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OTHERS

A MAGAZINE *of the* NEW VERSE

JULY 1915

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GRANTWOOD, N. J.

15 cents a copy
\$1.50 per year

OTHERS

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VOL. I No. I

PS 301.08
v.1, no.1

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Grantwood, N. J.

SONGS OF A GIRL

I

There is a morning standing at my window, looking into my room, and saying :

“What will you do with me?

I am your slave

I will bring to you whatever you wish

Only tell me what you want me to do

And I will do it,

What you want me to bring to you

And it is yours.”

And with a sudden rush of tears to my heart, I said :

“Oh, morning, I do not want anything.

There is something I want, oh, very much !

But I do not know what it is exactly. Perhaps to die—perhaps to live—”

II

I am not afraid of my own heart.

I am not afraid of what may be in the places where the shadows are piled.

I am not afraid—see, I walk straight in

And look everywhere.

I am not afraid—ah, what was that ?

It is a dangerous place in which to walk—a heart.

Especially one's own.

III

Just to be young
Young enough to laugh when one should weep —

IV

There are three of us ; the little girl I used to be, the girl I am, and the woman I am going to be. We take counsel together concerning what colors we shall weave into the dream that we are making.

Sometimes they say, she is day-dreaming,
They do not know that we are taking counsel together,
the little girl, and the girl I am, and the woman
that I am going to be.

There are many things that they do not know.

V

I was alone with just me, the other evening
The me that nobody else knows
The me that is the nicest person I have ever met.
(Oh, quite the nicest!)

I was alone with just me
We had much to talk over
We had never properly met before,
But only caught glimpses
(Sometimes we were sure we wanted to meet, and at
other times we hoped that we never would)
We had all the years before to discuss and all the years
after to talk about
And there were other things — ourselves, and what life
was — Oh, we had much to talk over.
So we sat there, silently, and did not say a word.

VI

The little kiss is trembling on my lips

It will not leave its home, it is afraid.

“Go, go,” I whisper, but it weeps and stays.

The little kiss is restless on my lips

“Nay, I must go,” it whispers, “I must go,”

“Ah, wait a little, wait,” I counsel, “wait”—

VII

A turn of a stranger's head

Sometimes brings you very near to me.

A color,

A sound,

And I hear your breathing ;

I feel your eyes upon mine.

A room darkened for the death of a day,

And I weep for you ;

A bird crying out its song against its neighbors',

A flower new-born, startled—

And my heart beats with joy of you—

You whom I never knew

Whom I only loved.

VIII

I am going to die too, flower, in a little while

Do not be so proud—

LOVE SONGS

I

Spawn of fantasies
Sitting the appraisable
Pig Cupid his rosy snout
Rooting erotic garbage
"Once upon a time"
Pulls a weed white star-topped
Among wild oats sown in mucous membrane
I would an eye in a Bengal light
Eternity in a sky-rocket
Constellations in an ocean
Whose rivers run no fresher
Than a trickle of saliva

There are suspect places

I must live in my lantern
Trimming subliminal flicker
Virginal to the bellows
Of experience
 Colored glass.

II

The skin-sack

In which a wanton duality

Packed

All the completions of my infructuous impulses

Something the shape of a man

To the casual vulgarity of the merely observant

More of a clock-work mechanism

Running down against time

To which I am not paced

My finger-tips are numb from fretting your hair

A God's door-mat

On the threshold of your mind.

III

We might have coupled

In the bed-ridden monopoly of a moment

Or broken flesh with one another

At the profane communion table

Where wine is spilled on promiscuous lips

We might have given birth to a butterfly

With the daily news

Printed in blood on its wings.

IV

Once in a *mezzanino*
The starry ceiling
Vaulted an unimaginable family
Bird-like abortions
With human throats
And wisdom's eyes
Who wore lamp-shade red dresses
And woolen hair

One bore a baby
In a padded *porte-enfant*
Tied with a sarsanet ribbon
To her goose's wings
But for the abominable shadows
I would have lived
Among their fearful furniture
To teach them to tell me their secrets
For I had guessed mine
That if I should find YOU
And bring you with me
The brood would be swept clean out.

OLIVES

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

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

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

MIG- Miggles —
GLES That was his name,
Everyone always said,
“Miggles did it.”
Oh, Miggles,
I admired you from the beginning,
Miggles!

A It is a room that sets people thinking,
ROOM So they say,
Lighted like grandma's moonflowers . . .
Swish — I hear something in the corner,
Suddenly,
And I wish I were a cat.

BLUE Blue undershirts,
UNDER- Upon a line,
SHIRTS It is not necessary to say to you
Anything about it —
What they do,
What they might do . . . blue undershirts.

IN I am tortured
BED By this borrowed mattress . . .
How do you lie,
Napoleon?

IN THE They made a statue
SQUARE Of a general on horseback,
 With his face turned nobly
 Toward the crupper . . .
 'Twas true
 Of him
 Quite half the time.

AT THE I have only a tingling remembrance
DOOR Not of his eyes
 But of
 A dandelion . . .
 Nevertheless,
 The whole of him,
 The whole of me,
 There —
 Known, elicited, understood.

ON THE Little duck
TABLE Made of plaster,
 With your head
 Upon a spring,
 When my hand trembles upon the table
 You nod,
 And when I chuckle too . . .
 Such understanding,
 C'est *henaurme!*

IN THE Dinky, slinky,
STREET You must not wink
That way . . .
You hussy,
Do you forget I think
For both of us?

IN THE This morning,
ORCHARD As the quince blossoms died,
The cherries were ripening . . .
Such are all your moments,
Little one.

SOME Now I know
WHERE I have been eating apple-pie for breakfast
In the New England
Of your sexuality.

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

YOU

By you all things are changed.
My friends and foes alike, my household
Become as strangers without name,
Incredibly remote by your incredible nearness.
Their speech is foreign, their actions dream,
Echos and shadows that pass but cannot claim.
In them whatever I learned of recognition and
acquaintance,
Whatever tenderness of glance, what sympathetic touch,
You, you from them withdraw,
Essence of all I know and do and am.
Only memory paths me back to their far world;
Yet as I gaze happily through its twilit vista
The past itself stretches me-ward a path of new
astonishment,—
All, all its meaning was your sure approach.

HERTHA

She will grow
Beautiful.
Beauty will come to her
Given, like sun and rain;
Will go from her
Freely, like laughter.
She will be

Center, circumference to a great joy
Swiftly passing, repassing
Like water in and from a limpid well.
She is of the new generation, new;
Torch for the flame of passion,
Flame for the torch of love.

She will grow
Beautiful.
No, beauty itself will grow
Like her.
— Child, if these dead things
Virtue, morality
Haunt you,
Deny them, deride them!
Which are of atoms, not men.

THE IDIOT

—Yes!
But as for me
I pass without debate of life and death,
Stumbling or dancing as the tune is pitched,
Not choosing, not remembering;
Dragging no chains and aiming for no star.
I know who frowns and grudges:
'Concentrate essence of inconstant moments,

The flower's soul, the fool's way his!'
And that may be.
But ever I peer about
Observing these anxious fretful folk, these moderns,
Tired Atlases who bear
A world of borrowed marble and stolen fame,—
I peer about, and ever as I pass
Touch softly each gleaming pillar, each smoking shrine
And unperceived, drop tears upon them.
Tears.
For men are sleepers in a world of dream,
An unreal, staggering world,
That any moment, as I know,
Will break asunder, crashing, heaved apart
By bursting seeds of God's compelling spring,
Temple on temple, arch on arch
All staggering down and whelmed
In waters of eager thought, in flames of love;
Against which day I neither lock nor loose
Nor own nor will be owned within this doom
That with a few others undetached and free
My soul may cry:
'Lo God within this quickened earth
Plow under this yearning heart which I have borne
So many seasons, unfertile till you had sown.'
— -- — Aye,
The fool's way mine.

Where is that Prophet crying within my heart?

VARIATIONS

WIZARDRY

Your hands,
so strong,
so cool,
wizards
improvising sleep
. . .

VARIATION

Till you came—
I was I.

CARESS

It was as though one of those trees—
the very tallest of them,
that compassionate one—
had bent over me for a moment.

MARCH

The air is drenched with the noise of wind.
I with the noise of you.

WILLOWS

This amphitheater of willows
praying that tarn,
are my mes
in constant attendance
on you.

CONTRA MUNDUM

There is one sanctuary
that is never shut—
to you.

PER CONTRA

Don't weep.
There is sanctuary
from me,
as well.
Come.

PRIEST

I burn candles,
candles—
and no two alike—
at an altar.

OVERHEARD IN AN ASYLUM

And here we have another case,
quite different from the last,
another case quite different—
Listen.

*Baby, drink.
The war is over.
Mother's breasts
are round with milk.*

*Baby, rest.
The war is over.
Only pigs
slop over so.*

*Baby, sleep.
The war is over.
Daddy's come
with a German coin.*

*Baby, dream.
The war is over.
You'll be a soldier
too.*

We gave her the doll—
Now there we have another case,
quite different from—

Others for August are Robert Carlton Brown, Skipwith Cannell, Alanson Hartpence, Amy Lowell, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams.

Hand-set and printed by the workers of the
Liberty Print Shop in New York City.