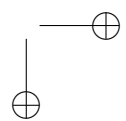
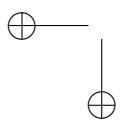
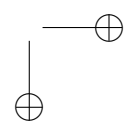
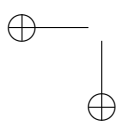
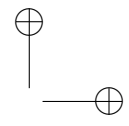
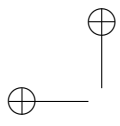
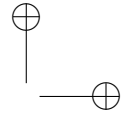
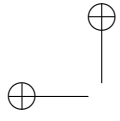


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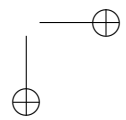
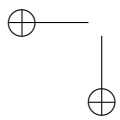


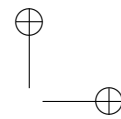
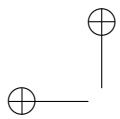


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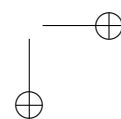
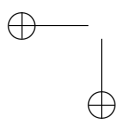
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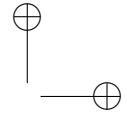
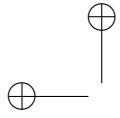
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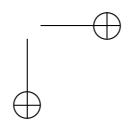
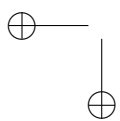


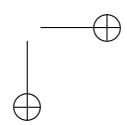
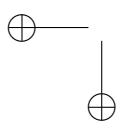
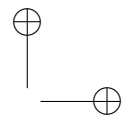
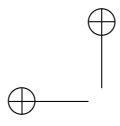
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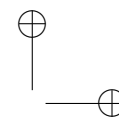
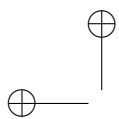




FOR CHARLES, JULIE AND PAT,  
MY CRITICS, MY CHAMPIONS, MY COPY







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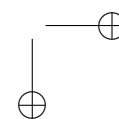
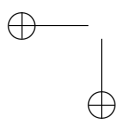
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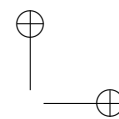
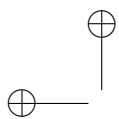
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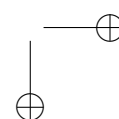
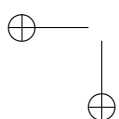
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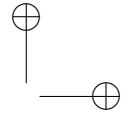
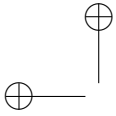




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## FOREWORD BY W. H. AUDEN

Phyllis McGinley needs no puff. Her poems are known and loved by tens of thousands. They call for no learned exegesis. If a Ph.D. thesis is ever written about her work, it will be in an alien tongue and an alien alphabet.

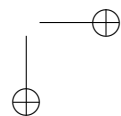
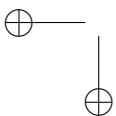
I start a sentence: "The poetry of Phyllis McGinley is . . .," and there I stick, for all I wish to say is ". . . is the poetry of Phyllis McGinley," a statement which I can prove to be true by quoting at random.

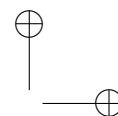
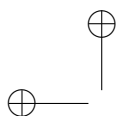
. . . By day the chattering mowers cope  
With grass decreed a final winner.  
Darkness delays. The skipping rope  
Twirls in the driveway after dinner.

Through lupine-lighted borders now  
For winter bones Dalmatians forage.  
Costly the spray on apple bough.  
The canvas chair comes out of storage;

And rose-red golfers dream of par,  
And class-bound children loathe their labors,  
While pilgrims, touring gardens, are  
Cold to petunias of their neighbors. . .

Without knowing who wrote them, I could recognize the genre of English poetry to which such lines belong, and name some of the masters in it – Hood, Praed, Calverley, Belloc, Chesterton. But when, instead of looking at their style and technique, I think of writers with a comparable kind of





sensibility, a similar cast of imagination, the names that come to mind have either, like Jane Austen, Colette, and Virginia Woolf, written in prose, or, like Laura Riding and Marianne Moore, written poetry in a totally different style. What, in fact, distinguishes Phyllis McGinley's poems from those of most light-verse poets is that no man could have written them. The masculine and feminine imagination are not mutually exclusive – the hundred-per-cent male and the hundred-per-cent female are equally insufferable – but they can, I believe, be differentiated. There are two questions about which it seems to me fascinating to speculate: firstly, "What does the poetry men write owe to the influence of women, whether as mothers, sisters, and wives, or as women authors whom they admire?" and secondly, "What can women who write learn from men and what should they beware of imitating in masculine literature?"

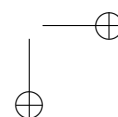
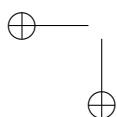
Naturally, I first look to see what Phyllis McGinley has to say on these matters. She speaks up bravely for her own sex.

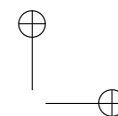
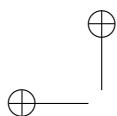
*For the female of the species may be deadlier than the male  
But she can make herself a cup of coffee without reducing  
The entire kitchen to a shambles.*

Perverse though their taste in cravats  
Is deemed by their lords and their betters,  
They know the importance of hats  
And they write you the news in their letters,  
Their minds may be lighter than foam,  
Or altered in haste and in hurry,  
But they seldom bring company home  
When you're warming up yesterday's curry.

*And when lovely woman stoops to folly,  
She does not invariably come in at four A.M.,  
Singing "Sweet Adeline."*

On the other hand, she is no ferocious feminist; she is willing to admit that we have a few small virtues.





For invitations you decry  
He furnisheth an alibi.  
He jousts with taxi-men in tourney,  
He guards your luggage when you journey,  
And brings you news and quotes you facts  
And figures out your income tax  
And slaughters spiders when you daren't  
And makes a very handy parent.

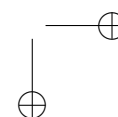
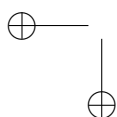
But, of course, from the beginning, little boys can never hope to be as smart as little girls. Compare their reactions when they can no longer believe in Santa Claus.

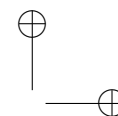
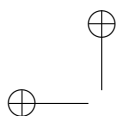
*For little boys are rancorous  
When robbed of any myth,  
And spiteful and cantankerous  
To all their kin and kith.  
But little girls can draw conclusions  
And profit from their lost illusions.*

The masculine imagination lives in a state of perpetual revolt against the limitations of human life. In theological terms, one might say that all men, left to themselves, become gnostics. They may swagger like peacocks, but in their heart of hearts they all think sex an indignity and wish they could beget themselves on themselves. Hence the aggressive hostility toward women so manifest in most club-car stories.

Hence also their attitude toward matter: they love chopping and sawing and drilling and hammering, and it gives them as much pleasure, perhaps even more, to knock a building down as to put one up. And when matter rebels against their injustice, when collar studs roll away and umbrellas go into hiding, they are helpless and have to cry for rescue to their wives.

Left to itself the masculine imagination has very little appreciation for the here and now; it prefers to dwell on what is absent, on what has been or may be. If men are more





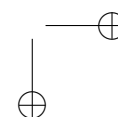
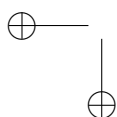
punctual than women, it is because they know that, without the external discipline of clock time, they would never get anything done.

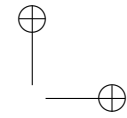
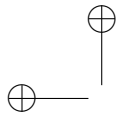
Above all, the masculine imagination is essentially theatrical. In comparison with women, men are poor liars because their sense of the difference between fact and fiction is so much vaguer: even in domestic life a man expects to be admired, not for telling the truth, but for telling a good story well. Among the poets, the purest examples of the masculine imagination that I know are Victor Hugo and W. B. Yeats. Who could possibly conceive of either of them as a woman?

In contrast, the feminine imagination accepts facts and is coolly realistic. There are certain resemblances between the lines from “June in the Suburbs” which I quoted on page ix and the poetry of John Betjeman, but what makes it impossible that Mr. Betjeman could have written them is their total lack of nostalgia. A striking illustration of this is a “sad” poem, “Blues for a Melodion.” The theme of this, the passing of youth and the oncome of middle-age, has frequently been treated by men. As a rule, they devote their words to their memories of themselves – once I could run very fast, once I was much admired by the girls, once I was very bright, etc., but now. . . . In Phyllis McGinley’s poem, the “I” does not appear until the last two lines and the past is hardly mentioned.

A castor’s loose on the buttoned chair –  
The one upholstered in shabby coral.  
I never noticed, before, that tear  
In the dining-room paper.

When did the rocker cease to rock,  
The fringe sag down on the corner sofa?  
All of a sudden the Meissen clock  
Has a cherub missing.





All of a sudden the plaster chips,  
The carpet frays by the morning windows;  
Careless, a rod from the curtain slips,  
And the gilt is tarnished.

This is the house that I knew by heart.  
Everything here seemed sound, immortal.  
When did this delicate ruin start?  
How did the moth come?

Naked by daylight, the paint is airing  
Its rags and tatters. There's dust on the mantel.  
And who is that gray-haired stranger staring  
Out of my mirror?

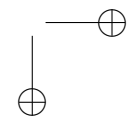
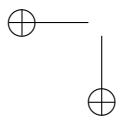
So, too, in her satirical pieces. Confronted with things and people who do not please her, she does not, like many male satirists, lose her temper or even show shocked surprise; she merely observes what is the case with deadly accuracy.

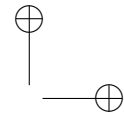
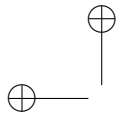
*Evening Musicale*

Candles. Red tulips, ninety cents the bunch.  
Two lions, Grade B. A newly tuned piano.  
No cocktails, but a dubious kind of punch,  
Lukewarm and weak. A harp and a soprano.  
The "Lullaby" of Brahms. Somebody's cousin  
From Forest Hills, addicted to the pun.  
Two dozen gentlemen; ladies, three dozen,  
Earringed and powdered. Sandwiches at one.

The ash trays few, the ventilation meager.  
Shushes to greet the late-arriving guest  
Or quell the punch-bowl group. A young man eager  
To render "Danny Deever" by request.  
And sixty people trying to relax  
On little rented chairs with gilded backs.

After reading this, anyone who, like myself, has had the honor of entertaining Phyllis McGinley, will think twice about inviting her again.





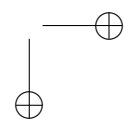
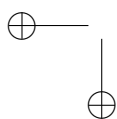
Women do not, I think, excel at what is conventionally called Love Poetry. Indeed, when they try, the results can be embarrassingly awful – think of poor Mrs. Browning. Perhaps the feminine imagination is too serious. Men can write good love poems because they are always aware that the girl they happen to be in love with might be someone else (and often one suspects that they are thinking of several girls at the same time). But women write better than men about marriage. When a husband does write about his wife, which is rare, he is apt to become weepy. Not so a wife writing about a husband.

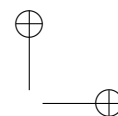
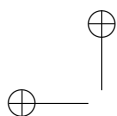
In garden-colored boots he goes  
Ardent around perennial borders  
To spray the pink, celestial rose  
Or give a weed its marching orders.

Draining at dawn his hasty cup,  
He takes a train to urban places;  
By lamplight, cheerful, figures up  
The cost of camps and dental braces.

And warm upon my shoulders lays  
Impetuous at dinner table  
The mantle of familiar praise  
That's better than a coat of sable.

In order to write well about children, it would seem that a man must be, like Lewis Carroll or Hans Andersen, a bachelor, but a woman a mother. When fathers write about their offspring, their chief concern is not the child as child but the future adult they hope or fear it will grow into. Bachelors, with their masculine nostalgia for their own childhood, are better than women, perhaps, at understanding the fantasy life of children, but only a mother can convey a sense of their physical presence.





Oh, the peace like heaven  
That wraps me around,  
Say, at eight-thirty-seven,  
When they're schoolroom-bound  
With the last glove mated  
And the last scarf tied,  
With the pig-tail plaited,  
With the pincurl dried,  
And the egg disparaged  
And the porridge sneered at,  
And last night's comics furtively peered at,  
The coat apprehended  
On its ultimate hook,  
And the cover mended  
On the history book!

There is, perhaps, one thing which women can profitably learn from men, a sense of play. Left to itself, the feminine imagination would get so serious that it would look down on the arts as unworthy frivolities. Phyllis McGinley has her fair element of masculine imagination, to which she owes, among other things, her dexterity in rhyming. But she does not go in for ostentatiously farcical rhymes like

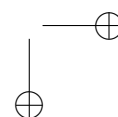
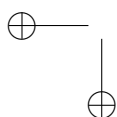
Among the anthropophagi  
One's friends are one's sarcophagi  
(Ogden Nash)

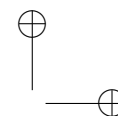
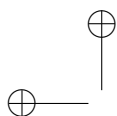
or puns like

The bar-maid of the Crown he lov'd,  
From whom he never ranged,  
For though he changed his horses there,  
His love he never changed.

He thought her fairest of all fares,  
So fondly love prefers;  
And often, among twelve outsides,  
Deem'd no outside like hers.

(Thomas Hood)





I think she is wise to avoid such things. A gift for standing on one's head and pulling faces seems to be a masculine gift. There have been wonderful comediennes, but who has heard of a woman clown?

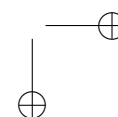
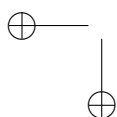
Clowns are enchanting in their proper place, the stage, but in real life, private or public, they can be boring and a menace. Ten minutes with a newspaper leave me with the conviction that the human race has little chance of survival unless men are disenfranchised and debarred from political life: in a technological age, only women have the sense to know which toys are dangerous.

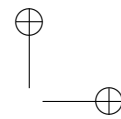
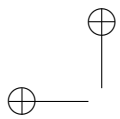
Let them on Archimedes dote  
Who like to hear the planet rattling.  
I cannot cast a hearty vote  
For Galileo or for Gatling,  
Preferring, of the Freaks of science,  
The pygmies rather than the giants –

*(And from experience being wary of  
Greek geniuses bearing gifts) –*

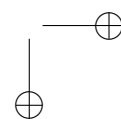
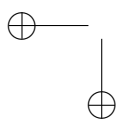
Deciding on reflection calm,  
Mankind is better off with trifles:  
With Band-Aid rather than the bomb,  
With safety match than safety rifles.  
Let the earth fall or the earth spin!  
A brave new world might well begin  
With no invention  
Worth the mention  
Save paper towels and aspirin.

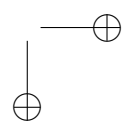
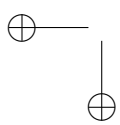
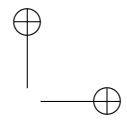
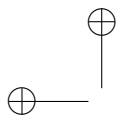
As for the arts, it may be true that up till now the greatest artists have been men, but from whom did they get the notion of making anything in the first place? Their motive is implied in Dr. Johnson's reply to the lady who asked him to define the difference between men and women: "I can't conceive, Madam, can you?"

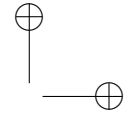
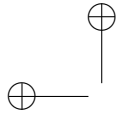




THE FIFTIES







## A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

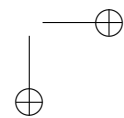
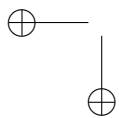
### THE CONQUERORS

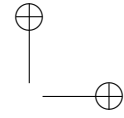
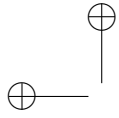
It seems vainglorious and proud  
Of Atom-man to boast aloud  
    His prowess homicidal  
When one remembers how for years,  
With their rude stones and humble spears,  
Our sires, at wiping out their peers,  
    Were almost never idle.

Despite his under-fissioned art  
The Hittite made a splendid start  
    Toward smiting lesser nations;  
While Tamerlane, it's widely known,  
Without a bomb to call his own  
    Destroyed whole populations.

Nor did the ancient Persian need  
Uranium to kill his Mede,  
    The Viking earl, his foeman.  
The Greeks got excellent results  
With swords and engined catapults.  
    A chariot served the Roman.

Mere cannon garnered quite a yield  
On Waterloo's tempestuous field.  
    At Hastings and at Flodden





Stout countrymen, with just a bow  
And arrow, laid their thousands low.  
And Gettysburg was sodden.

Though doubtless now our shrewd machines  
Can blow the world to smithereens  
More tidily and so on,  
Let's give our ancestors their due.  
Their ways were coarse, their weapons few.  
But ah! how wondrously they slew  
With what they had to go on.

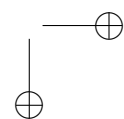
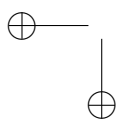
#### THE DAY AFTER SUNDAY

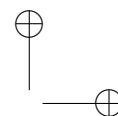
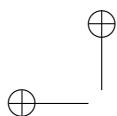
Always on Monday, God's in the morning papers,  
His Name is a headline, His Works are rumored abroad.  
Having been praised by men who are movers and shapers,  
From prominent Sunday pulpits, newsworthy is God.

On page 27, just opposite Fashion Trends,  
One reads at a glance how He scolded the Baptists a  
little,  
Was firm with the Catholics, practical with the Friends,  
To Unitarians pleasantly noncommittal.

In print are His numerous aspects, too: God smiling,  
God vexed, God thunderous, God whose mansions are  
pearl,  
Political God, God frugal, God reconciling  
Himself with science, God guiding the Camp Fire Girl.

Always on Monday morning the press reports  
God as revealed to His vicars in various guises –  
Benevolent, stormy, patient, or out of sorts.  
God knows which God is the God God recognizes.



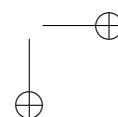
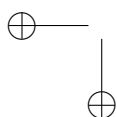


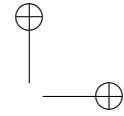
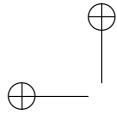
#### REFLECTIONS AT DAWN

I wish I owned a Dior dress  
    Made to my order out of satin.  
I wish I weighed a little less  
    And could read Latin,  
Had perfect pitch or matching pearls,  
    A better head for street directions,  
And seven daughters, all with curls  
    And fair complexions.  
I wish I'd tan instead of burn.  
    But most, on all the stars that glisten,  
I wish at parties I could learn  
    To sit and listen.

*I wish I didn't talk so much at parties.  
It isn't that I want to hear  
My voice assaulting every ear,  
Uprising loud and firm and clear  
    Above the cocktail clatter.  
It's simply, once a doorbell's rung,  
(I've been like this since I was young)  
Some madness overtakes my tongue  
    And I begin to chatter.*

Buffet, ball, banquet, quilting bee,  
    Wherever conversation's flowing,  
Why must I feel it falls on me  
    To keep things going?  
Though ladies cleverer than I  
    Can loll in silence, soft and idle,  
Whatever topic gallops by,  
    I seize its bridle,  
Hold forth on art, dissect the stage,  
    Or babble like a kindergart'ner  
Of politics till I enrage  
    My dinner partner.





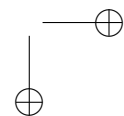
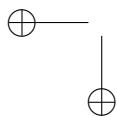
*I wish I didn't talk so much at parties.  
When hotly boil the arguments,  
Ah! would I had the common sense  
To sit demurely on a fence  
And let who will be vocal,  
Instead of plunging in the fray  
With my opinions on display  
Till all the gentlemen edge away  
To catch an early local.*

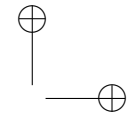
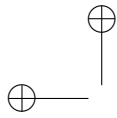
Oh! there is many a likely boon  
That fate might flip me from her griddle.  
I wish that I could sleep till noon  
And play the fiddle,  
Or dance a tour jeté so light  
It would not shake a single straw down.  
But when I ponder how last night  
I laid the law down,  
More than to have the Midas touch  
Or critics' praise, however hearty,  
*I wish I didn't talk so much,  
I wish I didn't talk so much,  
I wish I didn't talk so much  
When I am at a party.*

#### ROCK-'N'-ROLL SESSION

For this the primal reed was cloven.  
For this did Berlioz break his ease  
And Schubert starve and deaf Beethoven  
Bend silence into symphonies.

For this the little Mozart fiddled  
Beyond his bedtime, Bach was born,  
And Guido got the scale unriddled:  
That, paced by an hysteric horn,





The pimpled heirs of Orpheus, beating  
Damp palms, might sway (agape like fish)  
To four notes endlessly repeating  
Thirty-two bars of gibberish.

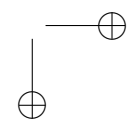
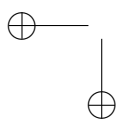
**A THRENODY**

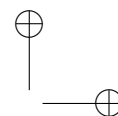
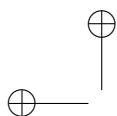
*“The new Rolls-Royce is designed to be owner driven. No chauffeur required.” — From an advertisement in The New Yorker.*

Grandeur, farewell.  
Farewell, pomp, glory, wealth’s indulgent voice.  
Tyre turned to dust in time. Great Carthage fell.  
And owner-driven is the new Rolls-Royce.

Behold it, democratic front to back;  
Nimble when traffic pinches;  
Steered, braked by power; briefer than Cadillac  
By eighteen inches;  
Humming at sixty with an eerie purr  
But needing no chauffeur.

What does it signify if radiator  
(Altered but once, and that in '33,  
When, at Sir Henry’s death, or a little later,  
The red R R was re-  
Placed by a less conspicuous ebony)  
Keeps still its ancient shape? What matter whether  
The seats no minion now will ever use  
Come padded in eight hides of English leather –  
Enough for one hundred and twenty-eight pairs of shoes?  
That the paint glistens and the brasses shine  
More lusterful than hope?  
That engineers have listened for axle-whine  
With a stethoscope?

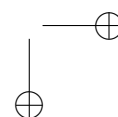
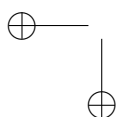


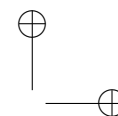
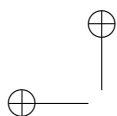


Splendor decays, despite the walnut table  
Sliding from under the dash. Who now will stow  
The wicker hampers away? For ladies in sable,  
Who'll spread the cloth, uncork the Veuve Clicquot?  
Who'll clean  
The optional-special espresso coffee machine,  
From folding bed whip off the cover of baize, or  
Guard the electric razor?

Who but the owner-driver, squinting ahead  
Through the marvelous glass, fretting when lights are red,  
Studying on his lap  
The cryptic, cross-marked, wife-defeating map?  
He, it is he,  
Tooling toward Cambridge, say (or Yale or Colgate),  
On football afternoons, must nervously  
Fumble for change at the tollgate,  
Curse the careering drivers of both genders  
Whose rods are hot,  
Fear for his fourteen-times-enameled fenders,  
Search out the parking lot,  
Remember the chains of winter, wrench the round wheel  
Against the arrogant trucks, nor ever feel  
Less mortal than man in Minx or Oldsmobile.

No one remains to touch a decorous forelock  
Or fold a monogrammed blanket over the knees.  
Gone the chauffeur – gone like Merlin the Warlock  
And the unmourned chemise.  
Gone newsboy's Grail, all that is rich and choice  
And suave as David Niven.  
Grandeur, a long farewell. The new Rolls-Royce  
Is owner-driven.





#### MY SIX TOOTHBRUSHES

Against the pure, reflective tiles,  
Northeast a little of the shower,  
Gaudy as crocuses they flower.

The colors vary; but the styles  
Are recommended and didactic  
(Some Fuller and some Prophylactic.)

I cannot, it is strange, recall  
When impulse sent me forth to buy  
These gauds, or where or even why.

But here they dangle on my wall,  
Symbols of vanity and hope.  
I watch them shimmer while I soap

And am astonished, more or less,  
Discovering how has lived in me  
Such rage against mortality

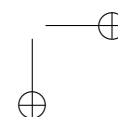
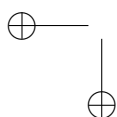
That I this morning should possess  
Six, six! and all set dense as thistles  
With tough, imperishable bristles.

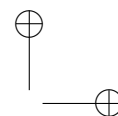
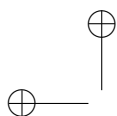
Polychromatic, they confront  
My startled, half-abluted eyes.  
Do these, I think, epitomize

The frivolous trophies of my Hunt?  
Is my one Creed, my guidestar polar,  
*In corpore sano, sana molar,*

Which has no care for kind or witty  
Or learned ways or actual grace?  
Disturbing. Well, in any case,

At least they do look rather pretty  
Hanging redundantly in files  
Against the cool, reflective tiles.





## THE LANDSCAPE OF LOVE

### I

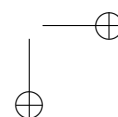
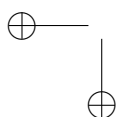
Do not believe them. Do not believe what strangers  
Or casual tourists, moored a night and day  
In some snug, sunny, April-sheltering bay  
(Along the coast and guarded from great dangers)  
Tattle to friends when ignorant they return.  
Love is no lotus-island endlessly  
Washed by a summer ocean, no Capri;  
But a huge landscape, perilous and stern –

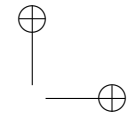
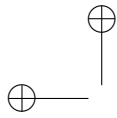
More poplared than the nations to the north,  
More bird-beguiled, stream-haunted. But the ground  
Shakes underfoot. Incessant thunders sound,  
Winds shake the trees, and tides run back and forth  
And tempests winter there, and flood and frost  
In which too many a voyager is lost.

### II

None knows this country save the colonist,  
His homestead planted. He alone has seen  
The hidden groves unconquerably green,  
The secret mountains steeping through the mist.  
Each is his own discovery. No chart  
Has pointed him past chasm, bog, quicksand,  
Earthquake, mirage, into his chosen land –  
Only the steadfast compass of the heart.

Turn a deaf ear, then, on the traveler who,  
Speaking a foreign tongue, has never stood  
Upon love's hills or in a holy wood  
Sung incantations; yet, having bought a few  
Postcards and trinkets at some cheap bazaar,  
Cries, "This and thus the God's dominions are!"





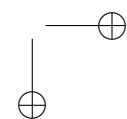
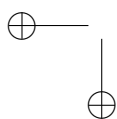
#### AGAINST HOPE

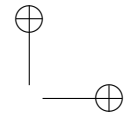
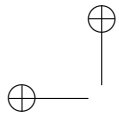
When mischievous Pandora (the first woman),  
Greedy for what was hid  
In Jove's great box, succumbed to being human  
And flipped, as it were, her lid,  
All miseries, they say, went pouring past her  
Into the world's scope –  
Every conceivable ill, plague, spite, disaster.  
But at the end came Hope,  
A fluttering envoy always in reach, on call.  
And Hope was worst of all.

Alas, Pandora! Had she only been  
Quicker to act or else more dilatory  
And trapped the insect in,  
Our chroniclers could tell a different story.  
Man, the poor beast,  
Might have become accustomed to life's uses,  
Put up with famine nor awaited feast,  
Accepted his bruises,  
His lumps and bumps and smarts and his crops of stone.  
But Hope never lets him alone.

Louder than famished midges, buzzing and humming,  
Hope swarms at his shoulder, makes him promises of  
Goals, grails, importances, a Second Coming,  
Unnotional love,  
No later than Tuesday. He cannot sit down in tears  
But Hope whines round his ears  
All lies and tattle.

“That cloud,” she whispers, “from which has lately come  
Lightning to take your homestead and your cattle,  
Look! may be lined with pure uranium.  
The friends who did you dirty

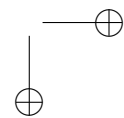
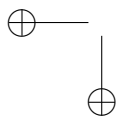


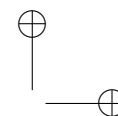
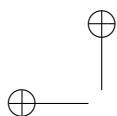


May still repent. How foolish to despair!  
Your sons will learn to love you when they're thirty.  
This rutted road somewhere  
May fork toward Tyre or Eden, who knows which?  
Perhaps by next October  
You will be rich,  
Tactful, well-tailored, famous, slender, and sober.  
Climb therefore out of that comfortable ditch  
And start again upon your foot-sore travels."

Thus like a shrewd  
Penelope, Hope every night unravels  
His shroud of fortitude,  
Coaxing him on from hurt to hurt forever;  
Cries that this foaming river  
On which a thousand floating relics move  
Will be his last barrier before the City.  
His pictures will sell, his sinuses improve,  
The critics write him luminous and witty  
If he but take the last, impossible stride.  
There is no wholesome gust  
From the world's ends can blow her from his side.  
He cannot hide  
To lick his wounds or seek the easy dust  
But she is with him, oracles in her voice.

O! given Pandora's choice  
(Or even any reasonable offer),  
I would let all escape from the God's coffer  
But slam the lid and lash it down with rope  
Before I let go free  
Malignant Hope,  
The stinging mite, Man's pestilential flea.





#### A GARLAND OF PRECEPTS

Though a seeker since my birth,  
Here is all I've learned on earth,  
This the gist of what I know:  
Give advice and buy a foe.  
Random truths are all I find  
Stuck like burs about my mind.  
Salve a blister. Burn a letter.  
Do not wash a cashmere sweater.  
Tell a tale but seldom twice.  
Give a stone before advice.

Pressed for rules and verities,  
All I recollect are these:  
Feed a cold to starve a fever.  
Argue with no true believer.  
Think-too-long is never-act.  
Scratch a myth and find a fact.  
Stitch in times saves twenty stitches.  
Give the rich, to please them, riches.  
Give to love your hearth and hall.  
But do not give advice at all.

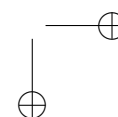
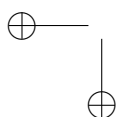
#### EPITAPHS FOR THREE PROMINENT PERSONS

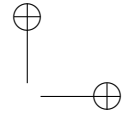
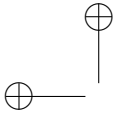
##### THE INDEPENDENT

So open was his mind, so wide  
To welcome winds from every side  
That public weather took dominion,  
Sweeping him bare of all opinion.

##### THE STATESMAN

He did not fear his enemies  
Nor their despiteful ends,





But not the seraphs on their knees  
    Could save him from his friends.

THE DEMAGOGUE

That trumpet tongue which taught a nation  
Loud lessons in vituperation  
Teaches it yet another, viz.:  
How sweet the noise of silence is.

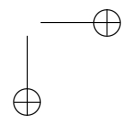
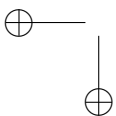
TEXT FOR TODAY

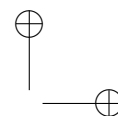
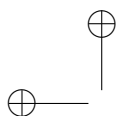
*A cheerful poem written upon reading in the New York Times  
that Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy, of the Museum of Natural  
History, has discovered on Bermuda several specimens of the  
cahow, a bird believed extinct since 1620.*

Amid the dark that rims us now,  
    Beset by news we cannot cherish,  
Let us consider the cahow –  
    That petrel which refused to perish,  
In spite of gossip it had gone  
The way of auk and mastodon.

Three hundred years ago or more,  
    It built its nest, it spent its slumbers,  
At ease upon Bermuda's shore  
    In innocent, prolific numbers,  
A creature of the coral reef  
Credulous, gentle, and naif.

But then the hungry settlers came  
    To find those pastures stern for plowing.  
The bird was edible and tame,  
    So everybody went cahowing,  
Till by and by, beside the water,  
There were no more cahows to slaughter.





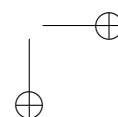
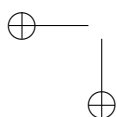
“Alas!” cried all the scientists,  
“Alas, career so brief and checkered!”  
They crossed “cahow” from off the lists  
And wrote “extinct” upon the record.  
And man could boast another feat  
Of rendering nature obsolete.

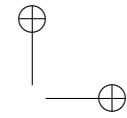
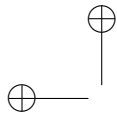
But all the while, with stealth and skill  
(Necessity become its motto),  
The shrewd cahow was nesting still  
On lonely rock, in cave and grotto;  
Invincibly, and by some plan,  
Three hundred years outwitting man.

O brave cahow, so stubborn-linked  
To your own island, palmed and surfy!  
I’m happy you are not extinct,  
But got espied by Dr. Murphy.  
You lend me hope, you give me joy,  
Whom Total Man could not destroy.

You give me joy, you lend me hope  
(At any rate, what hope is bred on);  
For surely if a bird can cope  
So cunningly with Armageddon,  
And, snug in unimagined dens,  
Wait out its season for returning,  
Why, so can Homo sapiens  
Tomorrow when the planet’s burning –

Can flee, root, cower, scabble, strive,  
And rear its progeny. And survive.  
Amid our ills that seem incurable,  
Cahow, you make me feel more durable.



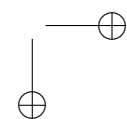
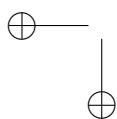


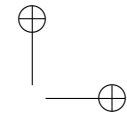
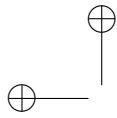
#### JOURNEY TOWARD EVENING

Fifty, not having expected to arrive here,  
Makes a bad traveler; grows dull, complains,  
Suspects the local wine, dislikes the service,  
Is petulant on trains,  
And thinks the climate overestimated.  
Fifty is homesick, plagued by memories  
Of more luxurious inns and expeditions,  
Calls all lakes cold, all seas  
Too tide-beset (for Fifty is no swimmer),  
Nor, moving inland, likes the country more,  
Believes the hills are full of snakes and brigands.  
The scenery is a bore,  
Like the plump, camera-hung, and garrulous trippers  
Whose company henceforward he must keep.  
Fifty writes letters, dines, yawns, goes up early  
But not to sleep. He finds it hard to sleep.

#### THE ANGRY MAN

The other day I chanced to meet  
An angry man upon the street –  
A man of wrath, a man of war,  
A man who truculently bore  
Over his shoulder, like a lance,  
A banner labeled “Tolerance.”  
  
And when I asked him why he strode  
Thus scowling down the human road,  
Scowling, he answered, “I am he  
Who champions total liberty –  
Intolerance being, ma’am, a state  
No tolerant man can tolerate.





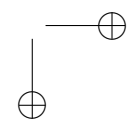
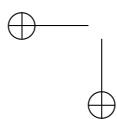
“When I meet rogues,” he cried, “who choose  
To cherish oppositional views,  
Lady, like this, and in this manner,  
I lay about me with my banner  
Till they cry mercy, ma’am.” His blows  
Rained proudly on prospective foes.

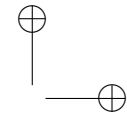
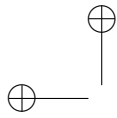
Fearful, I turned and left him there  
Still muttering, as he thrashed the air,  
“Let the Intolerant beware!”

#### MIDCENTURY LOVE LETTER

Stay near me. Speak my name. Oh, do not wander  
By a thought’s span, heart’s impulse, from the light  
We kindle here. You are my sole defender  
(As I am yours) in this precipitous night,  
Which over earth, till common landmarks alter,  
Is falling, without stars, and bitter cold.  
We two have but our burning selves for shelter.  
Huddle against me. Give me your hand to hold.

So might two climbers lost in mountain weather  
On a high slope and taken by the storm,  
Desperate in the darkness, cling together  
Under one cloak and breathe each other warm.  
Stay near me. Spirit, perishable as bone,  
In no such winter can survive alone.



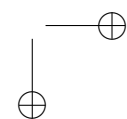
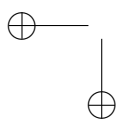


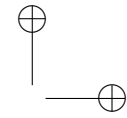
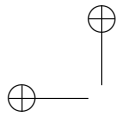
## REFORMERS, SAINTS, AND PREACHERS

### MARTIN LUTHER

Tempted by a taunting Devil,  
Master Martin did his level  
Best, one midnight, to combat him –  
Flung a brimming inkpot at him.  
Whereupon, and with a roar,  
Fled the Fiend, but not before  
He'd absconded, slick as whistle,  
With the cautionary missile  
(Having noted at a glance  
All its awful puissance).

Dire the upshot! One must wince  
To consider ever since  
How that weapon has been hurled  
Back and forth across the world  
Twixt Reformer and the naughty  
Devil's scribbling literati.  
Ceaselessly for generations  
It has spilled on men and nations  
Till the mind forbears to think  
Of the tides in which we sink.  
Ah, the seas and seas of ink!





#### THE THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

Whenever Mr. Edwards spake  
In church about Damnation,  
The very benches used to quake  
For awful agitation.

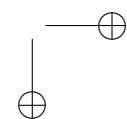
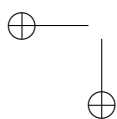
Good men would pale and roll their eyes  
While sinners rent their garments  
To hear him so anatomize  
Hell's orgiastic torments,

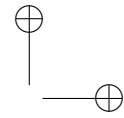
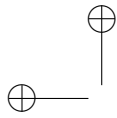
The blood, the flames, the agonies  
In store for frail or flighty  
New Englanders who did not please  
A whimsical Almighty.

Times were considered out of tune  
When half a dozen nervous  
Female parishioners did not swoon  
At every Sunday service;

And, if they had been taught aright,  
Small children, carried bedwards,  
Would shudder lest they meet that night  
The God of Mr. Edwards.

Abraham's God, the Wrathful One,  
Intolerant of error –  
Not God the Father or the Son  
But God the Holy Terror.





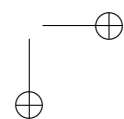
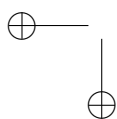
#### THE ADVANTAGES OF INACTION

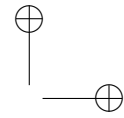
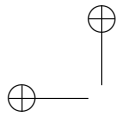
Philip Melanchthon  
Liked, as scribe,  
Logic better than diatribe.  
Ascetic, lean  
As Apostle Paul,  
He hated a scene,  
Loathed a brawl,  
And looked up staunch  
But temperate terms  
For Luther to launch  
At the Diet of Worms.

Luther laughed at him quite a lot  
For his monkish ways.  
“By the Lieber Gott!  
Go sin a little,”  
He used to roar,  
“Or what can the Lord forgive you for?”  
But Philip, smiling,  
Paying no heed,  
Went on compiling  
The Augsburg Creed.

While cronies battled,  
Fierce and bloody,  
Philip Melanchthon kept to his study,  
Praising the cool  
Retreat he sat in;  
Taught his school,  
Polished his Latin,  
Nor wielded staves  
Like his fellow Germans.

Then over their graves  
He preached the sermons.



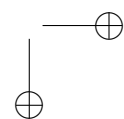
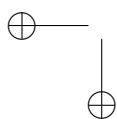


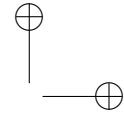
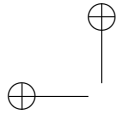
#### THE GIVEAWAY

Saint Bridget was  
A problem child.  
Although a lass  
Demure and mild,  
And one who strove  
To please her dad,  
Saint Bridget drove  
The family mad.  
For here's the fault in Bridget lay:  
She *would* give everything away.

To any soul  
Whose luck was out  
She'd give her bowl  
Of stirabout;  
She'd give her shawl,  
Divide her purse  
With one or all.  
And what was worse,  
When she ran out of things to give  
She'd borrow from a relative.

Her father's gold,  
Her grandsire's dinner,  
She'd hand to cold  
And hungry sinner;  
Give wine, give meat,  
No matter whose;  
Take from her feet  
The very shoes,  
And when her shoes had gone to others,  
Fetch forth her sister's and her mother's.

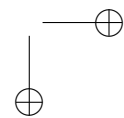
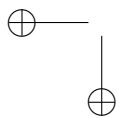


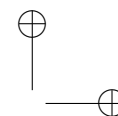
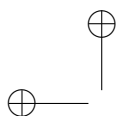


She could not quit.  
She had to share;  
Gave bit by bit  
The silverware,  
The barnyard geese,  
The parlor rug,  
Her little niece-  
'S christening mug,  
Even her bed to those in want,  
And then the mattress of her aunt.

An easy touch  
For poor and lowly,  
She gave so much  
And grew so holy  
That when she died  
Of years and fame,  
The countryside  
Put on her name,  
And still the Isles of Erin fidget  
With generous girls named Bride or Bridget.

Well, one must love her.  
Nonetheless,  
In thinking of her  
Givingness,  
There's no denial  
She must have been  
A sort of trial  
To her kin.  
The moral, too, seems rather quaint.  
*Who* had the patience of a saint,  
From evidence presented here?  
Saint Bridget? Or her near and dear?





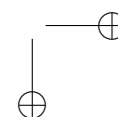
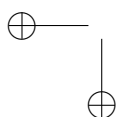
## SAINT FRANCIS BORGIA

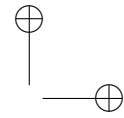
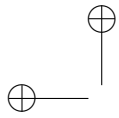
OR, A REFUTATION OF HEREDITY

In Courts of Evil,  
Borgias dine,  
Toasting the Devil  
In his own wine,  
And while advances  
The fiery Shade,  
They ask of Francis  
The renegade –  
Spanish Francis,  
Sport of the clan,  
Born both Borgia and God-struck Man.

Doom falls shortly,  
But where is he,  
Francis the portly  
Great Grandee?  
Schooled to administer  
Fief and field,  
With two bars sinister  
On his shield,  
Life-long shaken  
By Borgia pride,  
He should be quaffing at Caesar's side.

Yonder, instead,  
At peace he sits,  
Breaking his bread  
With the Jesuits,  
Staking his chances  
On Christian grace –  
White-sheep Francis  
With the Borgia face;





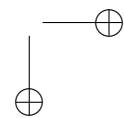
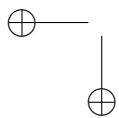
Of the family temper  
And the family taint,  
Shaping a genial Borgia saint.

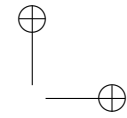
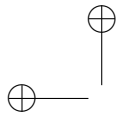
When, lost and evil,  
At dark of the moon,  
Supping with the Devil  
From a very short spoon,  
Gather the Borgias, shorn of hope,  
Soldier and sovereign and fat, false Pope,  
They speak of Francis, and wrathful still,  
They mock God's mercy  
And they curse Free Will  
Till wits go reeling  
And thunder rolls.  
But Francis, kneeling,  
Prays for their souls.

**LESSON FOR BEGINNERS**

Martin of Tours,  
When he earned his shilling  
Trooping the flags  
Of the Roman Guard,  
Came on a poor,  
Aching and chilling  
Beggard in rags  
By the barracks yard.

Blind to his lack,  
The Guard went riding.  
But Martin a moment  
Paused and drew  
The coat from his back,  
His sword from hiding,  
And sabered his raiment  
Into two.





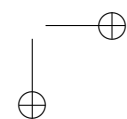
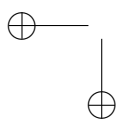
Now some who muse  
On the allegory  
Affect to find  
It a pious joke;  
To beggar what use,  
For Martin what glory,  
In deed half-kind  
And part of a cloak?

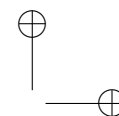
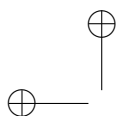
Still, it has charm  
And a point worth seizing.  
For all who move  
In the mortal sun  
Know halfway warm  
Is better than freezing,  
As half a love  
Is better than none.

#### THE PASTOR AND THE LADY

Old John Knox  
Of Edinburgh,  
Sure of his mission  
To be God's tool,  
From pulpit-box  
More in anger than sorrow  
Called down perdition  
On Female Rule.

While England wondered,  
While Scotland trembled,  
Hot, vociferous,  
Uncontent,  
John Knox thundered  
To Kirk assembled  
At Women's Monstriferous  
Regiment.



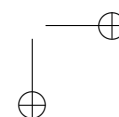
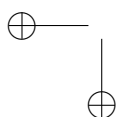


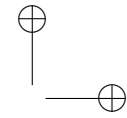
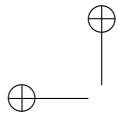
Mary, poor creature,  
Nourished in kinder  
Courts and weather  
Than her dour land's,  
Wept that the Preacher  
Had much maligned her  
And wrung together  
Her royal hands.

Cried Mary, "Alas,  
He hails me strumpet  
Whose fault is chiefly  
To wear a crown!"  
But his voice was the brass  
Of Joshua's trumpet,  
And, wavering briefly,  
The walls fell down.

She lost her smile  
And she lost her nation,  
Lost – oh, sinister! –  
Her pretty head;  
Lost for a while  
Her reputation,  
While John Knox, Minister,  
Died in bed.

Yes, leader of flocks,  
Most stern and thorough,  
A man well-molded  
For the Scottish scene  
Was old John Knox  
Of Edinborough.  
But would he had scolded  
A plainer Queen.





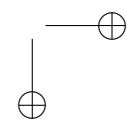
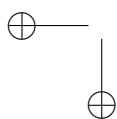
## TWO SIDES OF CALVIN

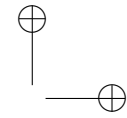
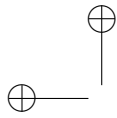
### I. THE MARRIAGE

These are the virtues Calvin thought desirable  
In a wife: an even mood,  
Chastity, patience, thrift, and an untirable  
Solicitude  
For her lord's health. Here ends the simple list –  
And not one word  
Tells us if he admired a delicate wrist  
Or much preferred  
A hazel eye to brown or amethyst.  
What! Had he not some choice  
Of statures? Was he not partial in the matter  
Of a right female voice,  
Desire but silence or a wrenlike chatter?  
And did not kindness count, or a cool repose?  
A cheek of white-and-rose?  
Or courtesy? Or wit?

All very well that it should not obtain  
If she were fair or plain  
(Since by philosophy one must admit,  
In this connection,  
A woman's flesh is but the spirit's mask)  
But ah! not even to ask  
That in her breast some taper of affection,  
Some flame however decorous and dim  
Should burn, and burn especially for him.

Of Mistress Calvin we know little save  
She was eight years a wife,  
Well-dowered, also "honorable and grave"  
And lived a quiet life.  
One hopes against hope that she was debonair





And managed to mingle with connubial care  
For his dyspepsia, some small tendernesses.  
But miracles are rare.

One's better guess is  
(And all we have is Calvin's list to go on)  
That since he asked, beside a sensible dot,  
Only thrift, patience, chastity and so on,  
Likely it's what he got.

## II. A RONDEAU FOR GENEVA, 1542

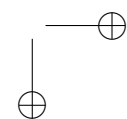
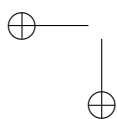
In the City of God with Calvin, king,  
The capital virtues had their fling,  
But mirth won little or no renown.  
A cold decorum, a pious frown  
Were proper Burghers' appareling.

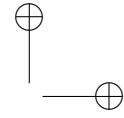
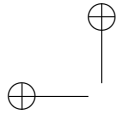
Nobody laughed much. None might sing  
Or dance to fiddles or kiss-and-cling.  
Condemned together were lover and clown  
In the City of God.

For smiling in church, or slumbering,  
For wreathing a Maypole come the Spring,  
Jail was the punishment handed down.  
One wonders if God, when He walked the town,  
Ever felt homesick or anything  
In the City of God.

## HOW TO START A WAR

Said Zwingli to Muntzer,  
"I'll have to be blunt, sir.  
I don't like your version  
Of Total Immersion.  
And since God's on my side





And I'm on the dry side,  
You'd better swing ovah  
To me and Jehovah."

Cried Muntzer, "It's schism,  
Is Infant Baptism!  
Since I've had a sign, sir,  
That God's will is mine, sir,  
Let all men agree  
With Jehovah and me,  
Or go to Hell, singly,"  
Said Muntzer to Zwingli,

As each drew his sword  
On the side of the Lord.

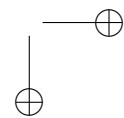
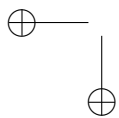
#### CREAM OF THE JESTERS

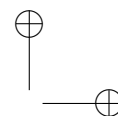
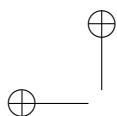
When Philip Neri walked abroad  
Beside the Tiber, praising God,  
They say he was attended home  
By half the younger set of Rome.

Knight, novice, scholar, boisterous boy,  
They followed after him with joy,  
To nurse his poor and break his bread  
And hear the funny things he said.

For Philip Neri (by his birth  
A Florentine) believed in mirth,  
Holding that virtue took no harm  
Which went with laughter arm-in-arm.

Two books he read with most affection –  
The Gospels and a joke collection;  
And sang hosannas set to fiddles  
And fed the sick on soup and riddles.





So when the grave rebuke the merry,  
Let them remember Philip Neri  
(Fifteen-fifteen to ninety-five),  
Who was the merriest man alive,  
Then, dying at eighty or a bit,  
Became a saint by Holy Wit.

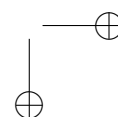
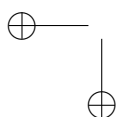
#### SIMEON STYLITES

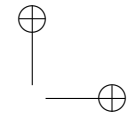
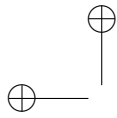
On top of a pillar Simeon sat.  
He wore no mantle,  
He had no hat,  
But bare as a bird  
Sat night and day.  
And hardly a word  
Did Simeon say.

Under the sun of the desert sky  
He sat on a pillar  
Nine feet high.  
When Fool and his brother  
Came round to admire,  
He raised it another  
Nine feet higher.

The seasons circled about his head.  
He lived on water  
And crusts of bread  
(Or so one hears)  
From pilgrims' store,  
For thirty years  
And a little more.

And why did Simeon sit like that,  
Without a garment,  
Without a hat,  
In a holy rage  
For the world to see?





It puzzles the age,  
It puzzles me.  
It puzzled many  
A Desert Father.  
And I think it puzzled the Good Lord, rather.

**SONNET FROM ASSISI**

Blind Francis, waiting to welcome Sister Death,  
Worn though he was by ecstasies and fame,  
Had heart for tune. With what remained of breath  
He led his friars in canticles.

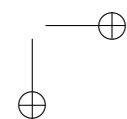
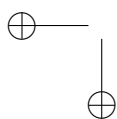
Then came  
Brother Elias, scowling, to his side,  
Small-souled Elias, crying by book and candle,  
This was outrageous! Had the monks no pride?  
Music at deathbeds! Ah, the shame, the scandal!

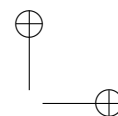
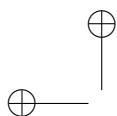
Elias gave him sermons and advice  
Instead of song; which simply proves once more  
What things are sure this side of paradise:  
Death, taxes, and the counsel of the bore.  
Though we outwit the tithe, make death our friend,  
Bores we have with us even to the end.

**CONVERSATION IN AVILA**

Teresa was God's familiar. She often spoke  
To Him informally,  
As if together they shared some heavenly joke.  
Once, watching stormily  
Her heart's ambitions wither to odds and ends,  
With all to start anew,  
She cried, "If this is the way You treat Your friends,  
No wonder You have so few!"

There is no perfect record standing by  
Of God's reply.





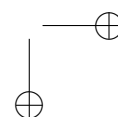
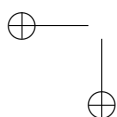
#### ORIGIN OF SPECIES

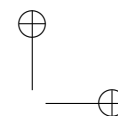
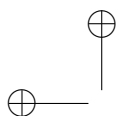
Nicholas, Bishop of Myra's See,  
Was holy a saint  
As a saint could be;  
Saved not a bit  
Of his worldly wealth  
And loved to commit  
Good deeds by stealth.

Was there a poor man,  
Wanting a roof?  
Nicholas sheltered him weatherproof.  
Who lacked a morsel  
Had but to ask it  
And at his doorsill  
Was Nicholas' basket.

O, many a basket did he carry.  
Penniless girls  
Whom none would marry  
Used to discover to their delight,  
Into their windows  
Tossed at night  
(When the moon was old  
And the dark was showry),  
Bags of gold  
Enough for a dowry.

People, I read,  
Grew slightly lyrical,  
Calling each deed  
He did, a miracle.  
Told how he calmed the sea for sailors  
And rescued children  
From awful jailors





Who, drawing lots  
For the foul design,  
Liked pickling tots  
In pickle brine.

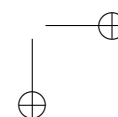
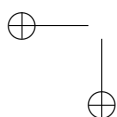
Nicholas, *circa*  
Fourth cent. A.D.,  
Died in the odor of sanctity.  
But fortune changes,  
Blessings pass,  
And look what's happened to Nicholas.

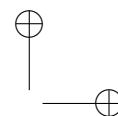
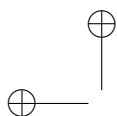
He who had feared  
The world's applause,  
Now, with a beard,  
Is Santa Claus.  
A multiplied elf, he struts and poses,  
Ringing up sales  
In putty noses;  
With Comet and Cupid  
His constant partners,  
Telling tall tales to kindergart'ners,  
His halo fickle as  
Wind and wave.

While dizzily Nicholas  
Spins in his grave.

#### THE TEMPTATIONS OF SAINT ANTHONY

Off in the wilderness bare and level,  
Anthony wrestled with the Devil.  
Once he'd beaten the Devil down,  
Anthony'd turn his eyes toward town  
And leave his hermitage now and then  
To come to grips with the souls of men.





Afterward, all the tales agree,  
Wrestling the Devil seemed to be  
Quite a relief to Anthony.

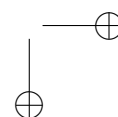
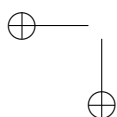
**ONCE THERE WERE THREE IRISHMEN**

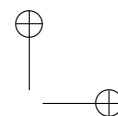
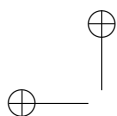
I. COLMAN THE HERMIT

Colman of Galway,  
Pledged to be  
Addict of chosen poverty,  
Living single in his wattled cell,  
Yet had creatures  
To serve him well;  
Kept three friends  
To cheer his house –  
A cock, a fly,  
And a Galway mouse.

Colman the schoolman  
Told the cock:  
“Crow me for Matins. Be my clock.”  
Said to the mouse, “At midnight creep  
To wake me, praying,  
From sloven sleep.  
And when I read  
In the Books of Grace,  
Let fly hover  
To keep my place.”

Colman, with three  
To teach or bless,  
Throve in learning and holiness.  
On honey and mead he fed the fly,  
Praised the mouse  
For his bright eye,





Bade cock follow  
Where he went,  
Loved the Lord  
And was content.

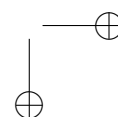
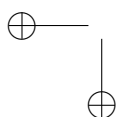
But after a season,  
One by one  
As failed each small companion,  
Colman, being but human still,  
Wrote to the Abbot  
Columcille,  
“I grieve a little  
On my gray rock  
For fly and mouse  
And the crowing cock.”

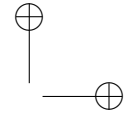
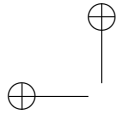
Answered the Abbot  
Soothingly,  
“Look what a trouble wealth can be!  
See how sadly is treasure bought.  
While he with nothing  
Mourns for naught,  
You who were rich  
Lament your store.  
Colman, dear man,  
Be rich no more.”

Thenceforth, paupered  
Without complaint,  
Colman lived and died a saint.

## II. COLUMBA THE ABBOT

Gray-eyed Columba, he  
Who rhymed in the Gaelic tongue  
And had been king if he cared,  
Heard how over the sea





(In the place where he'd been young)  
Illy the Poets fared.

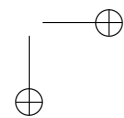
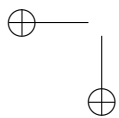
“Trouble is all they make!”  
Complained the angry people.  
“Too heavy is their hire!  
For price of a song they take  
The bell from the village steeple,  
The cow from the farmer’s byre.

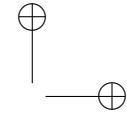
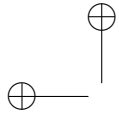
“Let them be off and going!  
For mischief, for their greed,  
We banish them one and all.”  
Then Saint Columba, knowing  
A bit of the minstrel breed,  
Came back to Donegal.

Back from Iona’s isle  
He came where the Irish heather  
Was welcome to his feet.  
And after a little while  
He called the people together  
Before the High King’s seat.

“Admitted,” he said, “it’s so  
That bards are kittle-kattle  
And thorns in everyone’s sides.  
But who, if the Poets go,  
Will sing the tale of a battle  
Or the beauty of your brides?”

“Like grass that autumn yellows  
Your fame will wither away.  
Dull must a nation be  
Without these meddling fellows.  
It’s the price you have to pay  
For owning a history.”





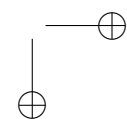
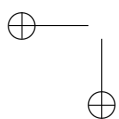
Columba lifted his rod  
And Poets walked no more  
Under the exile's curse –  
Colum who, next to God  
And the sight of Ireland's shore,  
Loved a proficient verse.

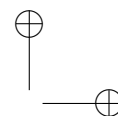
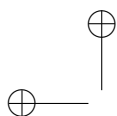
### III. PATRICK THE MISSIONER

Saint Patrick was a preacher  
With honey in his throat.  
They say that he could charm away  
A miser's dearest pence;  
Could coax a feathered creature  
To leave her nesting note  
And fly from many a farm away  
To drink his eloquence.

No Irishman was Patrick  
According to the story.  
The speech of Britain clung to him  
(Or maybe it was Wales).  
But ah, for curving rhet'ric,  
Angelic oratory,  
What man could match a tongue to him  
Among the clashing Gaels!

Let Patrick meet a Pagan  
In Antrim or Wicklow,  
He'd talk to him so reachingly,  
So vehement would pray,  
That Cul or Neall or Reagan  
Would fling aside his bow  
And beg the saint beseechingly  
To christen him that day.



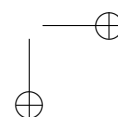
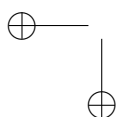


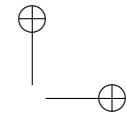
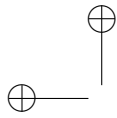
He won the Necromancers,  
The bards, the country herds.  
Chief Aengus rose and went with him  
To bear his staff and bowl.  
For such were all his answers  
To disputatious words,  
Who'd parry argument with him  
Would end a shriven soul.

The angry Druids muttered  
A curse upon his prayers.  
They sought a spell for shattering  
The marvels he had done.  
But Patrick merely uttered  
A better spell than theirs  
And sent the Druids scattering  
Like mist before the sun.

They vanished like the haze on  
The plume of the fountain.  
But still their scaly votaries  
Were venomous at hand.  
So three nights and days on  
Tara's stony mountain  
He thundered till those coteries  
Of serpents fled the land.

Grown old but little meeker  
At length he took his rest.  
And centuries have listened, dumb,  
To tales of his renown.  
For Ireland loves a speaker,  
So loves Saint Patrick best:  
The only man in Christendom  
Has talked the Irish down.

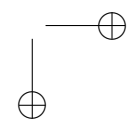
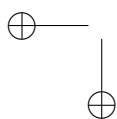


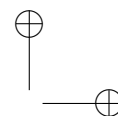
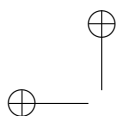


#### THE THUNDERER

God's angry man, His crotchety scholar,  
Was Saint Jerome,  
The great name-caller,  
Who cared not a dime  
For the laws of libel  
And in his spare time  
Translated the Bible.  
Quick to disparage  
All joys but learning,  
Jerome thought marriage  
Better than burning;  
But didn't like woman's  
Painted cheeks;  
Didn't like Romans,  
Didn't like Greeks,  
Hated Pagans  
For their Pagan ways,  
Yet doted on Cicero all his days.

A born reformer, cross and gifted,  
He scolded mankind  
Sternier than Swift did;  
Worked to save  
The world from the heathen;  
Fled to a cave  
For peace to breathe in,  
Promptly wherewith  
For miles around  
He filled the air with  
Fury and sound.  
In a mighty prose  
For almighty ends,  
He thrust at his foes,





Quarreled with his friends,  
And served his Master,  
Though with complaint.  
He wasn't a plaster  
Sort of saint.

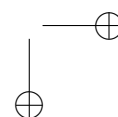
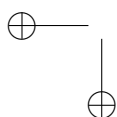
But he swelled men's minds  
With a Christian leaven.  
It takes all kinds  
To make a Heaven.

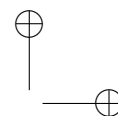
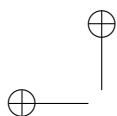
#### PATERFAMILIAS

Of all the saints who have won their charter –  
Holy man, hero, hermit, martyr,  
Mystic, missionary, sage, or wit –  
Saint Thomas More is my favorite.  
For he loved these bounties with might and main:  
God and his house and his little wife, Jane,  
And four fair children his heart threw on,  
Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John.

That More was a good man everybody knows.  
He sang good verses and he wrote good prose,  
Enjoyed a good caper and liked a good meal  
And made a good Master of the Privy Seal.  
A friend to Erasmus, Lily's friend,  
He lived a good life and he had a good end  
And left good counsel for them to con,  
Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John.

Some saints are alien, hard to love,  
Wild as an eagle, strange as a dove,  
Too near to heaven for the mind to scan.  
But Thomas More was a family man,  
A husband, a courtier, a doer and a hoper





(Admired of his son-in-law, Mr. Roper),  
Who punned in Latin like a Cambridge don  
With Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John.

It was less old Henry than Anne Boleyn  
Hailed him to the Tower and locked him in.  
But even in the Tower he saw things brightly.  
He spoke to his jailers most politely,  
And while the sorrowers turned their backs  
He rallied the headsman who held the ax,  
Then blessed, with the blessing of Thomas More,  
God and his garden and his children four.

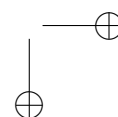
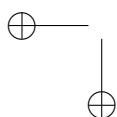
And I fear they missed him when he was gone –  
Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John.

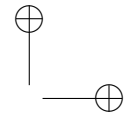
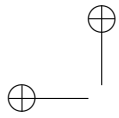
**FOR A BOY NAMED SEBASTIAN**

Stamped as you are both His and Hers,  
My child, you do not greatly need  
Godmothers or Astrologers  
Or gentlemen of Merlin's breed  
Around your crib to prophecy  
What way your fortunes lie.

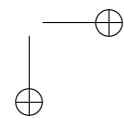
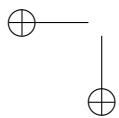
The stars have danced, the eagles spread  
Benign and intellectual wings  
For augury. Upon your head  
Must fall a rain of pleasant things.  
Still, while good wishes stream on you,  
Accept mine, too.

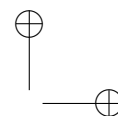
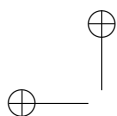
For I recall your name-saint. He  
Won some renown, however narrow,  
By getting pierced incessantly  
With Everyman's ungracious arrow.  
He owned no armor but his skin  
And that, too thin.





Now none can fend all barbs away  
Even with candle, book and bell.  
But this my hope, Sebastian: May  
You grow a noble sort of shell,  
A good, tough, weapon-blunting hide  
To stow your heart inside,  
Not made of coarseness or conceit,  
Not dull or cold or overbearing,  
But proudly masculine and neat –  
One suitable for princely wearing.  
Then, though you feel the arrows' touch,  
They can not harm you much,  
Or turn you off from any issue.  
And that's the best wish I can wish you.





## A CERTAIN AGE

### GIRL'S-EYE VIEW OF RELATIVES

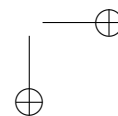
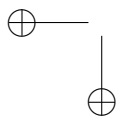
#### FIRST LESSON

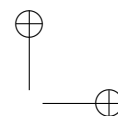
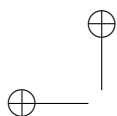
The thing to remember about fathers is, they're men.  
A girl has to keep it in mind.  
They are dragon-seekers, bent on improbable rescues.  
Scratch any father, you find  
Someone chock-full of qualms and romantic terrors,  
Believing change is a threat –  
Like your first shoes with heels on, like your first bicycle  
It took such months to get.

Walk in strange woods, they warn you about the snakes  
there.  
Climb, and they fear you'll fall.  
Books, angular boys, or swimming in deep water –  
Fathers mistrust them all.  
Men are the worriers. It is difficult for them  
To learn what they must learn:  
How you have a journey to take and very likely,  
For a while, will not return.

#### TURN OF THE SCREW

Girl cousins condescend. They wear  
Earrings, and dress like fashion's sample,





Have speaking eyes and curly hair.  
And parents point to their example.  
But the boy cousins one's allotted  
Are years too young for one. Or spotted.

TRIOLET AGAINST SISTERS

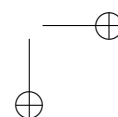
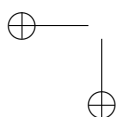
Sisters are always drying their hair.  
    Locked into rooms, alone,  
They pose at the mirror, shoulders bare,  
Trying this way and that their hair,  
Or fly importunate down the stair  
    To answer a telephone.  
Sisters are always drying their hair,  
    Locked into rooms, alone.

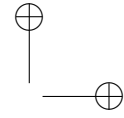
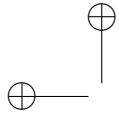
IN PRAISE OF AUNTS

Of all that tribe the young must do  
Familial obedience to,  
Whom we salute on anniversaries,  
Whose names we learn while new in nurseries  
Or borrow at baptismal fonts,  
The soothingest are aunts.

Aunts are discreet, a little shy  
By instinct. They forbear to pry  
Into recesses of the spirit  
Where apprehensions lie.  
Yet, given a tale to hear, they hear it.

Aunts spinster pamper us with praise,  
And seats for worldly matinées  
With coffee after. Married aunts,  
Attentive to material wants,  
Run rather to the shared comestible,  
Taboo or indigestible;





Are lenient but cool;  
And let us, if we must, play fool.

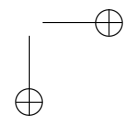
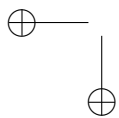
Aunts carry no duty in their faces.  
Their letters, mailed from far-off places,  
Are merely letters meant to read  
(Answerable at a moderate speed),  
Not cries of need  
Or vessels heavy with their hopes.  
Aunts also send,  
Tucked into casual envelopes,  
Money entirely ours to spend.

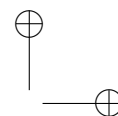
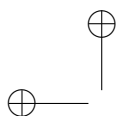
At night they do not lie awake  
Shuddering for our sorrows' sake.  
Beneath our flesh we seldom wear  
Their skeletons, nor need we stare  
Into a looking glass and see  
Their images begin to be.  
Aunts care, but only mildly care,  
About our winter moods,  
Postures, or social attitudes,  
And whether we've made a friend or dropped one.

All should have aunts, or else adopt one.

#### THE ADVERSARY

A mother's hardest to forgive.  
Life is the fruit she longs to hand you,  
Ripe on a plate. And while you live,  
Relentlessly she understands you.





#### A CERTAIN AGE

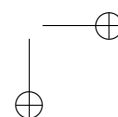
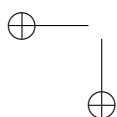
All of a sudden, bicycles are toys,  
Not locomotion. Bicycles are for boys  
And seventh-graders, screaming when they talk.  
A girl would rather  
Take vows, go hungry, put on last year's frock,  
Or dance with her own father  
Than pedal down the block.

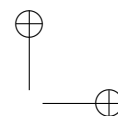
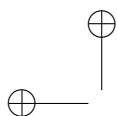
This side of childhood lies a narrow land,  
Its laws unwritten, altering out of hand,  
But, more than Sparta's, savagely severe.  
Common or gentry,  
The same taboos prevail. One learns, by ear,  
The customs of the country  
Or pays her forfeit here.

No bicycles. No outcast dungarees  
Over this season's round and scarless knees,  
No soft departures from the veering norm.  
But the same bangle,  
Marked with a nickname, now from every arm  
Identically must dangle,  
The speech be uniform –

Uniform as the baubles round the throat,  
The ill-made wish, the stiffened petticoat,  
And beauty, blurred but burning in the face.  
Now, scrubbed and scented,  
They move together toward some meeting place,  
Wearing a regimented,  
Unutterable grace.

They travel rapt, each compass pointing south –  
Heels to the shoes and lipstick on the mouth.



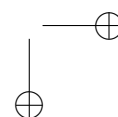
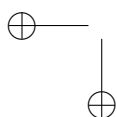


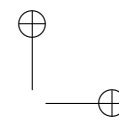
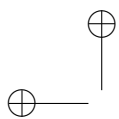
#### BOOTLESS SPECULATIONS

*One fact eccentric I often muse on:  
Girls of sixteen won't keep their shoes on.*

Girls, at sixteen, for all our strictures,  
Are proper as Puritans,  
Pretty as pictures.  
With waists cinched tightly,  
Wearing ponytails,  
They move more lightly  
Than a ship with sails,  
Than roses shaking  
The summer dews off –  
But why must they always be taking their shoes off?

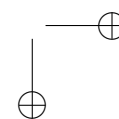
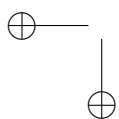
Girls of sixteen  
Have rows and rows  
Of fanciful, lean  
Capezios.  
Helter-skelter,  
To point of scandal,  
Their closets shelter  
Slipper and sandal,  
Glass shoes, gilt shoes,  
Shoes with baubles on,  
Three-inch-stilt shoes  
That anyone wobbles on,  
Shoes gone risible,  
Shoes for sport,  
Shoes without visible  
Means of support.  
Each maidenly foot is a clad-with-care foot,  
But how do they go?  
Why, chiefly barefoot.

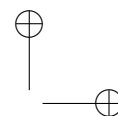
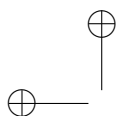




They never enter  
Their entrance halls  
But front and center  
The footwear falls:  
Pumps under sofas;  
Brogues on the stairs;  
Loathsome loafers  
Beneath wing chairs;  
Shoes on the landing,  
Lost in flight;  
On porches standing  
Overnight,  
While, legs a-taper,  
Combing their curls,  
Blithely caper  
The discalced girls.  
Shoeless they chatter their gossip windy  
Or barefoot at parties  
Dance the Lindy.

Girls at sixteen have depths unsounded.  
Of sugar and spice  
Are they compounded;  
Sweetly their powers  
Shame doubting Thomases;  
They keep late hours  
But keep their promises;  
They keep cool heads  
For the course they cruise on.  
So why in the world can't they keep their shoes on?





#### PORTRAIT OF GIRL WITH COMIC BOOK

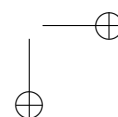
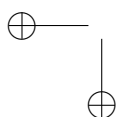
Thirteen's no age at all. Thirteen is nothing.  
It is not wit, or powder on the face,  
Or Wednesday matinées, or misses' clothing,  
Or intellect, or grace.  
Twelve has its tribal customs. But thirteen  
Is neither boys in battered cars nor dolls,  
Not *Sara Crewe*, or movie magazine,  
Or pennants on the walls.

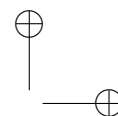
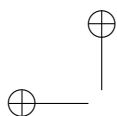
Thirteen keeps diaries and tropical fish  
(A month, at most); scorns jumpropes in the spring;  
Could not, would fortune grant it, name its wish;  
Wants nothing, everything;  
Has secrets from itself, friends it despises;  
Admits none to the terrors that it feels;  
Owns half a hundred masks but no disguises;  
And walks upon its heels.

Thirteen's anomalous – not that, not this:  
Not folded bud, or wave that laps a shore,  
Or moth proverbial from the chrysalis.  
Is the one age defeats the metaphor.  
Is not a town, like childhood, strongly walled  
But easily surrounded; is no city.  
Nor, quitted once, can it be quite recalled –  
Not even with pity.

#### LAUNCELOT WITH BICYCLE

Her window looks upon the lane.  
From it, anonymous and shy,  
Twice daily she can see him plain,  
Wheeling heroic by.  
She droops her cheek against the pane  
And gives a little sigh.





Above him maples at their bloom  
Shake April pollen down like stars  
While he goes whistling past her room  
Toward unimagined wars,  
A tennis visor for his plume,  
Scornful of handlebars.

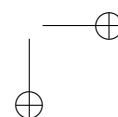
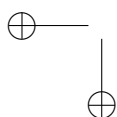
And, counting over in her mind  
His favors, gleaned like windfall fruit  
(A morning when he spoke her kind,  
An afterschool salute,  
A number that she helped him find,  
Once, for his paper route),

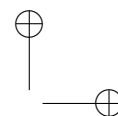
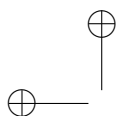
Sadly she twists a stubby braid  
And closer to the casement leans –  
A wistful and a lily maid  
In moccasins and jeans,  
Despairing from the seventh grade  
To match his lordly teens.

And so she grieves in Astolat  
(Where other girls have grieved the same)  
For being young and therefore not  
Sufficient to his fame –  
Who will by summer have forgot  
Grief, April, and his name.

#### HOMEWORK FOR ANNABELLE

$A = bh$  over 2.  
3.14 is  $\pi$ .  
But I'd forgotten, if I ever knew,  
What  $R$ 's divided by.  
Though I knew once, I'd forgotten clean  
What a girl must study to reach fifteen –





How  $V$  is Volume and  $M$ 's for Mass,  
And the hearts of the young are brittle as glass.

I had forgotten, and half with pride,

Fifteen's no field of clover.

So here I sit at Annabelle's side,

Learning my lessons over.

For help is something you have to give

When daughters are faced with the Ablative

Or first encounter in any school

Immutable gender's mortal rule.

Day after day for a weary spell,

When the dusk has pitched its tents,

I sit with a book and Annabelle

At the hour of confidence

And rummage for lore I had long consigned

To cobwebby attics of my mind,

Like: For the Radius, write down  $R$ ,

The Volga's a river, Vega's a star,

Brazil's in the Tropic of Capricorn,

And heart is a burden that has to be borne.

Oh, high is the price of parenthood,

And daughters may cost you double.

You dare not forget, as you thought you could,

That youth is a plague and trouble.

$N$  times 7 is  $7n -$

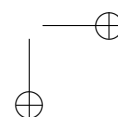
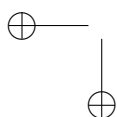
Here I go learning it all again:

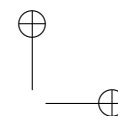
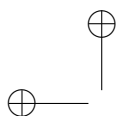
The climates of continents tend to vary,

The verb "to love" 's not auxiliary,

Tomorrow will come and today will pass,

But the hearts of the young are brittle as glass.





#### FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY

The Enemy, who wears  
Her mother's usual face  
And confidential tone,  
Has access; doubtless stares  
Into her writing case  
And listens on the phone.

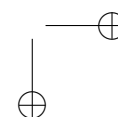
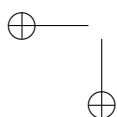
Her fortress crumbles. Spies  
Who call themselves her betters  
Harry her night and day.  
Herself's the single prize.  
Likely they read her letters  
And bear the tale away,

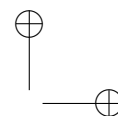
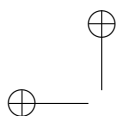
Or eavesdrop on her sleep  
(Uncountered and unhidden)  
To learn her dreams by heart.  
There is no lock will keep  
A secret rightly hidden  
From their subversive art.

But till the end is sure,  
Till on some open plain  
They bring her to her knees,  
She'll face them down – endure  
In silence and disdain  
Love's utmost treacheries.

#### BALLADE OF LOST OBJECTS

Where are the ribbons I tie my hair with?  
Where is my lipstick? Where are my hose –  
The sheer ones hoarded these weeks to wear with  
Frocks the closets do not disclose?





Perfumes, petticoats, sports chapeaux,  
The blouse Parisian, the earring Spanish –  
Everything suddenly ups and goes.  
*And where in the world did the children vanish?*

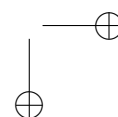
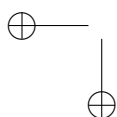
This is the house I used to share with  
Girls in pinafores, shier than does.  
I can recall how they climbed my stair with  
Gales of giggles, on their toptoes.  
Last seen wearing both braids and bows  
(But looking rather Raggedy-Annish),  
When they departed nobody knows –  
Where in the world did the children vanish?

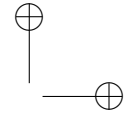
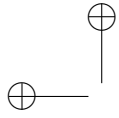
Two tall strangers, now I must bear with,  
Decked in my personal furbelows,  
Raiding the larder, rending the air with  
Gossip and terrible radios.  
Neither my friends nor quite my foes,  
Alien, beautiful, stern, and clannish,  
Here they dwell, while the wonder grows:  
Where in the world did the children vanish?

Prince, I warn you, under the rose,  
Time is the thief you cannot banish.  
These are my daughters, I suppose.  
*But where in the world did the children vanish?*

#### THE DOLL HOUSE

After the children left it, after it stood  
For a while in the attic,  
Along with the badminton set, and the skis too good  
To be given away, and the Peerless Automatic  
Popcorn Machine that used to fly into rages,  
And the Dr. Dolittle books, and the hamsters' cages,

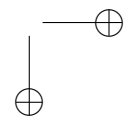
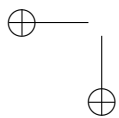


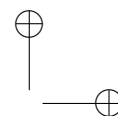
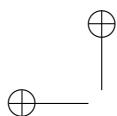


She brought it down once more  
To a bedroom, empty now, on the second floor  
And put the furniture in.

There was nothing much  
That couldn't be used again with a bit of repair.  
It was all there,  
Perfect and little and inviolate.  
So, with the delicate touch  
A jeweler learns, she mended the rocking chair,  
Meticulously laundered  
The gossamer parlor curtains, dusted the grate,  
Glued the glazed turkey to the flowered plate,  
And polished the Lilliput writing desk.

She squandered  
One bold October day and half the night  
Binding the carpets round with a ribbon border;  
Till, to her grave delight  
(With the kettle upon the stove, the mirror's face  
Scoured, the formal sofa set in its place),  
She saw the dwelling decorous and in order.  
It was a good house. It had been artfully built  
By an idle carpenter once, when the times were duller.  
The windows opened and closed. The knocker was gilt.  
And every room was painted a suitable color  
Or papered to scale  
For the sake of the miniature Adam and Chippendale.  
And there were proper hallways,  
Closets, lights, and a staircase. (What had always  
Pleased her most  
Was the tiny, exact, mahogany newel post.)  
And always, too, wryly she thought to herself,  
Absently pinning  
A drapery's pleat, smoothing a cupboard shelf –  
Always, from the beginning,





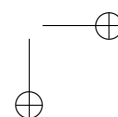
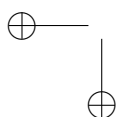
This outcome had been clear. Ah! She had known  
Since the first clapboard was fitted, first rafter hung  
(Yet not till now had known that she had known),  
This was no daughters' fortune but her own –  
Something cautiously lent to the careless young  
To dazzle their cronies with for a handful of years  
Till the season came  
When their toys diminished to programs and souvenirs,  
To tousled orchids, diaries well in arrears,  
Anonymous snapshots stuck round a mirror frame,  
Or letters locked away.

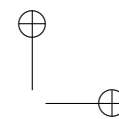
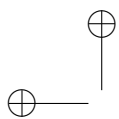
Now seed of the past  
Had fearfully flowered. Wholly her gift at last,  
Here was her private estate, a peculiar treasure  
Cut to her fancy's measure.  
Now there was none to trespass, no one to mock  
The extravagance of her sewing or her spending  
(The tablecloth stitched out of lace, the grandfather's clock,  
Stately upon the landing,  
With its hands eternally pointing to ten past five).

Now all would thrive.

Over this house, most tranquil and complete,  
Where no storm ever beat,  
Whose innocent stair  
No messenger ever climbed on quickened feet  
With tidings either of rapture or of despair,  
She was sole mistress. Through the panes she was able  
To peer at her world reduced to the size of dream  
But pure and unaltering.

There stood the dinner table,  
Invincibly a gleam  
With the undisheveled candles, the flowers that bloomed  
Forever and forever,



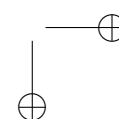
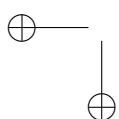


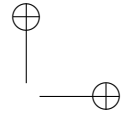
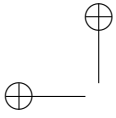
The wine that never  
Spilled on the cloth or sickened or was consumed.

The *Times* lay at the doorsill, but it told  
Daily the same unstirring report. The fire  
Painted upon the hearth would not turn cold,  
Or the constant hour change, or the heart tire  
Of what it must pursue,  
Or the guest depart, or anything here be old.

“Nor ever,” she whispered, “bid the spring adieu.”

And caught into this web of quietnesses  
Where there was neither After nor Before,  
She reached her hand to stroke the unwithering grasses  
Beside the small and incorruptible door.





## MY OWN BAEDEKER

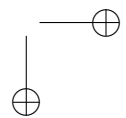
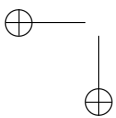
### LAMENT FOR LOST LODGINGS

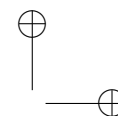
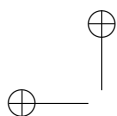
*“Do you remember an Inn, Miranda?” — Hilaire Belloc,  
“Tarantella.”*

Yes, do you remember an Inn,  
Miranda,  
Where chairs rocked, creaking,  
On the long veranda,  
Where beds were elderly  
To match the plumbing  
But the manager smiled at our coming?

Far from the highway where the traffic muttered,  
It was clapboarded white,  
It was greenly shuttered.  
There peace descended  
When night began  
And we paid by American Plan.

Remember the lobster redder than the wine,  
The breakfast dining-room  
That closed at nine,  
The wavy mirrors  
In the first-floor Women’s,  
The waitresses all from Smith or Simmons  
And the crickets loud

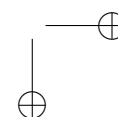
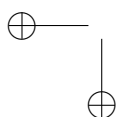


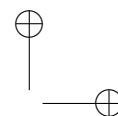
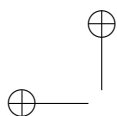


But the busboys louder  
And the reek of the leek  
In the weekly chowder  
And the carefree luggage  
That porters brought in  
And the baths you could launch a yacht in?

Nevermore, Miranda, nevermore.  
Only the faceless,  
Duplicated door  
Of a thousand Motels  
From Taos to Truro  
With Television built in the built-in bureau.  
Only the wallpaper, self-assertive,  
And the dusty coming  
And the going, furtive,  
And the Howard Johnson's  
For a meal, en masse,  
And the clink of the drink  
In the toothbrush glass.  
Only the guests, neither gentlemen nor ladies,  
But Monsieur the Buick  
Or Madame, Mercedes  
And the fee in advance  
And the sleeping pill  
For the traffic roaring at the sill.

Let me fly to an Inn like a sword to its scabbard  
Where the crickets cry  
And the walls are clapboard.  
Till I find a rocker  
On a long veranda  
I'll motor no more, Miranda.





## NEW ENGLAND PILGRIMAGE

### THE CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY

Connecticut, with much at stake,  
Prefers to call a pool a lake,  
But in New Hampshire and beyond  
They like to call a lake a pond.

### LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURINES

Vermont has mountains,  
Vermont has pines,  
Has highways innocent of billboard signs,  
Has white front porches, neighborly and wandering,  
Where ladies hang the laundry  
When they feel like laundering.

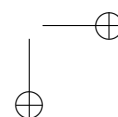
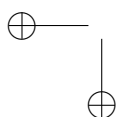
People in Vermont  
Keep their tongues well-throttled,  
Have carbonated summertimes that should be bottled,  
Have cows like goddesses and cats like pandas.  
But they *will* hang their washing  
On their front verandas.

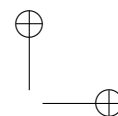
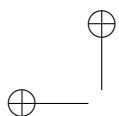
### HAPPY TIME

It goes to the heart,  
It goes to the head  
To look on lobster  
When it's red.  
Lobster, native on a *carte du jour*, may  
Make a gourmand out of a gourmet.

### THEATER-IN-THE-BARN

Old Guernsey ghosts – do they recall, with shock,  
When they were the sole stars of summer stock?



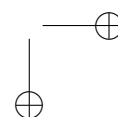
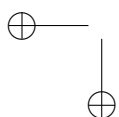


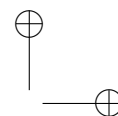
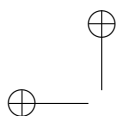
MEMO FOR DUNCAN HINES

Russians are fond of caviar.  
The French, whom nothing ruffles,  
Admire the pale  
Reclusive snail,  
And send their pigs for truffles.  
The Swedes hold court  
With smorgasbord.  
But down New England way,  
Where once the bean  
Was high cuisine,  
Behold the Relish Tray!

*Don't look now,  
But here it comes:  
Cinnamon apples,  
Candied plums,  
Fanciful notions  
Like pickled peas,  
And oceans and oceans  
Of cottage cheese.*

I've ordered oysters on the Cape  
When empty was the bucket.  
The chowder bowl  
That soothes the soul  
Has failed me in Nantucket.  
I've found Vermont  
At times in want  
Of turkey, which was hellish.  
But who has been  
At any Inn  
Immaculate of Relish?

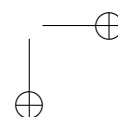
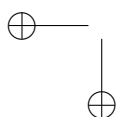


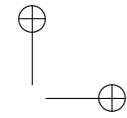
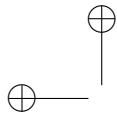


*Dine at Danbury,  
Lunch at Noone.  
A similar cranberry  
Stains the spoon.  
It's onions at Dover  
To spice the breeze,  
And over and over  
It's cottage cheese.*

There's many a gastronomic gulf  
    No alien palate bridges.  
On Britain's coast  
They toast their toast,  
    Then cool it in their fridges.  
Chinese say grace  
Above a brace  
    Of birds' nest rolled in batter.  
But, Haddam Neck  
To the Kennebec,  
    There reigns the Relish Platter.

*Butter your muffin,  
Order your filet,  
Harbor your strength  
For the piccalilli,  
For things in an umber  
Mustard mix,  
The sweet cucumber,  
The carrot sticks,  
The celery twisted  
Like tropic trees,  
And the cottage cheese.  
And the cottage cheese.*





AFTERNOON TEA AT THE COLONY

In Peterboro or on its margin  
    (Where I was visiting at),  
I watched the authors roaming at large in  
    Their natural habitat.  
Tranced, on the slopes of the Great McDow'll,  
I saw them feed, I heard them growl.  
But try as I would, I couldn't tell  
Which was lion  
And which gazelle.

SIC TRANSIT

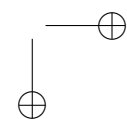
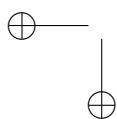
Although these days it makes my hair lift –  
Descending Mansfield in a chair lift –  
Now (over twenty-one and freeborn)  
I'd rather ride down than be ski-borne.

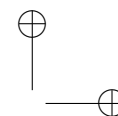
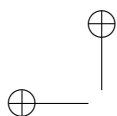
CONCERNING MAINE SWIMMING

Glacial and glittery,  
The waters off Kittery.  
I dread to dunk  
At Kennebunk.  
But that cool wave  
Past Bath and Bristol  
I wouldn't brave  
At the point of a pistol.

**A DREAM OF GIFTIES**

Somewhere somebody sits  
    (In a cave, in a cell, in a tower) –  
Somebody out of his wits  
    But primed with lunatic power.



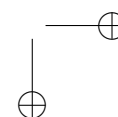
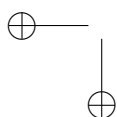


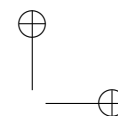
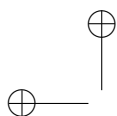
And what is he doing when midnight's brewing  
And mocking moons sail high?  
Inventing with sneers the Souvenirs  
That summer tourists buy;  
With sneers and jeers and lunatic leers  
Inventing the roadside Souvenirs  
That motoring tourists buy:

Balsam pillows in dubious felts,  
Handpainted neckties,  
Wampum belts,  
Perfumes harsher  
Than laws by Dracon,  
Plates with pictures of Echo Lake on,  
Pottery gnomes for cluttering yards  
And plaid, unplayable playing-cards.

No Gift Shop stands so bleak,  
Motel so poor but has'm,  
From Pike's memorial peak  
To dark Ausable Chasm.  
At soda fountains in the Rocky Mountains,  
At southern inns gardenious,  
Behold rich rows of the curios  
Spawned by his nightmare genius:

Pots of cactuses, gray and scratchy,  
Moccasins spurned  
By the poorest Apache,  
Incense burners  
Like skulls and hearses,  
Raffia baskets, raffia purses,  
Leather-work calendars slightly singed,  
And all designed by a mind unhinged.





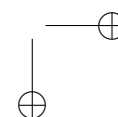
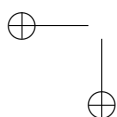
They lurk with a smirk obscene  
In a thousand Parks and Grottos  
Where all of the soap is green  
And all of the mugs wear mottos.  
From seashore tavern to Carlsbad Cavern,  
Wherever the Buicks roam,  
You can trace his tracks by the pennants and plaques  
That motorists carry home,  
The terrible stacks of pennants and plaques  
That ladies in slacks with sunburnt backs  
Bemusedly carry home,  
While he laughs Ha Ha and he snorts Bey Hey.  
Oh, I had a horrible  
Thought today!  
When soon our astronauts  
Raid the stars,  
What will they fetch from the fields of Mars?  
Souvenir spoons in a matching set  
And a pink Saint Christopher statuette.

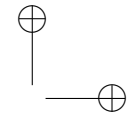
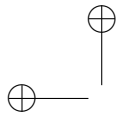
#### A TOUR OF ENGLISH CATHEDRALS

IN THE SUMMER (OR RAINY) SEASON

#### WESTMINSTER ABBEY

I wandered lonely as a fareless cabby  
Through miles and miles of the Royal Abbey,  
Which some call stately and some call sinister  
But most Americans call "Westminister,"  
For I wanted to see, beneath the throne,  
That Stone of Scone which is Scotland's Stone.





The Stone was the reason for my safari,  
But, getting confused by the statuary,  
By the granite poets and the marble dukes,  
By generals and judges in carved perukes,  
By king in his coffin, by knight in his stall,  
I didn't see the Stone of Scone at all.

Though later, in a buttery, pondering alone,  
I was served by the waitress with a scone of stone.

ST. PAUL'S

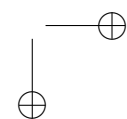
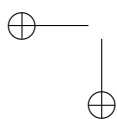
From the stone gallery there's a view  
Of London that is simply heaven.  
To see it, all you have to do  
Is climb six hundred twenty-seven  
Steps. It doesn't cost a penny.  
The only thing is I found it exactly six hundred and twenty-  
six steps too many.

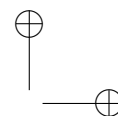
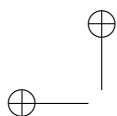
ELY

Although assembled of various famous styles,  
And one of the vastest in all of the British Isles,  
Ely, whenever it rains,  
Makes one aware of the drains –  
For the Master Builders, while certainly up and coming,  
Didn't understand plumbing.

WELLS

All by themselves on the Bishop's Moat,  
Two swans were somnolently afloat  
Who didn't seem to care in particular  
If naves were Gothic or Perpendicular,  
Or faced with limestone or Purbeck marble,  
But only that weather had stopped being horr'ble





And sun, for a moment, was edging through.  
Then, prying a pebble out of my shoe,  
I trudged off churchward to stare for a while  
At the Tombs of the Saxons on the Northern Aisle.

NOTE ON THE PREVALENCE OF FEE-TAKING

I think in all of England's See  
No verger dwells untipped by me.

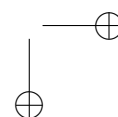
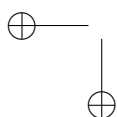
SALISBURY

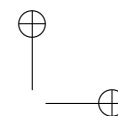
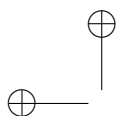
Salisbury had a splendid steeple,  
A cloister walk in good repair,  
And lots of French and German people  
Reading their guidebooks everywhere.  
Despite a rather ominous sky,  
They all took pictures. So did I.

We loved the Chapter House; its gate  
Looked toward a river and a thicket.  
Now, was it Salisbury where we ate  
A sole that wasn't quite the ticket,  
Or farther on, at Bath? No matter –  
It's where I found my Lowestoft platter.

NOTE ON THE PREVALENCE OF CHORISTERS

Nothing can glower  
Like a tourist throng  
Trapped for an hour  
By Evensong.





SOME NOTES ON THE PREVALENCE OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY  
CHURCHES

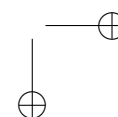
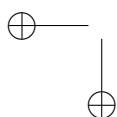
A couple of very industrious men  
Were Grinling Gibbons and Christopher Wren.  
Across the land,  
While the nation gulped,  
Christopher planned  
And Grinling sculped,  
Busy as bees in honeycombs.  
Colonnades, porticoes, elegant domes,  
Apses, transepts, naves, and chapels,  
Pulpits and choirs with turned pineapples,  
Pews of mahogany, ceilings of gilt –  
Grinling carved as Christopher built,  
All over England, an absolute host of them.  
And I think by now I must have seen most of them.

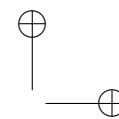
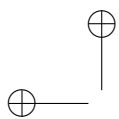
CANTERBURY TALE

When April's dulcet showers begin,  
Few rooms are free at the Falstaff Inn.  
In May, in June, when bloom the roses,  
The Abbot's Barton's guest list closes.  
Comes on July, you'll find small bounty  
Remaining at the cozy County.  
But when sets in the August flurry,  
Fly, Pilgrim, fly from Canterbury!

WINCHESTER

When we came into Winchester,  
Unsuppered and morose,  
We saw a hundred swallows  
Fly circling in the Close.





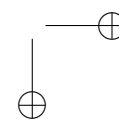
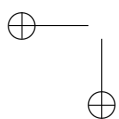
Down the austere gray corridors  
No footsteps rang but ours,  
And all the airs of evening  
Were spiced with gillyflowers.

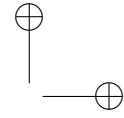
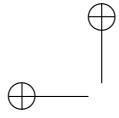
Against the Canon's Garden  
A red-and-white marquee  
Stood, gala, for tomorrow's  
Old Boys' and Parents' Tea,

And it had rained that morning,  
Would rain again that night,  
But nothing then save silence  
Spoke in the colored light

Till a bird sang his Vespers  
From somewhere near at hand.  
Then, suddenly, in focus  
We saw this Fortress stand,

This plot, this realm, this England,  
And truly wished it well  
Before we sought in Winchester  
Our bleak two-star hotel.





## THE ARTS AND CRAFTS

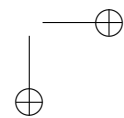
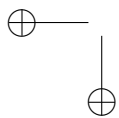
### A WORD TO HOSTESSES

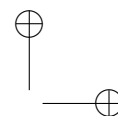
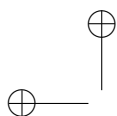
Celebrities are lonely when  
They congregate with lesser men.  
Among less lambent men they sit,  
Bereft of style, deprived of wit,  
A little chilly to the touch,  
And do not sparkle very much.

Wrenched from their coteries, they lack  
Mirrors to send their image back,  
And find it, therefore, hard to muster  
Glint for a purely private luster.  
(One sees a hunger in their eyes  
For splendor they can recognize.)

But seat them next a Name, and lo!  
How they most instantly will glow,  
Will light the sky or heat the room  
With gossip's incandescent bloom,  
As if, like twigs, they only burst  
In flame when rubbed together first.

Hostesses, then, when you are able  
To lure Celebrity to table,  
It is discreet to bear in mind  
He needs the comfort of his kind.





Fetch other Names. Fetch three or four.  
A dozen's better, or a score.  
And half a hundred might be fitter.  
But even one will make him glitter.

#### **SPECTATOR'S GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY ART**

##### HOW TO TELL PORTRAITS FROM STILL-LIFES

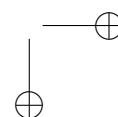
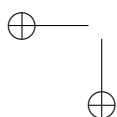
Ladies whose necks are long and swanny  
Are always signed Modigliani.  
But flowers explosive in a crock?  
Braque.

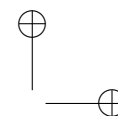
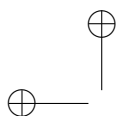
##### ON THE FARTHER WALL, MARC CHAGALL

One eye without a head to wear it  
Sits on the pathway, and a chicken,  
Pursued perhaps by astral ferret,  
Flees, while the plot begins to thicken.  
Two lovers kiss. Their hair is kelp.  
Nor are the titles any help.

##### THE GOLDEN TOUCH

Señor Dali,  
Born delirious,  
Considers it folly  
To be serious;  
Would rather paint than cubes or cones  
Mona Williams and telephones –  
Not toothsome fruits or tender trilliums  
But melting watches and Mrs. Williams,  
With an extra flourish to "Dali – *his* mark"  
Now that she's Mona, Countess Bismarck.





#### THE MODERN PALETTE

Picasso's Periodic hue  
Is plain enough for any dullard.  
The simple red succeeds the blue,  
And now the Party-colored.

#### SQUEEZE PLAY

Jackson Pollock had a quaint  
Way of saying to his sibyl,  
"Shall I dribble?  
Should I paint?"  
And with never an instant's quibble,  
Sibyl always answered,  
"Dribble."

#### THE CASUAL LOOK

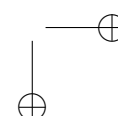
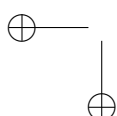
In pictures by Grandma Moses  
The people have no noses.

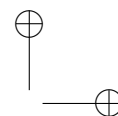
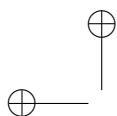
#### PUBLISHER'S PARTY

At tea in cocktail weather,  
The lady authors gather.  
Their hats are made of feather.  
They talk of Willa Cather.

They talk of Proust and Cather,  
And how we drift, and whither.  
Where wends the lady author,  
Martinis do not wither.

Their cocktails do not wither  
Nor does a silence hover.  
That critic who comes hither  
Is periled like a lover;



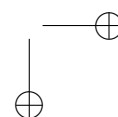
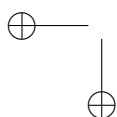


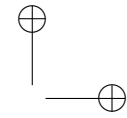
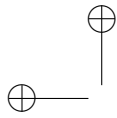
Is set on like a lover.  
Alert and full of power,  
They flush him from his cover,  
No matter where he cower.  
And Honor Guest must cower  
When they, descending rather  
Like bees upon a flower,  
Demand his views on Cather –  
On Wharton, James, or Cather,  
Or Eliot or Luther,  
Or Joyce or Cotton Mather,  
Or even Walter Reuther.  
In fact, the tracts of Reuther  
They will dispute together  
For hours, gladly, soother  
Than fall on silent weather.  
From teas in any weather  
Where lady authors gather,  
Whose hats are largely feather,  
Whose cocktails do not wither,  
Who quote from Proust and Cather  
(With penitence toward neither),  
Away in haste I slither,  
Feeling I need a breather.

**NOTES ON SOME EMINENT FOREIGN NOVELISTS**

FROM ANY ANGLE IT'S A VIPER'S TANGLE

The wise commit the errors,  
The good commit the sins.  
The brave are full of terrors.  
Only the loser wins.





And even white is partly black  
In books by François Mauriac.

THE MUTED SCREEN OF GRAHAM GREENE

Were all our sins so empty of enjoyment,  
All sinners gloomy as the ones he paints,  
The Devil soon, I think, would lack employment  
And the earth teem with saints.

THE CAT ON THE MAT DESERVES A PAT

Colette  
Kept Love for a pet,  
Brushed its fur as soft as silk,  
Gave it saucerfuls of milk,  
Taught it all the tricks there are –  
But didn't trust it very far.

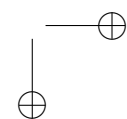
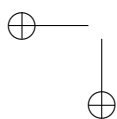
LAST YEAR'S DISCUSSION: THE NOBEL RUSSIAN

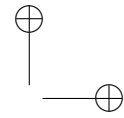
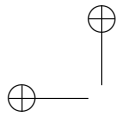
In Fond du Lac, Bronxville, Butte, Chicago,  
Everyone ordered Dr. Zhivago,  
A novel by Boris Pasternak.

But how many read it from front to back  
In Bronxville, Chicago, Butte, Fond du Lac?

THE ABSOLUTE LAW OF EVELYN WAUGH

Englishmen of the upper classes  
Are more amusing than the masses.





**MRS. SWEENEY AMONG THE ALLEGORIES**

*Multi-Level Verses Composed in a New Haven Railroad Car  
Immediately after Having Spent an Afternoon with the Col-  
lected Poems of T. S. Eliot and an Evening at The Confiden-  
tial Clerk.*

I

In the beginning was the word  
And, for an act, I understood.  
Colby was Lord Mulhammer's son.  
Burnished Lucasta longed for food.

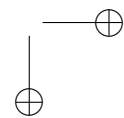
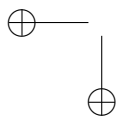
Gnomic, the jests of Ina Claire  
Scampered on super-cadenced feet.  
Eggerson spoke of Brussels Sprouts.  
Entered, at left, the Paraclete.

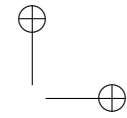
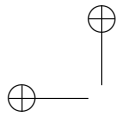
Defunctive message under B.  
Passed comprehension after while,  
Nearly; even I could see  
Discussion animate the aisle.

Transfigured, the illicit clerk  
Refused a post designed for him.  
Play beneath play beneath a play  
Then burnt, just visible but dim.

II

"This music crept by me upon the water,"  
Along Times Square, cutting through Shubert Alley.  
O! Poet's Poet, for a bit I heard,  
Upon a little stool in the Algonquin,  
The murmur of your transcendental meaning,  
With all the fiddles of the mind beginning





To scratch it out. But then,  
A single waiter with insomnia cried,  
“Madam, your double bourbon,” and it died.

III

On the stage the actors come and go.  
Whose heir is which they do not know.

IV

Between the Idea  
And the Interpretation,  
Between the epigram  
And the guffaw,  
Falls the Symbol.

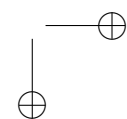
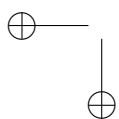
Between the Intermission  
And the Finale,  
Between the horns  
And the dilemma,  
Falls the Symbol.

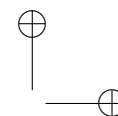
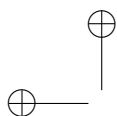
Between the First Level  
And the Third Level,  
Between the dark  
And the daylight,  
Between Grand Central Terminal  
And Larchmont, New York,  
Falls the Symbol.

Here, then, is the story:

v

T. Eliot, the Anglican, who feared God,  
Removing his bowler, furling his umbrella,  
Set down, in riddles, dogma for the crowd.  
Now he's in Africa with another fella,





Leaving behind no confidential Glossary.  
I hope he's not run over by Rhinosauri.

VI

For  
This is the way his farce ends,  
This is the way his farce ends,  
This is the way his farce ends,  
Not with a mot but a moral.

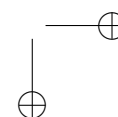
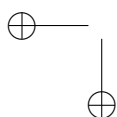
**LINES SCRIBBLED ON A PROGRAM**

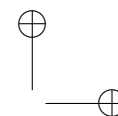
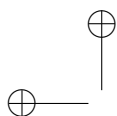
AND DISCOVERED BY A WAITER SWEEPING UP  
AFTER A LITERARY DINNER

Whenever public speakers rise  
    To dazzle hearers and beholders,  
A film comes over both my eyes.  
    Inevitably, toward my shoulders  
I feel my head begin to sink.  
It is an allergy, I think.

No matter what the time or place,  
    No matter how adroit the speaker  
Or rich the tone or famed the face,  
    I feel my life force ebbing weaker.  
Even the chairman, lauding him,  
Can make the room about me swim.

The room swims. And my palms are wet.  
    Languor and lassitude undo me.  
I fumble with a cigarette  
    For ashtrays never handy to me,





Lift chin, grit teeth, shift in my chair,  
But nothing helps – not even prayer.

From all who Talk, I dream away –  
From statesmen heavy with their travels,  
From presidents of P.T.A.

Exchanging honorary gavels;  
From prelate, pedant, wit, and clown,  
Club treasurer, John Mason Brown;

From lecturers on the ductless gland,  
Ex-Communists, ex-dukes, exhorters,  
Poets with poems done by hand,  
Political ladies, lady reporters,  
Professors armed with bell and book,  
Mimes, magnates, mayors, Alistair Cooke.

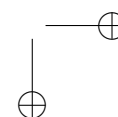
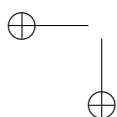
The hot, the fluent, and the wise,  
The dull, the quick-upon-the-trigger –  
Alike, alike they close my eyes.

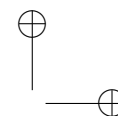
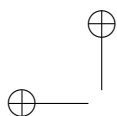
Alike they rob me of my vigor.  
For me Demosthenes, with pain,  
Had mouthed his Attic stones in vain.

The aforementioned being clear  
Concerning speech, concerning speaker,  
Alas, what am I doing here,

Facing my empty plate and beaker,  
And watching with a wild unrest  
The rising of the evening's Guest?  
Ah, was it mine, this monstrous choice?  
Whose accents these? And whose the voice  
That wakes in me a pang well known?

Good God, it is my own, my own!





### SPEAKING OF TELEVISION

#### THE LAST WORD

I'd take more pleasure in discussions schola'ly  
If Bergen Evans wouldn't laugh so jollily.

#### PICKWICK TIME

Readings by Mr. Laughton  
I cannot dote as I ought on.  
Though the prose is doubtless  
Deathless,  
Could he not speak out less  
Breathless?

#### ALMOST ANY EVENING

On all the channels,  
Nothing but panels!

#### INSULT IS THE SOUL OF WIT

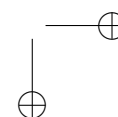
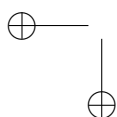
Groucho Marx is a man I'm fond of.  
A gray-haired jest he can make a blonde of.  
But I'd rather be a derelict, sleeping in parks,  
Than a guest on the program of Groucho Marx.

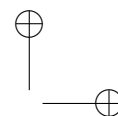
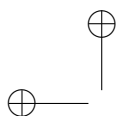
#### DEFINITION OF AN AFTERNOON PROGRAM

A lady who shows you how to embellish  
Saturday's roast with Monday's relish.

#### ON THE PREVALENCE OF MURDER

Did I hear you say  
Crime doesn't pay?





BY ANY OTHER NAME

A pretty pair  
I like to praise  
Are Peter Lind  
And Mary Hayes.  
Excuse it, please –  
What I meant, really,  
Was Linda Hayes  
And Peter Healy.  
No, no!  
I'm coming all unpinned.  
It's Healy Hayes  
And Mary Lind,  
Or anyhow  
Some close relation.  
Ah, well! Let's try another station.

ROBIN HOOD

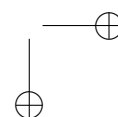
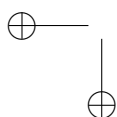
Zounds, gramercy, and rootity-toot!  
Here comes the man in the green flannel suit.

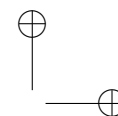
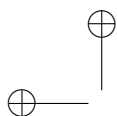
THE \$64,000 ANSWER

I think that I shall never see  
A Quiz Tot who appeals to me.

REFLECTIONS DENTAL

How pure, how beautiful, how fine  
Do teeth on television shine!  
No flutist flutes, no dancer twirls,  
But comes equipped with matching pearls.  
Gleeful announcers all are born  
With sets like rows of hybrid corn.  
Clowns, critics, clergy, commentators,





Ventriloquists and roller skaters,  
M.C.s who beat their palms together,  
The girl who diagrams the weather,  
The crooner crooning for his supper –  
All flash white treasures, lower and upper.  
With miles of smiles the airwaves teem,  
And each an orthodontist's dream.  
'Twould please my eye as gold a miser's –  
One charmer with uncapped incisors.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING WESTERN

Wyatt Earp  
Rides tall in the stearp.

#### THE PERRY COMO SHOW

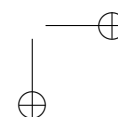
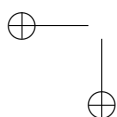
Someday, perhaps,  
Will he really collapse?

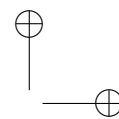
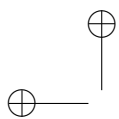
#### MAMA

The humor of family sagas is far from Shavian –  
Including the Scandinavian.

#### THE NEWS

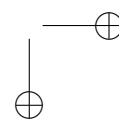
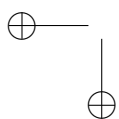
Now that the crisp or thunderous word  
Has been made flesh upon the screen,  
The day's events a little blurred  
Come to my ear. Ah, could it mean  
Newscasters should be only heard,  
Not seen?

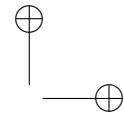
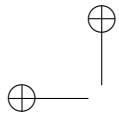




REFLECTIONS ON THE FALLIBILITY OF PROGRESS

If all the world were Color  
    From Rome to Roanoke,  
No brighter and no duller  
    Would sound the comic's joke;  
If every screen, I figger,  
    Stretched fifty inches down,  
No smaller and no bigger  
    The wit of any clown.

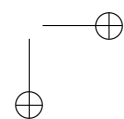
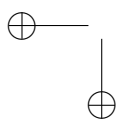


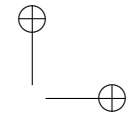
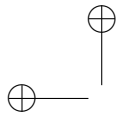


## LAMENTS AND PRAISES

### DIRGE FOR AN ERA

O! do you remember Paper Books  
When paper books were thinner?  
It was all so gay  
In that far-off day  
When you fetched them home  
At a quarter a tome  
To dip in after dinner  
Or carry to bed in a handy packet,  
Bosomy girls on every jacket.  
And never a taint of Culture  
Sullied that wholesome air  
But only bodies  
In Bishop's studies  
And blood on the bill-of-fare.  
As the type grew blurry the plots grew thick.  
But what do we get now?  
Moby Dick.  
Cluttering bookstore counters,  
In stationer's windows preening,  
The Paperbacks  
Now offer us facts  
On Tillich and Sartre  
And abstract artre  
And Life's essential Meaning,

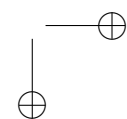
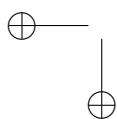


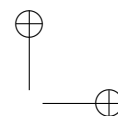
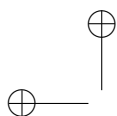


Confessions by St. Augustine  
    Instead of murderous men  
Or many a yard  
Of Kierkegaard  
    And the myriad laws of Zen  
Or books about bees and how they hive,  
Cheap at a dollar-  
Ninety-five.

You pack your trunk and you're at the station  
But what do you find for a journey's ration?  
Books by Aeschylus, books by Chaucer,  
Books about atom or flying saucer,  
Books of poetry, deep books, choice books,  
Pre-Renaissance and neo-Joyce books,  
In covers chaste and a prose unlurid.  
Books that explore my id and *your* id,  
Never hammock or summer-porch books  
But Compass, Evergreen, Anchor, Torch Books,  
Books by a thousand stylish names  
And everywhere, everywhere, Henry James.

O! *do* you remember Paper Books  
    When paper books were thrilling,  
When something to read  
Was seldom Gide  
Or Proust or Peacock  
Or Margaret Mead  
    And seldom Lionel Trilling?  
Gone is the sleuth that cheered our youth  
    And the prose that galloped pure.  
The flame of our pleasure burns to ash  
Since shops are swept of their darling trash  
And all we can buy for petty cash  
    Is paper Literature.





#### SUNDAY PSALM

*This is the day which the Lord hath made,  
Shining like Eden absolved of sin,  
Three parts glitter to one part shade:  
Let us be glad and rejoice therein.*

Everything's scoured brighter than metal.  
Everything sparkles as pure as glass –  
The leaf on the poplar, the zinnia's petal,  
The wing of the bird, and the blade of the grass.

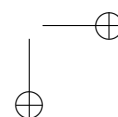
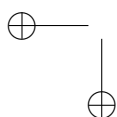
All, all is luster. The glossy harbor  
Dazzles the gulls that, gleaming, fly.  
Glimmers the wasp on the grape in the arbor.  
Glisten the clouds in the polished sky.

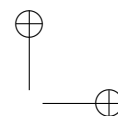
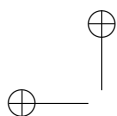
Tonight – tomorrow – the leaf will fade,  
The waters tarnish, the dark begin.  
But *this is the day which the Lord hath made:*  
*Let us be glad and rejoice therein.*

#### THE BONUS

Of the small gifts of heaven,  
It seems to me a more than equal share  
At birth was given  
To girls with curly hair.  
Oh, better than being born with a silver ladle,  
Or even with a caul on,  
Is wearing ringlets sweetly from the cradle.  
Slaves to no beauty salon,  
Ladies whose locks grow prettier when moister  
Can call the world their oyster.

Ladies with curly hair  
Have time to spare.



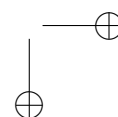
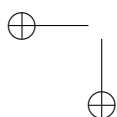


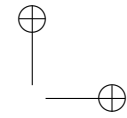
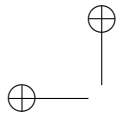
Beneath a windy drier  
They need not thumb through *Photoplay* each week.  
They can look higher.  
Efficient, tidy, and forever chic,  
They own free hours to cook or study Greek,  
Run for the Senate, answer notes, break par,  
Write poems, chair the local D.A.R.,  
Paint,  
Or practice for a saint.

Ladies with curls are kind, being confident.  
In smiles their lives are spent,  
Primrosed their path.  
Rising, like Venus, crinkly from the bath,  
They keep appointments, punctual to the dot,  
And do good works a lot.  
In crises they are cool. 'Mid floods or wrecks,  
Examples to their sex,  
Steadfast they stand,  
Calm in the knowledge not a hapless strand  
Of hair is stragglng down the backs of their necks.

However brief their lashes, plump their ankles,  
The matter never rankles.  
They marry well, are favorites with their kin.  
Untyrannized by net and bobby pin,  
They seldom cry "Alas!"  
Or wring their hands or need divorce attorneys.  
They are the girls boys choose at dancing class,  
And they are beautiful on motor journeys.

Ah, pity her, however rose-and-white,  
Who goes to bed at night  
In clamps and clips!  
Hers is no face to lure a thousand ships.  
Had she been born unwavy,  
Not Helen herself could ever have launched a navy.





#### LOVE NOTE TO A PLAYWRIGHT

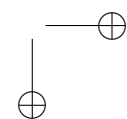
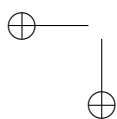
Perhaps the literary man  
I most admire among my betters  
Is Richard Brinsley Sheridan,  
Who, viewing life as more than letters,  
Persisted, like a stubborn Gael,  
In not acknowledging his mail.

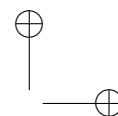
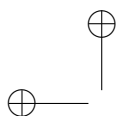
They say he hardly ever penned  
A proper “Yrs. received & noted,”  
But spent what time he had to spend  
Shaping the law that England voted,  
Or calling, on his comic flute,  
The tune for Captain Absolute.

Though chief of the prodigious wits  
That Georgian taverns set to bubblin’,  
He did not answer Please Remits  
Or scoldings from his aunts in Dublin  
Or birthday messages or half  
The notes that begged an autograph.

I hear it sent his household wild –  
Became a sort of parlor fable –  
The way that correspondence piled,  
Mountainous, on his writing table,  
While he ignored the double ring  
And wouldn’t answer anything;

Not scrawls from friends or screeds from foes  
Or scribble from the quibble-lover  
Or chits beginning “I enclose  
Manuscript under separate cover,”  
Or cards from people off on journeys,  
Or formal statements from attorneys.





The post came in. He let it lie.  
(All this biographers agree on.)  
Especially he did not reply  
    To things that had R.S.V.P. on.  
Sometimes for months he dropped no lines  
To dear ones, or sent Valentines;

But, polishing a second act  
    Or coaxing kings to license Freedom,  
Let his epistles wait. In fact,  
    They say he didn't even read'm.  
The which, some mornings, seems to me  
A glorious blow for Liberty.

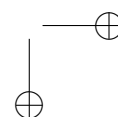
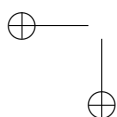
Brave Celt! Although one must deplore  
    His manners, and with reason ample,  
How bright from duty's other shore,  
    This moment, seems his bold example!  
And would I owned in equal balance  
His courage (and, of course, his talents),

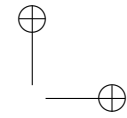
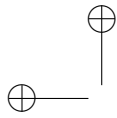
Who, using up his mail to start  
    An autumn fire or chink a crevice,  
Cried, "Letters longer are than art,  
    But *vita* is extremely *brevis*!"  
Then, choosing what was worth the candle,  
Sat down and wrote *The School for Scandal*.

#### SATURDAY STORM

This flooded morning is no time to be  
Abroad on any business of mankind.  
The rain has lost its casual charity;  
It falls and falls and falls and would not mind  
Were all the world washed blind.

No creature out of doors goes weatherproof.  
Birds cower in their nests. The beast that can

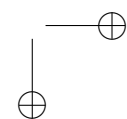
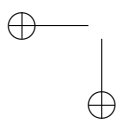


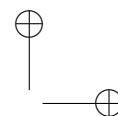
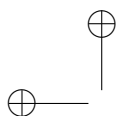


Has found himself a roof.  
This hour's for man  
To waken late in, putter by his fire,  
Leaf through old books or tear old letters up,  
Mend household things with bits of thrifty wire,  
Refill his coffee cup,  
And, thus enclosed in comfort like a shell,  
Give thought to, wish them well  
Who must this day  
On customary errands take their way:

The glistening policemen in the street,  
For instance, blowing their whistles through the welter  
And stamping their wet feet;  
And grocery boys flung in and out of shelter  
But faithful to their loads;  
And people changing tires beside the roads;  
Doormen with colds and doctors in damp suits;  
And milkmen on their routes,  
Scuttling like squirrels; and men with cleated boots  
Aloft on telephone poles in the rough gale;  
But chiefly trudging men with sacks of mail  
Slung over shoulder,  
Who slog from door to door and cannot rest  
Till they've delivered the last government folder,  
The final scribbled postcard, misaddressed.

Oh, all at ease  
Should say a prayer for these –  
That they come, healthy, homeward before night,  
Safer than beasts or birds,  
To no dark welcome but an earned delight  
Of pleasant words,  
Known walls, accustomed love, fires burning steady,  
And a good dinner ready.





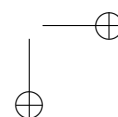
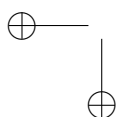
#### SONG OF HIGH CUISINE

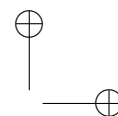
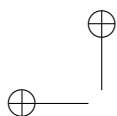
*Written upon reading in the New York Times that Bloomingdale's grocery department now offers stuffed larks from the region of Carcassonne as well as one thrush from the French Alps.*

At Bloomingdale's,  
At Bloomingdale's,  
    Who would not wish to be –  
Where hornèd are the Gallic snails,  
    Where curls the anchovy!  
For palate stales as winter fails  
    And rainy spring comes on.  
So they have birds at Bloomingdale's  
    That flew in Carcassonne.

Yes, hark!  
The lark  
At heaven's gate,  
    That lately sang so pure,  
There trussed and truffled for the plate  
    Invites the epicure.  
And, sheltering from the Alpine wind  
    In more than Alpine hush,  
Arrives most elegantly tinned  
    A solitary thrush.

Ah, few the sales  
At Bloomingdale's,  
    Amid imported straw,  
Of tongues of foreign nightingales  
    Or pearls in Malaga.  
But they have many a merry thing.  
    So who'll go there to buy  
The little larks with parsleyed wing



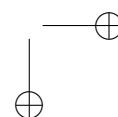
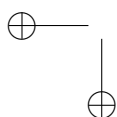


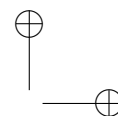
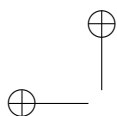
That speak so eloquent of spring,  
The single thrush that does not sing?

Well, gentlemen, not I.

#### EROS IN THE KITCHEN

Our cook is in love. Love hangs on the house like a mist.  
It embraces us all.  
The spoons go uncounted. Confused is the grocery list,  
But light each footfall.  
Astonished, we notice how lyric the dishwasher sings.  
(Did it always sing thus?)  
And the mop has a lilt. And the telephone ceaselessly rings,  
Although seldom for us.  
Here nothing seems quite the same as it did before.  
Something ineffably hovers  
Over the household. All of us plunge or soar  
With the mood of the lovers.  
We dine to distraction on delicate viands today  
Who, likely, tomorrow  
Must scrabble with timorous forks at a fallen soufflé  
More sodden than sorrow.  
And salad's served up with dessert and the napkin's forgot,  
The butter's unformed by the mold,  
And the bouillon's barbarically cold,  
Or the aspic comes hot.  
And the message for Mister or Madam's a fortnight untold.  
  
But who's such a churl as to care  
With amour like a mist on the air,  
On the house like a bloom –  
When so blithe is the broom,  
And the voice of the kettle, the beat of the brush on the tile  
Sound gayer than springtime peeper?  
We smile at each other at breakfast. At dinner we smile.



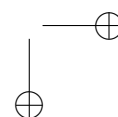
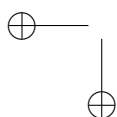


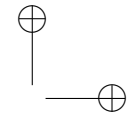
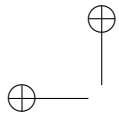
There's a smile on the face of the sleeper.  
Our years have grown younger. We sally to parties at night  
In tall hat and long glove.  
We remember what we had forgotten. The hallways are  
bright.  
Our cook is in love.

#### PRAISE FOR AN INSTITUTION

Of all museums,  
I've a pet museum,  
And it's not the Morgan  
Or the Met Museum,  
Or the Frick Museum,  
Which steals the heart,  
Or a trick museum  
Like the Modern Art.  
I must confess  
It's a queer museum,  
A more or less  
Done-by-ear museum,  
But it suits my nature  
As knife suits fork:  
The Museum of the City of New York.

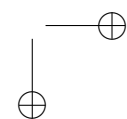
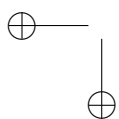
A bit like an auction,  
A bit like a fair,  
Everything is cozy that's collected there.  
Everything is cheerful as a Currier & Ives:  
Capes made for gentlemen,  
Caps for their wives;  
Lamps lit at dark  
By Great-Grandmama;  
Central Park  
In a diorama

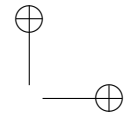
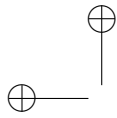




(Where boys are sledding  
And their runners curl);  
A brownstone wedding  
With a flower girl;  
Doll-house parlors with carpet on the floor;  
Patriotic posters from the First World War;  
A solitary spur  
That belonged to Aaron Burr;  
And a small-scale model  
Of a ten-cent store.

There for the dawdler,  
Yesterday is spread –  
Toys that a toddler  
Carried once to bed;  
Hoopskirts, horsecars,  
Flags aplenty;  
Somebody's dance dress, circa '20;  
Somebody's platter, somebody's urn;  
Mr. and Mrs.  
Isaac Stern –  
All gaily jumbled  
So it's automatic  
To believe you've stumbled  
On your great-aunt's attic.  
Helter-skelter  
But large as life,  
A room by Belter  
And a room by Phyfe;  
A period spinet,  
A period speller;  
The rooms that soured Mr. Rockefeller;  
Rooms you can stare at, rooms you can poke in,  
And a tenderhearted lobby  
You can even smoke in.



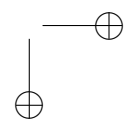
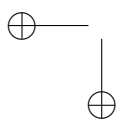


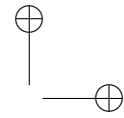
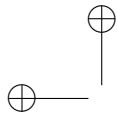
It's a fine museum,  
Not a new museum,  
But a neighborly  
Sort of old-shoe museum,  
Not a class museum  
Where the pundits go  
Or a mass museum  
With a Sunday show,  
Not vast and grand  
Like the Natural History.  
How it ever got planned  
Is a minor mystery.  
But it fits my fancy  
Like applesauce and pork,  
The Museum of the City of New York.

#### THE SEA CHANTEY AROUND US

How vast, how clean  
The ageless ocean!  
Whether serene  
Or in commotion,  
Haunted by gull  
Or dolphin set,  
How beautiful,  
How wild and wet!

Though rich and rare  
Its fauna and flora,  
No evening's there  
And no aurora;  
Instead, I think,  
A great supply  
Of pearls and ink-  
Y octopi.





From pole to pole  
    What whales take cover in,  
The moon its sole  
    Capricious sovereign,  
Speaking in thunders  
    Through its sleep,  
Ah, rife with wonders  
    Is the deep!

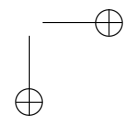
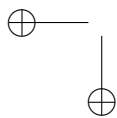
The waters tell it,  
The billows shout it.  
And I'm fed to the teeth with books about it.

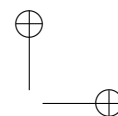
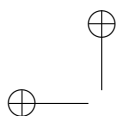
#### THE FORGOTTEN WOMAN

Who are the friends of Dr. Gallup? Who,  
Ah, who are they  
Incessantly he puts inquiries to –  
The ones who say  
Their public yea or nay  
On every matter controversy flares in?  
Who fills those questionnaires in?

Where lurk the people Mr. Roper's minions  
Implore for their opinions?  
What straws define the wind, however it blows?  
God knows.  
All I can vouch for is the fact I see:  
Nobody quizzes *me*.

Day after day across this mighty land,  
While thunderous presses roll,  
Young men with hats and briefcases in hand  
(Or so I understand)  
Wander from poll to poll,  
Asking odd men in some peculiar street





Which candidate is theirs, which breakfast food  
They least dislike to eat,  
Which heresy offends their current mood.  
But, left or right though thick the issues fall,  
Nobody asks me anything at all.

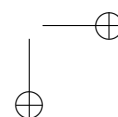
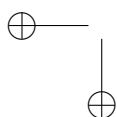
Although I hold opinions firm and ample,  
Unmatched as clues,  
Nobody begs me will I be his Sample.  
None wants my views –  
Not even Photographers from the *Daily News*.

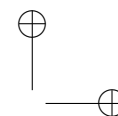
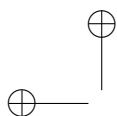
Never do wheedling voices at my door  
Ask how I stand on Nembutal for naps,  
Or Christian soldiers marching off to war,  
Or love, or coonskin caps,  
Which virtue I prefer, which cigarette.  
I never get  
Called to the phone by females I'm no kin to  
To say which TV program I'm tuned in to.

The counters and the checkers pass me by.  
Ignored am I  
Alike by those who augur, for a stipend,  
Just how the votes have ripened  
And by distinguished *Timemen* gathering data  
On everybody else's Alma Mata.

Still, hope's eternal. Here I stand and wait,  
All needles-y and pins-y,  
Thinking perhaps yon stranger at my gate  
May come from Dr. Kinsey;  
Might be, at worst, a messenger, delayed,  
Seeking my choices for the Hit Parade.

But no one knocks to ask me, even now,  
Am I detergent-minded or a soaper.  
Where art thou, Gallup? Hooper, where art thou?  
Where's Elmo Roper?





The breeze is freshening, the breeze is raw,  
And here's your willing straw.  
Before the unpolled generations trample me,  
Won't *someone* sample me?

#### A GALLERY OF ELDERS

##### THE OLD FEMINIST

Snugly upon the equal heights  
Enthroned at last where she belongs,  
She takes no pleasure in her Rights  
Who so enjoyed her Wrongs.

##### THE OLD PRELATE

God's House such decades has been his  
To tend, through fortune or disaster,  
He half forgets now which he is –  
Custodian or Master.

##### THE OLD REFORMER

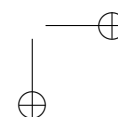
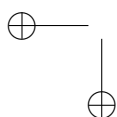
Few friends he kept that pleased his mind.  
His marriage failed when it began,  
Who worked unceasing for mankind  
But loathed his fellow man.

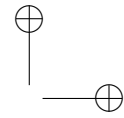
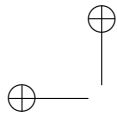
##### THE OLD POLITICIAN

Toward caution all his lifetime bent,  
Straddler and compromiser, he  
Becomes a Public Monument  
Through sheer longevity.

##### THE OLD RADICAL

The burning cause that lit his days





When he was younger came to harm.  
Now Hate's impoverished charcoal blaze  
Is all that keeps him warm.

THE OLD PHILANTHROPIST

His millions make museums bright;  
Harvard anticipates his will;  
While his young typist weeps at night  
Over a druggist's bill.

THE OLD ACTOR

Too lined for Hamlet, on the whole;  
For tragic Lear, too coarsely built,  
Himself becomes his favorite role,  
Played daily to the hilt.

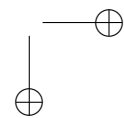
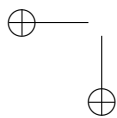
THE OLD BEAUTY

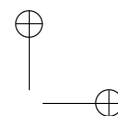
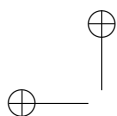
Coquettes with doctors; hoards her breath  
For blandishments; fluffs out her hair;  
And keeps her stubborn suitor, Death,  
Moping upon the stair.

**JUNE IN THE SUBURBS**

Not with a whimper but a roar  
Of birth and bloom this month commences,  
The wren's a gossip at her door.  
Roses explode along the fences.

By day the chattering mowers cope  
With grass decreed a final winner.  
Darkness delays. The skipping rope  
Twirls in the driveway after dinner.





Through lupine-lighted borders now  
For winter bones Dalmatians forage.  
Costly, the spray on apple bough.  
The canvas chair comes out of storage;

And rose-red golfers dream of par,  
And class-bound children loathe their labors,  
While pilgrims, touring gardens, are  
Cold to petunias of their neighbors.

Now from damp loafers nightly spills  
The sand. Brides lodge their lists with Plummer.  
And cooks devise on charcoal grills  
The first burnt offerings of summer.

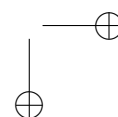
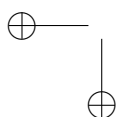
#### REACTIONARY ESSAY ON APPLIED SCIENCE

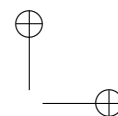
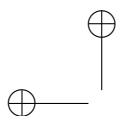
I cannot love the Brothers Wright.  
Marconi wins my mixed devotion.  
Had no one yet discovered Flight  
Or set the air waves in commotion,  
Life would, I think, have been as well.  
That also goes for A. G. Bell.

*What I'm really thankful for, when I'm cleaning up after  
lunch,  
Is the invention of waxed paper.*

That Edison improved my lot,  
I sometimes doubt; nor care a jitney  
Whether the kettle steamed, or Watt,  
Or if the gin invented Whitney.  
Better the world, I often feel,  
Had nobody contrived the wheel.

*On the other hand, I'm awfully indebted  
To whoever it was dreamed up the elastic band.*





Yes, pausing grateful, now and then,  
    Upon my prim, domestic courses,  
I offer praise to lesser men –  
    Fultons unsung, anonymous Morses –  
Whose deft and innocent devices  
Pleasure my house with sweets and spices.

*I give you, for instance, the fellows  
Who first had the idea for Scotch Tape.*

I hail the man who thought of soap,  
    The chap responsible for zippers,  
Sun lotion, the stamped envelope,  
    And screens, and wading pools for nippers,  
Venetian blinds of various classes,  
And bobby pins and tinted glasses.

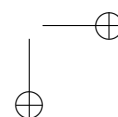
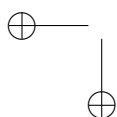
*DeForest never thought up anything  
So useful as a bobby pin.*

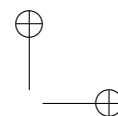
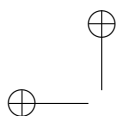
Those baubles are the ones that keep  
    Their places, and beget no trouble,  
Incite no battles, stab no sleep,  
    Reduce no villages to rubble,  
Being primarily designed  
By men of unambitious mind.

*You remember how Orville Wright said his flying machine  
Was going to outlaw war?*

Let them on Archimedes dote  
    Who like to hear the planet rattling,  
I cannot cast a hearty vote  
    For Galileo or for Gatling,  
Preferring, of the Freaks of science,  
The pygmies rather than the giants –

*(And from experience being wary of  
Greek geniuses bearing gifts) –*



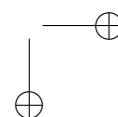
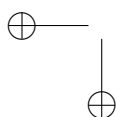


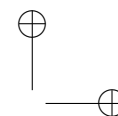
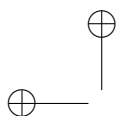
Deciding, on reflection calm,  
Mankind is better off with trifles:  
With Band-Aid rather than the bomb,  
With safety match than safety rifles.  
Let the earth fall or the earth spin!  
A brave new world might well begin  
With no invention  
Worth the mention  
Save paper towels and aspirin.

*Remind me to call the repairman  
About my big, new, automatically defrosting refrigerator with  
the built-in electric eye.*

#### SEASON AT THE SHORE

Oh, not by sun and not by cloud  
And not by whippoorwill, crying loud,  
And not by the pricking of my thumbs,  
Do I know the way that the summer comes.  
Yet here on this seagull-haunted strand,  
Hers is an omen I understand –  
Sand:  
Sand on the beaches,  
Sand at the door,  
Sand that screeches  
On the new-swept floor;  
In the shower, sand for the foot to crunch on;  
Sand in the sandwiches spread for luncheon;  
Sand adhesive to son and sibling,  
From wallet sifting, from pockets dribbling;  
Sand by the beaker  
Nightly shed  
From odious sneaker;  
Sand in bed;



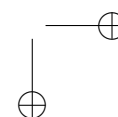
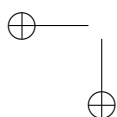


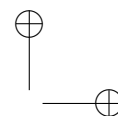
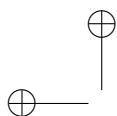
Sahara always in my seaside shanty  
Like the sand in the voice  
Of J. Durante.

Winter is mittens, winter is gaiters  
Steaming on various radiators.  
Autumn is leaves that bog the broom.  
Spring is mud in the living room  
Or skates in places one scarcely planned.  
But what is summer, her seal and hand?  
Sand:

Sand in the closets,  
    Sand on the stair,  
Desert deposits  
    In the parlor chair;  
Sand in the halls like the halls of ocean;  
Sand in the soap and the sun-tan lotion;  
Stirred in the porridge, tossed in the greens,  
Poured from the bottoms of rolled-up jeans;  
    In the elmy street,  
        On the lawny acre;  
    Glued to the seat  
        Of the Studebaker;  
Wrapped in the folds of the *Wall Street Journal*;  
Damp sand, dry sand,  
Sand eternal.

When I shake my garments at the Lord's command,  
What will I scatter in the Promised Land?  
Sand.





#### THE SPANISH LIONS

Guarding the doors of the Hispanic Society  
At a Hundred and Fifty-fifth near Riverside,  
Two lions sit, so charged with natural piety  
(In the Virgilian sense), so filled with pride,  
They seem less carved from rock than from the spirit  
Of Spain. Oh, these are lords of the Spanish law,  
Castilian lions, gilt-edged and eighteen-carat,  
Hidalgos from rearing head to rigorous paw.

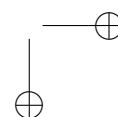
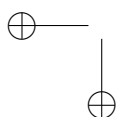
They are leaner than wasps. Yet neither thirst nor hunger  
Possesses them. They thrive on honor alone,  
Granite exemplars, as if when time was younger  
All lions were haughty and Spanish and made of stone.  
They look down their high-bred noses. Their manes are  
jaunty  
As a matador's queue. They stare on nothing at all –  
Not even the bas-relief of Rosinante,  
Posed with his Knight astride, on the opposite wall.

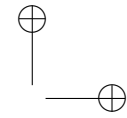
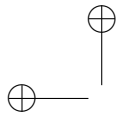
#### MAN WITH PRUNING SHEARS

This gentleman loves all that grows –  
Bud, shoot, or bough that blossoms dapple.  
He plants the rose and feeds the rose  
And guards the springtime apple;

Has a green thumb; is quick to praise  
The frailest petal in his borders;  
Can heal (and with a myriad sprays)  
The peony's disorders.

So what has overtaken him,  
What frenzy set his wits to wander  
That he should ravage limb by limb  
The wholesome lilac yonder?

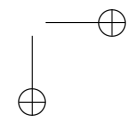
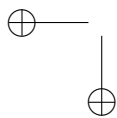


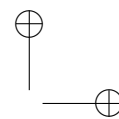
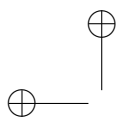


That he should lay the privet low  
And do the vines such deadly treason  
That scarce a twig, I think, will show  
Its leaf against this season?  
A milder chap was never planned,  
Or one who dug with more decorum.  
But now the weapon's in his hand,  
And branches thick before'm.  
The selfsame madness takes his mind  
That took his mind when he was little  
And owned a knife and could not find  
Sufficient sticks to whittle.

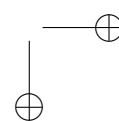
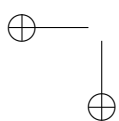
#### APOLOGIA

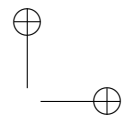
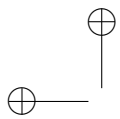
When I and the world  
Were greener and fitter,  
Many a bitter  
Stone I hurled.  
Many a curse  
I used to pitch  
At the universe,  
Being so rich  
I had goods to spare;  
Could afford to notice  
The blight on the lotus,  
The worm in the pear.  
But needier grown  
(If little wiser)  
Now, like a miser,  
All that I own  
I celebrate  
Shamefacedly –



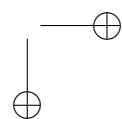
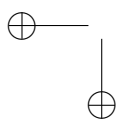


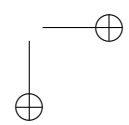
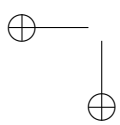
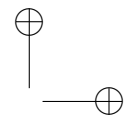
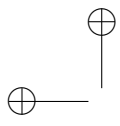
The pear on my plate,  
The fruit on my tree,  
Though sour and small;  
Give, willy-nilly,  
Thanks for the lily,  
Spot and all.

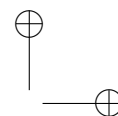
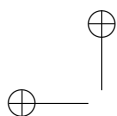




THE FORTIES







## THE WAR BEFORE THE LAST

### THE PORTENTS

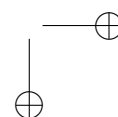
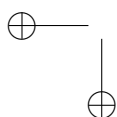
*“Trial blackout of city studied by officials.” — Headline in the New York Times.*

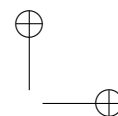
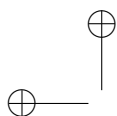
By a cloud, by rings on the moon  
Or a bough that casts no shadow,  
By the snowflake falling at noon  
In a shriveled meadow  
Do the knowing eye and the reason  
Predict the season.

So who can regard the least  
Of these things with pulse untroubled?  
The wind has veered to the east,  
The fields are stubbled,  
And the shrewd airs inform  
Us of the storm.

Whose hands – not yours, not mine –  
Shall hold the floods in tether?  
We have seen the cloud and the sign,  
But we cannot stay the weather.  
Run to your house. Pull fast  
Your shutters on the blast.

Though there is no safety there,  
I think. Nor anywhere.





#### BALLAD OF FINE DAYS

*“Temperatures have soared to almost summer levels. . . making conditions ideal for bombing offensives.” — Excerpt from B.B.C. news broadcast.*

All in the summery weather,  
    To east and south and north,  
The bombers fly together  
    And the fighters squire them forth.

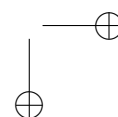
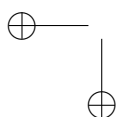
While the lilac bursts in flower  
    And buttercups brim with gold,  
Hour by lethal hour,  
    Now fiercer buds unfold.

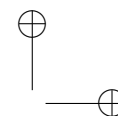
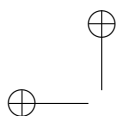
For the storms of springtime lessen,  
    The meadow lures the bee,  
And there blooms tonight in Essen  
    What bloomed in Coventry.

All in the summery weather,  
    Fleeter than swallows fare,  
The bombers fly together  
    Through the innocent air.

#### THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE

Summer is icumen in,  
    Sound the sirens, light the torches,  
Warn the roses to begin  
    Climbing up suburban porches.  
Let the laurel run like fire  
    Over all the upland reaches  
But be wary of the wire,  
    Barbed and bright, along the beaches.



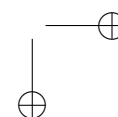
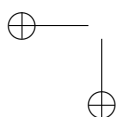


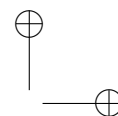
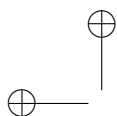
Hark! The blithe, the morning bird,  
Early singing, stirs our slumber  
Where the young man, undeterred,  
Waits upon his legal number.  
Now the wren's unmortgaged nest  
Hugs our hospitable acre,  
And the ski pole takes its rest  
With the rationed Studebaker.

Now the sails of summer fill,  
Now the waves are all a-glimmer,  
Though attentive at his drill  
Stands the lean and sunburnt swimmer.  
Now the lilies swoon with sun,  
Now the cricket pipes the shadows  
And the anti-aircraft gun  
Crouches in astonished meadows.

Here is June. So let the ice  
Tinkle in unsweetened glasses.  
Fling the immemorial rice.  
Strew the picnic on the grasses.  
Tell the chattering mind to hush  
For one soft, deceptive hour  
While the berry fires the bush  
And the bee invades the flower,

Till in lupine-colored light  
Dusk dissolves, the stars are certain,  
And the aromatic night  
Leans against the blackout curtain.





#### LANDSCAPE WITHOUT FIGURES

The shape of the summer has not changed at all.  
There is no difference in the sky's rich color,  
In texture of cloud or leaf or languid hill.  
The fringed wave is no duller.

Even the look of this village does not change –  
Shady and full of gardens and near the sea.  
But something is lacking. Something sad and strange  
Troubles the memory.

Where are they? – the boys, not children and not men,  
In polo shirts or jeans or autographed blazers,  
With voices suddenly deep, and proud on each chin  
The mark of new razors.

They were workers or players, but always the town was theirs.  
They wiped your windshield, they manned the parking  
lots.

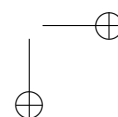
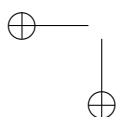
They delivered your groceries. They drove incredible cars  
As if they were chariots.

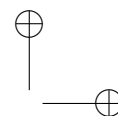
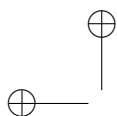
They were lifeguards, self-conscious, with little whistles.  
They owned the tennis courts and the Saturday dances.  
They were barbarous-dark with sun. They were vain of their  
muscles  
And the girls' glances.

They boasted, and swam, and lounged at the drugstore's  
portal.

They sailed their boats and carried new records down.  
They never took thought but that they were immortal,  
And neither did the town.

But now they are gone like leaves, like leaves in the fall,  
Though the shape of the summer has not changed at all.





#### SOLDIER ASLEEP

Soldier asleep, and stirring in your sleep,  
In tent, trench, dugout, foxhole, or swampy slough,  
I pray the Lord your rifle and soul to keep,  
And your body, too,

From the hid sniper in the leafy tangle,  
From shrapnel, from the barbed and merciless wire,  
From tank, from bomb, from the booby trap in the jungle,  
From water, from fire.

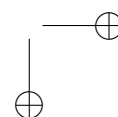
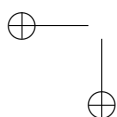
It was an evil wind that blew you hither,  
Soldier, to this strange bed –  
A tempest brewed from the world's malignant weather.

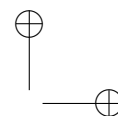
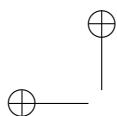
Safe may you sleep, instead,  
Once more in the room with the pennants tacked on the  
wall,

Or the room in the bachelor apartment, 17 L,  
The club room, the furnished room across the hall,  
The room in the cheap hotel,

The double-decker at home, the bench in the park,  
The attic cot, the hammock under the willow,  
Or the wide bed in the remembered dark  
With the beloved's head beside you on the pillow.

Safe may the winds return you to the place  
That, howsoever it was, was better than this.





#### DIDO OF TUNISIA

I had heard of these things before – of chariots rumbling  
Through desolate streets, of the battle cries and the  
danger,  
And the flames rising up, and the walls of the houses crumbling.

It was told to me by a stranger.

But it was for love of the fair and long-robed Helen,  
The stranger said (his name still troubles my sleep),  
That they came to the windy town he used to dwell in,  
Over the wine-dark deep.

In the hollow ships they came, though the cost was dear.  
And the towers toppled, the heroes were slain without  
pity.

But whose white arms have beckoned these armies here  
To trample my wasted city?

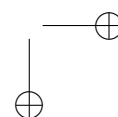
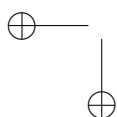
Ah, this, Aeneas, you did not tell me of:  
That men might struggle and fall, and not for love.

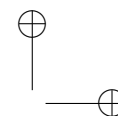
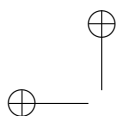
#### VALEDICTORIAN

HIGH SCHOOL – 1943

Stand up, young man with the pink and earnest face,  
Tonight grown paler.  
The crease of your new flannels pinch into place,  
Tug at your collar.

The Principal, beaming parentward, has left the stand,  
Having given his Message, complete with whimsical comment.





Stand up, my boy. Clutch the notes tight in your hand.  
This is the eloquent moment.

On behalf of the Class, for yourself, for the monitors with  
their badges,  
You have much to say.  
Make the goodbyes, make the promises and the pledges,  
Map out the way.

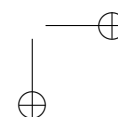
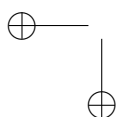
Never farewells like yours were spoken before,  
Against this shabby and familiar curtain.  
Never was any future so naked and sure,  
Or any path so certain.

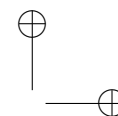
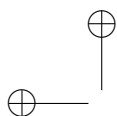
There was always in other years a sound that was hollow  
To the adolescent vow.  
There were always the climbers and those who could not  
follow.  
You will march together now.

One flashing destiny awaits you all:  
Neither the job at the mill (or the drugstore counter)  
Nor the wide campus colored with the fall  
Nor the poolroom's banter.

There will be none left idling at the gate,  
No prizes for the bolder,  
But only the rifle resting its equal weight  
On every shoulder.

So stand up, boy, forgetting the Golden Fleece.  
Step to the rostrum, bow, and speak your piece.  
There were never farewells spoken so stoutly here  
Nor a path that showed so clear.





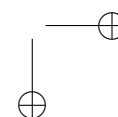
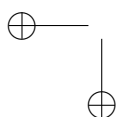
#### BALLAD OF CITATIONS

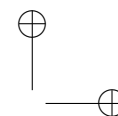
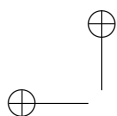
*“King George VI has knighted Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark and Maj. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith. . . and has awarded the order of Companion of the Bath to Lt. Gen. George S. Patton.” — News item in the New York World-Telegram.*

“Hark, hark,”  
Said General Clark,  
    “Sir Mark is what I hight me.”  
Said General Smith  
To his kin and kith,  
    “The king was kind to knight me.”  
Then up rose General Patton,  
    Who follows the iron path,  
And “Fellows,” he cried, “it’s plain to see  
You haven’t heard how they’ve honored me.  
For I’m Lieutenant General P.,  
    Companion of the Bath!

“My voice may boom like a thunderclap,  
    I’m tougher than Japs or Proosians,  
But England claims I’m the proper chap  
    To help with the royal ablutions –  
To turn the tap and measure the tub  
And fetch the brush for the royal scrub  
    And see the floor has a mat on.  
It isn’t so much in the way of pelf,  
And it’s not the thing that I’d choose myself,  
But – hand me those bath salts off the shelf,”  
    Said General George S. Patton.

“Whoever I’m with,”  
Spake General Smith,  
    “They really must call me Sir now.”  
Yawned General Clark,





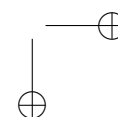
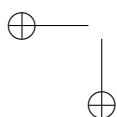
“When I stroll in the park,  
I cause a terrible stir now.”  
But General (Three-star) Patton,  
He turned from his guns to growl,  
“Would either of you have the wit to cope  
With the kingly sponge and the kingly soap  
(The lavender or the heliotrope)?  
Could you marshal the kingly towel?”

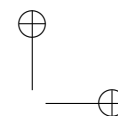
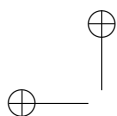
“The enemy fears my baleful eye,  
The foe abhors my power,  
But Albion asks that I stand by  
When a monarch’s in his shower.  
Yes, I’m the man by the realm marked down  
To handle the royal dressing gown.  
And this you can go to bat on –  
Whenever I hear that bathroom bell,  
I’ll do my job and I’ll do it well.  
Though war, you’ll have to admit, is h-l,”  
Said General George S. Patton.

#### ON EVERY FRONT

Sickened by sounds of war and pillage,  
Wearied by rumors on the air  
Of stricken town and wasted village  
And death and battle everywhere,  
I fled the house that horror grew in,  
I fled the wireless shouting ruin,  
To walk alone, a hopeful comer,  
In my green garden, ripe with summer.

I leaned my head above the rose  
And while I watched, her natural foes –  
Beetle and slug – in barbarous fettle,  
Crept to consume her, leaf and petal.





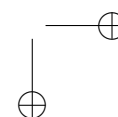
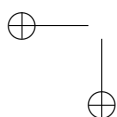
I saw the ants amid the grass  
In foraging battalions pass,  
Driving toward their disputed goal  
For loot and *Lebensraum*. The mole,  
Devious, secret, like a virus,  
Bored from within upon the iris.

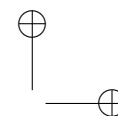
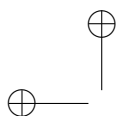
In captured trees had flung their tents  
The caterpillar regiments.  
Snails went in armor, scared and chilly,  
While forward moved upon the lily  
The cutthroat worm; but not for long.  
Checking his desultory song,  
A robin pulled the raider back  
With one swift aerial attack,  
But to be routed in disorder  
By Tabby, pouncing from a border.

In bloody dust those armies weltered.  
Horde marched upon belligerent horde.  
It was not peace my garden sheltered  
But the insatiable sword.  
And watching there, I sighed. But soon,  
On that same summer afternoon,  
I took up arms and, stoutly met,  
Slew twenty slugs with no regret.

#### HORRORS OF WAR

Upon this meek civilian head  
There fall few blows I can't put up with.  
I slice my own unbuttered bread  
And creamless coffee fill my cup with.  
To market in my rationed shoes  
I trudge on patient metatarsals,  
Select the reds, tear out the blues,  
And homeward stagger with my parcels.





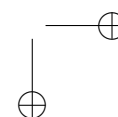
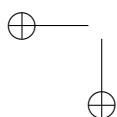
'Tis not the want of morning bacon,  
'Tis not the storage cupboard bare  
Which cause my life at times to take on  
This aspect of despair.

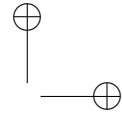
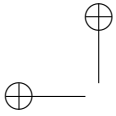
*It's amateur dietitians  
Telling me how to make meat loaf out of peanut butter.*

Should yet the government desire,  
I'll cast off wool and go in dimity,  
My last, my lone, my ultimate tire  
Yield up with honest equanimity.  
Each warden's rule, however slight,  
Finds my co-operation certain.  
Obedient, at the fall of night  
I shade my lamp and draw my curtain.  
Sweetly I pay the allotted fee  
(Per printed forms that thick and thin come)  
On what I often laughingly  
Refer to as my income.

*What depresses me is having to fill out all those little serial  
numbers  
On all those little coupons.*

For write this down in deathless crayon,  
These things are not the things that rankle:  
The stocking made of vilest rayon  
Ignobly twisting round the ankle,  
Suburban gardeners planning farms on  
The plots they scarce can turn a rake in,  
The silly clocks without alarms on,  
The kitchen by the cook forsaken,  
The butcher haughty in his den  
Dispensing curious chops, and thinner,  
And never any extra men  
To ask for dinner.





Let the bomb burst, I shall not fear.  
Let foemen march, I'll guard my city.  
*But none shall force this outraged ear*  
*To listen to another radio crooner warbling another alleged*  
*patriotic ditty.*

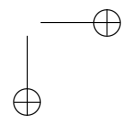
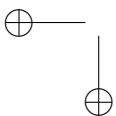
**ADMNITION**

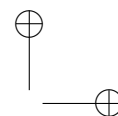
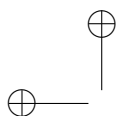
*To the Chicago Daily Times, which is advocating a one-day*  
*smokers' fast to relieve the cigarette shortage.*

O *Times*, O reckless journal,  
O sheet unblest!  
What is this mischief, this design infernal  
That you suggest?  
Let smokers for one dreary day and night  
Absent themselves, you say, from all delight.  
Then we might see the secret stores unlocked,  
The Luckies back, the shelves with Camels stocked.  
Perhaps. I merely tender this advice:  
Consider the Price.

Consider a nation  
Biting its nails and wrestling with temptation  
For twenty-four desperate hours.  
Think of the tempers poised on murder's brink,  
Of men at morning fainting in their showers,  
Or driven, at eve, to drink.

Think, think  
Of the vast quarrels let loose, the evil forces,  
The words across the tables, the divorces,  
Tots scurrying from the path  
Of strange parental wrath,  
Bosses, for once unwary,  
Firing the blond and guiltless secretary,





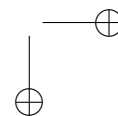
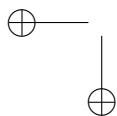
Collaborations coming to an end,  
Friend bickering with friend,  
The innocent delivered to the furies  
Of untobaccoed juries,  
Deals lost, wives beaten, relatives told off,  
And all for lack of a carload and a cough.

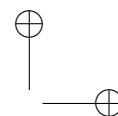
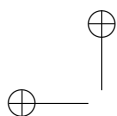
Through the small haze which wreathes about me yet  
(From what now passes for a cigarette),  
I conjure up the horrors of that day,  
And, gentlemen, I say,  
Resign your scheme. Quick, take your project back.  
Better the lack,  
The scramble, the shortage, the barley-flavored brand  
Than anarchy across this smiling land.  
Better, I cry, a bottleneck met head on  
Than Armageddon.

#### FIESTA IN THE REICH

*“The German Propaganda Ministry last week warned the people not to discuss military defeats and not to ‘look depressed.’”*  
— *News item in the New York Times.*

Come, lift a blithesome roundelay  
    To wake the Seventh Sleeper.  
The bomb is dropping from the bay,  
    The Russ has crossed the Dnieper.  
The Anglo-Saxon threatens Rome  
    And perils every border.  
But we’ll be merry here at home  
    By Goebbels’ special order.  
(Tra-la, tra-lay,  
We’re awfully gay,  
    By brisk, official order.)





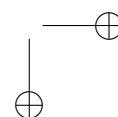
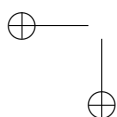
Though Liberators tour these skies  
So sacredly *der Führer's*,  
We'll swear it's all a pack of lies  
Or maybe done with mührrors,  
And dance and deck the streets with flowers  
Until our brows are beaded,  
When told some new retreat of ours  
Has cleverly succeeded.  
(We've made attack  
By moving back,  
And brilliantly succeeded.)

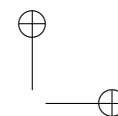
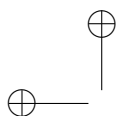
The casual tear, the downcast look  
Are banned on edict simple.  
We practice daily by the book  
To wear an *ersatz* dimple.  
And if some fellow lost to shame,  
When friends break bread together,  
Should call the future by its name,  
We talk about the weather. . . .  
(Report the dunce  
Of course, at once,  
And then discuss the weather.)

#### CHANT OF THE OPTIMISTIC BUTCHER

Oh, once I sang of the sirloin,  
Of hamburgers once sang I,  
Or oft would boast  
Of the prime rib roast,  
Unrationed and hanging high.  
But now with unction akin to piety,  
I hymn the meats that are called Variety:

*Variety meats, variety meats,  
Who will buy my variety meats?*



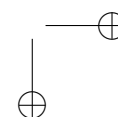
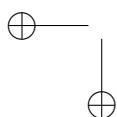


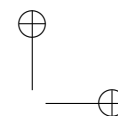
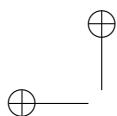
Regard, dear Moddon, this rich array.  
I've kidneys and sweetbreads  
Fresh today.  
I've tongue (a sliver),  
I've shanks and shins,  
I've liver aquiver  
With vitamins.  
I've succulent parts  
Of a similar stripe.  
I've heads and hearts  
And masses of tripe.  
Stew 'em with herbs or simmer in wine,  
Season, stir,  
And go out to dine.

The chop has gone from the showcase,  
The bacon no more I slice,  
And I seldom drape on  
The duck, the capon  
A Saturday Special price.  
So gladly now to my soul I grapple  
An order of Philadelphia scrapple.

*Variety meats, variety meats,  
Who will buy my variety meats?*

Moddom, dear Moddom, take a chance.  
They're highly regarded,  
I hear, in France.  
The color's queer  
And the taste is awful,  
But everything here  
Is yours, and lawful.  
Yes, merry as grigs,  
Come sound the tocsin.  
I've knuckles of pigs  
And tails of oxen.





And if the prospect should leave you glum,  
Cheer up, for the *Wurst*  
Is yet to come.

I've a morsel of brains for occasional treats.  
*Won't somebody buy my variety meats?*

**A READER'S-EYE VIEW OF THE WAR**

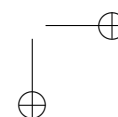
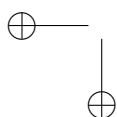
Now sound the trumpets, beat the drums,  
Let joy be open-handed,  
For hail, the conquering hero comes,  
His brow with garlands banded.  
He bears the marks of battles proud,  
Assorted honors grace him,  
And who is first amid the crowd,  
Most fervent to embrace him?

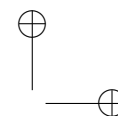
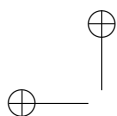
His wife? His sire? The children four  
Whose features star his locket?

No, no! It is an Editor  
With contracts in his pocket.  
And who, more tender than a spouse,  
His hand with rapture presses?  
A scout, I think, from Random House  
Or maybe S. & S.'s.

*Here come the valiant, here march the bold.  
After them, Macmillan, e'er their deeds grow cold.  
Home rolls the sailor, rescued from the brine;  
Henry Holt will sign him on the signatory line.  
Bring unholy ghosts, now, fetch the frantic quill.  
The Publishers, the Publishers,  
Are crouching for the kill.*

Upon some bloody field tonight  
Men breast the flood infernal,





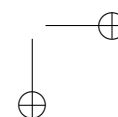
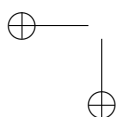
For God, for Country, for the Right,  
And many a weekly journal.  
No gunner at his smoking gun  
Lays down that grim utensil  
But Mr. Luce is on the run  
To furnish him a pencil.

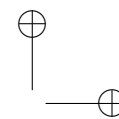
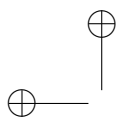
The castaway upon his raft  
Is probably engrossed now,  
Composing, neatly paragraphed,  
His saga for the *Post* now,  
While paratroopers turn a phrase  
In perilous positions.  
The paths of glory nowadays  
Lead on to twelve editions.

*Back fly the bombardiers with medals on their hearts.  
Read it all in Collier's, complete in seven parts.  
Look will have the story with pictures underneath.  
Uneasy lies the head, lads, that wears a laurel wreath.  
Though you escape the bullet and live to see the day,  
The Magazines, the Magazines,  
Will have you for their prey.*

#### V-DAY

Savor the hour as it comes. Preserve it in amber.  
Instruct the mind to cherish its sound and its shape.  
Cut out the newspaper clippings. Forever remember  
The horns and the ticker tape,  
The flags, the parades, the radio talking and talking,  
Ceaselessly crying the tale on the noisy air  
(But omitting for once the commercials), the sirens shrieking,  
The bulletins in Times Square,

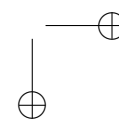
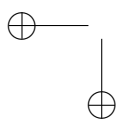


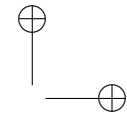
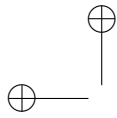


The women kneeling in churches, the people's laughter,  
The speeches, the rumors, the tumult loud in the street.  
Remember it shrewdly so you can say hereafter,  
"That moment was safe and sweet.

"Safe was the day and the world was safe for living,  
For Democracy, Liberty, all of the coin-bright names.  
Were not the bomb bays empty, the tanks unmoving,  
The cities no more in flames?

"That was an island in time, secure and candid,  
When we seemed to walk in freedom as in the sun,  
With a promise kept, with the dangers of battle ended,  
And the fearful perils of peace not yet begun."





## I KNOW A VILLAGE

### SPRING COMES TO THE SUBURBS

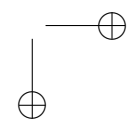
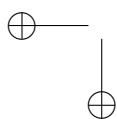
Now green the larch; the hedges green,  
And early jonquils go a-begging.  
The thoughtful man repairs his screen,  
The child emerges from his legging.

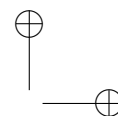
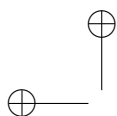
By daylight now, commuters come  
Homeward. The grackle, unimpeded,  
Forsakes his charitable crumb  
To loot the lawn that's newly seeded.

Tulips are mocked for their display  
By periwinkles' self-effacement,  
And benedicts on ladders sway,  
Fetching the storm sash to the basement.

Still slumbers the lethargic bee,  
The rosebush keeps its winter tag on,  
But hatless to the A & P  
The shopper rides in station wagon.

Once more Good Humor's wheedling bell  
Brings out the spendthrift in the miser,  
And everywhere's the lovely smell  
Of showers and soil and fertilizer.



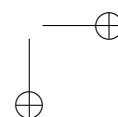
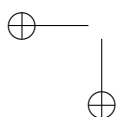


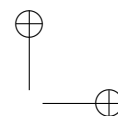
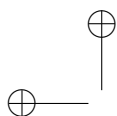
#### BALLROOM DANCING CLASS

The little girls' frocks are frilly.  
The little boys' suits are blue.  
On little gold chairs  
They perch in pairs  
Awaiting their Friday cue.  
The little boys stamp like ponies.  
The little girls coo like doves.  
The little boys pummel their cronies  
With white, enormous gloves.  
And overhead from a balcony  
The twittering mothers crane to see.

Though sleek the curls  
Of the little girls,  
Tossing their locks like foam,  
Each little boy's tie  
Has slipped awry  
And his hair forgets the comb.  
He harks to the tuning fiddle  
With supercilious sneers.  
His voice is cracked in the middle,  
Peculiar are his ears.  
And little girls' mothers nod with poise  
To distracted mothers of little boys.

Curtsying to the hostess,  
The little girls dip in line.  
But hobbledehoy  
Bobs each little boy,  
And a ramrod is his spine.  
With little girls' charms prevailing,





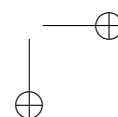
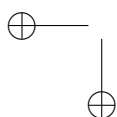
Why, as the music starts,  
Are the little girls' mothers paling?  
And why do they clasp their hearts  
When the hostess says with an arching glance,  
"Let boys choose partners before we dance"?

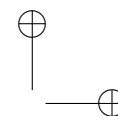
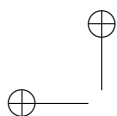
Now little girls sway  
Like buds in May  
And tremble upon the stalk.  
But little boys wear  
An arrogant air  
And they swagger when they walk.  
The meagerest boy grows taller.  
The shyest one's done with doubt,  
As he fingers a manful collar  
And singles his charmer out,  
Or rakes the circle with narrowed eyes  
To choose his suitable Friday prize.  
While overhead in the balcony  
The little boys' mothers smile to see  
On razorless cheek and beardless chin  
The Lord-of-Creation look begin.

Oh, little boys beckon, little girls bend!  
And little boys' mothers condescend  
(As they straighten their furs and pat their pearls)  
To nod to the mothers of the little girls.

#### REFLECTIONS ON THE DAILY MAIL

For this, for this, Herodotus, despite  
Snow, rain, or gloom of night,  
Or cold that chills or tiger heat that parches,  
Or predatory dog, or falling arches,  
Some courier undismayed  
(I'm quoting rather loosely from the Grecian)





Took his appointed round and was not stayed  
Until its swift completion:

That I might find delivered to my door  
A catalogue, a card  
Announcing shantung selling by the yard  
At something-eighty-four,  
A notice that on Thursday I am due  
For dental prophylaxis,  
Two charity appeals, one copy of *Cue*,  
A bill from Saks.

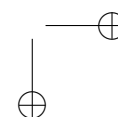
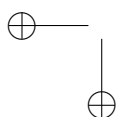
#### THE TOM-TOM

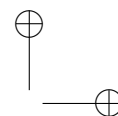
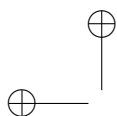
This is the day for bicycles.

Yesterday was a swimming day,  
A day for splashing head over heels,  
When every child would have screamed dismay  
At anything less than dolphin play.

But today they are all on wheels.  
Large and little and middle-sized,  
An army of children goes mechanized.  
As if for a silver medal,  
Around and around they pedal.

And we saw no rockets fly,  
No messenger brought the word.  
Yet lonely, lonely, the beaches lie  
And the saltiest bathing suit is dry  
While every child sweeps breathless by  
Like a bird, like a bird.  
How did they know? What sign was sent  
To herald the seashore's banishment?  
Who proclaimed it the time and weather  
For cycling all together?



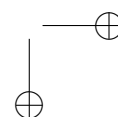
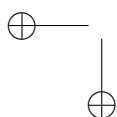


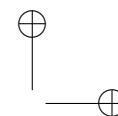
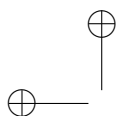
Tomorrow, or the day after,  
    The pedals will lose their power.  
Solemn, and yet with laughter,  
They will turn to something dafter,  
    All at the selfsame hour.  
All of a sudden the windy heights  
Will burst into gaudy bloom of kites  
With a heaven-aspiring reach  
And a child attached to each.

But that hour overthrown,  
    The falcon kites will be grounded.  
As if a bugle had blown,  
    As if a signal had sounded,  
They will learn as one to be monster tall  
When a madness of stilts assails them all.  
Together in hot compliance,  
They will walk the village like giants.

If you ask them, they are perplexed.  
    The calendar gives no warning.  
One does not tell the next,  
    Yet they wake and know in the morning  
(As a swallow knows the time  
    For quitting a rainy land),  
When the rope should whirl to the skipping-rhyme  
    Or the baseball thud in the hand,  
Or the multitudinous din  
Of the roller skates begin.

It is something that tom-toms say.  
You cannot explain it away,  
    Though reason or judgment reels.  
For yesterday was a swimming day  
And today is the same as yesterday,  
    Yet now they are all on wheels.





### I KNOW A VILLAGE

I know a village facing toward  
Water less sullen than the sea's,  
Where flickers get their bed and board  
And all the streets are named for trees.

The streets are named for trees. They edge  
Past random houses, safely fenced  
With paling or with privet hedge  
That bicycles can lean against.

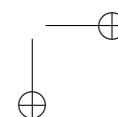
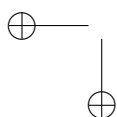
And when the roots of maples heave  
The solid pavements up that bound them,  
Strollers on sidewalks give them leave  
To thrust, and pick a way around them.

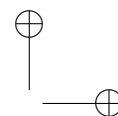
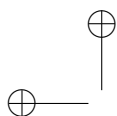
The little boats in harbor wear  
Sails whiter than a summer wedding.  
One fountain splashes in a Square.  
In winter there's a hill for sledding;

While through October afternoons  
Horse chestnuts dribble on the grass,  
Prized above diamonds or doubloons  
By miser children, shrill from class.

I know a village full of bees  
And gardens lit by canna torches,  
Where all the streets are named for trees  
And people visit on their porches.

It looks haphazard to the shore.  
Brown flickers build there. And I'd not  
Willing, I think, exchange it for  
Arcadia or Camelot.





### HALLOWEEN

The night is moonstruck, the night is merry.

Listen! It peals with a chime of words.

Twitters the town like an aviary,

Haunted by voices stranger than birds' –

Haunted by shades abroad together,

Shapes of childhood, mendicant ghosts,

Who claim the dark as their private weather,

Walking the world in a giggling host.

They cast long shadows, or roly-poly.

They tamper with doorbells. They chalk the stairs.

The night belongs to them, singly, wholly;

Surer than Christmas this Feast is theirs.

Swarming past hedges like sparrows flocking,

The gravel cracking beneath their feet,

Flutter the children. When they come knocking,

Open the door to them, Trick or Treat.

Open the door to phantom and vagrant,

Whistle them in from the wild outside,

For under the trees the leaves are fragrant,

Over the houses the sky is wide,

And only a street lamp vaguely dapples

Spellbound paths where the chestnut drops.

Comfort them quickly with candied apples.

Stay them with pennies and lollypops.

Or they may forget how their beds are standing –

Sheets turned down, and a light in the hall –

Forget the fire and the clock on the landing

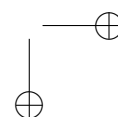
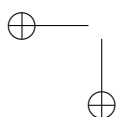
And never come back from the dark at all.

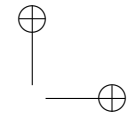
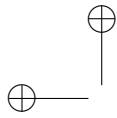
Coax them, wheedle them, call to them fonder

Than ever you did on an evening yet,

For who knows whither a ghost may wander

With mischief loose and the moon not set?



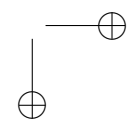
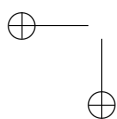


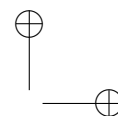
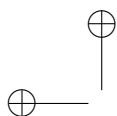
Treat them or trick them. But bar the door  
Till the Shade is bewitched to a child once more.

**MALEDICTION**

ON THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BUILT A HOUSE DIRECTLY ACROSS  
THE ROAD FROM OURS

Across our road there used to lie  
    A little meadow, semirural,  
Which seemed to a suburban eye  
    View pleasanter than Alp or Ural.  
Four birches grew there, leaning leeward,  
And apple trees without a steward.  
  
Day lilies lit an orange flame  
    In June there. We could glimpse a steeple  
And look on fields, until they came –  
    This pair, these proud, presumptuous people,  
With prints irrevocably blue  
For a tall house to block our view.  
  
They cut the meadow down alive,  
    Cut down the leeward-leaning birches  
To make the stylish cinder drive  
    Where now their station wagon lurches.  
Down went the lilies' yellow glory  
And up their sordid second story.  
  
Despiteful folk! With half earth's soil  
    On which to rear their vile enclosure,  
This single meadow must they spoil,  
    The one that blest our south exposure.  
But they shall rue the day they marred  
The vista of an angry bard.





Confusion take their walls, their house!  
    May termite dwell in porch and shutter;  
In closet, moth; in pantry, mouse;  
    And leaks in every copper gutter.  
May they be haunted by disaster,  
Including cracks in all the plaster.

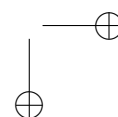
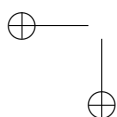
Let rivers through their basement flow,  
    Paint peel, pipes knock, screens fail in summer.  
And may they call one fiend I know  
    When, weekly, they must call a plumber.  
Let tradesmen do them down in battle.  
And may their midnight windows rattle.

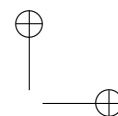
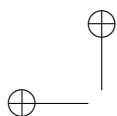
My wrath on them across our lane  
    Who laid those apples low with axes!  
Come, smoking chimney, clogging drain,  
    Drafts under doors, and higher taxes.  
Come, swarm of wasp and plague of gnat;  
Come, trouble with the thermostat;  
Come, faithless eaves that buckle over;  
Come, crab grass where was planted clover;  
Come, dogs along their borders rooting!  
And let them simply *loathe* commuting.

Perhaps that will instruct them to  
Ravage a poet's favorite view!

#### GOOD HUMOR MAN

Listen! It is the summer's self that ambles  
    Through the green lanes with such a coaxing tongue.  
Not birds or daisy fields were ever symbols  
    More proper to the time than this bell rung  
With casual insistence – no, not swallow  
    Circling the roof or bee in hollyhock.





His is the season's voice, and children follow,  
Panting, from every doorway down the block.

So, long ago, in some such shrill procession  
Perhaps the Hamelin children gave pursuit  
To one who wore a red-and-yellow fashion  
Instead of white, but made upon his flute  
The selfsame promise plain to every comer:  
Unending sweets, imperishable summer.

#### SMALL-TOWN PARADE

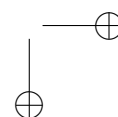
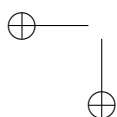
##### DECORATION DAY

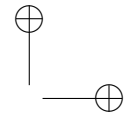
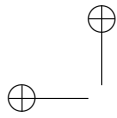
Below the lawns and picket fences,  
Just past the firehouse, half a block,  
Sharp at eleven-five commences  
This ardent and memorial walk  
(Announced, last night, for ten o'clock).

Solemn, beneath the elmy arches,  
Neighbor and next-door neighbor meet.  
For half the village forward marches  
To the school band's uncertain beat,  
And half is lined along the street.

O the brave show! O twirling baton!  
O drummer stepping smartly out!  
O mayor, perspiring, with no hat on!  
O nurses' aid! O martial rout  
Of Bluebird, Brownie, Eagle Scout!

And at the rear, aloof and splendid,  
Lugging the lanterns of their pride,  
O the red firemen, well attended  
By boys on bicycles who ride  
With envious reverence at their side!





The morning smells of buds and grasses.  
Birds twitter louder than the flute.  
And wives, as the procession passes,  
Wave plodding husbands wild salute  
From porches handy to the route.

Flags snap. And children, vaguely greeted,  
Wander into the ranks a while.  
The band, bemused but undefeated,  
Plays Sousa, pedagogic style,  
Clean to the Square – a measured mile.

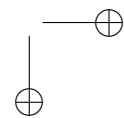
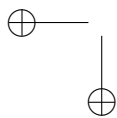
Until at last by streets grown stony,  
To the gray monument they bring  
The wreath which is less testimony  
To Death than Life, continuing  
Through this and every other spring.

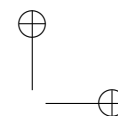
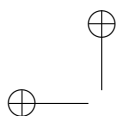
#### SONNETS FROM THE SUBURBS

##### VILLAGE SPA

By scribbled names on walls, by telephone number,  
Cleft heart, bold slogan, carved in every booth,  
This sanctum shall be known. This holy lumber  
Proclaims a temple dedicate to Youth.  
Daily in garments lawful to their tribe,  
In moccasins and sweaters, come the Exalted  
To lean on spotty counters and imbibe  
Their ritual Cokes or drink a chocolate malted.

This refuge is their own. Here the cracked voice,  
Giving the secret passwords, does not falter.  
And here the monstrous deity of their choice  
Sits bellowing from his fantastic altar,  
A juke-box god, enshrined and well at home,  
Dreadful with neon, shuddering with chrome.





P.T.A. TEA PARTY

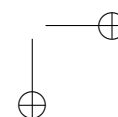
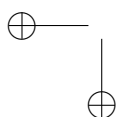
The hats are flowered or the hats are furred  
According to the season. Plump and pretty,  
Madam the Chairman says a plaintive word  
About the Milk-and-Midday-Lunch Committee.  
The secretary, fumbling through her papers,  
Murmurs inaudibly the bleak returns  
From Tuesday's Fun Fair. Someone lights the tapers  
Set, geometric, by the coffee urns.

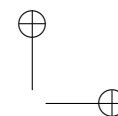
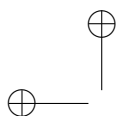
Now from their chalky classrooms straggle in  
The apprehensive mentors of the young,  
To be impaled like beetles on a pin  
By the sharp glance, the question-darting tongue  
Of vested motherhood – while daylight droops  
To smile and sip and talk of Hobby Groups.

SUBURBAN NEWSPAPER

Headlines, a little smudged, spell out the stories  
That stir the Friday village to its roots:  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETS FOR MAY, MISS BABCOCK MARRIES,  
SHORE CLUB TO BAN BIKINI BATHING SUITS.  
While elsewhere thunders roll or atoms shiver  
Or ultimate tyrants into dust are hurled,  
Weekly small boys on bicycles deliver  
News to our doors of this more innocent world –

A capsule universe of church bazaars  
Where even the cross-stitched aprons sell on chances,  
Of brush fires, births, receptions, soda bars,  
Memorial Day parades, and high-school dances,  
And (though on various brinks the planet teeters)  
Of fierce disputes concerned with parking meters.



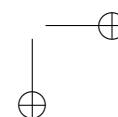
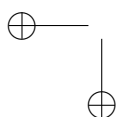


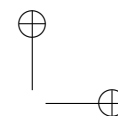
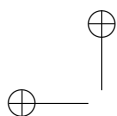
#### COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Reverend Dr. Harcourt, folk agree,  
Nodding their heads in solid satisfaction,  
Is just the man for this community.  
Tall, young, urbane, but capable of action,  
He pleases where he serves, He marshals out  
The younger crowd, lacks trace of clerical unction,  
Cheers the Kiwanis and the Eagle Scout,  
Is popular at every public function,  
And in the pulpit eloquently speaks  
On divers matters with both wit and clarity:  
Art, Education, God, the Early Greeks,  
Psychiatry, Saint Paul, true Christian charity,  
Vestry repairs that shortly must begin –  
All things but Sin. He seldom mentions Sin.

#### OCCUPATION: HOUSEWIFE

Her health is good. She owns to forty-one,  
Keeps her hair bright by vegetable rinses,  
Has two well-nourished children – daughter and son –  
Just now away at school. Her house, with chintzes  
Expensively curtained, animates the caller.  
And she is fond of Early American glass  
Stacked in an English breakfront somewhat taller  
Than her best friend's. Last year she took a class  
In modern drama at the County Center.  
Twice, on Good Friday, she's heard Parsifal sung.  
She often says she might have been a painter,  
Or maybe writer; but she married young.  
She diets. And with Contract she delays  
The encroaching desolation of her days.



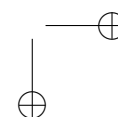
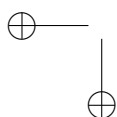


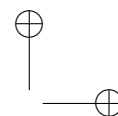
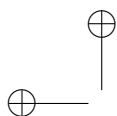
#### LENDING LIBRARY

Between the valentines and birthday greetings  
    With comical verses, midway of the aisle,  
Here is a rendezvous, a place of meetings.  
    Foregathers here the lady bibliophile.  
A dollar down has bought her membership  
    In this sorority. For three cents daily  
Per paper-jacketed volume she can dip  
    Deep in Frank Yerby or Miss Temple Bailey,  
  
Lug home the current choices of the Guild  
    (Commended by the press to flourish of trumpets),  
Or rent a costume piece adroitly filled  
    With goings on of Restoration strumpets –  
And thus, well read, join in without arrears  
The literary prattle of her peers.

#### BEAUTY PARLOR

The lady in Booth Three is discontented  
    With her last wave, rejects the oil shampoo  
As if it were a bribe. Ammonia-scented,  
    The permanent begins in Number Two.  
Five thinks perhaps she'd like to take a flyer  
    On something upswept. Elderly Mrs. Sloane,  
From Number Seven, deafened by the dryer,  
    Confides abruptly in a public tone  
  
To Miss Estelle the history of her spleen.  
    Six orders sandwiches. The pages flutter,  
On aproned laps, of *Look* and *Silver Screen*.  
    Seven, alarmed, subsides now to a mutter,  
And Three debates the problem whether to dapple  
Her nails with Schoolhouse Red or Stolen Apple.





#### VOLUNTEER FIREMAN

Four strident whistles means the business section,  
Two longs and a short, the Manor; three, the Park.  
He knows the signals vaguely. With direction  
He can unhook a ladder in the dark,  
Rescue canaries, save a mattress whole  
Or pass the cups of coffee laced with brandy.  
No midnight blaze but finds him ready to roll,  
Providing he's awake and the Buick handy.

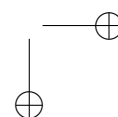
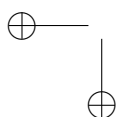
Monthly he drills. But valor has its inning  
That autumn night when by an annual route,  
Helmeted, gloved, with all the torches shining,  
He marches proudly in his crimson suit –  
A boy of forty who has skimmed the cream  
From childhood's first and most enduring dream.

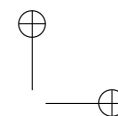
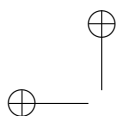
#### COUNTRY CLUB SUNDAY

It is a beauteous morning, calm and free.  
The fairways sparkle. Gleam the shaven grasses.  
Mirth fills the locker rooms and, hastily,  
Stewards fetch ice, fresh towels, and extra glasses.

On terraces the sandaled women freshen  
Their lipstick; gather to gossip, poised and cool;  
And the shrill adolescent takes possession,  
Plunging and splashing, of the swimming pool.

It is a beauteous morn, opinion grants.  
Nothing remains of last night's Summer Formal  
Save palms and streamers and the wifely glance,  
Directed with more watchfulness than normal,  
At listless mate who tugs his necktie loose,  
Moans, shuns the light, and gulps tomato juice.

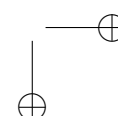
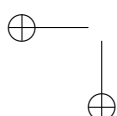


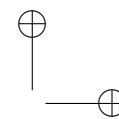
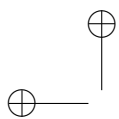


THE 5:32

She said, If tomorrow my world were torn in two,  
Blacked out, dissolved, I think I would remember  
(As if transfixed in unsundering amber)  
This hour best of all the hours I knew:  
When cars came backing into the shabby station,  
Children scuffing the seats, and the women driving  
With ribbons around their hair, and the trains arriving,  
And the men getting off with tired but practiced motion.

Yes, I would remember my life like this, she said:  
Autumn, the platform red with Virginia creeper,  
And a man coming toward me, smiling, the evening paper  
Under his arm, and his hat pushed back on his head;  
And wood smoke lying like haze on the quiet town,  
And dinner waiting, and the sun not yet gone down.





## MODERN TIMES

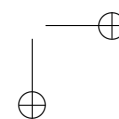
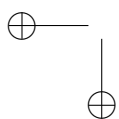
### BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN MAN

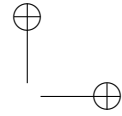
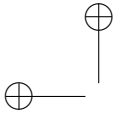
Tiptoe, the weathercock  
Pursues his furious search  
For pure Authority.  
Upon his giddy perch  
(More wavering than rock),  
He postures, "Follow me!

"Here's Truth from the wind's mouth.  
This is the final Weather,  
Revealed for man or beast."  
Then he and wind, together,  
Pointing but lately south,  
Whirl instantly to east.

Wind veers again. He goes,  
With faith as firm as ever,  
Around and 'round his route.  
Feeling immensely clever,  
He stretches on his toes  
To tell the Absolute,

Proclaiming as he spins,  
"The Truth is in the West.  
Forget the old illusion."  
So, at each gust, begins  
His unavailing quest





That comes to no conclusion –  
And comes to no conclusion.

#### MOODY REFLECTIONS

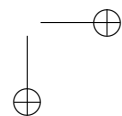
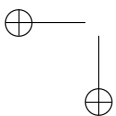
When blithe to argument I come,  
    Though armed with facts, and merry,  
May Providence protect me from  
    The fool as adversary,  
Whose mind to him a kingdom is  
    Where reason lacks dominion,  
Who calls conviction prejudice  
    And prejudice opinion.

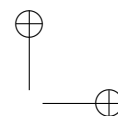
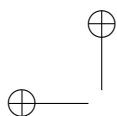
Yes, when with dolts I disagree,  
    Both *sic* and also *semper*,  
May my good angels succor me  
    And help me hold my temper.  
But strength from what celestial store  
    Shall keep my head from bending  
When I behold whom I abhor –  
The snob, the bigot, and the bore –  
Wielding their witless cudgels for  
    The cause that I'm defending?

#### THE TOWN THAT TRIES MEN'S SOULS

*“Philadelphia – The Fairmount Park Commission refused permission today for a statue of Tom Paine to be erected in the park on the ground that ‘his writings indicated that he was an atheist.’” — News item in the New York Times.*

I give you the City of Brotherly Love,  
The home of the Blue Law, the haunt of the Dove,  
Where the Liberty Bell in a showcase resides,





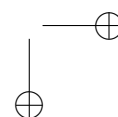
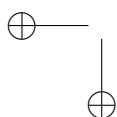
With dents in the clapper and cracks in the sides.  
There Sunday's reserved for the spirit that droops,  
There all of the houses have similar stoops,  
And there on the greensward no hero may perch  
Who didn't belong to an orthodox church.

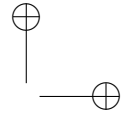
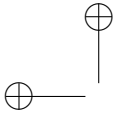
For Philadelphia,  
Philadelphia,  
    Has Standards to maintain,  
And they wouldn't care  
To pollute the Square  
    With a statue of Th-m-s Pa-ne.

Ah, think of the gossip and think of the scandal  
To bell and to book and municipal candle!  
Consider the shock to a village so cloistered,  
Whose train is the Pennsy, whose taverns are oystered.  
The cricket clubs shiver, the Main Line is trembly,  
While debutantes pale at the gilded Assembly  
Lest Thomas the Doubter and Thomas the Dark  
Should dare to invade a respectable park.

O Philadelphia,  
Philadelphia,  
    Her virtue is pearled and rubious,  
And she swerves no jot  
For a patriot  
    With background a trifle dubious.

For Tom might star on historical lists,  
But he didn't confide in the Calvinists;  
He wasn't a Baptist, he wasn't a Shaker,  
He certainly wasn't an affluent Quaker.  
Doubtless his sentiments pleased the Lord,  
But he never sat on a vestry board;  
He seldom quoted from Chapter and Verse,





He didn't sprinkle, he didn't immerse.  
His words were food for a hungry nation,  
But where's the letter from his congregation?

We mustn't encourage his like again  
In the city founded by William Penn.

#### HOME IS THE SAILOR

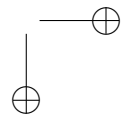
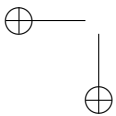
*Lines written upon hearing that inmates of Sailors Snug Harbor, an institution with an estimated thirty-million-dollar endowment, have been asked to sign over to the corporation all private income, including pensions, savings, and social security monies.*

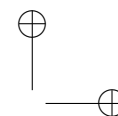
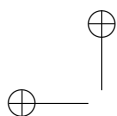
When sailors snug in harbor sit  
And munch the bread Endowment measures,  
It is not meet, it is not fit,  
That they should yearn for grosser pleasures.

What can an old man want but sleep,  
Gossip, his pipe, the daily plateful,  
And Institution rules to keep,  
And prompt advice on being grateful?

The private dollar in the purse,  
The treat that is not quite a rarity,  
Could breed but discontent or worse –  
Would dull the cutting edge of Charity.

Give them the ancient's proper due:  
A bed, a bench, a wall that's sunny,  
And immemorial truth to chew;  
Only the rich have need of money.





#### NOTE TO MY NEIGHBOR

We might as well give up the fiction  
That we can argue any view.  
For what in me is pure Conviction  
Is simple Prejudice in you.

#### MOURNING'S AT EIGHT-THIRTY

OR, A HEADLINE A DAY KEEPS EUPHORIA AWAY

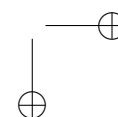
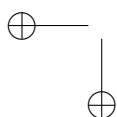
'Tis day. I waken, full of cheer,  
And cast the nightmare's shackle.  
Hark, hark! the sanguine lark I hear  
Or possibly the grackle.

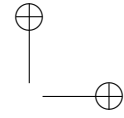
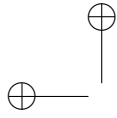
Phoebus arises. So do I;  
Then, tuneful from the shower,  
Descend with head and courage high  
To greet the breakfast hour.

All's well with all my world. I seem  
A mover and a shaper  
Till from the doorstep with the cream  
I fetch the morning paper –

*Till I fetch in the paper and my hopes begin to bleed.  
There's a famine on the Danube, there's a crisis on the  
Tweed,  
And the foes of peace are clever,  
And my bonds no good whatever,  
And I wish I had never  
Learned to read.*

The coffee curdling in my cup  
Turns bitterer than tonic,





For stocks are down and steaks are up  
And planes are supersonic.

Crops fail. Trains crash. The outlook's bright  
For none except the coffiner,  
While empires topple left and right,  
Though Leftward rather oftener,

And Russia will not come to terms,  
And Sikhs are full of passion,  
And each advertisement affirms  
My wardrobe's out of fashion.

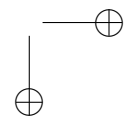
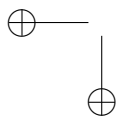
*Oh, I see by the papers we are dying by degrees.  
There's a war upon our border, there's a blight upon our  
trees;*

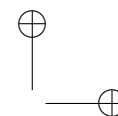
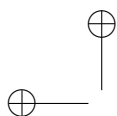
*And to match each Wonder Drug up  
That our scientists have dug up,  
They have also turned the bug up  
Of a painful new disease.*

At eventide the journals face  
In happier directions.  
They like a juicy murder case,  
They dote on comic sections.

But in the morning even "Books"  
Sends shudders coursing through me.  
The outlook for the Drama looks  
Intolerably gloomy,

And though the sun with all his heart  
Is shining round my shoulder,  
I notice by the weather chart  
Tomorrow will be colder.





*Oh, I wake in the dawning and my dreams are rosy-red,  
But the papers all assure me there's destruction straight  
ahead,  
If the present's pretty dismal,  
Why, the future's quite abysmal,  
And I think that I'll just  
crawl  
back  
to  
bed.*

#### POST-ELECTION RUMINATIONS

The tumult and the shouting dies.

The Captains rally to their muttoms,  
And from lapel the voter pries  
His bright, identifying buttons.

Manned by a loud-exulting crew,

The Ship of State is safely harbored  
(Or else, according to one's view,  
Has sunk to leeward and to starboard).

Now lesser voices split the air,

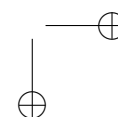
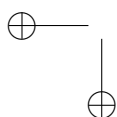
Crying their cosmic pills and nostrums;  
Now droop the placards in the square,  
Now fades the bunting round the rostrums.

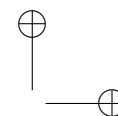
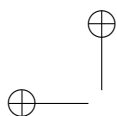
While friend with his dissenting friend

Speaks once again, assured and hearty,  
Finding the world has yet to end  
With victory for the Other Party –

That heaven stands, the sunset burns,

Cheerful, accustomed, and eternal,  
In spite of what the late returns  
Foreshadowed in an evening journal.





And on we stumble as before,  
Skirting somehow the black abyss,  
Tough from a hundred years or more  
Of crises noisier than this.

#### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

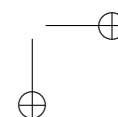
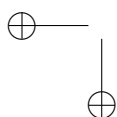
*“The brunt [of the new tax] will be borne by the middle brackets.” — News item from the New York Times.*

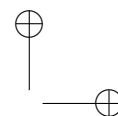
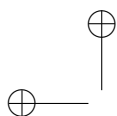
I’m a middle-bracket person with a middle-bracket spouse  
And we live together gaily in a middle-bracket house.  
We’ve a fair-to-middling family; we take the middle view;  
So we’re manna sent from heaven to Internal Revenue.

We’re the pride of every sector.  
We’re the darlings of the land.  
To the income-tax collector  
We extend a helping hand.  
For the poor have empty pockets  
And the rich bewail the Day,  
But the middle-bracket patriots  
Are steady with their pay.

When there’s duty to accomplish, it’s our duty that we do.  
Though the world is in a muddle, we contrive to muddle  
through.  
We are first in all the battles as we’re first in every peace,  
And we lead the van devoutly when the levies must increase.

The upper brackets, nightly,  
Have dreams of What’s Beyond,  
And to their bosoms tightly  
They clutch the taxless bond.  
The cheerful lower brackets  
Get coupons from the gov.,





But the people in the middle  
Own the legislature's love.

Oh, we reimburse the dentist and we meet the butcher bills.  
We're the folk who keep the temples up, along the templed  
hills.

We are sturdy as to shoulder and our collars all are white.  
So the income-tax department keeps us forming to the right.

Then sing a song of sixpence  
And ninety billions more.

Hum a ballad for the wolf  
That hangs about the door.

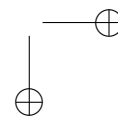
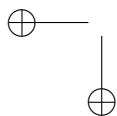
But chant a pretty ditty  
Until the welkin rings

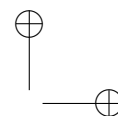
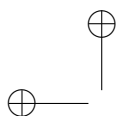
For the middle-bracket citizens  
Who bear the brunt of things.

#### THE GREAT ENIGMA

I hear that Mr. Morgenthau,  
Who sits in office, stately,  
Has many a wrinkle in his brow  
Which was not there till lately,  
From wondering how to solve aright  
This problem on his docket:  
The money that is burning bright  
In everybody's pocket.  
But though it's money, plain enough,  
That turns inflation's key,  
What happens to the pretty stuff  
Before it gets to me?

*The money, the money,  
It's surely very funny  
What happens to the money  
Before it reaches me.*



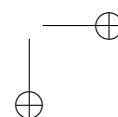
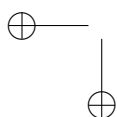


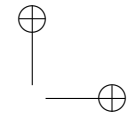
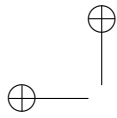
Now everyone is getting rich –  
The infant and his elder,  
The digger in the union ditch,  
The merchant and the welder.  
The miner climbs a golden ground,  
The jack a golden steeple,  
But I don't seem to get around  
Among the proper people.

For faithful as the wolf who howls  
Along this private sector,  
Beside my door, incessant, prowls  
The income-tax collector.  
My salary dwindles when it's due,  
Exploding like a comet,  
And every day there's something new  
To be deducted from it.

Yes, let each bureaucratic gent  
Improve the shining hour  
Inventing plans to circumvent  
The nation's buying power,  
And let him study in his cell  
How best to prick the bubble,  
But as for me, he might as well  
Just save himself the trouble.  
For farmers live on clotted cream,  
Machinists draw their pay,  
But something dams the flowing stream  
Before it comes my way.

*The money, the money,  
That makes existence sunny!  
What happens to the money  
Before it comes my way?*





#### DANIEL AT BREAKFAST

His paper propped against the electric toaster  
    (Nicely adjusted to his morning use),  
Daniel at breakfast studies world disaster  
    And sips his orange juice.

The words dismay him. Headlines shrilly chatter  
    Of famine, storm, death, pestilence, decay.  
Daniel is gloomy, reaching for the butter.  
    He shudders at the way

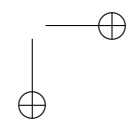
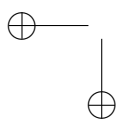
War stalks the planet still, and men know hunger,  
    Go shelterless, betrayed, may perish soon.  
The coffee's weak again. In sudden anger  
    Daniel throws down his spoon

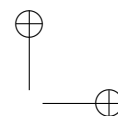
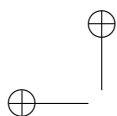
And broods a moment on the kitchen faucet  
    The plumber mended, but has mended ill;  
Recalls tomorrow means a dental visit,  
    Laments the grocery bill.

Then, having shifted from his human shoulder  
    The universal woe, he drains his cup,  
Rebukes the weather (surely turning colder),  
    Crumples his napkin up  
And, kissing his wife abruptly at the door,  
Stamps fiercely off to catch the 8:04.

#### LITANY FOR THE UNORGANIZED

I want to belong to a Union  
    And own a Union card  
With time and half for overtime  
    And benefits by the yard,  
With a Union pin for my coat lapel  
    And a Union scale of pay.





For the garrulous names of the A. F. of L.  
Keep haunting me night and day.

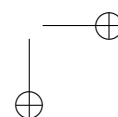
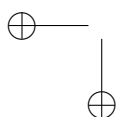
Do I hear a rousing welcome from the laborers of the nation?  
International Union of United Brewery, Cereal & Soft Drink  
Workers of America, are you with me to a man?  
Will you have me for a member, Roofers, Damp & Waterproof  
Workers' Association?  
Or you, Union of Journeyman Horseshoers of United States  
& Can.?

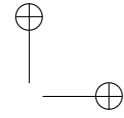
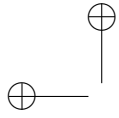
Before my years turn colder  
And the days toward darkness press,  
Oh, give me the card of a Molder  
Or a Special Delivery Mess!  
For the dues they weigh in my pocket,  
Ambition burns like flame,  
And I want to dwell  
In the A. F. of L.  
And wear a Union name.

Sheepshearers of North America, think lengthily and well on  
me.  
Union of Glass-Bottle Blowers, come give me your answer  
true,  
For the sound of your teeming titles has cast a fatal spell on  
me.  
International Association of Marble, Slate & Stone Polishers,  
Rubbers & Sawyers, Tilers & Marble Setters, Helpers &  
Terrazzo Helpers, I love you.

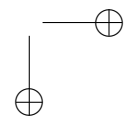
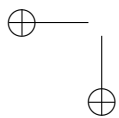
#### CONFESSIONS OF A RELUCTANT OPTIMIST

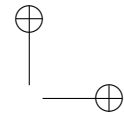
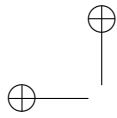
When flaming comrades I admire  
(And in whose breasts was ever coddled  
Dissatisfaction's honest fire)





Argue how to their hearts' desire  
The universe should be remodeled –  
When of their wrongs they call the roll,  
Vowing that fortune is a hellion,  
Shamefaced I sit, an outcast soul,  
Incapable of true rebellion.  
For, though aware that life is what  
One ought to view with wrath and gravity,  
I live delighted with my lot,  
Sunk in content as in depravity.  
Less woman, I expect, than mouse,  
To alter fate I would not bother.  
I like my plain suburban house.  
I like my children and their father.  
Quite able to believe the decks  
Are stacked for females – much it boots me!  
I would not willing change my sex.  
It is the very sex which suits me.  
In fact, I find it hard to see  
Exactly what I ought disparage.  
I like my nationality,  
I like my relatives-by-marriage.  
Trapped, tricked, enslaved, but lacking sense  
To enter in the conflict single,  
I wear my chains like ornaments,  
Convinced they make a charming jingle.  
Alas, alack, how well I know  
My kind's a drawback to the nation!  
But here I am and here I go,  
Contented with the status quo,  
And quite beyond salvation.





#### WITHOUT A CLOAK

Hate has a fashionable cut.  
It is the garment man agrees on,  
Snug, colorful, the proper weight  
For comfort in an icy season.

And it is weatherproof, they say –  
Becoming, also, to the spirit.  
I fetched Hate homeward yesterday,  
But there it hangs. I cannot wear it.

It is a dress that suits me ill,  
However much the mode sustains me.  
At once too ample and too small,  
It trips, bewilders, and confines me.

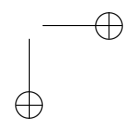
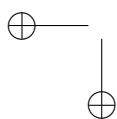
And in my blood do fevers flow,  
Corruptive, where the fabric presses,  
Till I must pluck it off as though  
It were the burning shirt of Nessus.

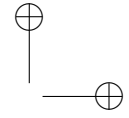
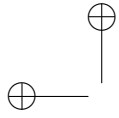
Proud walk the people folded warm  
In Hate. They need not pray for spring.  
But threadbare do I face the storm  
Or hug my hearthstone, shivering.

#### ORDEAL IN HUNGARY

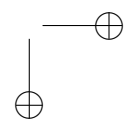
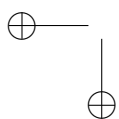
With honest fire and simple flame  
To Orleans' maid they put the question.  
It was a mortal arrow came  
To still the ardors of Sebastian.

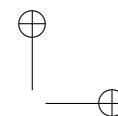
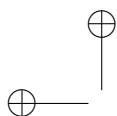
Mild Thomas, welcoming the steel,  
By mercy's self was unforsaken  
And Catherine upon her wheel  
Gave only body to be broken.





But man has flourished, has been quick  
    To learn new arts of death and torment.  
Now must the stubborn heretic  
    Yield up the spirit with its garment.  
Now he who wears compassion's face  
    Or carries conscience for a banner  
Must meet his captors, stripped of grace,  
    Wit, reputation, will, and honor,  
And suffer more outrageous loss,  
    A martyrdom more fresh-discovered,  
Than Andrew joyful on his cross  
    Or Stephen to the stones delivered.





## PUBLIC ADDRESSES

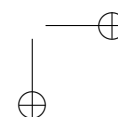
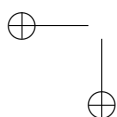
### INCIDENT IN THE AFTERNOON

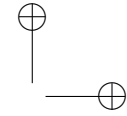
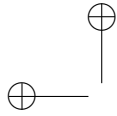
I heard two ladies at a play –  
    A comedy considered witty.  
It was a Wednesday matinée  
    And they had come from Garden City.  
Their frocks were rather arts-and-crafts,  
And they had lunched, I learned, at Schrafft's.

Although we did not speak or bow  
    Or comment even on the weather,  
More intimate I know them now  
    Than if we'd gone to school together.  
(As you must presently divine,  
Their seats were rather near to mine.)

Before the curtain rose I heard  
    What each had told her spouse that morning.  
I learned the history, word for word,  
    Of why three cooks had given warning.  
Also that neither cared a straw  
For domineering sons-in-law.

I heard a bridge hand, play by play.  
    I heard how all's not gold that glitters.  
I heard a moral résumé  
    Of half a dozen baby-sitters.





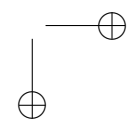
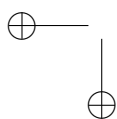
I learned beyond the slightest question  
Shrimps are a trial to digestion.

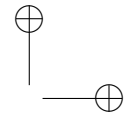
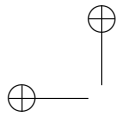
The lights went down. The stage was set.  
Still, in the dusk that fans the senses,  
Those ladies I had never met  
Poured out their swollen confidences.  
The dialogue was smart. It stirred them  
To conversation. And I heard them.

Above each stylish epigram  
Wherewith the hero mocked his rival,  
They proved how nicely curried lamb  
Might justify a roast's revival,  
That some best-selling author's recent  
Book was lively. But indecent.

I heard a list of maladies  
Their all too solid flesh was heir to.  
I heard that one, in her deep freeze,  
Could store a steer, but did not care to.  
A neighbor's delicate condition  
I heard of, all through intermission.

They laid their lives, like open tomes,  
Upon my lap and turned the pages.  
I heard their taste in hats and homes,  
Their politics, but not their ages.  
So much I heard of strange and true  
Almost it reconciled me to  
One fact, unseemly to recall:  
I did not hear the play at all.





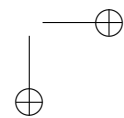
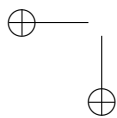
#### RADDLED RHYME IN PRAISE OF POODLES

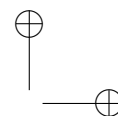
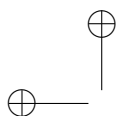
Sealyhams waddle,  
Newfoundlands cuddle,  
Airdales all dawdle  
On corners to grouse.  
Dachshunds know oodles  
Of reasons to huddle.  
But Poodles  
Walk proud in the house.

Boxers are addled  
With love. They speak twaddle;  
Guests are bestraddled,  
Kissed, pummeled, embraced.  
Cockers have noodles  
Enchanting to model.  
But Poodles  
Have manners and taste.

Needless and idle  
On Poodle, the paddle.  
Learning's a bridle  
He's panting to wear.  
Ruffed to the middle,  
He'll sit or skedaddle,  
Play fiddle,  
Or waltz to an air.

Collie's a breed'll  
Guard babes in the cradle;  
Springers can wheedle  
A bird from a tree,  
Dobermans muddle,  
Pugs scorn a puddle,  
Beagles can yodel,  
Though slightly off key.





Scotties win medals,  
    Pekinese toddle,  
Chows, while a riddle,  
    Are tempting to coddle.  
Yet, kit and caboodle,  
    No peer has the Poodle.  
For Poodle  
    Thinks highly of Me.

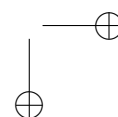
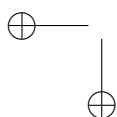
#### HOSTESS

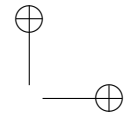
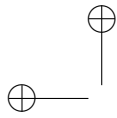
Her delicate hands among the demitasses  
Flutter like birds.  
She smiles, and from her smiling mouth releases  
A shower of words  
Shrewdly designed to set  
The dust of any private tête-à-tête.

Now, having drained the ceremonial cup,  
Let none expect her pardon  
But every guest fanatically take up  
The evening's burden,  
Answer the roll of names  
And spring with quick obedience to the Games.

Let every voice grow shrill, let laughter rise.  
He who has fed must caper.  
She prowls the drawing room with watchful eyes,  
Filling the glasses, passing the slips of paper,  
And desperately bent  
On stirring up a scheduled merriment.

No calm must fall, however brief and narrow,  
Lest to her dread,  
From some small knothole of silence, some hidden burrow,  
The scotched snake, Thought, should rear its venomed head.





NOTES WRITTEN ON A DAMP VERANDA

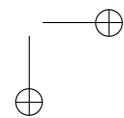
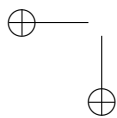
Do they need any rain  
In Portland, Maine?  
Does Texas pray for torrents,  
The water supply  
Run dry, run dry,  
From the ancient wells of Florence?  
Is the vintage grape  
In perilous shape  
On the slopes of Burgundy?  
Let none despair  
At the arid air –  
They've only to send for me.  
Invite me to stay for a holiday  
And the rain will follow me.

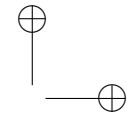
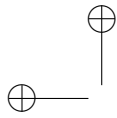
Rain is my lover, my apple strudel.  
It haunts my heels like a pedigreed poodle.  
Beyond the seas or across the nation,  
It follows me faithful on every vacation.

Others back from Bermuda wander  
Burning pink as an oleander.  
But sun turns off like a Macy gadget  
The minute I set a foot in Paget.

It rains when I go to a Brookline wedding.  
Friday to Monday it rains in Redding.  
All that I've seen of a bay called Oyster  
Is part of the ocean getting moister.

The tops of umbrellas was all I saw,  
The time I attended the Mardi Gras.  
And it hadn't rained for a year in Tucson  
Till I was the guest the clouds let loose on.





Wherever I travel, wherever I hie,  
Tumult begins in the cumuli,  
The mold creeps over the pillow's feather,  
And flaps of envelopes stick together.

I never land  
With my bags in hand  
    But floods inspire the greenery.  
I bring fresh showers  
For the thirsting flowers  
    But I don't see much of the scenery.  
The desert's a rose where I am, God knows,  
    But I don't see much of the scenery.

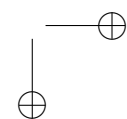
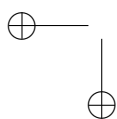
So Noah was lucky, I guess, at that,  
I wasn't weekending on Ararat.

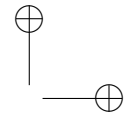
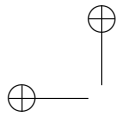
#### HONEST CONFESSION

The things are three  
    Which I discern  
Less easily  
    As the years turn.

Three things seem sliding  
    From my sight:  
The line dividing  
    Wrong from right;

Whereto we hie  
    From where we've been to;  
The needle's eye  
    A thread goes into.





#### DEATH AT TWILIGHT

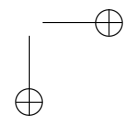
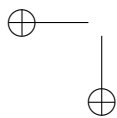
*Verses composed upon hearing that scientists are recording the mating calls of mosquitoes and plan to use them to lure the insects to their downfall.*

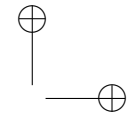
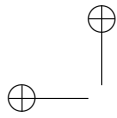
When summer's warm upon the breeze  
And evening shrouds the glens,  
Oh, pity poor Anopheles  
And Culex Pipiens,  
Whom Science, on deliberate vote,  
Has destined for a *Liebestod*.

The mists will fall, the moon will rise,  
Darkness the daylight veto.  
Then forward to his strange demise  
Will race the blithe mosquito,  
Antennae tuned to catch the tender  
Accents of the female gender.

From duty will he turn away  
To bear an ardent torch.  
He'll leave his work and leave his play  
On patio or porch,  
Desert the foray intramural,  
The city roof, the terrace rural,  
The chosen grasses, moist and deep,  
The chamber dedicate to sleep,  
The bright, the unscreened living room,  
And hurry off to meet his doom –  
Yea, quit, no matter how it rankles,  
His job on easy arms and ankles.

Forgoing much, forgetting all,  
Save love or matrimony,  
He'll fly – to find that mating call  
A trick, a trap, a phony,





And come to grief with no defense,  
The victim of his sentiments.

For thus, weighed down by nature's fetters,  
The lower orders ape their betters.

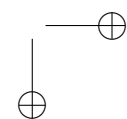
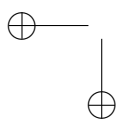
#### REFLECTIONS ON A DARK DAY

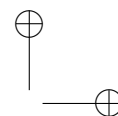
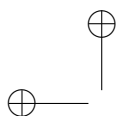
Now and then there seems some doubt  
I have much to brag about.  
Cleo, serpent of the Nile,  
Owned a more romantic style,  
Mary upped more Scottish bonnets,  
Laura won diviner sonnets,  
Saint Theresa's soul was sunnier,  
Austen wrote a good deal funnier,  
Braver far was Molly Pitcher,  
Even Hetty Green got richer.

Now and then I tell my mirror:  
Isolde's lovers held her dearer,  
Joan was better versed in miracle,  
Sappho's poems read more lyrical,  
Staël attracted people wittier,  
Jenny Lind could carol prettier,  
And it's plain that Helen's powers  
Burnt a lot more topless towers.  
Still and all, there's this I've got –  
They are dead and I am not.

#### A CHOICE OF WEAPONS

Sticks and stones are hard on bones.  
Aimed with angry art,  
Words can sting like anything.  
But silence breaks the heart.



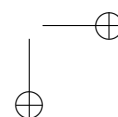
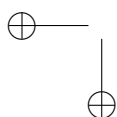


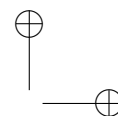
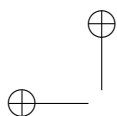
#### MONOLOGUE IN A PET SHOP

Some folk discourse  
On the noble horse  
    And some by newts are smitten,  
While others aver  
Their heartstrings stir  
    At sight of a frolic kitten.  
For every brute,  
Though meek, though mute,  
    There's somebody madly cares,  
But me, I think  
I'll settle for mink  
    Done up by Revillon Frères.

For I am a lady with pet resistance.  
Now, take the dog (and to any distance).  
He's a faithful buddy  
    To man, no doubt,  
But his paws are muddy,  
    His hair falls out.  
In accents florid  
    At dawn he rehearses.  
His bark is horrid,  
    His bite much worse is.  
At little dangers  
    He crawls away closer.  
He follows strangers  
    But nips the grocer.  
You fondle, you feed him,  
    You guard his habits.  
And when you need him,  
    He's chasing rabbits.

I lift my lute and I tune my lyre  
In bold defiance of Ellin Speyer.



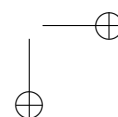
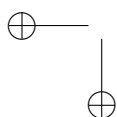


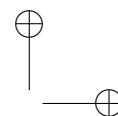
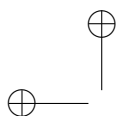
For cats are clawers,  
    Their blood runs clammily,  
In bureau drawers  
    They deposit their family.  
Horses are splendid  
    As things to bet on,  
But not intended  
    For me to get on.  
Goldfish stare at one,  
    Calm and chilly.  
Parrots swear at one,  
    Monkeys act silly.  
Mice I'm at bay from.  
    Birds are a bore.  
Pets, keep away from  
    My cottage door.

It's true the acumen  
Of Genus human  
    Is lower than spire or steeple,  
But the more I see  
Of the Pekinee,  
    The more I am fond of people.

**REPORT ON A SITUATION**

Tears at midnight  
    Stain the pillow  
Tears at morning  
    Puff the eye.  
Twilight tears are  
    Brief and shallow –  
Easy-summoned,  
    Quick to dry.  
Saltier sting those tears, they say,  
    Never shed by night or day.





### SONG FOR A PERSONAL PREJUDICE

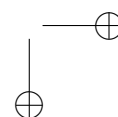
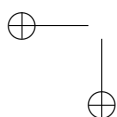
January's bearable  
    In spite of bad report.  
Though February's terrible,  
    It's short.  
With snows in proper season,  
    Each burdens down the larch.  
But March is full of treason,  
    And I hate March.

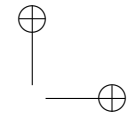
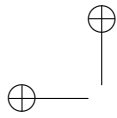
Hold your hats and duck, boys, March is nearly due,  
The sleet is on the windowpane, the slush is on the shoe.  
The pneumococcus carols a loud, triumphant song,  
And not a holiday's in sight the whole month long.

On many a wedding present  
    In June my ducats fly.  
The temperature's unpleasant  
    In July.  
As August airs grow olden,  
    Hay fever's what I've got.  
But any time seems golden  
    Compared to you-know-what.

Pick your shovels up, lads, you'll never know reprieve,  
For March is on the threshold with a blizzard up its sleeve,  
With a pussy-willow fable that is feeble on its facts,  
And a brand-new estimation of your extra income tax.

October leaves I rake with  
    An ardor far from faint,  
And April wetting take with-  
    Out complaint.  
Serene, in weather lawful,  
    I shiver or I parch.  
But March is merely awful.  
    I can't stand March.





Away, that month despicable, those days of dread and doubt,  
When the gale blows down the chimney and the oil is running  
out.

(Besides, I own a private cause to call the time accurst –  
I'll have another birthday when it's March the twenty-first.)

#### THE SEVEN AGES OF A NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIBER

From infancy, from childhood's earliest caper,  
He loved the daily paper.

Propped on his grubby elbows, lying prone,  
He took, at first, the Comics for his own.  
Then, as he altered stature and his voice,  
Sports were his single choice.

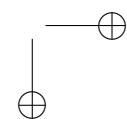
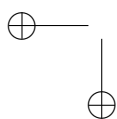
For a brief time, at twenty, Thought became  
A desultory flame.  
So with a critic eye he would peruse  
The better Book Reviews.

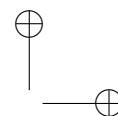
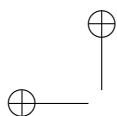
Behold the bridegroom, then – the dazzled suitor  
Turned grim commuter,  
Learning without direction  
To fold his paper to the Housing Section.

Forty enlarged his waistline with his wage.  
The Business Page  
Engrossed his mind. He liked to ponder well  
The charted rise of Steel or Tel & Tel.

Choleric, pompous, and too often vext,  
The fifties claimed him next.  
The Editorials, then, were what he scanned.  
(Even, at times, he took his pen in hand.)

But witness how the human viewpoint varies:  
Of late he reads the day's Obituaries.





TO A LADY IN A PHONE BOOTH

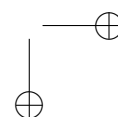
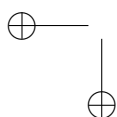
Plump occupant of Number Eight,  
    Outside whose door I shift my parcels  
And wait and wait and wait and wait  
    With aching nerves and metatarsals,  
I long to comprehend the truth:  
*What keeps you sitting in that booth?*

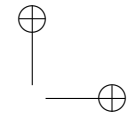
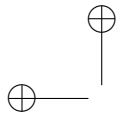
What compact holds you like a stone?  
    Whose voice, whose summons rich with power,  
Has fixed you to the telephone  
    These past three-quarters of an hour?  
Can this be love? Or thorns and prickles?  
And where do you get all those nickels?

Say, was the roof above you sold  
    By nameless landlord, cruel and craven,  
Till, driven by imperious cold,  
    You find this nook your only haven?  
Yield me the instrument you hoard,  
And I will share my bed and board.

Perhaps you choose such public place  
    To do your lips and change your vesture.  
You have not swooned, in any case.  
    A motion, an occasional gesture,  
Assures me you are safe inside.  
You do not sleep. You have not died.

That paper clutched within your fist –  
    I cannot quite make out the heading –  
Madam, is that a formal list?  
    Do you, by chance, arrange a wedding?  
Or – dreadful thought I dare not speak! –  
Perhaps you rent here by the week.





Well, likely I shall never know.  
My arches fall, my patience ravel.  
And with these bundles I must go,  
Frustrated, forth upon my travels.  
Behind the unrevealing pane  
The mystery and you remain.

Yet, as I totter out of line,  
A faint suspicion waxes stronger.  
Oh, could it be your feet, like mine,  
Would simply bear you up no longer?  
So did you happen, unaware,  
Upon this cubicle, with chair,

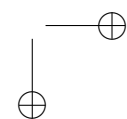
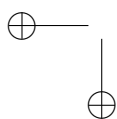
And did it seem in all the town  
One spot where you could just sit down?

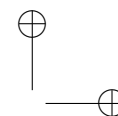
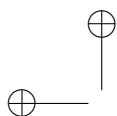
#### SUBVERSIVE REFLECTIONS

If wit engendered worthy deed  
And only the good were gay,  
Bad company would seldom lead  
The innocent astray.  
Toward primrose pastures few would stir  
In search of light and color  
Were virtuous people merrier  
Or the naughty people duller.

#### OLD GARDENER'S WARNING

Between one April's jonquil buds  
And the next spring's narcissus flowers,  
There used to roll imperial floods  
Of months and weeks and days and hours.  
The year went slow, the year went slow.  
It idled, almost to provoke us,





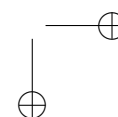
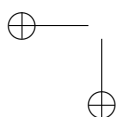
From the first flying of the snow  
    Until the flaunting of the crocus,  
And there was time to cope with roots  
    Of irises, and be their master,  
Or count the roses' earliest shoots  
    Before one blinked and saw the aster.  
But how a garden hurries now!  
    The seasons blur and run together,  
Leaf scarcely anchored to the bough  
    Before October cuts its tether.  
No vine may pause, no blossom stay  
    For our regard. While lilacs hurtle,  
Heedless and headlong, into May,  
    The zinnia tramples down the myrtle.  
And daffodils, before our eyes,  
    Are caught beneath November's sickle  
As the year shrinks to the day's size  
    And the great flood becomes a trickle.  
Quick! Run! Forbear to dillydally.  
    Glance at the sky but do not mind it.  
If here's the lily of the valley,  
    Can winter now be far behind it?

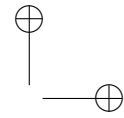
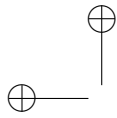
**WITHOUT RESERVATION**

*Fragments from the diary of a summer tourist in Canada.*

MOUNTAIN INTERLUDE

They might just as well  
    Have been holding conventions  
At every hotel  
    In the Scenic Laurentians.





O GOD, O MONTREAL!

In Montreal, in Montreal,

We saw two nuns with look seraphic.

We saw the rain incessant fall

On us and on the tangled traffic.

We saw some interesting tombs,

A park, full many a Gothic steeple,

An inn that boasts a thousand rooms

(All saved for other people).

PASTORAL

At quaint, old-worldly Ste. Agathe,

We got a Room. But not a Bath.

MURRAY BAY

They had no vacancies for two

At Chateau Murray or the Richelieu.

So we did not stay

At Murray Bay.

ANCIENT CITY

Streets of Quebec are charming to remember –

Steep, cobbled, wearing courtyards at the back,

Called by the names of saints. (Booked till September

We found the Frontenac.)

Along the river, youth went promenading

That summer eve. We watched them from a bench,

Then ate a dinner à la carte, applauding

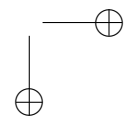
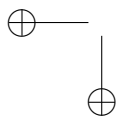
Each other's French.

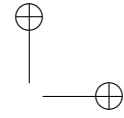
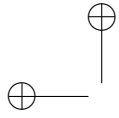
The Clarendon regretted. We fell heir to

Some guesthouse chamber, showerless and hot.

At morning we departed, taking care to

*Garder la droite.*





**TO A TALKATIVE HAIRDRESSER**

Too garrulous minion, stop. Be dumb.  
Attend my curls, however tarnished,  
In silence. Sir, I did not come  
For your opinion, plain or varnished.

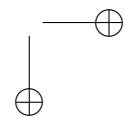
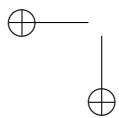
I do not wish to hear your views.  
The time is ripe for no discussion  
Of hemlines current in the news,  
Politics, weather, or the Russian.

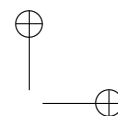
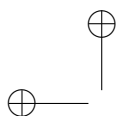
Spare me the story (while you soap)  
Of how your molars lately acted.  
This little hour – or so I hope –  
Is mine for languor undistracted.

Calm is this air-conditioned grot.  
I drowse, and there might linger in me  
An unaccustomed peace, but not  
If you must babble as you pin me,

If you must feel impelled to break  
My slumber with your conversation  
Concerning modes, the price of steak,  
Or where you went on your vacation.

Hush! Fetch me *Vogue* and get me to  
The dryer quickly as you can, sir,  
Which drones no windier than you  
Or duller, nor expects an answer.





#### BALLAD OF BLUE-PLATE SPECIALS

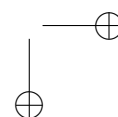
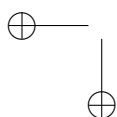
Gone are the days when myself was young and lissom,  
Gone like nickel candy bars and kings and 'possum coats.  
The snows of yesteryear are gone and few there are that miss 'm.  
But I lament the Dollar Table d'Hôtes.

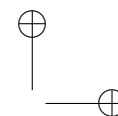
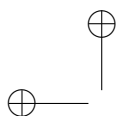
Do you mind the Dollar Dinner?  
Do you recollect the fare  
That was proffered saint or sinner  
Once at tables everywhere?  
Not a tearoom in the city,  
Scarce a tavern in the town  
But would serve you something pretty  
If you laid a dollar down.

I remember, I remember, how the candles used to gutter,  
How the napkins made of paper from one's lap were  
wont to slip.  
Oh, the spoonbread with the chicken! Oh, the flower-printed  
butter!  
Oh, the curtsy when you left a quarter tip!

On the daily Dollar Dinner,  
There was choice of pot. or veg.,  
There was soup as a beginner,  
There was pie with fluted edge.  
In its season corn was cob-ish,  
And the relishes were tart.  
Only captious folk or snobbish  
Ever ordered à la carte.

You may seek the ancient restaurants but little will it gain  
you,  
Though Musak plays as sweetly and the hostess smiles  
as pert.





For in lone, expensive glory stands the entree on the menu,  
And tomato juice is extra like dessert.

Though the bouillon's just as pallid,  
And as dubious the glass,  
Now it's extra for the salad.

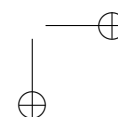
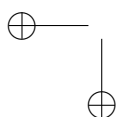
Extra comes the demitasse.  
And the cream, it runneth thinner  
Than it did in days of yore  
Since the darling Dollar Dinner,  
The delicious Dollar Dinner,  
The beparsleyed Dollar Dinner  
Stars the bill of fare no more.  
(I just ate a dollar dinner  
But it cost me nearly four.)

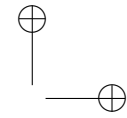
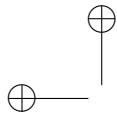
**POEM IN PRAISE OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS**

A FOURTH OF JULY HYMN

Thank you, Mr. Jefferson,  
For bearding the British brass.  
And thank you, Mr. Adams,  
Of Braintree (Quincy), Mass.  
Carroll and Clark and Clymer,  
Harrison, Hancock, Hart,  
Printer Franklin and Planter Hall,  
I thank you one and I thank you all  
For rising up at your country's call  
And giving the Fourth a start.  
Thanks with gratitude more than cursory  
For handing July an anniversary.

What is so rare in these sovereign states  
As festive weather on festive dates?  
Sneezes hamper the Yuletide kiss.  
Autumn glooms on the Armistice.



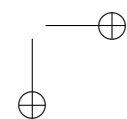
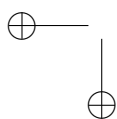


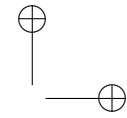
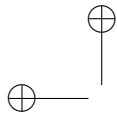
Easter's certain to be contrary.  
Washington picked out February.  
But east and west and south and north  
There's strawberry shortcake on the Fourth.

So hip and hip and a loud hooray  
For glorious Independence Day,  
Day auspicious for every comer  
Because it falls on the Fourth of summer,  
When winds are soft and the air's a prism  
And climate's conducive to patriotism.  
Fathers, I'm grateful when I remember  
You might have fixed on the Fourth of November.

You might have chosen August,  
When lawns begin to parch,  
Defended Man in the middle of Jan.  
Or the horrible first of March.  
But you thought of parades and picnics,  
Of a blue American sky,  
Of driving fast in a brand-new car,  
Of rowing boats and of breaking par,  
And you set it down on your calendar  
That you'd choose the Fourth of July.

So thank you, Button Gwinnett,  
For a celebration blithe.  
And thank you, Roger Sherman,  
And thank you, Mr. Wythe.  
Hopkinson, Hooper, Heyward,  
Livingston, Lewis, Lee,  
Merchant Morris, of Morrisania,  
Morton, the jurist from Pennsylvania,  
I'm happy you surged with that freedomania.  
Thanks for the Land of the Free,  
For giving us liberty's deathless chime  
And a holiday in the summertime.





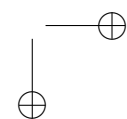
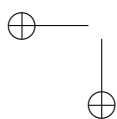
## SOME LITERARY NOTES

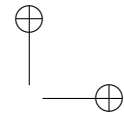
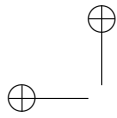
### NOTES ON LITERARY REVIVALS

It's hard  
Keeping up with the avant-garde.  
There was the time that Donne  
Had a place in the sun.  
His *lettres* were *belles* of pure gold  
And they tolled and they tolled and they tolled,  
Until critics in suitable haunts  
Took up Kafka (Franz).  
Then everyone wanted to herald  
The genius of Scott Fitzgerald.  
After that, among Prominent Names,  
It was utterly Henry James.

In between, of course, there was room  
For a Melville boom,  
For a peek at Poe, for a dollop  
Of Trollope,  
And currently people report on  
A scrambling aboard  
The elegant wagons of Wharton  
And Ford Madox Ford.

Oh, it's perfectly clear  
That there's change when the critics forgather.





Last year was a Hawthorne year.  
Coming up – Willa Cather?

And I'm happy the great ones are thriving,  
But what puzzles my head  
Is the thought that they needed reviving.  
I had never been told they were dead.

#### LITERARY LANDSCAPE WITH DOVE AND POET

OR, VERSES IN THE MODERN MANNER

The pedant dove, the poet who admires him  
Are adepts, both, of a most natural style.  
Each is aware that music needs no meaning.

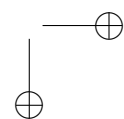
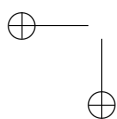
“Coo, coo,” observes the dove all morning long,  
All morning long, all evening longer still.  
Mourning and evening are his occupations.

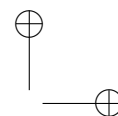
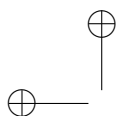
While underneath his eaves of occupation,  
Dove-plump with melody, the poet murmurs  
“Coo, coo,” incessant as a chime of bells.

Each is aware that music needs no meaning  
Since the instructed and submissive ear  
Believes the Word: “Coo, coo” is metaphysics.

#### COMPLAINT IN WOMRATH'S

My library lamp would burn more midnight watts  
Could I come on a novel that wasn't about tots,  
Could I open a book that didn't contain the essence  
Of secret childhood or wistful adolescence,  
Distilled (into four hundred pages, preface and all)  
By an author afflicted with Style and Total Recall.





For the young, if they're kept out of sight, I've a deal of  
forbearance.

I realize modern babes must resent their parents,  
Fall in love with their nursemaids, look on with innocent  
frown

While someone is murdered or playmates tactlessly drown,  
And I comprehend that it's perfectly normal in kiddos  
For little girls to be deadlier than Black Widows.

I understand all that. Still, I've never been wild  
About viewing the world through the eyes of a sensitive child  
Or even insensitive ones. Let me pulse, when I pulse,  
Over gruesome adventures happening to adults.  
The pangs that inferior Juliets feel as they grow up  
Induce in me but a delicate yearning to throw up.

Ah, bring me a book  
Where hero and heroine both wear that weathered look!

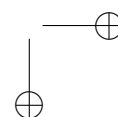
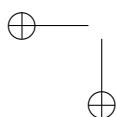
I'll settle for something historical, something post-Freudian,  
Something purple or tough or suspenseful or plain celluloid-  
ian,  
Something arty or artless, something even by Henry Green,  
So long as it's peopled by characters over sixteen.

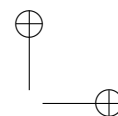
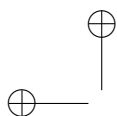
For the tale of a child may be teeming with local color,  
But bores will be bores  
And the younger they come, the duller.

#### PUBLIC JOURNAL

*Verses inspired by a day spent in communion with the bright  
young men of English verse*

It is four in the afternoon. Time still for a poem,  
A poem not topical, wholly, or romantic, or metaphysic,  
But fetched from the grab-bag of my mind and gaudy with





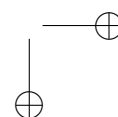
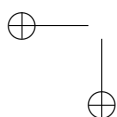
Symbol, slogan, quotation, and even music.  
And many a Marxian maxim and many allusions  
To a daft system and a world-disorder.  
I will mention machines and the eight-hour day and  
Czechoslovakia and the invaded border.

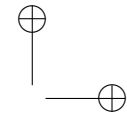
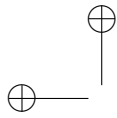
I will speak of love and I will do it slyly,  
Unloosing the sacred girdle with a tired air,  
Taking particular pains to notice the elastic garters  
And the literal underwear.

I will put learning into my poem, for I acquired learning  
At Cambridge or Oxford, it does not matter which.  
But I'll freshen it up with slang which I got by ear,  
Though it may sound a little off pitch.  
And I'll be casual with thymes for that is the trend,  
Fashionable as the black hat of Anthony Eden.  
I may put them at the middle of the stanza instead of the  
end,  
For really amazing effect.  
Or perhaps I'll find that assonance heightens the meaning  
better.  
Yes, definitely, I prefer the latter.

Well, it will be sport, writing my private hates  
And my personal credo.  
I must bring in how I went to Spain on a holiday,  
And how cold it was in Toledo.  
There was a bootblack, too, in Madrid,  
Who gave my shoes a burnish.  
He told me something important which I cannot repeat,  
For though I understand Spain, I do not understand Spanish.

I will put tarts into my poem, and tenement people,  
The poor but not the meek;  
And pieces of popular songs for a hint of nostalgia,  
And bits of Greek.





I shall be tough and ardent and angry-eyed,  
Aware that the world is dying, gasping, its face grown pallid;

But quick to embalm it in language as an aspic  
Enfolds the chicken salad.

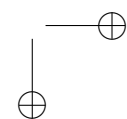
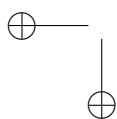
Now it is five o'clock. The poem is finished  
Like Poland, like the upper classes, like Sunday's roast.  
I must straighten my waistcoat and see that it goes straight  
out  
By the evening post.

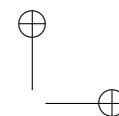
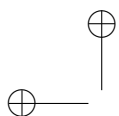
For what is left for us? Only  
The stanza a day,  
And the American royalties, and an inherited income,  
To keep the wolf at bay.

**ADVICE TO A YOUNG PERSON ABOUT TO WRITE A BOOK  
WITH NO EQUIPMENT OTHER THAN TALENT**

Anachronistic stripling,  
If you would see your name  
In living letters rippling  
Across the scroll of fame,  
Then shun those regions airy  
Where geniuses are made,  
Lay down the dictionary,  
And learn another trade.  
For not among the dwellers  
On bleak Parnassian heights  
Are born the sleek best-sellers  
Complete with movie rights.

Fatuous boy, to art apprenticed,  
Leave your Muse and be a dentist,  
Be an actor, be a hooper,

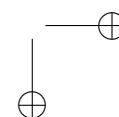
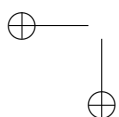


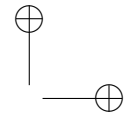
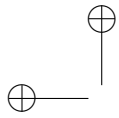


Welder, architect, or roofer.  
Chart the heavens' starry courses,  
Ride the rails or play the horses.  
Have a hobby, keep a pet,  
Photograph the Soviet.  
Build a dam or paint a steeple,  
Or just know a lot of people  
And with anecdote and hint  
Scandalize them well in print.  
Then what radiance will flash off  
From the volume that you dash off!

His royalties are slighter,  
And meager grow the bays  
For any simple writer  
Who loves the polished phrase.  
He gives his strict attention  
To Character and Style,  
And lands in "Briefer Mention"  
And ends on Liggett's aisle.  
But scrivening physicians  
Or raconteurs in pubs  
Recount their twelve editions  
For Book-and-Author Clubs.

Therefore, stripling, if you choose  
To acquire the best reviews,  
Join the circus, buy a dairy,  
Be an expert military,  
Be a captain on a liner,  
Lawyer, preacher, dress-designer,  
Rich man, poor man, beggar, thief,  
Someone lately on relief,  
Dodger, weary of the bat,  
Reminiscent diplomat.

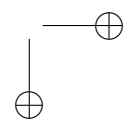
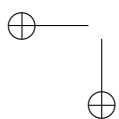


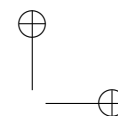
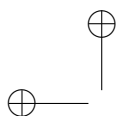


But the best of all to be  
Is some sort of refugee.  
Then, with contracts tailored to you  
How the publishers will woo you.  
Art, lad, is an eccentricity,  
But sweet are the uses of publicity.

**REFLECTIONS ON THE BENEFITS OF KEEPING A JOURNAL**

Lives of great men point a moral:  
We should prosper in our primes  
And, retiring, wreathed with laurel,  
Sell our memoirs to the *Times*.





## DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

### ABOUT CHILDREN

By all the published facts in the case,  
Children belong to the human race.

Equipped with consciousness, passions, pulse,  
They even grow up and become adults.

So why's the resemblance, moral or mental,  
Of children to people so coincidental?

Upright out of primordial dens,  
Homo walked and was sapiens.

But rare as leviathans or auks  
Is – male or female – the child who walks.

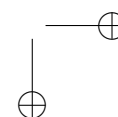
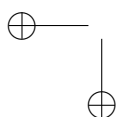
He runs, he gallops, he crawls, he pounces,  
Flies, leaps, stands on his head, or bounces,

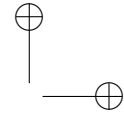
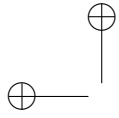
Imitates snakes or the tiger striped  
But seldom recalls he is labeled "Biped."

Which man or woman have you set sights on  
Who craves to slumber with all the lights on

Yet creeps away to a lampless nook  
In order to pore on a comic book?

Why, if (according to A. Gesell)  
The minds of children ring clear as a bell,





Does every question one asks a tot  
Receive the similar answer – “What?”

And who ever started the baseless rumor  
That any child has a sense of humor?

Children conceive of no jest that’s madder  
Than Daddy falling from a ten-foot ladder.

Their fancies sway like jetsam and flotsam;  
One minute they’re winsome, the next they’re swatsome.

While sweet their visages, soft their arts are,  
Cold as a mermaid’s kiss their hearts are;

They comprehend neither pity nor treason.  
An hour to them is a three months’ season.

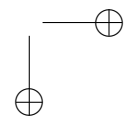
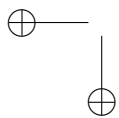
So who can say – this is just between us –  
That children and we are a common genus,

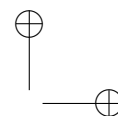
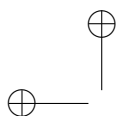
When the selfsame nimbus is eerily worn  
By a nymph, a child, and a unicorn?

#### YOUNG MAN WITH AN HEIR

From what majestic portals,  
From what Olympian ways,  
You fix on common mortals  
Your condescending gaze,  
Who – entering the nursery  
And halting at the door –  
Have in one moment cursory  
Become an Ancestor.

This infant, red and slumbering,  
That you’ve so lately met –  
This morsel now encumbering  
Crib, scales, or bassinet –





In him I watch you test your  
    Resemblance and your mark  
And straightway don the vesture  
    That robes a Patriarch.

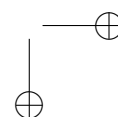
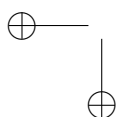
Even as you were bending  
    Above your scion, now,  
I saw the crown descending  
    To your astonished brow.  
And on your shaven chin, sir,  
    I noticed as I peered,  
Indubitably began, sir,  
    A faint, ancestral beard.

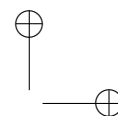
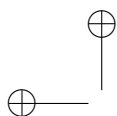
Before your startled stare looms  
    What venerable reward!  
Your chattels all turn heirlooms,  
    Yourself a Foundling Lord.  
And, seeing your look engravèd  
    On one pink, new-born lamb,  
You range yourself with David,  
    Solomon, Abraham.

#### COMEUPPANCE FOR A PROGENY

*“A credit of \$400 may be claimed for each person... under  
eighteen years of age.” — Federal Income-Tax Report.*

Arrogant girl,  
    Unclasp that curl  
And stifle that forward dimple.  
When I swore your worth  
Was the wealth of earth,  
    I find I was fond and simple.  
I set your price, and I set it high,  
    You personal bundle from heaven, you;





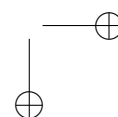
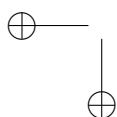
But look at the market as quoted by  
The Collector of Internal Revenue!

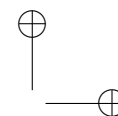
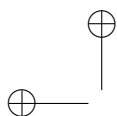
You, our costly, our first edition,  
A mine of gold to the obstetrician,  
To the corner druggist whose bills unnerve us,  
To Kiddie Krackers and Diaper Servus;  
You, our treasure, our platinum tot,  
For whom we mortgaged the house and lot,  
Had better develop a sense of humor.  
You're worth four hundred and not a sou more.

Cherubic tumbler,  
Be meek, be humbler,  
Of tempers and tantrums, wary.

Your infant charm  
May possibly warm  
The heart of the Golden Dairy.  
But hushaby, baby, cease those pranks  
That harry your mom and popper.  
They've got you down on the Income blanks  
At scarcely your weight in copper.

You who jingle like ready money  
To him that fathered the Snuggle Bunny;  
You, the original Comstock Lode  
For all purveyors to our abode:  
For makers of socks  
And hoods and gaiters,  
Alphabet blocks  
And perambulators,  
Cots and creepers  
And nursery stands,  
Arnold sleepers  
And Carter bands,  
Dolls and mittens

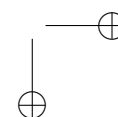
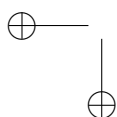


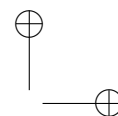
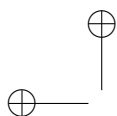


And oilcloth kittens  
And christening mugs  
And cribs  
And bibs –  
You, who rate, when the books are done,  
As Luxury Item Number One,  
Are here recorded beyond redemption  
As four hundred dollars tax exemption.

#### COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

Some lives are filled with sorrow and woe  
And some with joys ethereal.  
But the days may come and the weeks may go,  
My life is filled with cereal.  
My cupboards bulge and my shelves are bunchy  
With morsels crispy or cracked or crunchy,  
With rice things, corn things,  
Barley things, wheaten –  
All top-of-the-morn things  
And all uneaten.  
Ignored they sparkle, unheard they pop  
When once they've yielded the Premium Top.  
  
For Cheerios may be just the fare  
To energize whippersnappers,  
But mine consider they've had their share  
As soon as they've filched the wrappers.  
Breathes there a child with hopes so dim  
That Kix are innocent Kix to him,  
Not loot for filling  
His crowded coffers  
With Big New Thrilling  
Premium Offers?  
If such (as I fervently doubt) there be,  
He is no kin to my progeny.

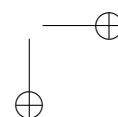
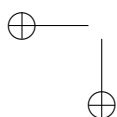


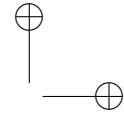
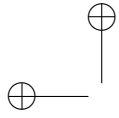


As a gardener lusts for a marigold,  
As a miser loves what he misers,  
So dotes the heart of a nine-year-old  
On sending away for prizes.  
The postman rings and the mail flies hence  
With Premium Tops and fifteen cents.  
The postman knocks and the gifts roll in:  
Guaranteed cardboard, genuine tin,  
Paper gadgets and gadgets plastic,  
Things that work till you lose the elastic,  
Things to molder in draws and pockets,  
Magnets, parachutes, pistols, rockets,  
Weapons good for a cop's assistant,  
Whistles for dogs that are nonexistent,  
Toys designed  
To make mothers tremble,  
That fathers find  
They have to assemble,  
Things Tom Mixish or Supermanish.  
How gadgets come and the box tops vanish!  
Then hippity-hop  
To the grocer's shop  
For a brand-new brand with a Premium Top.  
Oh, some lives read like an open book  
And some like a legend hoary.  
But life to me, wherever I look,  
Seems one long cereal story.

**ONE CROWDED HOUR OF GLORIOUS STRIFE**

I love my daughters with a love unailing,  
I love them healthy and I love them ailing.  
I love them as sheep are loved by the shepherd,  
With a fiery love like a lion or a leopard.



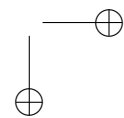
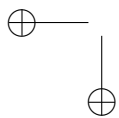


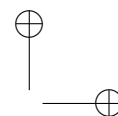
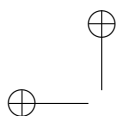
I love them gentle or inclined to mayhem –  
But I love them warmest after eight-thirty A.M.

Oh, the peace like heaven  
That wraps me around,  
Say, at eight-thirty-seven,  
When they're schoolroom-bound  
With the last glove mated  
And the last scarf tied,  
With the pigtail plaited,  
With the pincurl dried,  
And the egg disparaged,  
And the porridge sneered at,  
And last night's comics furtively peered at,  
The coat apprehended  
On its ultimate hook,  
And the cover mended  
On the history book!

How affection swells, how my heart leaps up  
As I sip my coffee from a lonely cup!  
For placid as the purling of woodland waters  
Is a house divested of its morning daughters.  
Sweeter than the song of the lark in the sky  
Are my darlings' voices as they shriek good-by –

With the last shoe burnished  
And the last pen filled,  
And the bus fare furnished  
And the radio stilled;  
When I've signed the excuses  
And written the notes,  
And poured fresh juices  
Down ritual throats,  
And rummaged for umbrellas  
Lest the day grow damper,





And rescued homework from an upstairs hamper,  
And stripped my wallet  
    In the daily shakedown,  
And tottered to my pallet  
    For a nervous breakdown.

Oh, I love my daughters with a love that's reckless  
As Cornelia's for the jewels in her fabled necklace.  
But Cornelia, even, must have raised three cheers  
At the front door closing on her school-bent dears.

#### DEATH AT SUPPERTIME

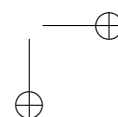
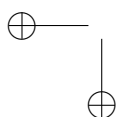
*Between the dark and the daylight,  
    When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupation,  
    That is known as the Children's Hour.*

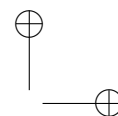
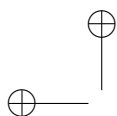
That endeth the skipping and skating,  
    The giggles, the tantrums, and tears,  
When, the innocent voices abating,  
    Alert grow the innocent ears.

The little boys leap from the stairways,  
    Girls lay down their dolls on the dot,  
For promptly at five o'er the airways  
    Comes violence geared to the tot.

Comes murder, comes arson, come G-men  
    Pursuing unspeakable spies;  
Come gangsters and tough-talking he-men  
    With six-shooters strapped to their thighs;

Comes the corpse in the dust, comes the dictum  
    "Ya' better start singin', ya' rat!"  
While the torturer leers at his victim,  
    The killer unleashes his gat.





With mayhem the twilight is reeling.  
Blood spatters, the tommy guns bark.  
Hands reach for the sky or the ceiling  
As the dagger strikes home in the dark.

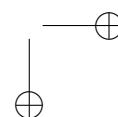
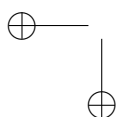
And lo! with what rapturous wonder  
The little ones hark to each tale  
Of gambler shot down with his plunder  
Or outlaw abducting the mail.

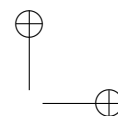
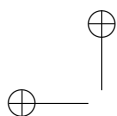
*Between the news and the tireless  
Commercials, while tempers turn sour,  
Comes a season of horror by wireless,  
That is known as the Children's Hour.*

**HERE COME THE CLOWNS, DIDN'T THEY?**

Oh, the tinted tanbark! Oh, the tangy airs!  
Oh, the snobbish camels and the plump performing bears!  
Oh, the plumèd horses! Oh, all I fail to see  
When Dulcy's at the Circus,  
Sitting next to me.

It's high wire and light wire  
And no net beneath;  
The girl is on the tight wire.  
She wears a spangled sheath.  
It's clasp hands and hope, now,  
Trembling below –  
Dare she skip the rope, now?  
I'll never know.  
For just as she's turning  
And drums have begun,  
Dulcy gets a yearning  
For a frankfurter bun.



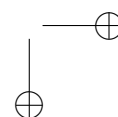
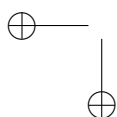


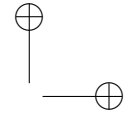
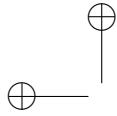
Yoo-hoo, wiener man! Hurry with your pitch.  
Dulcy has an appetite, so spread the mustard rich.  
Give the man the money, dear; bid the man begone.  
Now let's watch the lady –  
But the next act's on.

The spot's glowing yellow,  
Weak grow the knees,  
See the daring fellow  
On aerial trapeze.  
The thunder of voices  
Is hushed as by sleep.  
But just as he poises,  
Tense, for the leap,  
Dimmed is the splendor,  
For, heading our way,  
Dulcy spies the vendor  
With the ice-cream tray.

*Is* the diver rescued, flashing as he falls?  
*Can* the juggler balance those thirty spinning balls?  
*Do* the ponies samba, the tigers know their trade?  
Comes a Circus crisis,  
I'm buying lemonade.

I am keeping handy  
Quarters to swap  
For pink cotton candy  
And warm bottled pop,  
For souvenir turtles  
Alive and unfed,  
While Superman hurtles,  
Ignored, overhead.  
But someday, ah, someday,  
With heart light as foam,  
I'll hie to the Circus  
Like pilgrim to Rome.





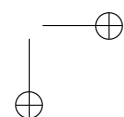
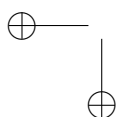
I'm going to the Circus  
And I'll leave my daughter home.

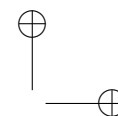
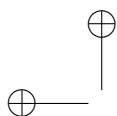
**PLEA IN A CHILDREN'S BOOKSHOP**

Do you have a book for a literate girl  
Who's six years old tomorrow?  
A book to be read when it's time for bed  
And hidden from those who borrow?  
She leans to the magic of just-suppose,  
She's fond of a tale that's merry,  
But she doesn't care how the story goes  
Or whether it's true or fairy,  
And she doesn't mind how the pictures look.  
She'd blink at a price inflation,  
So long as the book is a regular book  
Instead of an Animation.

Sir or Madam, I beg you hop up.  
Find her a volume that doesn't pop up,  
Fold, make comical noises, bend,  
Waggle, or wiggle, or stand on end –  
Something not so up-to-the-minute,  
That isn't sold with a record in it  
Or a chime that rings if your fingers strike it.  
It may be Art, but she doesn't like it.

Her eyes would glisten if she might listen  
To Sinbad the Sailor's progress.  
With sweet compliance she'd hear of giants,  
Or ogres, or maybe an ogress.  
She'd like a dwarf of a proper size  
Or a stepmother cruel and clever.  
But she doesn't want them to roll their eyes,  
Propelled by a paper lever.  
Away with audible tigers, please,  
And sheep (you can comb their wool out).





The lady's learning her A.B.C.s  
And she isn't amused by a Pull-out.

Seller of narratives juvenile,  
Scan your counter and search your aisle.  
Surely somewhere amid the welter  
A book immobile is taking shelter  
Whose pictured dragon, whose painted wizard  
Wasn't designed to be stroked or scissored,  
Pasted, colored, or strung with beading.  
Haven't you anything meant for reading?

#### THE VELVET HAND

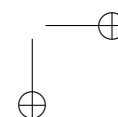
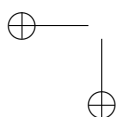
I call that parent rash and wild  
Who'd reason with a six-year child,  
Believing little twigs are bent  
By calm, considered argument.

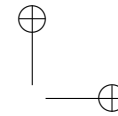
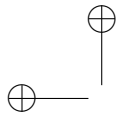
In bandying words with progeny,  
There's no percentage I can see,  
And people who, imprudent, do so,  
Will wonder how their troubles grew so.

Now underneath this tranquil roof  
Where sounder theories have their proof,  
Our life is sweet, our infants happy.  
In quietude dwell Mammy and Pappy.

We've sworn a stern, parental vow  
That argument we won't allow.  
Brooking no juvenile excess here,  
We say a simple No or Yes, here,

And then, when childish wails begin  
We don't debate.  
We just give in.





#### ANNIVERSARY

In garden-colored boots he goes  
Ardent around perennial borders  
To spray the pink, celestial rose  
Or give a weed its marching orders.

Draining at dawn his hasty cup,  
He takes a train to urban places;  
By lamplight, cheerful, figures up  
The cost of camps and dental braces.

And warm upon my shoulders lays  
Impetuous at dinner table  
The mantle of familiar praise  
That's better than a coat of sable.

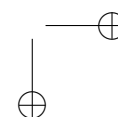
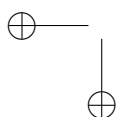
#### LETTER FROM A COUNTRY INN

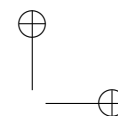
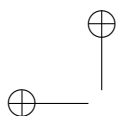
Dinner's at one. They ring an outside gong  
To summon cottagers from down the hill.  
The blue, anonymous days are seasons long,  
And nights derisive with a whippoorwill.

We brag on postal cards about the blankets  
We sleep beneath, or praise the altitude.  
The meadow wears its butterflies like trinkets,  
Gaudy and inexhaustibly renewed.

And all the hours are loud with children falling  
From habitable trees or in the lake,  
Forever at the tops of voices calling  
The gossip that consumes them while they wake,

Pursuing goose or fleeing jealous gander,  
Fishing for minnow fabulous as whale,  
Or scooping up the luckless salamander  
From violated pool to secret pail.

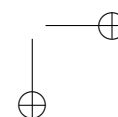
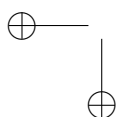


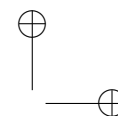
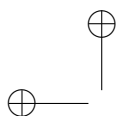


Here time swings idly as a toy balloon,  
Empty of struggle, almost of thought itself.  
Yesterday's paper comes this afternoon  
And lies unopened on the mantel shelf,  
And all is innocent and desultory  
As we'd forgotten that a world might seem.  
Only at week's end does the tempo vary.  
Then dreaming women rouse themselves from dream,  
Tie ribbons in their hair with rapt attention,  
Discard their knitting, put their novels down,  
And half-delighted, half with apprehension,  
Await the train that carries up from town  
Their stranger husbands, fetching even here  
Reality's outrageous atmosphere.

#### DEPARTURE FROM VERMONT

Close the last cupboard, roll the rug,  
Sweep clean the hearth of ash and splinter,  
Batten the final window snug  
Against imagined shapes of winter.  
The station wagon at the door  
Already pants for homeways hilly.  
This is farewell. One summer more  
Has withered like the Turk's-cap lily.  
Now mist and pallor overtake  
The meadows where we liked to forage;  
No swimmer cleaves the metal lake;  
Sailless, the sailboat sulks in storage.  
Already cold the morning airs.  
At night the bullfrog counsels danger.  
And this familiar landscape wears  
The sudden aspect of a stranger.





There lies a menace in the north.  
The swallows from their eaves have stolen.  
So fetch the bursting luggage forth –  
Since June, miraculously swollen.

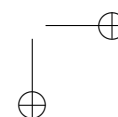
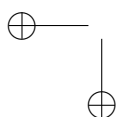
Discarding hammock to the moth,  
The picnic place to brush and boulder,  
Now drape the unaccustomed cloth  
Of town upon the sunburnt shoulder.

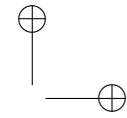
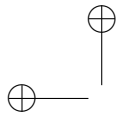
This is farewell. Quick, turn the key  
Upon the cricket's parting sentence  
And, newly waked from languor, flee  
The season's husk without repentance.

**TWO POEMS FROM A PRIVATE ROOM**

I. DON'T SHAKE THE BOTTLE, SHAKE YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW

When I was young and full of rhymes  
And all my days were salady,  
Almost I could enjoy the times  
I caught some current malady.  
Then, cheerful, knocked upon my door  
The jocular physician,  
With tonics and with comfort for  
My innocent condition.  
Then friends would fetch me flowers  
And nurses rub my back,  
And I could talk for hours  
Concerning my attack.  
But now, when vapors dog me,  
What solace do I find?  
My cronies can't endure me.  
The doctors scorn to cure me,  
And, though I ail, assure me  
It's all a state of mind.

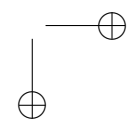
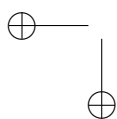


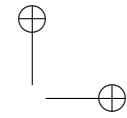
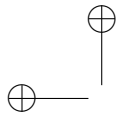


It's psychosomatic, now, psychosomatic.  
Whatever you suffer is psychosomatic.  
Your liver's a-quiver? You're feeling infirm?  
Dispose of the notion you harbor a germ.  
Angina,  
    Arthritis,  
        Abdominal pain –  
They're nothing but symptoms of marital strain.  
They're nothing but proof that your love life is minus.  
The ego is aching  
Instead of the sinus.  
So face up and brace up and stifle that sneeze.  
It's psychosomatic. And ten dollars, please.

There was a time that I recall,  
    If one grew pale or thinnish,  
The pundits loved to lay it all  
    On foods unvitaminish,  
Or else, dogmatic, would maintain  
    Infection somewhere acted.  
And when they'd shorn the tonsils twain,  
    They pulled the tooth impacted.  
But now that orgies dental  
    Have made a modish halt,  
Your ills today are mental  
    And likely all your fault.  
Now specialists inform you,  
    While knitting of their brows,  
Your pain, though sharp and shooting,  
Is caused, beyond disputing,  
Because you hate commuting  
    Or can't abide your spouse.

It's psychosomatic, now, psychosomatic.  
You fell down the stairway? It's psychosomatic.





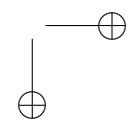
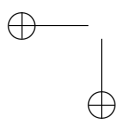
That sprain of the ankle while waxing the floors –  
You did it on purpose to get out of chores.  
Nephritis,  
    Neuritis,  
        A case of the ague?  
You're just giving in to frustrations that plague you.  
You long to be coddled, beloved, acclaimed,  
So you caught the sniffles.  
And aren't you ashamed!  
And maybe they're right. But I sob through my wheezes,  
"They've taken the fun out of having diseases."

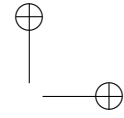
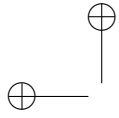
## II. MESSAGE FOUND IN A BOTTLE

### *Thrown from a Window at Harkness Pavilion*

When next upon my narrow cot,  
    A prey to symptoms horrid,  
I lie awake for fever's sake  
    Or hold my aching forehead,  
Let doctors come and doctors go,  
    They'll meet with no resistance.  
I'll gulp the bitterest brew. But, oh,  
    Let nurses keep their distance.

For the hearts of nurses are solid gold  
But their heels are flat and their hands are cold,  
And their voices lilt with a lilt that's falser  
Than the smile of an exhibition waltzer.  
Yes, nurses can cure you, nurses restore you,  
But nurses are bound that they'll do things for you.  
They make your bed up  
    On flimsy excuses.  
They prop your head up  
    And bring you juices.





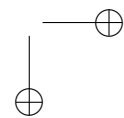
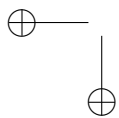
They run with egg-nogs from hither and thither.  
They fling out your flowers before they wither.  
They fetch your breakfast at dawn's first crack.  
They keep on pleading to rub your back.  
With eau de Cologne they delight to slosh you.  
And over and over they want to wash you.

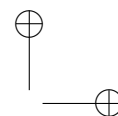
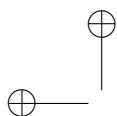
The nurse-at-night you can't recall.  
She's vaguer than a dream is;  
But when she whispers down the hall  
You think you're *in extremis*.  
The day nurse owns a beaming face  
Designed to cheer and hearten,  
And speaks to you with studied grace  
As to a kindergarten.

Oh, the deeds of nurses are noble and pure,  
But they're always taking your temperature.  
And, dewy morn till the light grows paler,  
They guard you close as a Nazi jailer.  
They pull your shades and they shut your doors.  
They snub convivial visitors.  
Your veriest frown  
They take to heart  
And scribble it down  
On a stealthy chart.

When you reach for a smoke they're there to nab you.  
With pills they dose you, with needles they jab you.  
They order you porridge instead of kippers.  
They steal your pencils and hide your slippers.  
They eat the candy your friends bequeath,  
And hourly urge you to brush your teeth.

The tribe of Florence Nightingale,  
Ah, let me not disparage.  
How deft their ways with luncheon trays,  
How masterful their carriage!





But when the pallid look I wear  
That marks the Liquid Diet,  
I wish they'd go some otherwhere  
And let me groan in quiet,  
Abandoned to my germy nest,  
Unnursed, unlaundered, unoppressed.

**BLUES FOR A MELODEON**

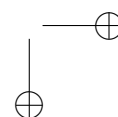
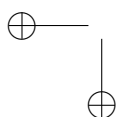
A castor's loose on the buttoned chair –  
The one upholstered in shabby coral.  
I never noticed, before, that tear  
In the dining-room paper.

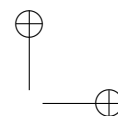
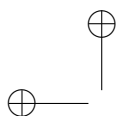
When did the rocker cease to rock,  
The fringe sag down on the corner sofa?  
All of a sudden the Meissen clock  
Has a cherub missing.

All of a sudden the plaster chips,  
The carpet frays by the morning windows;  
Careless, a rod from the curtain slips,  
And the gilt is tarnished.

This is the house that I knew by heart.  
Everything here seemed sound, immortal.  
When did this delicate ruin start?  
How did the moth come?

Naked by daylight, the paint is airing  
Its rags and tatters. There's dust on the mantel.  
And who is that gray-haired stranger staring  
Out of my mirror?



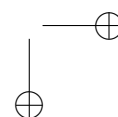
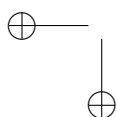


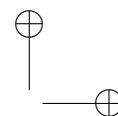
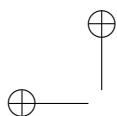
## A WREATH OF CHRISTMAS

DEAR MADAM: WE KNOW YOU WILL  
WANT TO CONTRIBUTE...

*Christmas is coming,  
The geese are getting fat.  
Please to put a penny in an old man's hat.  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do.  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God help you!*

Please to put a nickel,  
Please to put a dime.  
How petitions trickle  
In at Christmas time!  
Come and Save a Scholar.  
Bring the heathen hope.  
Just enclose a dollar  
Within the envelope.  
Send along a tenner,  
Anyhow a five,  
And let the Friends of Poetry inaugurate their drive.  
Share your weekly ration  
With miners up in Nome.  
Give a small donation  
To build a Starlings' Home.  
Please to send a shillin'  
For lawyers in the lurch.



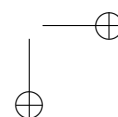
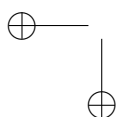


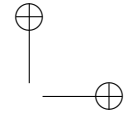
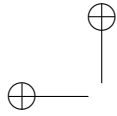
Drop a pretty bill in  
The offering at church.  
Remember all the orphans,  
Recall the boys at camps,  
And decorate your letters with illuminated stamps.  
The Common Colds Committee  
Implores you to assist.  
They're canvassing the city,  
They've got you on their list.  
Demonstrate your mettle  
For half a hundred causes.  
Fill the yawning kettle  
Of the corner Santa Clauses.  
Give for holy Charity  
Wherever she appears.  
And don't forget the Firemen and the Southern Moun-  
taineers.

*Christmas is coming,  
The mail is getting fat.  
Please to put a penny in every proffered hat.  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'pence let it be.  
If you haven't got a ha'pence left, you're just like me.*

#### CITY CHRISTMAS

Now is the time when the great urban heart  
More warmly beats, exiling melancholy.  
Turkey comes table d'hôte or à la carte.  
Our elevator wears a wreath of holly.  
Mendicant Santa Clause in flannel robes  
At every counter contradicts his label,  
Alms-asking. We've a tree with colored globes  
In our apartment foyer, on a table.





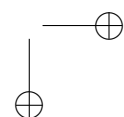
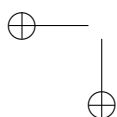
There is a promise – or a threat – of snow  
Noised by the press. We pull our collars tighter.  
And twenty thousand doormen hourly grow  
Politer and politer and politer.

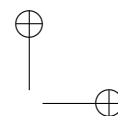
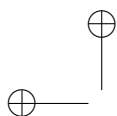
#### OFFICE PARTY

This holy night in open forum  
Miss McIntosh, who handles Files,  
Has lost one shoe and her decorum.  
Stately, the frozen chairman smiles  
On Media, desperately vocal.  
Credit, though they have lost their hopes  
Of edging toward an early Local,  
Finger their bonus envelopes.  
The glassy boys, the bursting girls  
Of Copy, start a Conga clatter  
To a swung carol. Limply curls  
The final sandwich on the platter  
Till hark! a herald Messenger  
(Room 414) lifts loudly up  
His quavering tenor. Salesmen stir  
Libation for his Lily cup.  
“Noel,” he pipes, “Noel, Noel.”  
Some wag beats tempo with a ruler.  
And the plump blonde from Personnel  
Is sick behind the water cooler.

#### WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS

When little boys are able  
To comprehend the flaws  
In their December fable  
And part with Santa Claus,





Although I do not think they grieve,  
How burningly they disbelieve!

They cannot wait, they cannot rest  
For knowledge nibbling at the breast.  
They cannot rest, they cannot wait  
To set conniving parents straight.

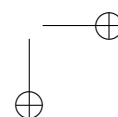
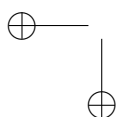
Branding that comrade as a dunce  
Who trusts the saint they trusted once,  
With rude guffaw and facial spasm  
They publish their iconoclasm,  
And find particularly shocking  
The thought of hanging up a stocking.

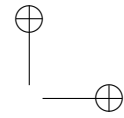
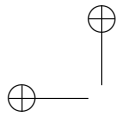
But little girls (no blinder  
When faced by mortal fact)  
Are cleverer and kinder  
And brimming full of tact.  
The knowingness of little girls  
Is hidden underneath their curls.

Obligingly, since parents fancy  
The season's tinsel necromancy,  
They take some pains to make pretense  
Of duped and eager innocence.

Agnostics born but Bernhardt's bred,  
They hang the stocking by the bed,  
Make plans, and pleasure their begetters  
By writing Santa lengthy letters,  
Only too well aware the fruit  
Is shinier plunder, richer loot.

For little boys are rancorous  
When robbed of any myth,  
And spiteful and cantankerous  
To all their kin and kith.





But little girls can draw conclusions  
And profit from their lost illusions.

**LADY SELECTING HER CHRISTMAS CARDS**

Fastidiously, with gloved and careful fingers,  
Through the marked samples she pursues her search.  
Which shall it be: the snowscape's wintry languors  
Complete with church,

An urban skyline, children sweetly pretty  
Sledding downhill, the chaste, ubiquitous wreath,  
Schooner or candle or the simple Scottie  
With verse underneath?

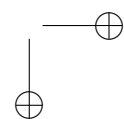
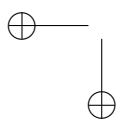
Perhaps it might be better to emblazon  
With words alone the stiff, punctilious square.  
(Oh, not Victorian, certainly. This season  
One meets it everywhere.)

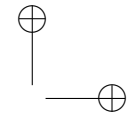
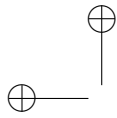
She has a duty proper to the weather –  
A Birth she must announce, a rumor to spread,  
Wherefore the very spheres once sang together  
And a star shone overhead.

Here are the Tidings which the shepherds panted  
One to another, kneeling by their flocks.  
And they will bear her name (engraved, not printed),  
Twelve-fifty for the box.

**CHRISTMAS EVE IN OUR VILLAGE**

Main Street is gay. Each lamppost glimmers,  
Crowned with a blue, electric star.  
The gift tree by our fountain shimmers,  
Superbly tall, if angular  
(Donated by the Men's Bazaar).





With garlands proper to the times  
Our doors are wreathed, our lintels strewn.  
From our two steeples sound the chimes,  
Incessant, through the afternoon,  
Only a little out of tune.

Breathless, with boxes hard to handle,  
The grocery drivers come and go.  
Madam the Chairman lights a candle  
To introduce our club's tableau.  
The hopeful children pray for snow.

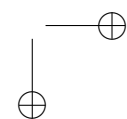
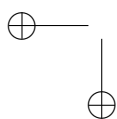
They cluster, mittened, in the park  
To talk of morning, half affrighted,  
And early comes the winter dark  
And early are our windows lighted  
To beckon homeward the benighted.

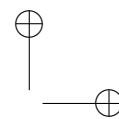
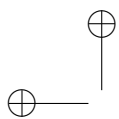
The eggnog's lifted for libation,  
Silent at last the postman's ring,  
But on the plaza near the station  
The carolers are caroling.  
"O Little Town!" the carolers sing.

#### TWELFTH NIGHT

Down from the window take the withered holly.  
Feed the torn tissue to the literal blaze.  
Now, now at last are come the melancholy  
Anticlimactic days.

Here in the light of morning, hard, unvarnished,  
Let us with haste dismantle the tired tree  
Of ornaments, a trifle chipped and tarnished,  
Pretend we do not see



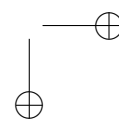
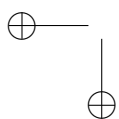


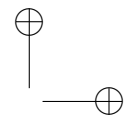
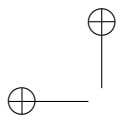
How all the rooms seem shabbier and meaner  
And the tired house a little less than snug.  
Fold up the tinsel. Run the vacuum cleaner  
Over the littered rug.

Nothing is left. The postman passes by, now,  
Bearing no gifts, no kind or seasonal word.  
The icebox yields no wing, no nibbled thigh, now,  
From any holiday bird.

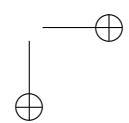
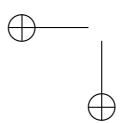
Sharp in the streets the north wind plagues its betters  
While Christmas snow to gutters is consigned.  
Nothing remains except the thank-you letters,  
Most tedious to the mind,

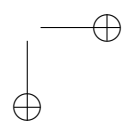
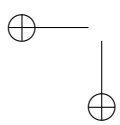
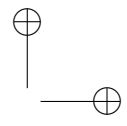
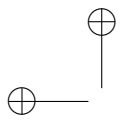
And the gilt gadget (duplicated) which is  
Marked for exchange at Abercrombie-Fitch's.

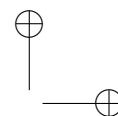
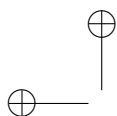




THE THIRTIES







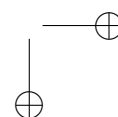
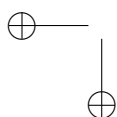
## PERSONAL REMARKS

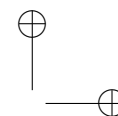
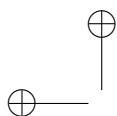
### LAMENT FOR A WAVERING VIEWPOINT

I want to be a Tory  
And with the Tories stand,  
Elect and bound for glory  
With a proud, congenial band.  
Or in the Leftist hallways  
I gladly would abide,  
But from my youth I always  
Could see the Other Side.

How comfortable to rest with  
The safe and armored folk  
Congenitally blessed with  
Opinions stout as oak.  
Assured that every question  
One single answer hath,  
They keep a good digestion  
And whistle in their bath.

But all my views are plastic,  
With neither form nor pride.  
They stretch like new elastic  
Around the Other Side;  
And I grow lean and haggard  
With searching out the taint

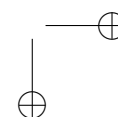
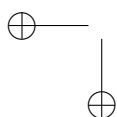


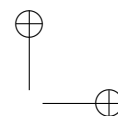
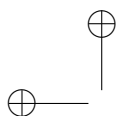


Of hero in the Blackguard  
Of villain in the saint.  
Ah, snug lie those that slumber  
Beneath Conviction's roof.  
Their floors are sturdy lumber,  
Their windows, weatherproof.  
But I sleep cold forever  
And cold sleep all my kind,  
Born nakedly to shiver  
In the draft from an open mind.

**ODE TO THE END OF SUMMER**

Summer, adieu.  
Adieu, gregarious season.  
Good-by, 'revoir, farewell.  
Now day comes late; now chillier blows the breeze on  
Forsaken beach and boarded-up hotel.  
Now wild geese fly together in thin lines  
And Tourist Homes take down their lettered signs.  
It fades – this green, this lavish interval,  
This time of flowers and fruits,  
Of melon ripe along the orchard wall,  
Of sun and sails and wrinkled linen suits;  
Time when the world seems rather plus than minus  
And pollen tickles the allergic sinus.  
Now fugitives to farm and shore and highland  
Cancel their brief escape.  
The Ferris wheel is quiet at Coney Island  
And quaintness trades no longer on the Cape;  
While meek-eyed parents hasten down the ramps  
To greet their offspring, terrible from camps.





Turn up the steam. The year is growing older.  
The maple boughs are red.  
Summer, farewell. Farewell the sunburnt shoulder,  
Farewell the peasant kerchief on the head.  
Farewell the thunderstorm, complete with lightning,  
And the white shoe that ever needeth whitening.

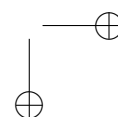
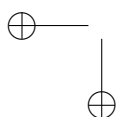
Farewell, vacation friendships, sweet but tenuous.  
Ditto to slacks and shorts.  
Farewell, O strange compulsion to be strenuous  
Which sends us forth to death on tennis courts.  
Farewell, Mosquito, horror of our nights;  
Clambakes, iced tea, and transatlantic flights.

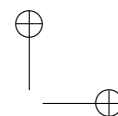
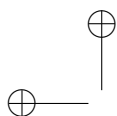
Unstintingly I yield myself to Autumn  
And Equinoctial sloth.  
I hide my swim suit in the bureau's bottom  
Nor fear the fury of the after-moth.  
Forswearing porch and pool and beetled garden,  
My heart shall rest, my arteries shall harden.

Welcome, kind Fall, and every month with "r" in  
Whereto my mind is bent.  
Come, sedentary season that I star in,  
O fire-lit Winter of my deep content!  
Amid the snow, the sleet, the blizzard's raw gust,  
I shall be cozier than I was in August.

*Safe from the picnic sleeps the unlittered dell.  
The last Good Humor sounds its final bell,  
And all is silence.*

*Summer, farewell, farewell.*



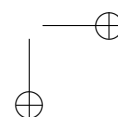
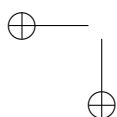


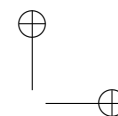
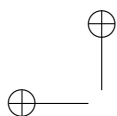
#### LETTER FROM A WINTER RESORT

The breeze is soft, the sky is blue,  
The sun's a gold persimmon;  
But how dismaying to the view,  
This wilderness of women!  
Upon the porches, ladies knit  
With small, well-practiced motion,  
And ladies on the beaches sit,  
And ladies fill the ocean.

Brown-limbed, the little children play,  
Beside the rolling waters,  
Or loudly dabble in the spray –  
And all of them are daughters.  
Soprano voices cleave the air  
Or mingle in the houses.  
It's women, women everywhere  
Except for furtive spouses.

Oh, tell me – for I half forget –  
Are somewhere men surviving yet?  
Not myth or tale or ancient fable,  
Still do they lean across the table  
In clubs and grills and automats,  
And practice law and furnish flats  
And work and play and take up hobbies  
And meet you in predestined lobbies  
And boast about their season's sales  
And criticize your fingernails  
And telephone from Frank-and-Gus's  
And jostle you on "L"s and buses  
And stand at bars with other hearties  
And bring you drinks at cocktail parties  
And tip their hats and swing their sticks





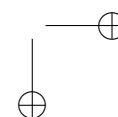
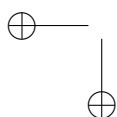
And argue over politics?  
Oh, is it true, I ask again,  
The world's still full of single men,

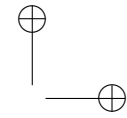
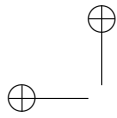
Ubiquitous as Cellophane,  
As commonplace as slumber,  
Who hail you taxis in the rain  
And ask you for your number?  
For what avails this winter rose,  
This January greenery,  
Where nothing in profusion grows  
Save womankind and scenery?

This sky is blue, this air is sweet  
And soothing to the spirit,  
But any Eden's incomplete  
With Adam nowhere near it.  
Give me, instead, the frozen town  
And some alert defender.  
For Holiday's no proper noun  
When feminine's the gender.

#### NOTES FOR A SOUTHERN ROAD MAP

Carry me back to old Virginny,  
Land of cotton and the Williamsburg Plan,  
Where the banjo calls to the pickaninny  
And the sun never sets on the Ku Klux Klan.  
Carry me anywhere south of the line, there,  
To old Kentucky or Fla. or Tenn.,  
But when I hear that it's time to dine, there,  
You can carry me North again.  
For Dixie's myth is a myth I dote on;  
The South's my mammy is what I mean.  
But never, ah never, they'll get my vote on  
Their pet cuisine.

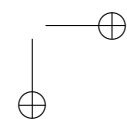
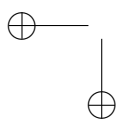


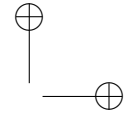
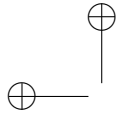


For it's ham,  
Ham,  
Frizzled or fried,  
Baked or toasted,  
Or on the side.  
Ham for breakfast  
And ham for luncheon,  
Nothing but ham to sup or munch on.  
Ham for dinner and ham for tea,  
Ham from Atlanta  
To the sea,  
With world-worn chicken for change of venue,  
But ham immutable on the menu.

Dear to my heart are the Southland's bounties,  
Where honeysuckle is sweet in May,  
Where warble the Byrds from important counties  
And everything runs by the TVA.  
I love the mint that they spice the cup with,  
Their women fair and their horses fast;  
An accent, even, can I put up with,  
And stories, suh, from a Noble Past.  
So carry me back to an old plantation  
In North Carolina or Alabam',  
But succor me still from a steadfast ration  
Of ham.

Ham,  
Ham,  
Not lamb or bacon  
But ham in Raleigh  
And ham in Macon.  
Ham for plutocrats,  
Ham for pore folk,  
Ham in Paducah and ham in Norfolk;

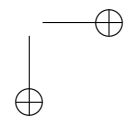
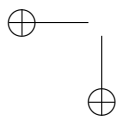


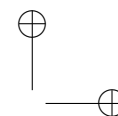
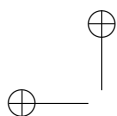


In Memphis, ham, and in Chapel Hill,  
Chattanooga,  
And Charlottesville.  
Ham for the Missy,  
Ham for the Colonel,  
And for the traveler, Ham Eternal.  
Oh, patriotically I implore,  
Look away, Dixieland, from the smokehouse door.

#### THE PURIST

He sauntered through the pearly town,  
Critical, chill, aloof,  
And favored Heaven with a frown  
Of casual reproof;  
Observed the scrolls upon the gate,  
The moons, the rings-of-Saturn,  
And doubted that they followed straight  
The ancient classic pattern,  
Then tasted the eternal bread  
And sipped the unfailing wine.  
“A vintage only fair,” he said,  
“Scarce the authentic Vine.”  
He strolled to Time’s extremest rim  
And stopped, and cupped his ears,  
And presently there came to him  
The music of the spheres.  
He sighed, “They flatted once or twice,  
Though pleasant enough they played.”  
So, for a while, through Paradise  
Mirth drooped and was dismayed,



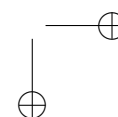
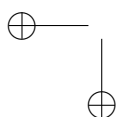


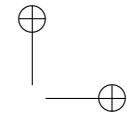
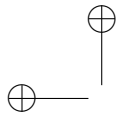
Till suddenly a little gust  
(Breath of his own disdain)  
Blew up and scattered him like dust  
Along the starry plain.

#### LAMENT OF THE NORMAL CHILD

The school where I go is a modern school  
With numerous modern graces.  
And there they cling to the modern rule  
Of "Cherish the Problem Cases!"  
From nine to three  
I develop Me.  
I dance when I'm feeling dancy,  
Or everywhere lay on  
With creaking crayon  
The colors that suit my fancy.  
But when the commoner tasks are done,  
Deserted, ignored, I stand.  
For the rest have complexes, everyone;  
Or a hyperactive gland.  
Oh, how can I ever be reconciled  
To my hatefully normal station?  
Why couldn't I be a Problem Child  
Endowed with a small fixation?  
Why wasn't I trained for a Problem Child  
With an Interesting Fixation?

I dread the sound of the morning bell.  
The iron has entered my soul.  
I'm a square little peg who fits too well  
In a square little normal hole.  
For seven years  
In Mortimer Sears  
Has the Oedipus angle flourished;

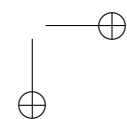
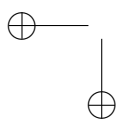


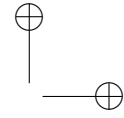
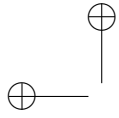


And Jessamine Gray,  
She cheats at play  
    Because she is undernourished.  
The teachers beam on Frederick Knipe  
    With scientific gratitude,  
For Fred, they claim, is a perfect type  
    Of the Antisocial Attitude.  
And Cuthbert Jones has his temper riled  
    In a way professors mention.  
But I am a Perfectly Normal Child,  
    So I don't get any attention.  
I'm nothing at all but a Normal Child,  
    So I don't get the least attention.

The others jeer as they pass my way.  
    They titter without forbearance.  
"He's Perfectly Normal," they shrilly say,  
    "With Perfectly Normal parents."  
I learn to read  
With a normal speed.  
    I answer when I'm commanded.  
Infected antrums  
Don't give me tantrums.  
    I don't even write left-handed.  
I build with blocks when they give me blocks.  
    When it's busy hour, I labor.  
And I seldom delight in landing socks  
    On the ear of my little neighbor.

So here, by luckier lads reviled,  
    I sit on the steps alone.  
Why couldn't I be a Problem Child  
    With a Case to call my own?  
Why wasn't I born a Problem Child  
    With a Complex of my own?



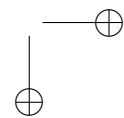
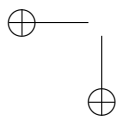


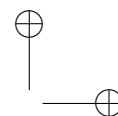
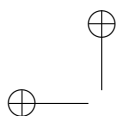
#### REFLECTIONS OUTSIDE A GYMNASIUM

The belles of the eighties were soft,  
They were ribboned and ruffled and gored,  
With bustles built proudly aloft  
And bosoms worn dashingly for'd.  
So, doting on bosoms and bustles,  
By fashion and circumstance pent,  
They languished, neglecting their muscles,  
Growing flabby and plump and content,  
Their most strenuous sport  
A game of croquet  
On a neat little court  
In the cool of the day,  
Or dipping with ladylike motions,  
Fully clothed, into decorous oceans.

The eighties surveyed with alarm  
A figure long-legged and thinnish;  
And they had not discovered the charm  
Of a solid-mahogany finish.  
Of suns that could darken or speckle  
Their delicate skins they were wary.  
They found it distasteful to freckle  
Or brown like a nut or a berry.  
So they sat in the shade  
Or they put on a hat  
And frequently stayed  
Fairly healthy at that  
(And never lay nightlong awake  
For sunburn and loveliness' sake).

When ladies rode forth, it was news,  
Though sidewise ensconced on the saddle.  
And when they embarked in canoes  
A gentleman wielded the paddle.



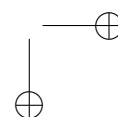
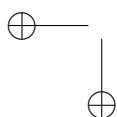


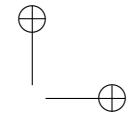
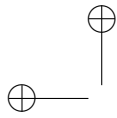
They never felt urged to compete  
With persons excessively agile.  
Their slippers were small on their feet  
And they thought it no shame to be fragile.  
Could they swim? They could not.  
Did they dive? They forbore it.  
And nobody thought  
The less of them for it.

No, none pointed out how their course was absurd,  
Though their tennis was feeble, their golf but a word.  
When breezes were chilly, they wrapped up in flannels,  
They couldn't turn cartwheels, they didn't swim channels,  
They seldom climbed mountains, and, what was more shock-  
ing,  
Historians doubt that they even went walking.  
If unenergetic,  
A demoiselle dared to  
Be no more athletic  
Than ever she cared to.  
Oh, strenuous comrades and maties,  
How pleasant was life in the eighties!

#### NURSERY RHYME

Heigh ho,  
This much I know:  
What they say about men  
Is largely so;  
What they've told about women  
From Eve to Ruth  
Is sober counsel,  
Is gospel truth;  
Tabby and Thomas  
Make dubious friends.





And that's where Wisdom  
Begins and ends.

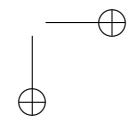
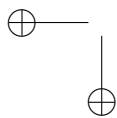
#### ODE TO THE BATH

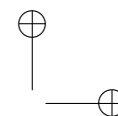
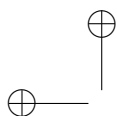
*“Dear to us ever is the banquet, and the harp, and the dance,  
and changes of raiment, and the warm bath, and love, and  
sleep.” — From The Odyssey, Book VIII.*

Seven our sins are, and our virtues seven.  
Seven times ten our years' unwithered span.  
And seven are the immortal mercies given  
To ease the lot of Man:  
Slumber and food to keep his body whole,  
Fine raiment that proclaims his outward merit,  
Motion, and music where he feeds his soul,  
And love to nurse his spirit –  
These six are needful; but the seventh thing  
More constant succor hath.  
Attend me, Muse, while loyally I sing  
The ancient consolation of the Bath.

Yes, haste, Pieridian daughters;  
Assist me while I praise  
Those warm and living waters  
That comfort all my days.  
Shunning the upstart shower,  
The cold and cursory scrub,  
I celebrate the power  
That lies within the Tub.

For this alone of our enchantments seems  
Blessing without a barb.  
The sleeper lies entangled in his dreams,  
The banquet ends in sodium bicarb.  
The moth invades the coat, the harpers fail,  
The dance grows dull or all the dancers bedfast,



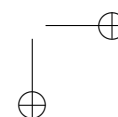
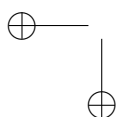


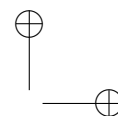
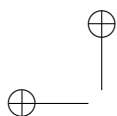
And love itself turns weary, flat, and stale.  
Only the Bath is steadfast,  
Whose last caress is as the first embrace,  
Where limbs repose, the burdened shoulders sink,  
And the lean mind, for half an hour's space,  
Forbears to think.

Not for the casual washer  
On simple cleanness bent,  
Not for the hasty splasher  
Awaits the Sacrament.  
Rewards are made to measure.  
And devotees recall  
That he who bathes for pleasure  
Must keep the ritual.

When spendthrift hand lay out the towels in order,  
Easy of access, fresh and soft as hope;  
Let sponge be fluffy, but the brushes harder,  
And lathersome the soap.  
Bring out the bath salts, decorously scented  
Of lavender or pine.  
Bring pillow that the head may rest contented –  
Then turn the tap, release the flood divine  
Till it three-quarters fill the porcelain chalice,  
Not cold or hot but tempered to desire.  
And there's your refuge that was mankind's solace  
When Homer struck his lyre.

For brighter joys may alter  
And livelier pastimes close,  
But in this happy shelter  
Peace blossoms like a rose.  
Of all refreshments primate,  
The last Beatitude,  
It keeps unchanging climate  
Where care may not intrude.





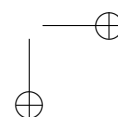
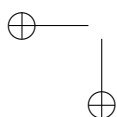
Let others, worn with living  
And living's aftermath,  
Take Sleep to heal the heart's distress,  
Take Love to be their comfortress,  
Take Song or Food or Fancy Dress,  
But I shall take a Bath.

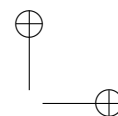
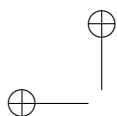
#### DISSERTATION ON FURNITURE

Furniture's rather a good idea,  
And one that was early hit on.  
Bureaus I'll pin to for stuffing things into,  
And sofas are nice to sit on.  
Love seats cater to amorous souls,  
A mirror's a space-enhancer,  
And secretaries have pigeonholes  
For letters you ought to answer.

*But I sing the bed, oh, lovely device,  
Flower of Furniture, Pearl without Price!  
Wide may its praises be spread.  
For rugs they expect you to walk about on,  
And desks were invented to work, no doubt, on,  
But beds are things you can just stretch out on.  
I sing the bed!*

A stove's the delight of an epicure  
Determined that he should sup right;  
Pianos are grand for the strenuous band  
Who favor a posture upright;  
A table's designed for holding lamps,  
And frequently, too, to eat off;  
And fireplaces scatter the dews and damp  
When janitors turn the heat off.



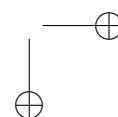
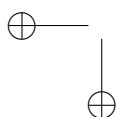


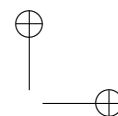
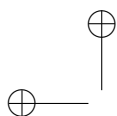
*But I sing the bed, more precious than these,  
Excellent vessel of comfort and ease  
And rest that is better than bread –  
Dear to the heart when the night is lowering,  
Dear before dinner when tempers are souring,  
Dearest of all when the morn is flowering.  
I sing the bed!*

Then here's to the pallet the poor man seeks,  
And here's to the couch of the wealthy,  
A kindly spot when the brow is hot  
And kindlier, still, when healthy.  
And here's to the article glorified  
By Messrs. De Mille and Simmons,  
Where all men's ultimate joys abide,  
And probably, also, women's.

For a shelf with a book has a cultured look  
And spaces for vases to go on,  
And a rocking chair is beyond compare  
For stubbing the midnight toe on.  
But it's pleasant to write a letter in bed  
And breakfast always tastes better in bed  
And life seems almost inviting in bed  
And books are more exciting in bed  
And poems are often inspired in bed  
And you hardly ever get tired in bed.

*So I sing the bed, by day and by night  
Luxury's pinnacle, final delight.  
Shelter for spirit and head,  
For being born and, of course, for dying in,  
For reading and writing and multiplying in,  
For nodding and napping and just for lying in,  
I sing the bed.*





**INVENTORS, KEEP AWAY FROM MY DOOR**

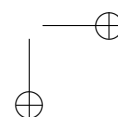
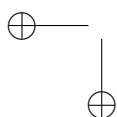
Ah, where's the patented device  
That I can learn to master?  
My icebox yields me melted ice,  
My oven, but disaster.  
From stranded cars it is my fate  
To view the rural scenery;  
For I'm the poor unfortunate  
Undone by all machinery.

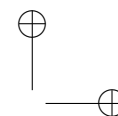
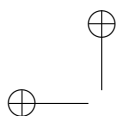
Other people's robots keep a willing head up.  
All their cheerful keyholes welcome in the key.  
Other people's toasters do not burn their bread up.  
But nothing ever works for me.

The gadgets come, the gadgets go,  
Ambitious for the attic.  
Tune up my stubborn radio –  
It screams with rage and static.  
The vacuum sweeper roundabout  
With slippery strength encoils me.  
Locks treacherously lock me out.  
The simple corkscrew foils me.

Other people's mousetraps sometimes bring a mouse down.  
Other people's furnaces sing in cozy glee.  
Mine huffs and it puffs till it brings the quaking house down.  
Nothing ever runs for me.

The humblest tools in my abode  
Know half a hundred ruses  
To leak or sputter or explode,  
Catch fire or short their fuses.  
In all things made of steel or wire,  
Inanimate, unholy,





There lurks some dark, ancestral ire  
Directed at me, solely;  
There lurks some black, malicious spite  
Amid the wheels and prisms,  
And what shall save me from the might  
Of wrathful mechanisms?

Other people's watches do not send them late for  
Amorous appointment or literary tea.  
Other people's telephones bring the word they wait for.  
But nothing ever works for me.

**MELANCHOLY REFLECTIONS AFTER A LOST ARGUMENT**

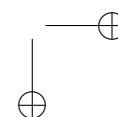
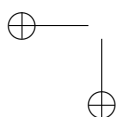
I always pay the verbal score  
With wit, concise, selective.  
I have an apt and ample store  
Of ladylike invective.

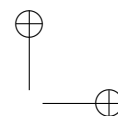
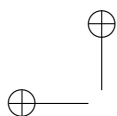
My mots, retorts, and quips of speech,  
Hilarious or solemn,  
Placed end to end, no doubt, would reach  
To any gossip column.

But what avails the epigram,  
The clever and the clear shot,  
Invented chiefly when I am  
The only one in earshot?

And where's the good of repartee  
To quell a hostile laughter,  
That tardily occurs to me  
A half an hour after?

God rest you merry, gentlemen,  
Who nastily have caught  
The art of always striking when  
The irony is hot.





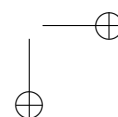
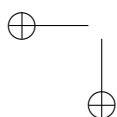
#### POOR TIMING

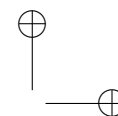
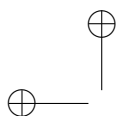
I sing Saint Valentine, his day,  
I spread abroad his rumor –  
A gentleman, it's safe to say,  
Who owned a sense of humor.  
Most practical of jokers, he,  
Who bade sweethearts make merry  
With flowers and birds and amorous words,  
In the month of February.  
The antic, frantic,  
Unromantic  
Middle of February.

Now, April weather's fine and fair  
For love to get a start in.  
And May abets a willing pair,  
And June you lose your heart in.  
There's many a month when wooing seems  
Both suitable and proper.  
But the mating call unseasonal  
Is bound to come a cropper.

When blizzards rage with might and main  
And a man's best friend's his muffler,  
Pity the February swain,  
That sentimental snuffler,  
Whose soul must surge, whose pulse must throb  
With passionate cadenza,  
When he yearns instead for a cozy bed  
Alone with influenza.

When winds blow up and snow comes down  
And the whole gray world seems horridier,  
And every lass that sulks in town  
Thinks wistfully of Florider,





Pity the chapped and wintry maid  
Who'd trade the arms that clasp her in,  
For Vitamin A and a nasal spray  
And maybe a bottle of aspirin.

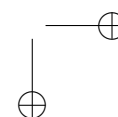
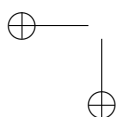
Who wants to bill, who cares to coo,  
Who longs for cherry-chopping,  
When noses are red and fingers blue  
And the hemoglobin's dropping?  
Let summer lovers droop and pine,  
Let springtime hearts be airy.  
I wouldn't be anyone's Valentine  
In the month of February.  
The spare-able, terrible,  
Quite unbearable  
Middle of February.

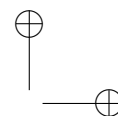
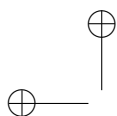
**WHY, SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE WOMEN**

I learned in my credulous youth  
That women are shallow as fountains.  
Women make lies out of truth  
And out of a molehill their mountains.  
Women are giddy and vain,  
Cold-hearted or tiresomely tender;  
Yet, nevertheless, I maintain  
I dote on the feminine gender.

*For the female of the species may be deadlier than the male  
But she can make herself a cup of coffee without reducing  
The entire kitchen to a shambles.*

Perverse though their taste in cravats  
Is deemed by their lords and their betters,  
They know the importance of hats  
And they write you the news in their letters.





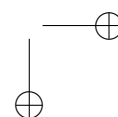
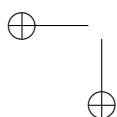
Their minds may be lighter than foam,  
Or altered in haste and in hurry,  
But they seldom bring company home  
When you're warming up yesterday's curry.

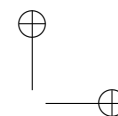
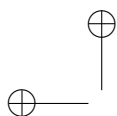
*And when lovely woman stoops to folly,  
She does not invariably come in at four A.M.  
Singing "Sweet Adeline."*

Oh, women are frail and they weep.  
They are recklessly given to scions.  
But, wakened unduly from sleep,  
They are milder than tigers or lions.  
Women hang clothes on their pegs  
Nor groan at the toil and the trouble.  
Women have rather nice legs  
And chins that are guiltless of stubble.  
Women are restless, uneasy to handle,  
But when they are burning both ends of the scandal,  
They do not insist with a vow that is votive,  
How high are their minds and how noble the motive.

As shopping companions they're heroes and saints;  
They meet you in tearrooms nor murmur complaints;  
They listen, entranced, to a list of your vapors;  
At breakfast they sometimes emerge from the papers;  
A Brave Little Widow's not apt to sob-story 'em,  
And they keep a cool head in a grocery emporium.  
Yes, I rise to defend  
The quite possible She.  
For the feminine gend-  
Er is O.K. by me.

*Besides, everybody admits it's a Man's World.  
And just look what they've done to it!*





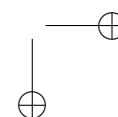
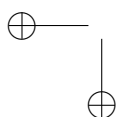
COMPLAINT TO THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

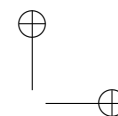
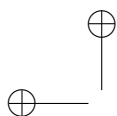
*Concerning their members' unfair monopoly of best-selling autobiographies and other fiction*

Of all God's creatures here below  
Whose feats confound the skeptic  
I most admire the Medico,  
That hero antiseptic.  
He has my heart, he has my hand,  
He has my utmost loyalties.  
(He also has my tonsils and  
A lien on my royalties.)  
For from the time he doth begin  
His sacred tryst with medicine,  
How noble, he! How never-tiring!  
Not rain, nor heat, nor maids admiring,  
Nor bills unpaid, nor farmers' hounds  
Can stay him from his sleepless rounds.  
More fleet than winners of the Bendix,  
He hastens to the burst appendix,  
Or breasts the blizzard cold and shivery  
To make some rural free delivery.

Or if to ampler orbits whirled  
(As fate will sometimes toss us),  
How he bestrides this narrow world,  
A medical Colossus!  
Perhaps, his kit upon his back,  
He dares the jungle thickets,  
Intent upon the fevered track  
Of yaws or mumps or rickets.

The chum of kings, the friend of presidents,  
He makes the earth his private residence;  
One day prescribing pills and pickups

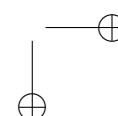
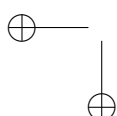


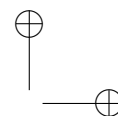
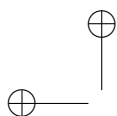


To cure an emperor of hiccups,  
The next in stricken cities stranded,  
Combating scourges single-handed,  
At peril of life, at risk of limb.  
Yet do such deeds suffice for him?  
No, no. In secret all the while  
He's sought a Literary Style.

The pen (so springs the constant hope  
Of all devout physicians)  
Is mightier than the stethoscope  
And runs to more editions.  
So while he's waged bacillic wars,  
Or sewed a clever suture,  
His mind has hummed with metaphors  
Laid up against the future.  
Amid the knives and sterile gauzes  
He's dreamt of modifying clauses,  
And never gone to bed so late  
His diary wasn't up to date,  
As if he'd sworn an oath to follow  
Both Harper Brothers and Apollo.  
Oh, more than Einstein, more than Edison  
I do admire the man of Medison.  
He has my hand, he has my note,  
He has those X-rays of my throat,  
But is it fair he should lay claim to  
The overcrowded writing game, too?

I eye askance those dubious laurels.  
Where are his ethics? Where his morals?  
In what brave school did he matriculate  
That he should be so damned articulate?  
And where's the seal to show his betters  
He's certified a Man of Letters?





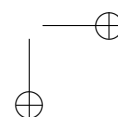
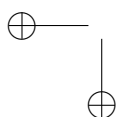
Professional sirs, I gravely doubt,  
In any really nice sense,  
Your boys should practice thus without  
Their literary license.

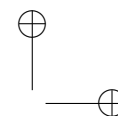
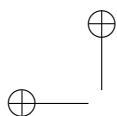
**ADVICE TO A TOT ABOUT TO LEARN THE ALPHABET**

Consider, child, be prudent.  
Rash infant, not so fast!  
Oh, stay, my dimpled student,  
Unlettered to the last.  
Unless you leap before you look,  
Your fate will be a trite one.  
For first you'll learn to read a book  
And then you'll want to write one.  
The Pulitzers, the Guggenheims,  
Will rank you with the winners.  
You'll print a play, compose some rhymes,  
And be reviewed in the *Sunday Times*  
And get invited for your crimes  
To Literary Dinners.

You'll be a Guest of Honor on a small, gold chair,  
Consuming filet mignon with a literary air.  
You'll grace the Speakers' Table, with authors flanked about,  
For the Culture Groups will get you if you don't watch out.

Between the lions and parrots,  
Behind the potted shrubs,  
You'll munch on peas and carrots  
And talk to Women's Clubs.  
'Mid microphones and ferny fronds  
You'll raise your cultured voice  
So dowagers in diamonds  
Can listen and rejoice,



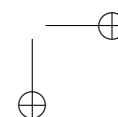
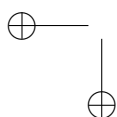


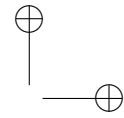
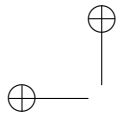
So folk who take their authors neat  
Can boast they lingered nigh one,  
And from a paid, impartial seat  
Can gaze upon you while you eat  
And twitter that your book was sweet,  
But never, never buy one.

Oh, princes thrive on caviar, the poor on whey and curds,  
And politicians, I infer, must eat their windy words.  
It's crusts that feed the virtuous, it's cake that comforts  
sinners,  
But writers live on bread and praise at Literary Dinners.

So shun this vain utensil  
Before it is too late.  
Throw down the bitten pencil,  
Discard the perilous slate,  
Else soon you'll start to scribble verse  
And then you'll write a tome,  
And so you'll go from bad to worse  
And never dine at home.  
You'll buy yourself an opera hat  
And learn to speak with unction  
And end a Guest of Honor at  
A Literary Function.

You'll be a Guest of Honor on a hard, gold chair,  
With your name upon the menu just below the bill of fare,  
And you'll sing for your supper while the lesser authors pout,  
For the Culture Clubs will get you if you don't watch out.





#### THE OUTCAST

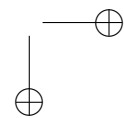
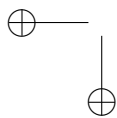
*“Solitary reading wrong, says Adler... Likens it to drinking alone.” — Headlines in the New York Times.*

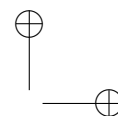
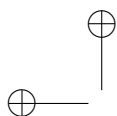
Consider the poor sinner,  
The desperate wretch by decency forsook,  
Who, after dinner,  
Stealthily from his shelves takes down a book  
And like as not,  
A drunken fool, a literary sot,  
Creeps to his lonely cot,  
There to swig down and out of public view  
Immoderate tankards of the Pierian brew.

How sunk in vice is he! Look how he gloats,  
Taking no notes,  
Letting his febrile fancy roam at large in  
Frivolous tomes and gay,  
Despised by Mr. A.,  
And annotating not a single margin.

Pity the fate  
Of this inebriate.  
Shunned by his fellows, none in his ear will shout  
How the plot ended, how it all came out.  
None in a Poetry Morning will enroll him,  
No one will buttonhole him  
To be an audience for some deathless prose  
Recited through the nose.

But, all the precepts dead to,  
Unsung at and unread to,  
He'll end in squalor,  
A miserable bookworm or a scholar.





#### WOMEN OF JERICHO

Though seven times, or seventy times seven,  
Your armies circle our beleaguered town,  
Not with their clamor may our gates be riven;  
O, not by trumpets shall the walls go down!  
Send out your troops to trample the fresh grasses  
With horns and banners! They shall find defeat.  
These walls can bear the insolence of brasses  
Sounded at noonday in the dust and heat.

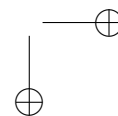
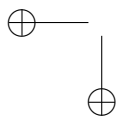
It is the whisper, only, that we dread:  
The hushed and delicate murmur like low weeping  
Which shall assail us, when, as do the dead,  
The warders sleep and all the town lies sleeping.  
That holy word is whispered which can fell  
These armored walls, and raze the citadel.

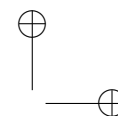
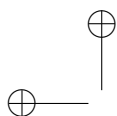
#### SIX NUNS IN THE SNOW

Beautifully, now, they walk among these new  
petals the snow shook down –  
identical figures, going two by two,  
each in a black gown.

With what a placid tread, what definite,  
calm impulse each proceeds,  
two by two, black on bewildering white,  
swinging her long beads;

an absolute six, taking their candid way  
undazzled by this whiteness,  
who have grown used to walking without dismay  
amid incredible brightness.





#### PORTRAIT

Her thought is separate from her act  
And neither her defender is,  
Whose nature seems at once compact  
Of courage and of cowardice.

Beset by hurricane and flood,  
She seeks no amnesty from Death,  
Yet lacks intrinsic hardihood  
To weather a disdainful breath.

Watching the year grow late, grow late,  
She finds no desperation in it,  
But cannot bear love's little wait  
Between a minute and a minute.

Let the earth shake. She stands her ground.  
Let her house fall. She will not flee,  
Who yet is shattered by the sound  
Of one door, closing, distantly.

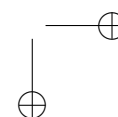
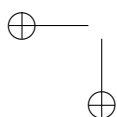
#### INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY

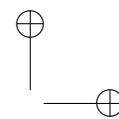
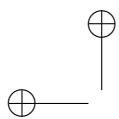
*On being told by the dentist that "this will be over soon"*

Indeed, it will soon be over, I shall be done  
With the querulous drill, the forceps, the clove-smelling  
cotton.

I can go forth into fresher air, into sun,  
This narrow anguish forgotten.

In twenty minutes or forty or half an hour,  
I shall be easy, and proud of my hard-got gold.  
But your apple of comfort is eaten by worms, and sour.  
Your consolation is cold.



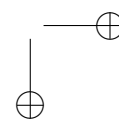
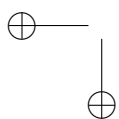


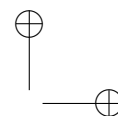
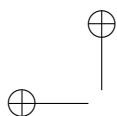
This will not last, and the day will be pleasant after.  
I'll dine tonight with a witty and favorite friend.  
No doubt tomorrow I shall rinse my mouth with laughter.  
And also that will end.

The handful of time that I am charily granted  
Will likewise pass, to oblivion duly apprenticed.  
Summer will blossom and autumn be faintly enchanted.  
Then time for the grave, or the dentist.

Because you are shrewd, my man, and your hand is clever,  
You must not believe your words have a charm to spell  
me.

There was never a half of an hour that lasted forever.  
Be quiet. You need not tell me.





## ON THE TOWN

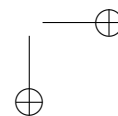
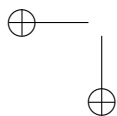
### VALENTINE FOR NEW YORK

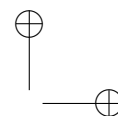
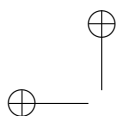
*Moscow is Red, Pittsburgh is gritty.  
I know a nicer kind of city.  
It's on the Hudson, not the Rhine.  
Manhattan, be my valentine.*

Tumultuous town, absurd and thunderful,  
I think you're wonderful –  
Sleeping or waking, frivolous or stable,  
Down at the heel, or opulent in sable,  
I like your voices, single or together.  
I even like your weather  
(Your rains, your wind that down the river blows,  
Your heat, your fogs, your perishable snows).  
I like your pomp and civic ceremony.  
I like you real. I love you when you're phony.  
In other words, no matter where I gad about,  
You're what I'm mad about.

*Then stay with me and be my dear,  
Accept this honest flattery,  
And I will sing your praises, clear  
From Harlem to the Battery.*

I sing the Empire State that magnates dwell in.  
I sing Sixth Avenue without the "L" in,



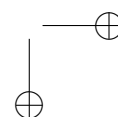
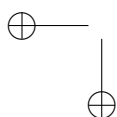


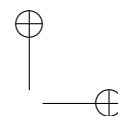
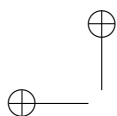
Bedraggled square and screaming boulevard,  
And Mr. Morgan's elegant back yard.  
I sing St. Thomas's, which sponsors marriages.  
I sing your parks equipped with lads and wenches,  
With dogs on leashes, and with tots in carriages  
And men on wooden benches.  
I sing the penthouse, harboring your élite,  
And four-flight walkups snug on Barrow Street;  
Your native cops, more virile than the bobby,  
And Powers models and the Astor lobby.

I sing your Automats,  
Your gentle tearooms, wary of the scallion;  
The Colony, where wend the risible hats,  
And tables d'hôte excessively Italian;  
And ferryboats and boogie-woogie bands  
And Nedick Orange stands.

*Metropolis, aloud I praise  
Your febrile nights, your clamorous days.  
Not even the sales tax, trying hard,  
Can cut in two my deep regard.*

Be mine, be mine:  
Shop, subway, danceteria, picket line;  
The Planetarium, replete with stars;  
Buses and banks and débutante bazaars;  
And traffic lights reflected, when it rains,  
In all the pavements; and the skiing trains;  
Orchids by Schling and men in areaways  
Selling bouquets;  
The show that sells out and the one that closes;  
Auctions, and all the deeds of Mr. Moses,  
And Sunday bells, and pretty secretaries  
Eating their lunch at soda stands or dairies;  
Progressive schools that cope with Freudian symbols,





And monasteries selling cheap at Gimbels;  
Jaywalkers, and St. Patrick's Day parades;  
And part-time maids,  
And art museums, where I take my aunts;  
And Mott Street, and the Ballroom Renaissance,  
Where sound the brasses that the dancers spin to;  
And El Morocco, which I've never been to;  
And kitchenettes and pubs,  
And Kansas clubs;  
The elms at Radio City, spreading tall;  
Foghorns, and pigeons – yes, and Tammany Hall.

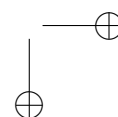
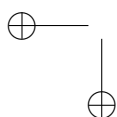
Let others, finding flaw or pointing fault,  
Accept you with their cautious grains of salt.  
Egregious city, facing toward the sea,  
Abide with me.

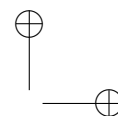
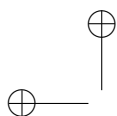
*Boston's well bred, Philadelphia's Blue.  
Borough of Manhattan, I love you.*

#### MONDAY IS FISH DAY

On Monday mornings early, before the town is shrill,  
When the dew is on the milkman and the bacon's on the  
grill,  
I hurry to the doorstep, intent upon my mission  
To read if Curator Christopher Coates  
Has made the first edition.

For six days a week  
The *Times* talks of treaties,  
The *Tribune* damns the Democrats  
With many a tosh and pish,  
But nothing happens Sunday,  
So happily on Monday  
Reporters get the story  
Of Mr. Coates's fish.





When nations keep the Sabbath, when all the world relaxes  
From wars and litigation and armament and taxes,  
Then who can save the papers, their presses stricken dumb,  
Save only Curator Christopher Coates  
At the City Aquarium?

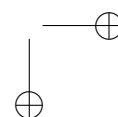
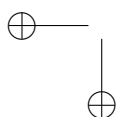
For six days a week  
There's a panic or a killing,  
On six days a week  
There are courts to abuse,  
But Sunday is a flat day.  
*Nothing* happens that day,  
So every Monday morning  
Mr. Coates supplies the news.

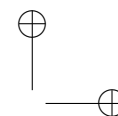
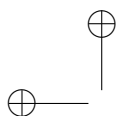
Then down with Thursday's scandal, with Wednesday's  
scoop, away!  
Throw out the double murder assigned for Saturday.  
I wait the throbbing headline that Monday morn reveals  
When Mr. Curator Christopher Coates  
Discusses tropic eels.

I raise up a cheer  
For goldfish and guppies,  
And print the kiss of honor  
On Mr. Coates's cheek,  
Who speaks when he's commanded,  
And, lone and singlehanded,  
Sustains the morning papers  
On the first of the week.

#### SALE TODAY

What syrup, what unusual sweet,  
Sticky and sharp and strong,  
Wafting its poison through the street,  
Has lured this buzzing throng





That swarms along the counters there  
Where bargain bait is dangled –  
Clustered like flies in honeyed snare,  
Shrill, cross, and well entangled?

**MIDSUMMER MEDITATIONS**

IN FRONT OF NUMBER ONE FIFTH AVENUE

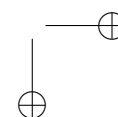
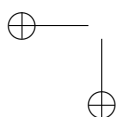
Old customs I am able  
To vision with delight,  
When people sat at table  
Indoors, and out of sight;  
Before the Picturesque-O  
Enslaved the urban glance,  
And when to dine al fresco  
Were better done in France.

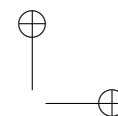
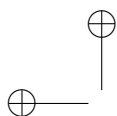
*No, Cybele, that isn't a spider  
In your tomato juice.*

Then tearooms served your salad,  
Your cottage-cheese-and-pear,  
In comfort far more valid  
Than this too-open air.  
Then, safe from gawk and gaper,  
You shunned the toxic breeze,  
And napkins, cloth or paper,  
Remained upon your knees.

*Waiter, there's just a dash too much carbon monoxide  
In the mashed potatoes.*

Synthetic grass grows dusty,  
Synthetic flowers droop,  
And airs of August, gusty,  
Waft cinders toward the soup.



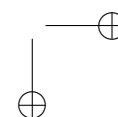
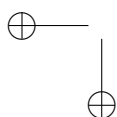


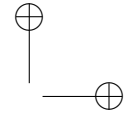
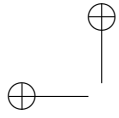
And wearier and wearier  
Of quaintness I have grown.  
Give me a dim interior  
And let me munch alone.  
For I am sick of sidewalks  
Whereon to break my bread.  
I simply can't abide walks  
With awnings overhead,  
And forth no more I'll sally  
To where, as like as not,  
They've turned a decent alley  
Into a Garden Spot.

*What do you say we just stand up at the bar?*

#### ODE TO MR. ZIMMERMAN

At seven hundred and thirty-four  
Mr. Zimmerman keeps a store  
With his name in brass  
On the window glass  
And curtains over the door.  
And a fragrant place is the corner place  
Of Mr. Zimmerman's pride.  
My nose goes up  
Like a terrier pup  
Whenever I step inside.  
For coffee bubbles behind a screen,  
The air is rich and murky,  
And the smell to the west is still unguessed  
But the northeast smell is turkey.  
And the counters, the shelves, the tables, the chairs,  
Are running over with beautiful wares:  
Caviar, herring, and onion pickle,  
Braunbrot, sauerbrot, pumpernickel,

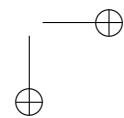
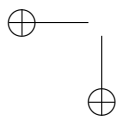


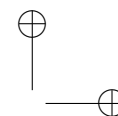
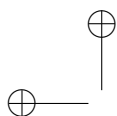


Sweet cream patties and hard rye loaves,  
Ham stuck full of spices and cloves,  
And hundreds of cans enchanting me  
With lithographical artistry.

I'll route my aunts to Villagish haunts  
When they visit the town to see 'em.  
I'll send my beau  
To a musical show  
And my friends to a good museum.  
But I'm going down to the comer,  
Insouciant as you please,  
To sniff at dishes  
Of pickled fishes  
And little curled anchovies,  
At big black olives and olives green,  
Salami, schnitzel, and sardine,  
Potato salad and ring of noodle,  
Crumb cake, coffee cake, apple strudel!

For many a lass grows blithe and gay,  
Enthralled by a Coty blending;  
And jasmine under the moon, they say,  
Conspires for a happy ending.  
But art or nature has not contrived  
A smell that ever can lessen  
My constant love  
For the fragrance of  
The corner delicatessen;  
For pears in savory sauce immersed,  
Wiener sausages, liverwurst,  
Stuffed tomato that no one wants,  
And Roquefort cheeses and Liederkrantz,  
In Mr. Zimmerman's lovely store  
At seven hundred and thirty-four





With his name in brass  
On the window glass,  
And Plenty behind the door.

#### HEAT WAVE

These are the days democratic, the days without barriers.  
Every man is a brother.  
Strangers speak at the stations, at counters. In common  
carriers  
They commiserate with each other.

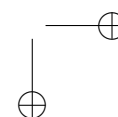
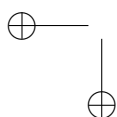
Mopping their foreheads, they mutter. The walls have been  
leveled  
That divided the sheep from the goats.  
The banker wilts with his clerk. Their gear is disheveled.  
They carry their coats.

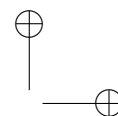
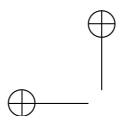
Now the neat city sprawls like a village, untidy  
In the smothering air.  
The dazed pedestrian walks where the awnings are shady.  
The legs of the ladies are bare.

Time turns like a mill wheel, slowly, but reason is wanting.  
The heat is all.  
(Avert your eyes from the shop windows crazily flaunting  
Black satins for fall.)

The pavement sucks at the foot, the skies are ferrous,  
The roofs come alive after dark.  
These are the days when glasses litter the terrace  
As Dixie cups the park.

And war is a tale unread while the town lolls, poring  
With a masochist's delight  
On the final, terrible headlines: *temperatures soaring*  
And *no relief in sight*.





**SOLD: TO THE LADY IN THE GREEN HAT**

Some people spend their forces  
    On mischievous games and crass.  
Some people bet on horses,  
    Some people love the glass.  
But black as the pit from pole to pole,  
    My destiny rideth clear,  
For I am the wretch who's sold my soul  
    To the Eloquent Auctioneer.

*Silo,*

*Flattau,*

*Sirs at Parke-Bernet,*

Somewhere an auction  
    Is going on today.  
And I must hie me thither  
    On swift, devotional feet,  
To bid 'em up  
On a porcelain cup  
    Or a Shakespeare (Incomplete);  
To beard the hardiest Dealer  
    And play him fast and loose for  
A screen, a rug,  
Or a Staffordshire jug  
    That I haven't the slightest use for.

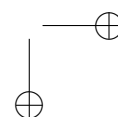
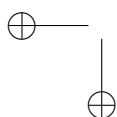
With bureaus the attic bulges –  
    With many an antique frame;  
And the shallowest drawer divulges  
    Statistics of my shame.

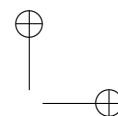
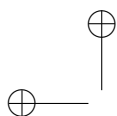
*Plaza,*

*Anderson,*

*Messrs. Brill & Brill!*

Somewhere an auctioneer  
    Is calling high and shrill.





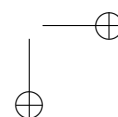
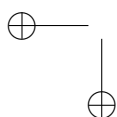
And I must follow, follow,  
Like the tots of Hamelin town,  
To spend my salary  
At every gallery  
Where gentlemen knock 'em down.

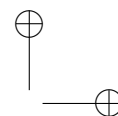
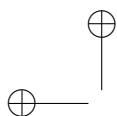
All I need is a platter,  
All I want is a plate,  
But I'll come back  
With a magazine rack  
And a lamp that's lost its mate,  
With maybe a chair and a couple of clocks  
And a painted plaque and a music box  
And a Minton bowl  
And a casserole  
And a lock-up cupboard without its locks.

For some people play at baccarat  
And some people tiddle beer,  
But mourn for the wretch, in muted verse,  
Who's lost her head and pledged her purse  
To the Eloquent Auctioneer.

#### SONG FOR AN ENGRAVED INVITATION

Now, warm and sweet, the summer days  
Are opening like the rose,  
With drowsy airs and languid ways  
Inviting to repose.  
But not for me a green retreat  
Or any vernal asset,  
Since up and down the panting street  
I stalk the demitasse set,  
Or trail the silver berry spoon,  
While lunch I dare not stop for.  
For what's so rare as a day in June  
Without a gift to shop for?



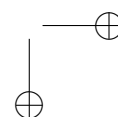
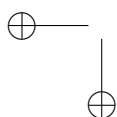


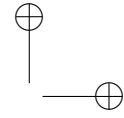
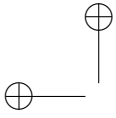
O June, fair June, what a month you are –  
The costliest time in the calendar!  
Filled, as a nettle is full of stings,  
With sweet occasions for giving things.

Wherever I look, whenever I listen,  
Solitaires gleam and diplomas glisten  
Or babes from darkness  
Emerge at Harkness  
Or somebody's child is ripe to christen  
Or somebody's daughter is taking a spouse  
Or somebody's warming a country house  
Or somebody's fledgling has finished the tenses  
At Taft or Groton or maybe Spence's.

December giving strains the purse,  
December lists are grievousome.  
Still, Christmas presents might be worse –  
You're certain to receive some.  
But when I scurry far and wide  
Or fevered errands fly on  
In search of plates to please a bride  
Or mugs to suit a scion,  
I know full well that I must brood  
For solace through the summer  
On pretty notes of gratitude.  
And a whacking bill from Plummer.

Sailings and weddings and births and showers!  
My fate is sealed for the month of flowers.  
When the first June wind blows soft and south,  
I'll be looking a gift shop in the mouth.





#### EPITHALAMION

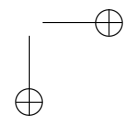
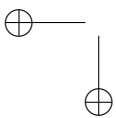
*If Spenser had been on the staff of The Bride's Magazine*

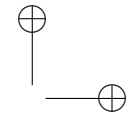
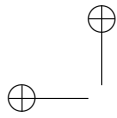
Hail, holy morn,  
Welcome, O radiant and auspicious day!  
Let every maid her person well adorn,  
Let every youth go forth in cutaway.  
Hail, joyous moment here at last! Unroll  
The crimson carpet, brim the caterer's bowl,  
Unfurl the awnings, summon without fail  
The gray-gloved ushers and the groomsman pale.  
Bid them be filled, e'er noon shall take its flight,  
With Bromo-Seltzer and a deep delight;  
And all bedight  
In ascot, morning coat, and solemn looks  
(Assembled jointly by the Brothers Brooks).

Come, guest and merry-maker!  
Crowd the dim church, crane necks, with pride recall  
How your gift (Tiffany's) outshone them all –  
The carving set, the clock, the silver shaker,  
The five-times duplicated crystal tumbler –  
Being unique, at least, if somewhat humbler.

Now, everywhere,  
Let music swell upon the happy air  
In stately chords Wagnerian and slow,  
While the bride's mother, she so goodly dressed  
In purple chiffon, low but not too low  
(And hat to match – available at Best),  
Brushes away  
The tear required and formal to this day.

Sound, sacred music, never cease or falter,  
For cometh now the bridegroom to the altar.





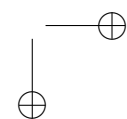
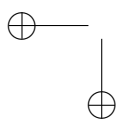
How dark his eye, how splendid his cravat,  
How creased his trouser and how gray his spat  
(Also from Brooks), while in his coat lapel  
A valley lily doth its duty well.

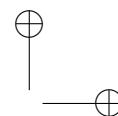
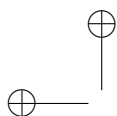
Even while he waits, behold, down the rich aisle,  
With sweet and fixed smile,  
The bridesmaids, yellow, coral, powder blue,  
Escorting Beauty's offering, and Love's,  
Move altarward in rhythm, two by two  
(Bonwit's ensemble, even to the gloves).

Swell louder, music! Like a blossomy bough,  
It is the bride, the bride, who followeth now.  
And whisper, seraphs, did you ever see  
A maiden fair as she –  
With step so lightsome or an eye so clear,  
So tall, so slim, visaged so like a garden  
(Coiffure by Antoine; skin by Elizabeth Arden),  
One so attired in Skinner's super-sheer  
With pleated collar and a spreading train  
(Altman's design), or one with modest face  
So half-obscured by veil of gauzy lace?

Ah, when she moves, there sounds a holier strain.  
Now she has reached his side whose heart she weareth.  
The congregation stareth,  
And the hands touch, the tender vows are given.  
(Prayer by the pastor; marriage – we trust – by Heaven.)

Now all is done. Bring home the bride again.  
Bring home the gleesome damsels and the men  
To the rich feast preparèd at the hand  
Of, say, Pierre or Sherry-Netherland.  
Broach the good cask, pull the embattled cork.  
Let Bacchus once more revel in New York,

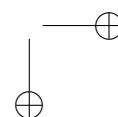
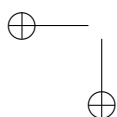


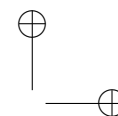
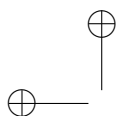


Bid the guests come  
To drink these healths in vintages (by Mumm).  
Drink to this pair made one, wake hills and highlands;  
Empty your glasses, empty them and fill more.  
Drink to their tickets to the Virgin Islands,  
Drink to their luggage (straight from Arthur Gilmore),  
And let the welkin ring  
Toasting their dovecote (plans by Bing & Bing).  
Yea, call a blessing down  
Upon this happiest pair in all the town.  
May only joy be theirs, all things delight them,  
Nor Reno nor a budget e'er affright them.  
Prosperity be theirs, and friends, and health,  
And relatives to leave them all their wealth.  
Kind spirits hover round this bride's dear head.  
Give her a full-time maid to call her own,  
Charge accounts, and a private telephone.  
And scatter pleasure o'er the marriage bed!  
(Mattress by Simmons; bed by W. and J. Sloane.)

**SONG TO BE SUNG AFTER LABOR DAY**

Bring in the blue October skies,  
Bring in the autumn weather,  
For the frost upon the pumpkin lies  
And the wild geese fly together.  
The wild geese fly together now,  
To sunnier climates wending,  
And I shall lay my bags away  
And go no more week-ending.  
To flower and field I'll say farewell,  
Farewell the round-trip ticket.  
I leave the farmer in the dell,  
The bramble in the thicket.

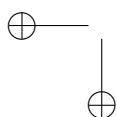


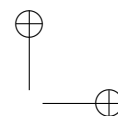
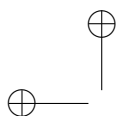


The trains may come, the trains may go,  
Long Island or New Haven,  
But I shall bide by my fireside,  
In comfort deep and craven.

No more, with luggage laden down,  
I'll leave the snug, the tranquil town,  
For windy hills or tossing breakers  
Or someone's poison-ivied acres.  
On my own couch I'll take my slumber,  
With bedclothes adequate in number,  
Whence I'll arise when day impels me,  
And not that hour my hostess tells me.  
Yes, I'll be Luxury's favorite daughter,  
My bathroom tap will run hot water,  
The alien towel I'll cry no pox on,  
I'll have some hooks to hang my frocks on,  
I'll fear no spate of extra women,  
Nor weedy pools dammed up to swim in.  
My mind will rest, my mind will harden,  
I'll seek no words to praise a garden,  
I will not picnic with a hamper  
Where grass is damp and boughs are damper,  
Nor by a brook, nor in a meadow,  
Nor where the bonfire crackles red. Oh,  
Neat and safe upon a chair,  
I will not picnic anywhere.

No more I'll rack my desperate brains  
For gifts to show my gratitude,  
Nor ponder wells and roofs and drains  
With revential attitude.  
For trains may come and trains may go,  
The Central or the Erie,  
But I shall hug my own hearthrug  
And, if I will, be dreary.





Turn back the daylight-saving clock,  
Bed down in urban clover!  
For the fodder's rusting in the shock  
And the week-end season's over.

**INCIDENT ON MADISON AVENUE**

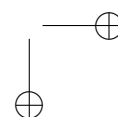
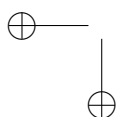
On Saturday, amid the crowd  
That in the sunshine drifted by,  
I wandered happy as a cloud  
Afloat with fellow-cumuli,  
Till suddenly, and face to face,  
I came on Mr. Morgan's place.

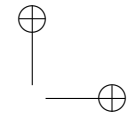
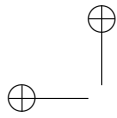
On Mr. Morgan's house I came,  
Where wonder brought me to a standstill.  
The iron gates were yet the same,  
The gardens stretched on either hand still.  
But, oh, I noticed, nearly fainting,  
How window sills cried out for painting.

As shabby and as weather-beat  
As those of mortgage-bearing biped,  
The sashes shamed that shining street;  
They were not even washed and wiped.  
And, staring on that sight appalling,  
I felt the world around me falling.

Upon my ears the tumbrels sounded,  
While wealth decayed and Fortune groaned.  
I looked on Privilege, surrounded,  
The Mighty from their seats dethroned.  
And quick, in terror and abasement,  
I fled each drear, unpainted casement.

Now, hidden from the curious gapers,  
I weep and know the end is near.





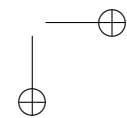
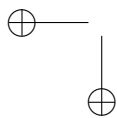
I have not dared to read the papers,  
Lest they should tell me what I fear:  
That mine and Wall Street's Patron Saint  
Cannot afford a can of paint.

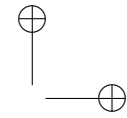
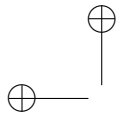
#### SHORT HISTORY OF COOKS

Dorcas broke the dishes,  
Clara slumbered late,  
Norah's sauces  
Were total losses,  
And Sigrid stole the plate.  
Mabel burnt the entrées  
And wooed the handy man,  
But rich and rare  
And beyond compare  
Are the works of Katharine Anne.

For Katharine Anne is a cook of cooks.  
She throws away the recipe books  
To bake by ear or by inspiration  
And her meagrest stew is a World Sensation.  
She lives to nourish the urge that's inner.  
She doesn't mind if there's ten to dinner.  
Lighter than foam  
Is her cheese soufflé,  
And she bides at home  
When it's her off day.  
On her morning coffee we call a blessing,  
She doesn't put sugar in salad dressing,  
Her roasts should hang in a gourmet's gallery,  
And she thinks that we ought to lower her salary.

Nellie was a lady  
Who kept me in my place,  
Emma's seasoning



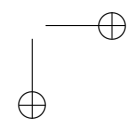
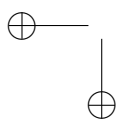


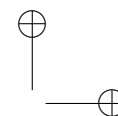
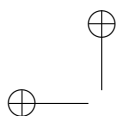
Lacked rhyme or reasoning,  
And ennui troubled Grace.  
Evangelist was Idabelle  
For starchless foods and raw,  
But find who can  
In Katharine Anne  
A single fault or flaw?

Oh, Katharine Anne is merry and humble.  
Her cakes don't fall and her pies don't crumble,  
Her custards never assail us clammy,  
Our larder doesn't supply her family.  
The grocery bill  
Is the bill she whittles,  
She lavishes skill  
On yesterday's victuals,  
Her puddings gleam like a gem from Flato's,  
There are no lumps in her mashed potatoes.  
She's learnèd with herbs and versed in spices,  
She has no sins and she owns no vices,  
She likes our kitchen, she praises her bed.  
And I've made her up out of my own head.

**ELEGY WITH A PEWTER LINING**

How meager are the hours  
Which Grandeur may enjoy!  
Gone are the gilded towers  
Whence Helen looked on Troy.  
The walls are rent asunder  
Of Babylon and Rome,  
And now with dust and thunder  
They raze the Hippodrome.  
No more in any age, there,  
While mirth and music sound,



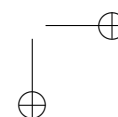
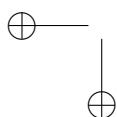


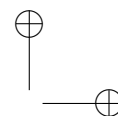
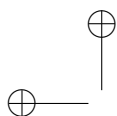
Will the revolving stage, there,  
Creak ponderously around  
That once – so runs the story –  
Less pallid pulses stirred,  
When it was all the glory  
Of 6th and 43rd.

No more will Neptune's daughters,  
Tall, languorous, and fair,  
Into fantastic waters  
Trip down a cunning stair.  
To some forgotten Limbo  
The elephants depart,  
That ere the time of Jambo  
Won plaudits for their art.

Gone now each stately Juno  
Robed like the Evening Star.  
Gone even the airs from Gounod  
At prices popular.  
Yet, lest we mourn forever  
Old, fabulous delights –  
The comic's grim endeavor,  
The spangles and the tights,  
The tumblers in formation,  
The Death-Defying Dive –  
Take this for consolation:  
Still do the pageants thrive.  
Disguised with newer fashions,  
Still, still, the Turns are played,  
Since now the Paid Admissions  
Can watch the Aquacade.

*For never blows  
So red and hot and splendid  
The Billy Rose  
As when some epoch's ended.*





#### NOVEMBER

Away with vanity of Man.  
Now comes to visit here  
The Maiden Aunt, the Puritan,  
The Spinster of the year.

She likes a world that's furnished plain,  
A sky that's clean and bare,  
And garments eminently sane  
For her consistent wear.

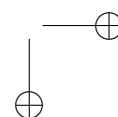
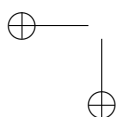
Let others deck them as they please  
In frill and furbelow.  
She scorns alike the fripperies  
Of flowers and of snow.

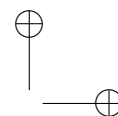
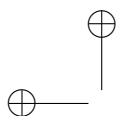
Her very speech is shrewd and slight,  
With innuendoes done;  
And all of her is hard, thin light  
Or shadow sharp as sun.

Indifferent to the drifting leaf,  
And innocent of guile,  
She scarcely knows there dwells a brief  
Enchantment in her smile.

So love her with a sparing love.  
That is her private fashion,  
Who fears the August ardor of  
A demonstrated passion.

Yet love her somewhat. It is meet,  
And for our own defense,  
After October to find sweet  
Her chilly common sense.





#### DIRGE OVER A POT OF PATÉ DE FOIE GRAS

*“The present chairman of the board, William A. Charles, a son of one of the founders, has no heir to carry on the name and has decided to retire. Neither is there a male heir in the family of Archibald C. Charles, which also holds an interest in the business.” — News item from the New York Herald Tribune.*

Weep for an empire falling.

Weep for a lost endeavor.

Cry ruin and woe,

Since Charles & Co.

Has bolted its doors forever.

Let sobs be broken, let tears be saline.

Charles & Company has no male line.

Not that the Trade had left them.

Not for a worldly reason

Are the cupboards locked

And the shelves unstocked

With succulence out of season.

A cause more sad and a lack more germinal

Has dimmed that glory beside the Terminal.

For where are the sons of Charles's,

Heirs to the founding sires?

Who shall be lord

Of the Governing Board

When William A. retires?

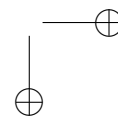
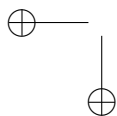
How shall a company sell or buy on,

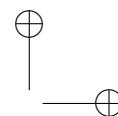
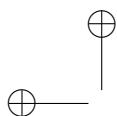
When feminine is its seed and scion?

The epicures keen in concert,

The gourmet averts his glance.

Gone like a wind





Are the puddings, tinned,  
And the vintages out of France.  
Gone the caviar, gone the truffles,  
Banished by daughterly skirts and ruffles.

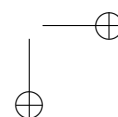
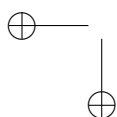
Gone from those splendid counters  
That watered the mouth of yore

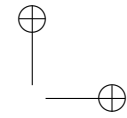
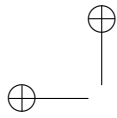
Are the jams  
And the hams  
And the teas  
And the cheese;  
The grand things,  
The canned things,  
The stuffed and the potted,  
The savory bits  
That our wits besotted;  
The soup-with-sherry,  
The wild strawberry,  
The bacon taken  
From Cork or Kerry,  
And all of the viands  
That ever made merry

Our fanciest grocery store.  
Swathed are the Baskets in crepe and tissue,  
For Charles & Co. has no male issue.

#### EVENING MUSICALE

Candles. Red tulips, ninety cents the bunch.  
Two lions, Grade B. A newly tuned piano.  
No cocktails, but a dubious kind of punch,  
Lukewarm and weak. A harp and a soprano.  
The "Lullaby" of Brahms. Somebody's cousin  
From Forest Hills, addicted to the pun.  
Two dozen gentlemen; ladies, three dozen,  
Earringed and powdered. Sandwiches at one.





The ash trays few, the ventilation meager.  
Shushes to greet the late-arriving guest  
Or quell the punch-bowl group. A young man eager  
To render “Danny Deever” by request.  
And sixty people trying to relax  
On little rented chairs with gilded backs.

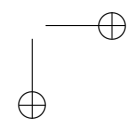
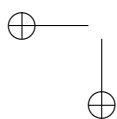
#### LAMENT

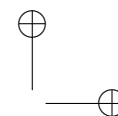
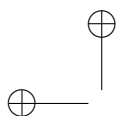
*Upon learning that Grover Whalen is no longer listed among  
the nation's best-dressed men*

Mourn, city of boroughs and bridges,  
Wail, desolate town.  
To the dust, to the ants and the midges  
Your grandeurs go down.  
The tailors have spoken. An age that was splendid  
Is ended.

That glossy perfection which blossomed more rich than the  
rose  
From official tonneaus;  
That artful ensemble which dazzled the gaping beholder –  
The accurate Shoulder,  
The Pocket, restrained but swell,  
The lordly Lapel,  
The fawn-colored Glove, the Cravat,  
The Spat –  
To oblivion slide. They have raised up the drab and the  
flighty  
To the seats of the mighty.

Now, wardrobes expansive but menial  
Depose the regalia gardenial.  
The trousers whose crease was a creed  
Give way to the slovenly tweed;





While the elegant topper,  
The Chesterfield, fitted and proper,  
Have both come a cropper.  
And amateur raiment in Mass. or the middling West  
Is crowned as the best.

Oh, therefore, while Dignity keens  
At a blow that is crushing,  
Weep! Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens,  
Especially Flushing.

Let touring celebrities heavy of head and of heart  
Amid their confetti depart.  
Let cameras hide in their coverts, reporters be humble,  
Let cornerstones crumble.  
The tailors have spoken. The glory of Grover  
Is over.

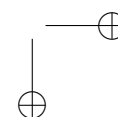
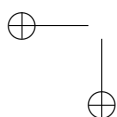
#### ENIGMA IN ALTMAN'S

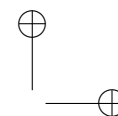
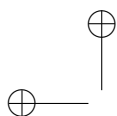
It is a strange, miraculous thing  
About department stores,  
How elevators upward wing  
By twos and threes and fours,

How pale lights gleam, how cables run  
All day without an end,  
Yet how reluctant, one by one,  
The homing cars descend.

They soar to Furniture, or higher,  
They speed to Gowns and Gifts,  
But when the bought weighs down the buyer,  
Late, late, return the lifts.

Newton, himself, beneath his tree,  
Would ponder this and frown:  
How what goes up so frequently  
So seldom cometh down.





SONG FROM NEW ROCHELLE

Monday's child is fair of face,  
And her driver's a handsome fellow.  
Tuesday's child is full of grace,  
So she gracefully hails a Yellow.  
Wednesday's child has a red coupé,  
With a little black horn she toots.  
But I was born on a Saturday,  
And Saturday's child commutes!

CHORUS

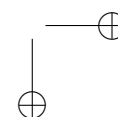
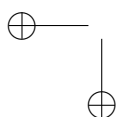
*No responsibility is assumed for errors in timetables  
Nor for inconvenience or damage resulting from delayed  
trains  
Or failure to make connections.*

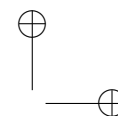
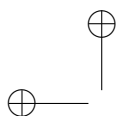
They that live on Washington Square  
May sleep as long as they please.  
And they slumber deep and they slumber fair  
In the affluent Seventies.  
In Tudor City the good and mild  
Lie late with a brow serene.  
But I am only Saturday's child  
So I get the eight-sixteen.

CHORUS

*Buy tickets before boarding trains, and avoid  
Payment of extra charge.*

The other girls go out to play  
In the fields of corn and clover.  
And the other girls can always stay  
Until the party's over.  
But just when the height is at its fun  
And the yodeler's growing vocal,

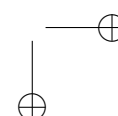
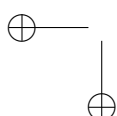


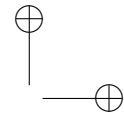
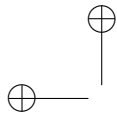


I am the one who needs must run  
To catch the Stamford local.  
It's I whom hostesses yearn to shelve;  
The Bridge-Table Blight am I.  
(If Cinderella went home at twelve,  
She probably lived in Rye.)  
Before the chorus has ceased to smile  
Or the maestro dropped his baton,  
I am the lass in the middle aisle  
Who's trying to get her hat on.  
Oh, gaiety dwells  
In the best hotels,  
But little to me it boots.  
For I was born  
On Saturday morn  
And Saturday's child commutes.

CHORUS

*The schedules shown herein are subject  
To change without notice.*





## THE HOUSE OF OLIVER AMES

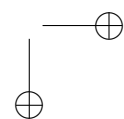
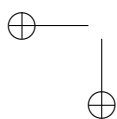
### APOLOGY FOR HUSBANDS

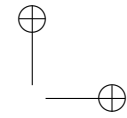
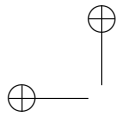
*In answer to a friend's observation that they're "more bother than they're worth"*

Although your major premise, dear,  
Is rather sharp than subtle,  
My honest argument, I fear,  
Can offer scant rebuttal.

I grant the Husband in the Home  
Disrupts its neat machinery.  
His shaving brush, his sorry comb,  
Mar tidy bathroom scenery.

When dinner's prompt upon the plate,  
He labors at the office late;  
Yet stay him while the stew is peppered,  
He rages like a famished leopard.  
He rages like an angry lion  
When urged to put a formal tie on,  
But should festivities grow hearty,  
He is the last to leave the party.  
He lauds your neighbor's giddy bonnet  
But laughs, immoderate, if you don it,  
And loathes your childhood friend, and always  
Bestrews his garments through the hallways.





But e'er you shun the wedded male,  
Recall his special talents  
For driving firm the picture nail  
And coaxing books to balance.

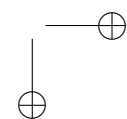
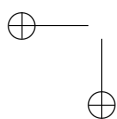
Regard with unalloyed delight  
That skill, which you were scorning,  
For opening windows up at night  
And closing them at morning.

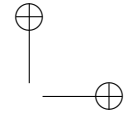
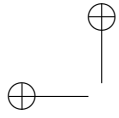
Though under protest, to be sure,  
He weekly moves the furniture.  
He layeth rugs, he fixeth sockets,  
He payeth bills from both his pockets.  
For invitations you decry  
He furnisheth an alibi.  
He jousts with taxi-men in tourney,  
He guards your luggage when you journey,  
And brings you news and quotes you facts  
And figures out the income tax  
And slaughters spiders when you daren't  
And makes a very handy parent.

What gadget's useful as a spouse?  
Considering that a minute,  
Confess that every proper house  
Should have a husband in it.

#### A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Now whom did Oliver lean on,  
Before we two were wed,  
To remind him, say,  
On the natal day  
Of his affluent Uncle Fred?  
Who wrote the news  
To his friends and folks?

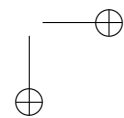
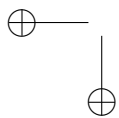


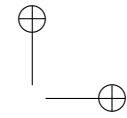
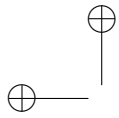


Who gave him the cues  
For his favorite jokes?  
Who scribbled his greetings when cards were sent out?  
Who counted his collars before they went out?  
Who hung up his racquets and stored his putter  
And thanked his hosts for their bread and butter?

Whose eagle eye was alert to spy  
The sag in his trousers' creases?  
With vision and thrift  
Who bought the gift  
For the nuptials of his nieces?  
Who dusted his satchel,  
Who packed his cases,  
When he was a bachel-  
Or, going places?  
For invitations he couldn't condone,  
Who gave his regrets on the telephone?  
And bundled him up for rain or mist  
And checked the names on his Christmas list?

Yes, who ran Oliver's errands,  
Busily, sun to sun?  
Or gave him warning  
To rise at morning,  
Before we twain were one?  
Of his kith and kin,  
He was wary, very.  
And it couldn't have been  
His secretary,  
And never an angel and not an elf.  
So perhaps it was Oliver Ames, himself.  
But I say it's odd how my legal lord  
Has thrown those worriments overboard.





For it's needles and pins,  
But a fig for father.  
When a man marries  
He just doesn't bother.

**OLIVER MEETS AN EMERGENCY**

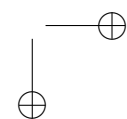
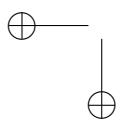
Cry storm, cry stress from every casement.  
There's devastation in the basement;  
There's havoc loose amid the plumbing.  
But hark! Do I hear rescue coming?

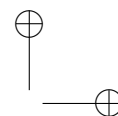
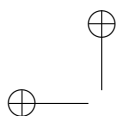
Yes, aid we need no further seek, now  
For Oliver will mend that leak, now.  
Rebellious drains that threaten plaster  
Have met for once their lord and master.

Then rally round, you helpers fluttery.  
Rally from kitchen, bath and buttery.  
Ring up your friends, call in the neighbors  
To help our hero at his labors.

Bring him his gloves and leather jerkin.  
Bring overalls for him to work in.  
Bring hammers, augers, braces, bits.  
Bring nails  
And pails  
And plumbers' kits.  
Bring bulbs to light the murky distance.  
(The handiest man might need assistance.)  
A ladder bring,  
    And tools of price,  
Or anything  
    Except advice.

Still flows the flood without rebuff?  
You'd best keep right on bringing stuff.

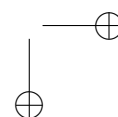
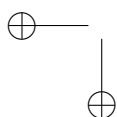


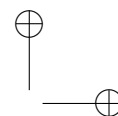
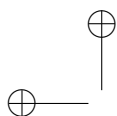


Bring coffee (black). Bring milk and sandwiches.  
Bring iodine and sterile bandwiches.  
Bring sympathy. Bring groans and tears.  
Bring cotton wool to stop your ears  
When syllables grow terse and torrid.  
Bring handkerchiefs to wipe his forehead.  
  
Bring someone's thumb to hold the dike.  
Bring brooms, bring mops. And if you'd like  
This pipe repaired before it's summer,  
Perhaps you'd better bring the plumber.

**MOTTO TO BE FRAMED IN A GUEST ROOM**

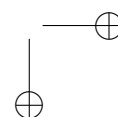
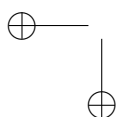
Some folk they say  
At break of day  
    Ecstatically awaken  
And straightway rise  
With joyful cries  
    To sniff the rashed bacon.  
Their hearts are light, their heads are clear,  
    For repartee they're able,  
And neatly buttoned they appear  
    Each morning at the table.  
Well, doubtless they're a worthy crew,  
    More potent than a powerhouse.  
But God forbid that they should do  
    Their breakfasting at our house.  
  
For hark,  
The lark  
At heaven's gate  
    Like Lily Pons may warble –  
The clan of Ames  
Morosely claims  
    There is no bird so horr'ble.

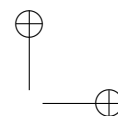
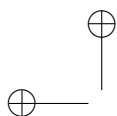




The rosy dawn delights us not.  
We view the sun with loathing,  
While staggering from reluctant cot  
To don distasteful clothing.  
Two figures bowed with haste and gloom,  
Daring the day to flower,  
Each glares at each across the room  
And stumbles to the shower.

Oh, chill, forlorn,  
Unholy morn  
The Ames were never friend to!  
With dull accord  
The breakfast board  
We drearily descend to.  
No gladsome quips  
Escape our lips.  
In epithets we mutter,  
Or beg at most  
The plate of toast  
Or snarl above the butter.  
And we must drain the Java's dregs  
And quaff the juice and crack the eggs  
And find the energy to stuff in  
A second cup, another muffin,  
Before conceding that we may  
As well exist another day.  
Yes, some folk rise  
With starry eyes  
When dawn's a kindling ember.  
But here's a warning and a clue.  
Till breakfast's positively through,  
The Amesese can't be spoken to.  
*And we'll thank you to remember.*





#### DON'T WRITE, WIRE

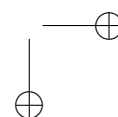
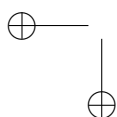
*A poem composed after attending an exhibition of the love letters of the poets*

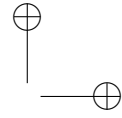
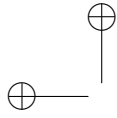
Oliver Ames is a gentleman of  
Qualities wise and witty.  
And Oliver Ames, my own true love,  
Has journeyed to Salt Lake City,  
Whence each day (as I swore he'd better)  
He sends me a lyrically worded letter  
That throbs with ardor and pulses with passion  
In somewhat the following fervent fashion:

*Darling, I've just  
A minute or two,  
But I simply must  
Get off to you  
A dutiful note as I said I would.  
I haven't been feeling so very good.  
The boys, here, threw me a little revel,  
And my head aches now like the very devil.  
The weather is fine and I wish you were  
Here. Love.*

*Hastily,  
Oliver.*

For Oliver Ames, my all-in-all,  
Clever at How and When To,  
Is hardly ever poetical  
In letters he puts his pen to.  
So, disappointed, taking it hard,  
I hurried out with a library card,  
To feast my mind on the missives planned  
By poets, taking their quills in hand.  
Among my betters  
I sought my wish





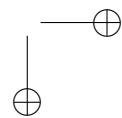
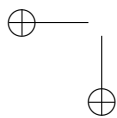
I read the letters  
Of Percy Bysshe.  
I peeped at Poe in the common mail,  
And Johnson writing to Mrs. Thrale,  
Thackeray, Longfellow, Bobbie Burns –  
All the gentlemen served their turns.  
I stripped the veil from the private lives  
Of bards addressing their loves and wives.  
And these are the amorous works of art  
With whose old sweetness I fed my heart:

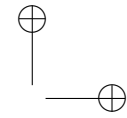
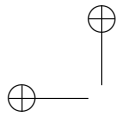
*Dearest Mary,*  
So Shelley wrote,  
*I've time for the very*  
*Briefest note,*  
*But I am well and I hope you're so*  
*Here is the coach and I'd better go.*  
*Love.*

*P. Shelley.*

O, Hail, Blithe Spirit!  
That's what you said, or something near it.  
And Robert Burns when he wrote his dear  
Railed at too many mugs of beer  
For the boys had given a little revel  
And his head ached then like the very devil.  
Boswell cried that his horse was winner,  
Thackeray ardently hymned his dinner,  
And Dr. Johnson with classic phrase  
Sighed of nostrums that filled his days.  
He spoke of pains in his legs and back  
And listed the virtues of ipecac.

For Oliver Ames, my bosom's staff,  
Whenever it's his ambition  
To put out a palpitant paragraph,  
Falls heir to a great tradition.





The hands are wrung and the lips are bitten  
But the sentiment never gets really written.

And he and Shelley and all the others  
Under the skin, in this, are brothers.

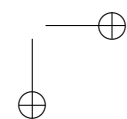
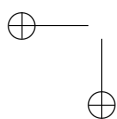
**RECIPE FOR A MARRIAGE**

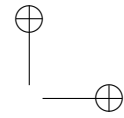
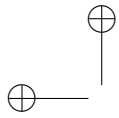
WITH A CURTSY TO MR. BURNS

John Anderson my jo, John,  
    When we were first acquaint,  
I had a fault or so, John,  
    And you were less than saint.  
But once we'd said a brave "I do"  
    And paid the parson's fee,  
I set about reforming you  
    And you reforming me.

John Anderson my jo, John,  
    Our years have journeyed fair;  
I think, as couples go, John,  
    We've made a pleasant pair.  
For us, contented man and wife,  
    The marriage bond endures,  
Since you have changed my way of life  
    And I have altered yours.

Let captious people say, John,  
    There's poison in that cup.  
We found a simple way, John,  
    To clear each difference up.  
We could not swap our virtues, John,  
    So this was our design:  
All your bad habits I took on,  
    While you adopted mine.



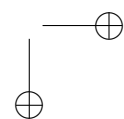
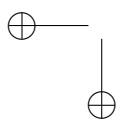


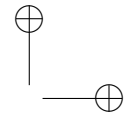
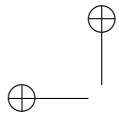
Until the final lightnings strike,  
It's comfortable to know  
Our faults we share and share alike,  
John Anderson my jo.

**VIEW FROM A SUBURBAN WINDOW**

When I consider how my light is spent,  
Also my sweetness, ditto all my power,  
Papering shelves or saving for the rent  
Or prodding grapefruit while the grocers glower,  
Or dulcetly persuading to the dentist  
The wailing young, or fitting them for shoes,  
Beset by menus and my days apprenticed  
Forever to a grinning household muse;

And how I might, in some tall town instead,  
From nine to five be furthering a Career,  
Dwelling unfettered in my single flat,  
My life my own, likewise my daily bread –  
When I consider this, it's very clear  
I might have done much worse. I might, at that.





## THE THREADBARE TIME

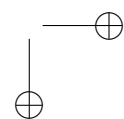
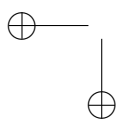
### LOVE IN THE DEPRESSION

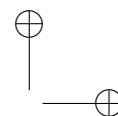
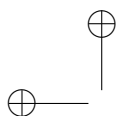
Pity all lovers who for love awaken  
To desolation, and forlorn are bedded –  
The thrust apart by malice, the forsaken,  
And those whose dears are dust or false or wedded.  
Look with compassion on the ones who sicken  
With the old malady that Dido knew;  
That same whereby Verona's pair was stricken,  
And Hero and Elaine. But pity, too,

The luckless brood, this generation's litter,  
For whom the flower shows a hopeful petal  
That poverty must wither, and the bitter  
Wind of delay; who see their love's good metal  
Moment by moment darken to their gaze  
In the dank air of these corroding days.

### TRINITY PLACE

The pigeons that peck at the grass in Trinity Churchyard  
Are pompous as bankers. They walk with an air, they  
preen  
Their prosperous feathers. They smugly regard their beauty.  
They are plump, they are sleek. It is only the men who are  
lean.





The pigeons scan with disfavor the men who sit there,  
Listless in sun or shade. The pigeons sidle  
Between the gravestones with shrewd, industrious motions.  
The pigeons are busy. It is only the men who are idle.  
The pigeons sharpen their beaks on the stones, and they  
waddle  
In dignified search of their proper, their daily bread.  
Their eyes are small with contempt for the men on the  
benches.  
It is only the men who are hungry. The pigeons are fed.

#### PROGRESS

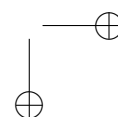
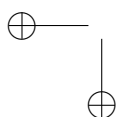
*“Scientists declare grass contains more vitamins than all other  
fruits and vegetables put together.” — News item in the New  
York Times.*

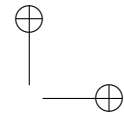
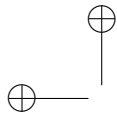
Nebuchadnezzar, snug in Hell,  
But panting still in that fervid clime,  
Read the papers and sighed, “How dull  
To have been a prophet before one’s time!

“I ranged the meadows beside the cattle,  
I fed on the fields to atone my sins,  
And no one knew I had found a subtle  
Method of getting my vitamins.

“Had I been born to a later people,”  
Cried Babylon’s King, “Alack, alas,  
How many an eager and lean disciple  
Had followed me out to the living grass!

“Then, roving naked amid the stubble,  
Half a nation on hand and knee  
Would worry the lawns and champ and nibble  
Or name an Institute after me.”





#### ORDEAL BY FAMILY

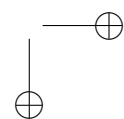
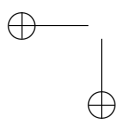
I've been out where the Blues begin,  
Stopping at home with my kith and kin,  
Where the handclasp's firm, and the smile is humorous,  
And Family Friends are a bit too numerous.

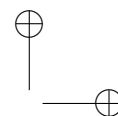
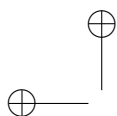
Oh, Family Friends are staunch and sound.  
Their virtues all are double.  
Family Friends, they rally round  
Whenever you're in trouble.  
Family Friends are worth their weight  
In any goods you carry.  
But they incline to speculate  
On when you're going to marry.

Family Friends, if they're feminine,  
Wear their chins in a triple line.  
Or, if of masculine gender, they  
Have positive views on the NRA.

Oh, Family Friends will fight for you  
To the utmost ditch.  
Family Friends are loyal and true,  
Sometimes even rich.  
But Family Friends are apt to fret  
About your squandered wages.  
And lest you haply might forget,  
They always mention ages.

Oh, Family Friends sit round in a ring  
And give you counsel on everything.  
They think red nails are an incongruity.  
They urge you to buy a good annuity.  
Their smiles are kind and their eyes are mild.  
They want to fatten you up, poor child,



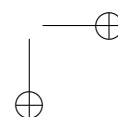
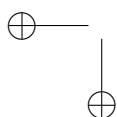


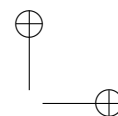
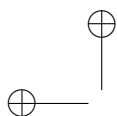
And feed you lovely chicken-and-waffle  
Meals designed to upset you awfully.  
They say “How tragic!” and “What a pity!”  
And of your life in the fervid city,  
They ask in an interested kind of way  
But never listen to what you say.

Oh, Family Friends are noble folk,  
With noble views on life.  
Each husband tells his little joke,  
Applauded by his wife.  
All the men are gentlemen,  
The ladies more than such.  
*And now that I'm away again,  
I miss them very much.*

#### APOSTROPHE TO A NEPHEW

Up, lovely infant, rosy sib,  
Up, vigorous embracer!  
Cast down the rattle, loose the bib.  
Oh, shame, to linger in your crib!  
You're ten months old today, sir.  
Ten moons on you have waxed and waned.  
Survey the time you've squandered,  
Boarded and bedded, entertained,  
And all too often laundered,  
The while your playmates and your peers,  
Your very generation,  
Are carving for themselves careers  
That stir the startled nation.  
  
In concert halls, on silver screens,  
They win the country over.  
Their mothers ride in limousines,  
Their dads have money in their jeans,  
Their aunts reside in clover.

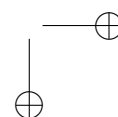
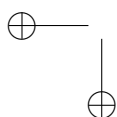


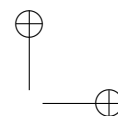
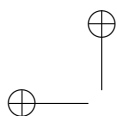


The land is full of prodigies  
With flannel round their middles.  
They pound upon piano keys,  
They lean upon their fiddles,  
They sparkle up at cameramen  
(If fat enough their parts are).  
Their wage is as the wage of ten  
Because so pure their hearts are.

Yet does your young ambition burn?  
Is industry your habit?  
Ah, no – your present whole concern  
Is one white woollen rabbit.  
You might be sending on the air  
That well-rehearsèd bellow.  
You might be practicing with care  
The chessboard or the 'cello.  
You might be posing in the nude  
On contract signed and juicy.  
You might be sponsoring Baby Food  
Or rendering Debussy.  
You might, at least, improvident kin,  
If you'd acquired forbearance,  
Be writing little verses in  
Connection with your parents.

So, chubby charmer, up, I say,  
And lisp your way to power!  
For you are ten months old today  
And now's the Children's Hour,  
When ancestors may gather all  
The rights that are decreed them.  
Cast down the rattle, drop your ball,  
And read upon your nursery wall  
How a little child shall feed them.





#### THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY

*“Count Curt Haugwitz-Reventlow and his wife, the former Barbara Hutton Mdivani, are en route to London for the Coronation. Two governesses and a nurse are in attendance on Lance, their baby son.” — News item.*

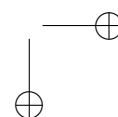
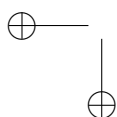
“Boom,” say the cannons, and “Hail,” sing the banners,  
“Ho,” cry the heralds with their elegantest manners.  
“Here comes a Sovereign to greet a brother king –  
A little prince chewing on a teething ring!”

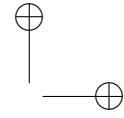
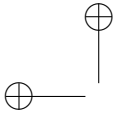
High street, low street,  
Parliament Square  
Send a rousing welcome  
To the Woolworth heir!  
Greet him, every horseman,  
In plume and shining button.  
His father is a Norseman,  
His mother was a Hutton.

Here comes the Scion, as regal as can be,  
With henchmen and footmen and handmaidens three,  
To comfort him with mittens and cut his spinach up,  
And feed him his gruel from a monogrammed cup.

Three ladies haughty  
To lean above his crib,  
To spank him when he’s naughty,  
And tie the royal bib;  
To teach him pretty answers  
And zip his zippers undone.  
Young Count Lance, sirs,  
Is on his way to London.

Merry ring the church bells, loud play the bands,  
Proud ride the monarchs with their scepters in their hands.





And some fear the Fascists and some dread the Debt,  
But Lance goes smiling in his bassinet.

High street, low street,  
Wish the Infant joy!  
Lift a rousing welcome  
To the last Royal Boy.  
For empires daily totter,  
And princes sulk in Rome,  
And a king across the water  
Awaits the mail from home.  
*But the pillow's made of down,  
And the head lies easy when  
It's a head that wears a crown  
From the Five-and-Ten.*

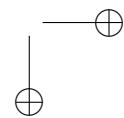
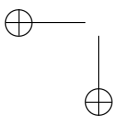
**LINES IN PRAISE OF OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL**

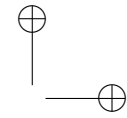
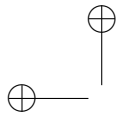
*Composed while waiting for a green light*

O, I have been to the Capital, and it's there I'd end my days,  
Where the Judas tree is flowering now and the dogwood  
lifts its crown;  
Where the fauna and flora and Senator Borah attract the  
passing gaze,  
*And it's twenty cents for a taxicab to any place in town!*

O, I have been to the Capital, where the D.A.R. convene,  
(Their bosoms are built on the Lane Bryant plan, and  
they favor armaments),  
Where party quarrel and mountain laurel enrich the public  
scene,  
*And I rode five miles in a taxicab and it cost me twenty  
cents!*

Then ho! for the beautiful D. of C. where our leaders guard  
and guide us.





I'm going to live in the Capital and leave this life so  
drab.  
I'll weep no more as the meters soar, but nonchalant as  
Midas,  
*For twenty cents I'll ride around in a Diamond Taxicab!*

**STAR-SPANGLED ODE**

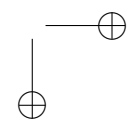
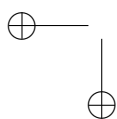
My country, 'tis to thee and all thy ways  
I lift my harp in praise.  
Land of tall forests, hills, lakes, seas, and valleys  
(The Pilgrims' pride and likewise the O'Malleys'),  
Haven to heroes from oppression fleeing  
(Viz: Kosciusko, Thomas Mann, and Erika);  
Country of canyons, corn, and central heating,  
Of thee I sing, America!

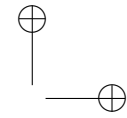
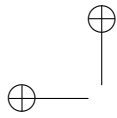
While statesmen fume and bicker in thy name,  
Thunder upon the Left or damn the Tories,  
My task shall be, unblushing, to proclaim  
Thy singular, matchless, and immoderate glories.

*Hail, Columbia, happy spot,  
Gem of a double ocean.  
Here I, embattled patriot,  
Publish my stout devotion.*

Hail, birthplace of my Gramp.  
Hail customs, monuments, cities, paths, and byways;  
Each garden, farm, park, house, and tourist camp,  
And every trailer on your teeming highways.  
Hail, land that loved the French and fought the Hessian,  
That dreamed of unearned riches, like Aladdin;  
Place of the Uplift, and the graphed Recession,  
Charlie McCarthy, and Bernarr Macfadden;

That in your ample bosom can enclose  
Pikes Peak and Billy Rose,



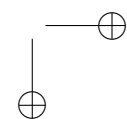
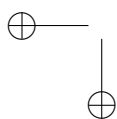


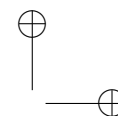
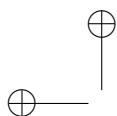
New England lilacs fragrant where you pass,  
And the gold poppy in the Western grass.

For good or ill, this is my chosen nation,  
Home of Joe Louis and the D.A.R.,  
Fairs, floods, the Federal Investigation,  
And the used car;  
Cape Cod, the Coca-Cola, Mount Rainier,  
The Swanee River and the River Bronx,  
The Dies Committee and the roasting ear,  
And Scottish songs in swing time at the On'x;  
Of rocking chairs on country porches rocking,  
And the slim leg in the superlative stocking.

All these do I rejoice in with rejoicing:  
Jones Beach, blueberry pie, and mocking birds,  
And Mrs. Doctor Mayo, sweetly voicing  
American Motherhood's authentic words;  
And footballs in October attitudes.  
And Automats, and packaged breakfast foods.  
Now more and evermore  
Dear to my heart is this, my native shore,  
Where Liberty lingers still, and even Hope  
Unvanquished dwells;  
Where dentists ply their trade, and there is soap –  
Soap, and hot waters steaming, in hotels.  
Where none so humble or his lot so low  
But in his house there blares the Radio.

*Oh, beautiful for spacious skies  
And waving fields of grain,  
For everything a buyer buys  
Embalmed in Cellophane.  
America, America,  
I call each prospect good,  
From Maryland  
To the Goldwyn strand  
Of shining Hollywood.*

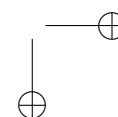
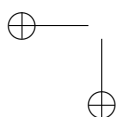


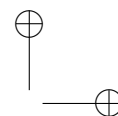
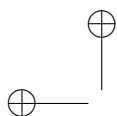


What do we lack that other nations boast of?  
What splendor or what plague?  
Unanimous Italy may make the most of  
Her Duce. We have Hague.  
As favorably our plains and mountains size up;  
Our suns are brighter and our snows as chill,  
And more profusely do our billboards rise up  
On every templed hill.  
And if, beneath the tread of iron heels,  
Our earth less sickly reels,  
Where are the armies valianter than these –  
Our troops of marching boys assembling yet,  
Lads without uniform or bayonet,  
Who come to grips with trees?  
And we have Donald Duck and Passamaquoddy,  
And more laws than anybody.

#### EPILOGUE

Now dies upon my ear  
The eagle screaming and the hollow cheer,  
The politician's loud and public tone,  
And the La Follette calling to its own.  
Only I hear  
Above the din, the clamor, the stone-flinging,  
Freedom, yet faintly ringing.  
And by the dawn's dim light I see you stand,  
O indestructible land,  
Swaggering still, and binding up your hurts,  
Building your towers, digging impossible ditches;  
Your leaders clad in ordinary shirts,  
Your Kennedy clinging to his common britches.  
So that I cry, secure within your gates,  
O.K., United States.





THE FURTHER OFF FROM ENGLAND . . .

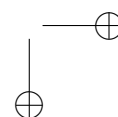
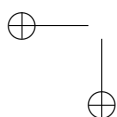
*“Grace Moore says controversy rages in Cannes over her curtsy to the Duchess of Windsor, with the Countess of Pembroke, etiquette authority, leading the opposition.” — Headline in the New York Post.*

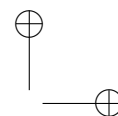
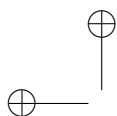
“Will you move a little faster?” said the Diva to the Duke.  
“There’s a Countess close behind me and she’s dealing out rebuke.  
Won’t you please persuade your Family to employ the final mercy,  
For the Côte d’Azur is crackling in the flames of Controversy.

Your lady’s name is ancient,  
But her blood is somewhat newer.  
So shall we, shan’t we, shall we, shan’t we,  
Shall we curtsy to her?

“I bowed to you, I bowed to her, I bent the full degree.  
I sent a chilling shudder through the British Colony.  
A Peeress sought her pallet and a Peer got indigestion,  
And Cannes is split in twain about a Very Vital Question.  
Casinos hum with gossip,  
And villas surge with strife,  
For can we, can’t we, can we, can’t we  
Recognize your wife?

“In other lands and countries, on less amazing shores,  
They talk of pacts and politics and armaments and wars.  
They babble over treaties or vilify the Debt,  
But on the Riviera we are torn by Etiquette.  
All furrowed are our foreheads,  
Considering the case  
Of may we, might we, may we, might we  
Curtsy to Her Grace.”





“Ah, well the earth may tremble and well the world may  
rock,”

Said the Singer to reporters when they met her at the dock.

“For who can eat his caviar and who can slumber sound  
When the matter to be settled is a question so profound?

Along the golden beaches,  
Beside the colored sea,  
Some range themselves with Pembroke  
And some line up with me.

But from no burning bush or  
Incendiary palm

Has come the final answer,  
Pontifical and calm,

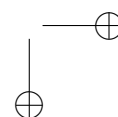
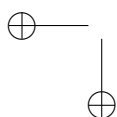
To ‘Does she, could she, shall she, should she  
Rate the Royal Salaam?’”

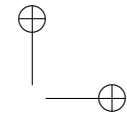
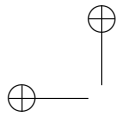
#### MESSAGE FROM MARS

*“Culture is necessary, but. . . not too much of it.” — Virginio  
Gayda, editor of the Fascist Giornale d’Italia.*

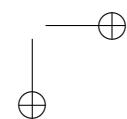
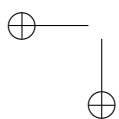
Ah, what avails the sceptered race,  
And how shall fare that nation  
Whose people know the evil face  
Of surplus education,  
Where the unregimented lip  
Is treasonable with scholarship?

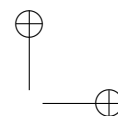
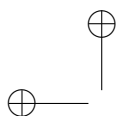
Above that doomed, unblestèd land  
Shall hover like a vulture  
The Democratic shadow and  
The nightmare shape of Culture,  
While men of brawn and men of ink  
Shall, likely, both aspire to think.





But here upon these happy shores  
Our ways shall never vary.  
Though we admit  
A little wit  
Is sometimes necessary,  
We strike, before it rears erect,  
The ugly head of Intellect;  
  
And, free from erudition's taint,  
Our muscular Elite, O,  
Shall strive from youth  
To speak the truth  
As stated by Benito,  
And he who follows where he's led'll  
Gain the palm and win the medal.  
  
A little language let him choose  
To read the Gospel Fascist –  
A little study baiting Jew,  
Some Doctrine for the rashest,  
A little War, a little Looting,  
A little lesson in Saluting,  
A little practice flinging down  
The Bomb upon the foreign town,  
A little course in shouting "Glory!"  
And crying loud for Territory,  
A little book-and-pamphlet burning –  
But not too much of any learning.





**CAROL WITH VARIATIONS, 1936**

*“The world now has 7,600,000 men under arms, excluding navies, as against 5,900,000 in 1913.” — News item printed in the New York Sun during Christmas week.*

Oh! Little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
Your flocks are folded in to sleep, and sleep your little ones.  
Behold, there is a Star again that climbs the eastern sky.  
And seven million living men are picking up their guns.

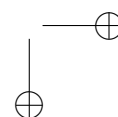
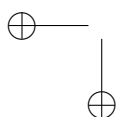
Hark, the happy cannons roar –  
Glory to the Dictator,  
Death and fear, and peace defiled,  
And a world unreconciled!

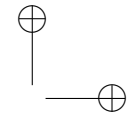
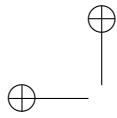
Once more the bells of Christendom ring out a proclamation  
Of joy to all the universe, and mercy, and good will;  
While brother shoots his brother down, and nation scowls  
at nation,  
And seven million uniforms are decorate at drill.

Hail to Dupont and to Krupp!  
Steel is strong and going up.  
Let the tidings glad be sent –  
'Tis the Morn of Armament.

God rest you merry, gentlemen, whose will these armies are.  
Go proudly in your colored shirts, let nothing you dismay.  
(Oh, little town of Bethlehem, how fades your shining star?)  
While seven million fighting men stand up on Christmas  
Day.

Sing hosanna, sing Noel.  
Sing the gunner and the shell.  
Sing the candle, sing the lamp,  
Sing the Concentration Camp.





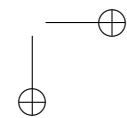
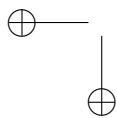
Sing the Season born anew,  
Sing of exile for the Jew,  
Wreathe the world with evergreen.  
Praise the cunning submarine.  
Sing the barbed and bitter wire,  
Poison gas and liquid fire,  
Bullet, bomb, and hand grenade,  
And the heart of man, afraid.  
Christ is come, the Light hath risen,  
All our foes are safe in prison,  
And the Christmastide begets  
Seven million bayonets.

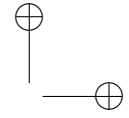
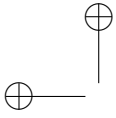
Hear the carol, once again –  
Peace on earth, good will to men.

**WRONG FORMULA**

*“I never make criticisms or comment on anything.” — Vice  
President Garner, as quoted in the New York Times*

On matters of moment,  
On topics political,  
I never made comment,  
I never talked critical.  
When the Senate embarked  
On unusual capers,  
I seldom remarked  
Remarks for the papers.  
Though my gavel aloft  
I would frequently swing,  
My answers were soft  
As Uvaldean Spring.  
My Ire never blazed, sirs,  
I proffered no Plan.

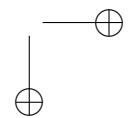
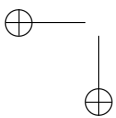


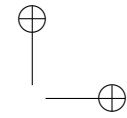
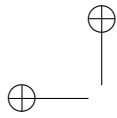


And everyone praised, sirs,  
So solid a man.  
Remote at the parley  
And naming no names,  
I rendered to Farley  
The things that were James'.  
Though Lending's legality  
Filled me with grief,  
I was mum on Neutrality,  
Mute on Relief.  
And, shunning pretenses,  
While yielding my baton,  
I mended my fences  
So they could be sat on. . .  
But here in my corner,  
While argument hums,  
Little Jack Garner  
Weeps for his plums.

**BALLAD OF THE LORD AND COLUMBUS**

Christopher Columbus, weary old tar –  
Fresh was the heavenly morning –  
Came one day to the Judgment Bar,  
Roused by the trumpet's warning;  
Rose up lightly, but with some surprise,  
Looking around him and rubbing his eyes.  
(For he'd done his share of toiling and of weeping  
And the Lord had left him a long time sleeping.)  
"Christopher Columbus," the Lord's voice spoke,  
"You've had your slumber and it's time you woke.  
The years are mounting,  
The centuries hum,  
And every soul's accounting  
Is bound to come."





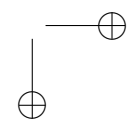
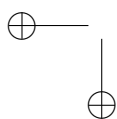
And He signed to Peter, nodding at His knee,  
“Fetch the Final Record that is filed in ‘C.’”

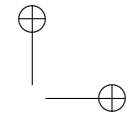
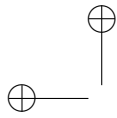
Columbus waited with a troubled look  
While the Lord went thumbing through the Golden Book,  
While the angels harped with suitable decorum  
And the saints sat around in a haloed quorum  
And the stars went whirling in an endless dance.  
Said Christopher Columbus, “I’ll take my chance.  
A man’s but human when he sails the seas,  
But You know I stuck by my theories.  
A queen had the credit and a king had the loot,  
But I reached the Indies by the Western route.”

Jehovah frowned and His voice was thunder.  
“The sons of Adam, they are doomed to blunder.  
Pitiful their follies of the future and the past,  
But even My patience has an end at last.  
You steered a passage toward the setting sun –  
Regard the work that your hand has done.”  
(Christopher Columbus felt the heavens shake.)  
“Must I forgive you for this mistake?

“I was ever vexed by my peopled planet.  
There’s always been trouble since Eve began it.  
In Africa and Asia, in Albion and Spain,  
Trouble and sorrow and wars and pain –  
Never any quietude, never any peace  
In Italy or Egypt or Palestine or Greece.  
Half the world in turmoil, with woe bent double!  
Yet you must go discovering a brand-new trouble.”

The winds from the spheres grew shrill and loud.  
Now shivered the saints anointed.  
Christopher Columbus knelt upon a cloud  
And looked where the Master pointed.



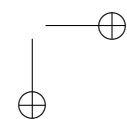
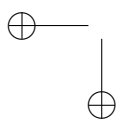


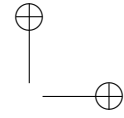
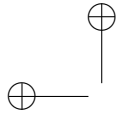
“Sailor,” said the Lord, “four hundred years  
This land has been a crying, a clamor in My ears,  
While you lay sleeping till the Judgment Day.  
Now rise and answer for the U.S.A.”

From the golden pavement, from the gateway pearly,  
Columbus looked on the spinning world.  
He saw the mountains, and he saw the sea,  
He saw America where India should be.  
He saw the cities and the fields of grain,  
And he heard the voice of the Lord complain:

“Behold the things that you brought to pass:  
The great towns bellowing in tones of brass;  
Billboards rising where the wild deer wandered,  
The earth despoiled and the forests squandered;  
Men looking down where My hills used to look up;  
Swing bands squealing on a national hookup;  
Strikes and riots  
    And bursting dams;  
Hollywood diets  
    And subway jams;  
A thousand new religions shouting out their wares;  
Floods and dust bowls and two World Fairs;  
Politics and panics and boys in breadlines,  
And everywhere the sound of their shrieking headlines.  
The heroes dead and the giants departed.  
Now rise and answer for the thing you started!”

Christopher Columbus, sturdy old tar,  
Stood up straight at the Judgment Bar.  
He bowed to Michael with his shining sword,  
    He bowed to the Great White Throne.  
Then Christopher Columbus spoke to the Lord  
    In a reasonable tone:  
“I saw the mountains, I saw the plain,

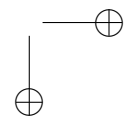
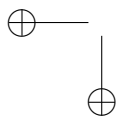


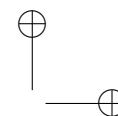
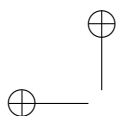


I saw the place where my ships had lain,  
And reaching northward till time took flight,  
There was America, gleaming in the light.  
I heard the tumult, I heard the clamor,  
The hiss of the rivet, the noise of the hammer,  
The speeches and the shouting and the sound of cheers  
And, Lord, it was strange to my sleep-filled ears.  
But I saw such wonders and I heard such mirth  
As I never knew when I walked on earth!

“A proud young race and their children and their sires,  
Dwelling in their houses, working at their fires;  
And some were weeping,  
    And some were old,  
And some were sleeping,  
    Hungry and cold,  
And some were wailing for the times askew,  
But, Lord, it was better than the world I knew.

“Tanned and tall were their sons and their daughters.  
They had won the valleys, they had tamed the waters.  
I saw them soaring  
    Through the conquered air.  
Their trains went roaring  
    Everywhere.  
Strong their buildings and their bridges stood.  
The land was fertile and the harvests good.  
And a hundred million people  
    Lived in brotherhood.  
The Jew and the Gentile had joined their labor.  
And none there feared to address his neighbor.  
And there was order  
    And the guns had died  
Along their border,  
    A continent wide.





“And freedom still on their hilltops hovered.  
Lord, I have seen what my ships discovered.  
Let whirlwind shake it, let lightning strike it.  
I have looked on this land, and, Lord, I like it.”

In the Golden City there was silence for a while.  
Then the watching angels saw Jehovah smile.  
And He chuckled, “There’s sense in a sailor lad.  
It’s a noisy nation, but it’s not so bad.

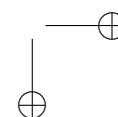
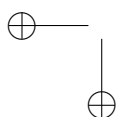
You rose in heaven  
And you had your say.  
And you are forgiven  
For the U.S.A.”

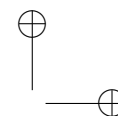
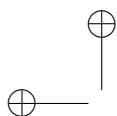
Oh, there was rejoicing on the utmost star  
When Columbus came from the Judgment Bar.

#### MILLENNIUM

Someday,  
Some blank, odd, pallid, immemorial day,  
Some curious Monday,  
Some Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday,  
Or even Sunday,  
I shall arise disheveled and a gaper,  
To scan the paper  
And stare thereon, thumb through, search it for clues,  
Peruse and re-peruse,  
And find no news.

Nothing to heat the blood or race the pulse,  
Nothing at all –  
No six-inch headlines screaming a war’s results  
Or a city’s fall.  
No threats, no bombs, no air-raids, no alarms,  
No feats of arms,

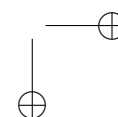
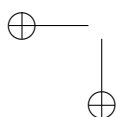


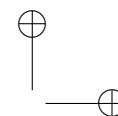
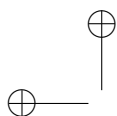


No foe at any gate,  
No politics, no shouting candidate;  
Nothing exclusive, not a censored phrase,  
No scoops, no Exposés;  
No crisis either foreign or domestic,  
Nothing wild, urgent, imminent, or drastic  
Happening on the earth.

Only reports of weather and the birth  
Of triplets to a lioness at the Zoo,  
(Printed within a box)  
And yesterday's sermons seeming scarcely new  
And something about the White-or-Sundry-Sox;  
An actress married or divorced or dead,  
Who led  
The golfing in some tournament or other.

Oh, I shall smother  
In ennui, I shall nod and yawn  
And fling the dull sheets upon the lawn,  
Bored near to death by what they have to say  
On that strange, beautiful day.





## ENVOY

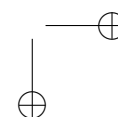
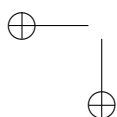
### IN PRAISE OF DIVERSITY

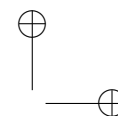
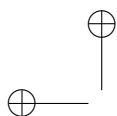
Since this ingenious earth began  
    To shape itself from fire and rubble;  
Since God invented man, and man  
    At once fell to, inventing trouble,  
One virtue, one subversive grace  
Has chiefly vexed the human race.

One whimsical beatitude,  
    Concocted for his gain and glory,  
Has man most stoutly misconstrued  
    Of all the primal category –  
Counting no blessing, but a flaw,  
That Difference is the mortal law.

Adam, perhaps, while toiling late,  
    With life a book still strange to read in,  
Saw his new world, how variegate,  
    And mourned, “It was not so in Eden,”  
Confusing thus from the beginning  
Unlikeness with original sinning.

And still the sons of Adam’s clay  
    Labor in person or by proxy  
At altering to a common way  
    The planet’s holy heterodoxy.





Till now, so dogged is the breed,  
Almost it seems that they succeed.

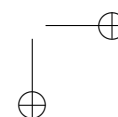
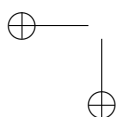
One shrill, monotonous, level note  
The human orchestra's reduced to.  
Man casts his ballot, turns his coat,  
Gets born, gets buried as he used to,  
Makes war, makes love – but with a kind  
Of masked and universal mind.

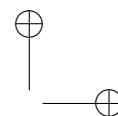
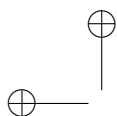
His good has no naunces. He  
Doubts or believes with total passion.  
Heretics choose for heresy  
Whatever's the prevailing fashion.  
Those wearing Tolerance for a label  
Call other views intolerable.

“For or Against” 's the only rule.  
Damned are the unconvinced, the floaters.  
Now all must go to public school,  
March with the League of Women Voters,  
Or else for safety get allied  
With a unanimous Other Side.

There's white, there's black; no tint between.  
Truth is a plane that was a prism.  
All's Blanshard that's not Bishop Sheen.  
All's treason that's not patriotism.  
Faith, charity, hope – now all must fit  
One pattern or its opposite.

Or so it seems. Yet who would dare  
Deny that nature planned it other,  
When every freckled thrush can wear  
A dapple various from his brother,  
When each pale snowflake in the storm  
Is false to some imagined norm?





Recalling then what surely was  
The earliest bounty of Creation:  
That not a blade among the grass  
But flaunts its difference with elation,  
Let us devoutly take no blame  
If similar does not mean the same.

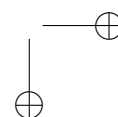
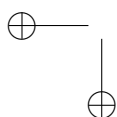
And grateful for the wit to see  
Prospects through doors we cannot enter,  
Ah! let us praise Diversity  
Which holds the world upon its center.  
Praise *con amor'* or *furioso*  
The large, the little, and the soso.

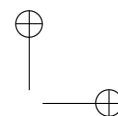
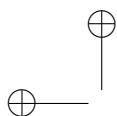
Rejoice that under cloud and star  
The planet's more than Maine or Texas.  
Bless the delightful fact there are  
Twelve months, nine muses, and two sexes;  
And infinite in earth's dominions  
Arts, climates, wonders, and opinions.

Praise ice and ember, sand and rock,  
Tiger and dove and ends and sources;  
Space travelers, and who only walk  
Like mailmen round familiar courses;  
Praise vintage grapes and tavern Grappas,  
And bankers and Phi Beta Kappas;

Each in its moment justified,  
Praise knowledge, theory, second guesses;  
That which must wither or abide;  
Prim men, and men like wildernesses;  
And men of peace and men of mayhem  
And pipers and the ones who pay 'em.

Praise the disheveled, praise the sleek;  
Austerity and hearts-and-flowers;

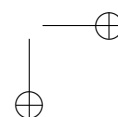
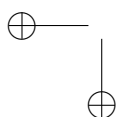


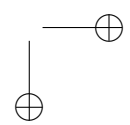
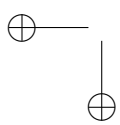
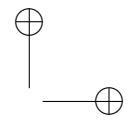
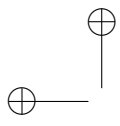


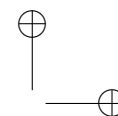
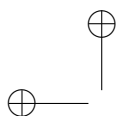
People who turn the other cheek  
And extroverts who take cold showers;  
Saints we can name a holy day for  
And infidels the saints can pray for.

Praise youth for pulling things apart,  
Toppling the idols, breaking leases;  
Then from the upset apple-cart  
Praise oldsters picking up the pieces.  
Praise wisdom, hard to be a friend to,  
And folly one can condescend to.

Praise what conforms and what is odd,  
Remembering, if the weather worsens  
Along the way, that even God  
Is said to be three separate Persons.  
Then upright or upon the knee,  
Praise Him that by His courtesy,  
For all our prejudice and pains,  
Diverse His Creature still remains.

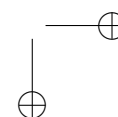
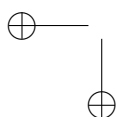


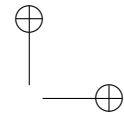
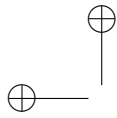




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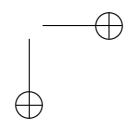
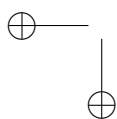
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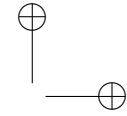
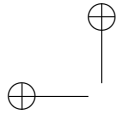
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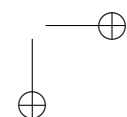
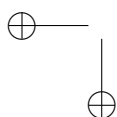


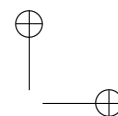
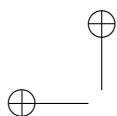


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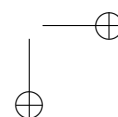
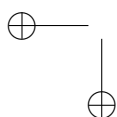
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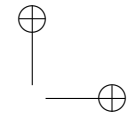
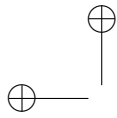
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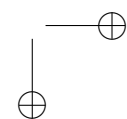
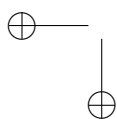
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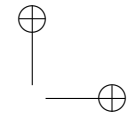
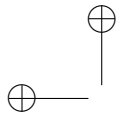
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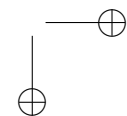
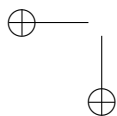


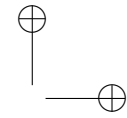
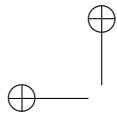
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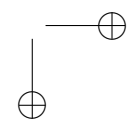
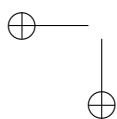
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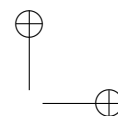
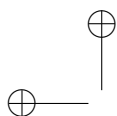




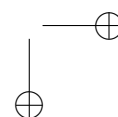
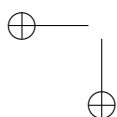
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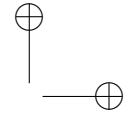
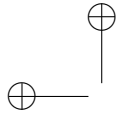
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