the universe by setting them down rather than to express a social or religious hope, etc. In fact the contact is first with topnotch comprehension rather than with locality or race or mere environment, the qualities of which are revealed without conscious attempt to reveal in the writing of a man who goes into himself for his product. Very true. But that which is unconsciously revealed must later be consciously apprehended and in the second use a new force enters.

All of which it is perhaps quite useless to reiterate, something the particular being saying it would not say unless he were a person of "reckless enthusiasm," "illiteracy" or "slapdash impulse" and a certain degree of "madness" not to say of "youth that needs ten years background."

There is but one type of genius which we find worth praising—the word is not used in any exalted sense—and that type is the genius of clearly rational ability to observe with a minimum of personal emotion other than an emotion of satisfaction in comprehension and discovery. The mystical exuberants, the social proclaimers, the cerebral brooders, the ones intent upon mediocrity and tedium are themselves interesting and authentic phenomena but they offer nothing except to those who respond to existence in an exotic manner identical to theirs.

One cannot take it upon oneself to judge, but whether it be a social phenomenon, an after war effect, a domination of the art market by Jews, the rasp of contemporary life upon people of sensibility but no too-clear intelligence, the fact is that at the present moment, much writing, and painting too for that matter, is murky and cloying with mysticism rampant, or dumbly felt if not articulate. One can understand the intense psychologic complexity and limitations of Waldo Frank on racial grounds; of D. H. Lawrence because of sexual difficulty; but it is difficult to believe that Sherwood Anderson is not what he is more because of Whitman, and of Russian literature, than because of his having his own defined apprehension of life. The rythm of the soil movement in America sweeps many to the apex of its wave, upon which apex they are prevented from being as clear-eyed as they might by the luminosity of mystical spray.

There is a tendency in America to boast of having read little. It is not a bad tendency, if writers making such a boast reveal in their work that they are feeling or thinking their own way through. But when their writing reveals them subjects to the genius method of perceiving such authors as they do read, it can be wished that they would read more, and include in their readings the works of some of the classics notable for their clarity of understanding. The quality of Voltaire, Sterne, Montaigne, many Elizabethans, and Greeks, is no less "modern" in its apprehension of life than that of Dostoeffsky, Whitman, Hardy, de Gourmont, and nearer-today writers; and the quality of the former is less strictly limited emotionally and intellectually, either by hopeful-hopelessness or by too-entirely cerebral imaginings. The movement of much later day literature has been toward intensity, with a sweep that carried with it little attempt at clarification.

There is this about people who do not read, but who do write: their writing responds restrictedly to atmospheric pressure, while they overlook the fact that social intercourse is as possible in reading, as it is in a conversation over a table with persons not so acutely observant, not so keen at detecting value, as the intelligence which produced a "classic."

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

SAMPLE CRITICAL STATEMENT.

COMMENT.

CONTACT has never in the least intimated that the American artist in preparing his position "should forget all about Europe." On the contrary the assertion has been that he should acquaint himself with everything pertaining to his wish that he can gather from European sources. He will in fact go about where he pleases and take or leave whatever necessity guides him to decide upon.

In exploiting his position in America the artist, aware of the universal physical laws of his craft, will however take off only from the sensual accidents of his immediate contacts. This achievement of a *locus*, Contact has maintained, is the one thing which will put his work on a comparable basis with the best work created abroad. Before the approach to anything of a serious character there must be this separate implantation of the sperm in each case.

Nothing will be forwarded, as it is persistently coughed at us for our children to believe, by a conscious regard for traditions which have arrived at their perfection by force of the stimuli of special circumstance foreign to us, the same which gave them birth and dynamise them to-day. Paris for painting, if you will, but it is the genius of the locality; the painting which centers in Paris is French painting, no matter by whom produced, Spaniard or Greek, French painting, long implanted and constantly held to the living circumstance by men of genius. Though no painting to-day can compare with it and though all must study it who will paint, it must be understood as French, the product of a locality, before it can be fully comprehended, a thing which, by every conceivable impulse of life converging immediately upon it from the French environment, has been brought into flower. It is living evidence of the essential nature of the local contact in art.

To attempt to live and to paint in New York by force of the same impulses which animate Paris is the occupation of adulatory provincials, to speak of "art" under these circumstances is the mark of our shallowness. The profit from French work begins when the student realizes that it is a special, a foreign, a peculiar growth, in its best examples every part discoverably related to some local turn of color or contour and so alone addressed to reality, able to be what it is, a living thing.

It is not art but French art that one goes to Paris to study, and one returns to Tokyo or New York to practice, not art, not French art but—to adore the gods of the locality as the French have taught one to adore them. It is this alone that could produce work of any use to Paris. African wood carving.

All that I have to say is after all just that the artist might profit largely by an American experience—if he exists. If Americans are to be blessed with important work it will be through intelligent, informed contact with the locality which alone can infuse it with reality.

American periodic literature, magazines which represent no position taken but which offer at best certain snippets in juxtaposition, implying that when one piece is like the other both are good, this is the worst in the local environment carried to the logical conclusion. The worst of the anthology method in magazine making is that, in taking no definite regard to position, innocent of local effects upon itself, it cannot possibly present foreign work in anything but a blurred light, on a constantly wavering screen. Work like Benda's, once forcibly removed from its very special and sensitive local field of action and pushed into unlocated pages, becomes nearly completely unintelligible, like a severed hand.

To bring to America the work of Picasso or de Gourmont, the first thing to do is to establish our own position by thorough knowledge of our own locality, thus giving the foreign work a place to which to arrive. This is the opportunity of the creative artist.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

This is the fourth issue of CONTACT. The next will be published either in London or Paris to appear later in the fall. MSS. should be sent direct to R. McAlmon, 1 South Audley St., London, W. 1.

• • •
Sour Grapes: Poems. William Carlos Williams. Boston: Four Seas Co. Will be ready in September or October.

• • •
CONTACT is especially pleased to give notice to the following communication. Those interested will correspond direct with Mr. Sanborne:

"I have been pondering ever since his death of how we can give Bob Coady a fitting memorial. It strikes me that it would be best to publish the five numbers of his one volcanic outburst, *The Soil*, in a fine volume. But—"

R. A. Sanborne, 1330 Highland Ave., Hollywood, Cal.

CONTACT

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1923**

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CONTACT V

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

ROBERT McALMON

Address: CONTACT, c/o Monroe Wheeler, 152 E. 22nd St., New York

GLORIOUS WEATHER—

With the spring, CONTACT proposes—a few theoretical statements and notes, upon the art of writing.

1. The object of writing is to celebrate the triumph of sense.

Note: In a poem such as Poe's ANNABEL LEE there is a record of the best sense of the time. We insist on this practical attitude toward writing as against the front of "pure aesthetics." Dada was the small, sweet forget-me-not of the war.

Note: Sense is the ability to set a thing up against the moment and have it escape banality. The result is not a symptom, not a synthesis of the time, but a construction that proves itself able to exist even in spite of, and over against everything in its time that is deadly. Lesser work succumbs through vulnerability: lack of sense.

It is not so much what one will do in writing as what one must do to write at all. It is a mistake to believe that there are an infinity of new possibilities in handling sounds, syllables, words. One cannot write just anything that assuming a logic within itself will be therefore invulnerable. One must write something whose form will not be outmoded when complete and so—reft of sense. One must write something, even if only an arbitrary confusion of consonants and vowels, that shall be, not a mere re-shuffling, but an escape, new, an invention upon the moment.

Everything in writing, except the writing itself, can have been appreciated without being written: but if it be written it is to celebrate its own emergence as against everything (its time) to which it stands opposed.

2. In writing, as in art generally, sense is in the form.

Note: "Subject matter", so-called, as opposed to "form", an abstraction, is a distinction that does not exist in a work of art save as a division between types of material.

The sense is not carried as an extraneous "meaning", but is constituted by the work itself. One does not write a poem to say something, but to write a poem, and this is equally true of a disjointed dada composition and of Edmund Spencer's EPITHALEMION—a most beautiful thing, all of one piece.

Freed from a former association, "abstraction", "subject matter", word, syllable or letter, becomes formal, possessed of a new flexible sense which makes it available to the artist for use in a structural unity such as he imposes. By "form" is meant everything in a work which relates to structural unity rather than to "meanings" dragged over from former associations.

In composition, it is a question only of choice of material according to circumstances. Sometimes "abstraction" will be used, sometimes other subject matter, as one must, to succeed in his escape at the moment.

The term "significant form" is a misnomer, an unnecessary complication of the sense. Either form is significant or it doesn't exist. However, "significant form" did have a transitory if misleading use in designating a certain type of abstraction used mainly by the painters as material.

3. Forms grow rapidly obsolete and must be replaced, but the intelligence, the motive power behind all composition, seeks further for a liberation of pure forms. Everything in the development and present make-up of the art of writing has resulted from a desire, on the part of writers, to clarify the implications of pure form.

Note: Modern art has stressed abstraction as subject matter in the emphasis upon pure form—but abstractions have nothing to do with art.

What has happened has been a renewal, a reaffirmation, a re-clarification of pure form in composition; a broadening of the field of choice among materials.

The thing that has been said over and over again is that whatever the material (and this is the modern variant) all in the work must tend to relate to an intrinsic unity and not to anything outside itself.

Note: What the writer attempts, at the best, might be stated to be—to present the sense of the moment, high complications of understanding, revealed in climaxes of intelligence (beauty) through continually refreshed crystallizations of form.

If the object of writing be to celebrate the triumph of sense, and if Marcel Duchamp be the apex of the modern sense, and if he continue in New York, silent . . .

We say only in view of Marcel's intelligent and devastating silence, etc., etc., Budapest, Argentina, Sinaloa, Siberia, West Coast of Africa—if, if, if,—etc., that there is no comment on pictures but pictures, on music but music, poems but poetry:

if you do, you do
if you don't, you don't

and that's all there is to that.

Combinations of glass are combinations of glass, without value as a critique of pigments mixed with oil and spread upon cloth—

Photographic combinations, methods, modes, etc., may or may not be the facet of the moment directly presented to the light—

but there is no excuse

in these things for BAD WRITING

Nor does work in glass, wire, sun-prints, etc., abolish the use of other modes.

The only thing that the occasional work of such a man as Marcel ABOLISHES is bad work in every line of endeavor—BAD WRITING, senseless composition with improper use of materials out of which the sense has passed and into which a new sense must be put before THAT material can be used again.

Genius is absolute: it is the triumph of sense.

In works of art, sense is shown solely by form—

Witness the idleness of Santayana's remark or reputed remark concerning Whitman—(Seligman, Manuscripts V.).

"He had no education and his natural delight in imbibing sensations had not been trained to the uses of practical and theoretical intelligence. . . Even during the civil war, when he heard the drum-taps so clearly, he could only gaze at the picturesque and terrible aspects of the struggle, and linger among the wounded day by day with a canine devotion; he could not be roused either to clear thought or positive action."

An abler commentator would have looked to the form of Whitman's work for his meaning. If the stupidities of war offered themselves to his sensibilities only as objects for pathetic solicitude, yet, his reply to everything was in the masterful comment of his poetical construction itself, in which he stood alone, the great innovator.

The word "innovation" is by this stripped of its false and lesser meaning, and rightly understood.

The "stupidities of war," by the way,—and we are fully sensible of Hueffer's statement that there are no employments worthy of a gentleman save war and poetry—the stupidities of war are precisely those things which are no longer in its use but which it still contains, a drain upon its resources and a deterrent to its freedom of action: those in the rear unemployed at the munitions and the provisioning, the maimed, the dismembered, insane, unbalanced, or simply bored. When the percentage of these mounts sufficiently high, war has become—obsolete, until new MEANS or a better use of MATERIALS has been discovered.

In especial, no amount of high motives or packing with new "meanings" will save it—it IS dead.

That is why we have come slowly to admire more and more the dissolution of stupidities which Miss Moore's work presents—its abandon as of a single fish against submarine distances, its clarity in presentation of pure form.

That is why we object to such writing as—

"To read it (Many Marriages) is..... to feel cold so no fire will warm and as if the top of one's head were taken off, that are true signs of poetry."

These are "true signs," if you will, but not of poetry.

When man or woman climbs into the pages of a magazine it should be with that same enlargement of the intelligence accessible to the young when they first climb into bed with each other; that time past—men feel lesser things: less important magazines—

the thing Lord Byron, prolonged
into banality—

Spring
Too long
Gongola

the thing, BEAUTY: climax of the intelligence. NOT truth. The thing that linked Shelley with Byron—which he (Shelley) too failed to identify when he coined his famous hyphenate: Intellectual-Beauty.

ANYHOW—"A poet is a maker, as the word signifies: and he who cannot make, that is invent, hath his name for nothing."

And—THE NEW PEARSON'S, in the current issue, heralds the most noteworthy event in the world of letters for the new year with the forthcoming

\$1500
LITERARY PRIZE
CONTEST
in three branches of
literature

The contest is open to all residents of the American Continent, and the choice will be made by some of the foremost literary figures of America.

FOR THE SHORT STORY CONTEST: Floyd Dell, Edmund Wilson,
F. Scott Fitzgerald.

FOR THE POETRY CONTEST: Edwin Markham, Elsa Gidlow, Blanche
Shoemaker Wagstaff.

FOR THE ESSAY CONTEST: Carl Van Doren, John Macy, George
Jean Nathan.

—Je meurs de soif auprès de la fontaine.

ROBERT McALMON

GROWTH IN THE CITY

Let me think, to collect myself together.
What is the season—winter—or spring?
The trees are leafless. Then it is autumn!
But things are growing in the cold steel air.
Steel spirals and smoke stacks
Are awakening, breaking through the frost soil.
No then, no then, no, it is spring's burgeoning,
with growing things and the smoke is blooming.

Oh, let me gather myself together.
Where are the pieces
quivering and staring and muttering
that are all to be a part of me?

Spring—it does not matter—autumn then
lies out on the sidewalks, in the frost,
trampled by feet with papers the wind has blown there.
Many things are falling down in the clatter,
steel pipes, skyscrapers, church steeples,
and wooden scaffolding are crackling in the frosty air.
So sear is the season with its wilful winds.

Yes, yes, it is spring, it is autumn.
They are here to greet us.
Let us be merry and syphilitic to greet the dawn,
Ere the fishes come to nibble and gnaw our fair bones.

King spring has come to fall.
Be blithesome all.
Join hands and sing a merry roundelay.

JOHN RODKER

MARRIED

This roof tree holds them
with trembling darkness
and a thin murmur
and a feeling of moonlight.

In ferny odors
in shadow deep deep;
the pale worm trembles
in pulpy ambrosias of candle light.

Till he throws off his large cocoon
creeping small, small
through the wet darkness
and the feeling of moonlight.
Fearful; she stiffens, then is fluid . . .
(O worm iridescent)
is absorbed, is transported
in sudden gyrations.

Disembowelled
he sinks shivering
clinging close, close . . .
but small and apart
and she warms him.

Permitted all, all:
and the clinging for comfort.
The tight blankets
and the long night
and the long morning.

GLENWAY WESCOTT

MEN LIKE BIRDS

elaborate kites, descend
into place; the umbrella tails,
illusory canvas, buff, pipe-stemmed,
collapse; and with yellow hands
arrest on a chip of flower
or hook of foliage, their majesty . . .

who flanked the ingress to god,
in drapery of light, elbow of wing
on rigid elbow of wing, tier on tier
of claws, jungle of quills,
still, scentless, cryless, public,
where daily the sun scatters
bright hypothetical seed.

From giants who climb to
invisibility and relinquish metal
clamour, three-throated, to that
red-blooded moth whose egg
"resembles an oblong pearl"—
all inexplicable,
save by their forebears, fore-being:

sublime alligator, and pin-feathered
toad, and red reptile, and turtle's
cask of petrified plumage,
and wedge-faced snake, holy cylinder—
the ruff of dry muscle raised and lowered,
and the caress of the underside
of the glazed mobile pipe,
whose twist in sleep (evolute, involute)
is the physics of life and death.

(I too inheritor; of the wit-like
anguish of Aquinas; blood-sprinkled
gilt, and the stiff of expiation,
crowned, 'twixt a woman's knees —
Christ, crystal, crystal,
grand-stands of angels with soft
aquamarine breasts;
"noli me tangere," craving theory,
in flesh paralysis.)

Antique infinite memoryless
the birds revert, without pain,
from the dogmatic ether, the apocalypse,
to squat in tin-cans and lilies;
lapping plates and wings once stacked
around god as swords in stacks,
at peace, placed in the literal.

Dew sweetens worm and kernel.
Wild slim faces vacillate. They flute
and from beaks like needles
(through the eyes of the needles) exhale
honey-slow breath.

Meran, April, 1923.

KAY BOYLE

SHORE

Path of gold sand I walked, bright
Through the long blue of twilight.
An old rose moon hung
Like a dull peach. Silence sung
On the downward river . . . a girl stood,
White lilacs in a lapis mood,
Leapt, a small fountain, to the blue
Water straightening; cutting through
Became a symbol. I had lost the meaning
Of progression. If I paused, she . . . leaning . . .
White on the rushes, jade shielding marble,
No wind blowing, no sound. I could tell
Of amazing a girl bathing. Nothing more.
The night nothing.
I could walk blind along the shore.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

NEW ENGLAND

New England is the condition
of bedrooms whose
electricity is brickish or
made into T beams—They
dangle them on wire cables
to the tops of Woolworth buildings
five and ten cents worth—
There they have bolted them
into place at masculine risk—
Or a boy with a rose under
the lintel of his cap standing
to have his picture taken
on the butt of a girder
with the city a mile down—
Captured lonely cock atop
iron girders wears rosepetal
smile reminiscent of Indians
on chestnut branches
to end “walking on the air”

CRITICAL NOTE

Bon dieu, bon dieu (my mother's mother was Meline Hurrard, St. Pierre, Martinique)—criticism is one of the most difficult of forms—I refer to Wescott and Boyle—my wife's cousin has just returned from Africa and brought us a native paddle and a string of virgin beads, the girls wear around their waists (the most moral people in the world) to indicate their chastity. At the High School play, last night, they got the flowers all mixed up—at the play, which was “wonderful”—(two girls about her age, playing tag bumped into me in the market, at Freetown I think. Not a stitch on them. I grabbed hold of one of them. You should have heard the crowd kid her)—the play that Ruth Chatterton, the same that played Barry's Mary Rose so sweetly on Broadway once—**COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN**—all mixed up, a box of roses: some other girl got them. But after the play she found it out and got them back—Imagine. —and afterward, you know you can't dance in the High School after twelve—some of the boys took us in their cars to supper and to dance in Newark—Oh it was wonderful! The play? Yes. No. —oh . . . oh, the edge, I mean, of that—what?—the scalloped edge of that African West Coast paddle, standing there, the whole cut from a tree—a medium surf paddle they call it, trident tipped. Feel the heft of it. Hold it . . . I don't know what to say, my relations grew sugar cane and made excellent liqueurs before Mt. Pele did for them—That which seems solid is wind; that which chips out the wood, bit by bit, hewing from the log the gross weapon against the water — slightly curved in the haft, six feet long, heavy, tapering to the tridentate spear's edge—wild niggers' work. What is poetry? What shall I say? What is their worth, these six poems in this issue judged absolutely—what? beside the cut of a West Coast nigger's surf paddle or roses to the wrong girl in a play—after the original — that was never original anyway — once

Men like birds,
elaborate kites, descend
into place;

— cutting through

Became a symbol. I had lost the meaning
Of progression. If I paused, she . . . leaning . . .
White on the rushes, jade shielding marble,
No wind blowing, no sound.

Who else prints anything?