1899

The Least Glory: The Great War as Seen by Women Poets

THE LEAST GLORY:

THE GREAT WAR AS SEEN BY WOMEN POETS

By

JOANN R. BEAN, B.A.

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

McMaster University
October, 1982

MASTER OF ARTS (1982) McMASTER UNIVERSITY

TITLE: The Least Glory: The Great War as Seen by Women Poets

AUTHOR: Joann Ruth MacLachlan Bean, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Alwyn Berland

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 132

ABSTRACT

This essay explores a neglected aspect of Great War literature, the verse written by women. The essay suggests possible reasons for the long neglect of the poetry written by women and points to the work yet to be done in the area, in addition to making some initial critical comment on the poetry. Before discussing the poems which women wrote about the Great War experience it was necessary to find them and for that reason this work is divided into two parts: the poems which form the appendix and, in an Introduction and two chapters, the first critical appraisal of this material.

The poems, which were found in popular and literary journals, in collected works and anthologies, are gathered here and presented for consideration for the first time. The twenty-nine poems in the appendix were chosen from among thousands available, a quantity which clearly provided a wide range of quality. My first consideration in choosing the poems was to choose those in which the poet matched the content and the treatment of the content. I discarded the clearly sentimental and the trite and looked for poetic attempts to come to terms with basic emotions and experiences. Some of the poems of lesser quality or poems with a few good effects or ideas have been included in the critical commentary. Other poems have been included in the body of the essay to illustrate themes or attitudes.

One of the problems for an anthologist is to decide on the categories for arranging poems. War anthologies are sometimes printed alphabetically by author and more often by placing poems with similar attitudes together. I decided to use the latter method. When the poems had been selected and arranged so that those which were similar in content were together, it became clear that chronology is also important. As the war continues the poetry changes. The earliest poems, particularly those printed in The United States, express anger and seek causes for war. The later poems express despair and disillusionment. Thus the essay not only discusses common themes and symbols used by the poets to describe their experience of the Great War, it also shows the development of attitudes to the war as expressed in poetry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks for their help with this work are offered to Professors J. Ferns and L. Hutcheon for their suggestions, to Professor A. Berland for his careful and helpful supervision and to Professor A. Bishop for his inspiration. To my daughter who wanted it "in a book" and my lover who encouraged and harassed me until it was done I offer the work as an expression of appreciation which cannot repay their efforts but was my best attempt. To the women who wrote the poems I remain forever in debt.

INTRODUCTION: Where have all the women gone?

> Now it is only fair that that half of the human race which gets the most misery and the least glory out of a war should be heard when war is discussed.

To suggest that women wrote poetry about the Great War is to elicit, if not derision, at least surprise; yet, as Helen Minturn Seymour points out in the above quotation from The Dial of November 16, 1914, men are not the only sufferers in wartime. Suffering in literate people occasions literate response and it is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that women wrote about the war and that some of that writing might have been poetry worth considering as an artistic expression of the event.

From the first reports of the invasion of Belgium to the news report of the grisly incident used by Herbert Read in "The End of a War" it was clear that women were victims of the war, but they were also active participants and commentators. The pages of the popular press during the Great War told of the supportive activities of women as bus-conductors, munitions workers, farmers and nurses; from the anonymous sock-knitter to Edith Cavell, women were experiencing the war. The Times, both in New York and in London, published work by women. Harpers, Punch and Saturday Night published stories and verse by women. The literary magazines of the period published poetry by women. Approximately one fifth of the one hundred and eighty-three contributors to A Treasury of War Poetry,[1] published in 1919, were women, and that women wrote substantial numbers of books of poetry, wholly or partly devoted to the war experience, the Bibliography of this work bears testimony.

However, when the half century had passed and the appropriate distance, combined with the tragedy of the Vietnam War, inspired, in

---

[1] G.H. Clarke. A Treasury of War Poetry. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.

the mid-sixties, a look at 'war poetry' as a genre, the ladies had vanished. In 1964, Gardner's Up the Line to Death: The War Poets 1914-1918[2] anthologized seventy-two poets, all men. Published in that same year, Johnston's critical discussion of English Poetry of the First World War[3] listed in its eight page index only six women: Marie Curie in a passing reference to "the Curies", Viola Meynell as author of a work on Julian Grenfell, Lady Ottoline Morrell's pacifism as an influence on Siegfried Sassoon, Lady Dorothy Wellesley as a correspondent of Wilfred Owen,and Virginia Woolf in a list with T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce as innovators. The only hint that women write poetry is a reference to Frances Cornford whose four line epigram describing Rupert Brooke is quoted. 1965 brought another collection, Men Who March Away: Poems of the First World War[4], which included Charlotte Mew among its thirty-three poets. Bernard Bergonzi, in the index to Heroes' Twilight[5], also published in 1965, lists seven women: three who received letters from war poets, H.D. because she was married to Richard Aldington and was a protégé of Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf because Mrs. Dalloway describes life after the war, Frances Cornford because of her Rupert Brooke epigram again, and Violet Hunt as an 'entanglement' from which Ford Madox Ford escaped by enlisting.

In the second wave of Great War books, dominated by Silkin and Fussell, Frances Cornford's epigram is reduced to a phrase and Charlotte Mew disappears. Fussell's index does note Vera Brittain, because she is twice quoted by other writers. Fussell also notes that Jennifer Johnston's How Many Miles to Babylon, published in 1974, authentically imagines the trench scenes[6], which is about as close as he comes to

---

[2]Brian Gardner, ed. Up the Line to Death: The War Poets 1914-1918. London:Methuen, 1964.

[3]J.H. Johnston. English Poetry of the First World War.New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964.

[4]I.M. Parson, ed. Men Who March Away: Poems of the First World War. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965.

[5]B. Bergonzi. Heroes' Twilight. London: Constable, 1965.

[6]P. Fussell. The Great War and Modern Memory. Oxford Univerity Press, 1975. p. 322.

admitting that he has read a book by a woman. When C.H. Sisson begins his introduction to English Poetry 1900-1950 by saying, "The object of this book is to show where the best English verse of the first half of the century is to be found, to indicate what its qualities are, and... what sort of men wrote it;"[7] the alert reader is prepared for a chapter on Imagism which fails to consider H.D. as a poet and which mentions ill-feeling between Pound and Aldington without ever noting their relationship to H.D. as a woman. There is no such warning for the reader of the basic books on World War I poetry. The reader is left with the impression that the Great War was fought, suffered, endured, remembered and described only by men. The generation of critics and scholars maturing during the years between the wars and immediately following World War II inadvertently concluded that men's experience of the war was the only valid experience of the war. These critics read Sassoon's savage attack on women,

> You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
> Or wounded in a mentionable place

in "Glory of Women" but failed to recognize his idealizing of women:

> Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
> They think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives.

in "Dreamers". In Memoirs of an Infantry Officer Sassoon finds, on more than one occasion, that he cannot tell his Aunt Evelyn about the reality of the front; he can scarcely be surprised that she does not understand the horrors he has encountered, if indeed she does not, for she is required, like Kurtz's intended in Heart of Darkness, to be "out of it". The soldier-poets might well have changed their attitudes to war; they had not necessarily changed their attitudes to women. Bernard Bergonzi comments on an antipathy, or at least a lack of sympathy for women in Wilfred Owen's poetry, forgetting that Owen trusted Dorothy Wellesley at least as a sympathetic correspondent. If the young officers in the trenches felt any heightened distrust of women, or alienation from them, and their poetry does not in general reflect this, Graves'

---

[7] C.H. Sisson. English Poetry 1900-1950. London: Rupert Hart and Davis, 1971. Introductory Note.

discussion of the male world in which English Public School boys lived provides possible reasons. He points out in Goodbye to All That how difficult it was for young men to relate to creatures whom, for ten or more years, they met only on holidays. It was these men who wrote the poetry and, after the war, wrote about the poetry. If women's experiences were quite different from men's, and there is no question about that, there is even more reason to wish to have a completed view of the war by finding and adding the activities, the emotions and the conclusions of women.

A brief attempt to define 'war poetry' and examine some of the assumptions about it may explain the absence of women's poetry in standard works and provide a framework for discussing the poems which women wrote.

The first assumption which requires examination is that willing, not to say joyous, volunteers are the only persons who write war poetry. Rupert Brooke stands at the head of a gallant army of Public School and University graduates from England and the Empire who 'rushed to the colours' when war was declared. They created a first and often lasting impression. Brooke died and has thenceforth and forever been read, along with John MacRae, on subsequent memorials of the Great War. They created the myth of the soldier poet. However, Rosenberg, a reluctant mercenary, without patriotic conviction, hated the idea of war even before he joined up.[8] Richard Aldington's public reaction in the September, 1914, issue of The Egoist was scarcely gallant:

> First of all, numbers of the hangers-on of the arts, those dirty little vultures which hung around looking out merely for carrion, will be done away with....In London I know of only two artists who are not either charlatans, posers or 'vaniteux'....While France sends poets, painters and probably philosophers to fight, England cannot even call up her cricket and football teams. I'm damned if I'll be killed while there are five hundred professional football teams, with their attendant ministers, unslain.

---

[8] J. Silkin. Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War. Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 274.

Presumably Aldington waited for this slaughter before joining up over a year later. The experiences of both of these reluctant fighters are, nonetheless, accepted by anthologists and critics as war poetry.

The Brooke story added to the Julian Grenfell, the Wilfred Owen and the Isaac Rosenberg story has also led occasionally to the conclusion that the only good war poet is a dead war poet, but Herbert Read, David Jones and Siegfried Sassoon are proof that dying in battle is not required for inclusion in anthologies of war poetry. Indeed, Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling, non-combatants, are often included in the anthologies. If, then, it is possible for war poetry to be written by non-combatants, about things other than actual combat experience, what is the impediment to the consideration of war poetry by women?

When the poet may respond to a wide range of experience and express a wide range of reactions, the question to be asked of an individual poem is not so much what attitude is being created but how clearly is it expressed, how real is the experience, how believable is the feeling. Indeed, in some cases, Ivor Gurney's or Sassoon's for example, the experience overshadows the poetry; it becomes difficult to judge the quality of the poetry because of the quality of the experience or the quality of the emotion the experience evoked. Virginia Woolf discusses this problem writing about Sassoon in 1918:

> It is difficult to judge him dispassionately as a poet, because it is impossible to overlook the fact that he writes as a soldier. It is a fact, indeed, that he forces upon you, as if it were a matter of indifference to him whether you called him poet or not....Mr. Sassoon's poems are too much in the key of the gramophone at present, too fiercely suspicious of any comfort or compromise, to be read as poetry; but his contempt for palliative or subterfuge gives us the raw stuff of poetry...[9]

The poet on the jumbled edge of madness or possessed by uncontrolled rage may be incapable of careful artistic contemplation and craft. Thus war poetry is not always, or even usually, the best poetry. It is the "stuff of poetry". The ordered forms, lines and stanzas are adequate

---

[9] V. Woolf. "Two Soldier Poets". Times Literary Supplement. (11 July, 1918), p.323.

and suited to the early poems of the war, those describing an ordered world with ordered expectations and even for those poems describing order shattered or a longing for the return of order. But anger and disorientation, violence and mechanized slaughter required broken forms, appropriate language and a realism of sound, image, description and incident. The descriptive power of the Georgians, the clarity of the Imagists and the open shapes of vers libre were tools waiting to be forged into new and powerful shapes. Half-rhyme and internal sound pattern become more useful than rhyme. Broken rhythms suggest fragmented impressions. Owen uses a maimed sonnet for "Futility". The result is as suitable as Julian Grenfell's rhymed four line stanzas for soldiers marching "Into Battle". The question to be asked about McCrae's use of a rondeau for "In Flanders Fields" is not how trite has over-use made the poem but how suitable is such an ordered form for the ideas which McCrae expresses, regardless of whether the ideas are agreeable.

Tracing a history of the efforts to find suitable means of describing war experiences in the twentieth century may be a valid reason for preserving some war poetry. Only one or two of the war poets are accepted as being great poets. Each critic has a favourite, one whom he or she feels is fit to stand with Yeats and Eliot; Owen and Rosenberg divide the laurels between them, with an occasional sprig for Sir Herbert Read, but critical opinion has changed several times since the end of the First World War and will no doubt swing again. The rest of those who wrote war poetry are important because of their place in the genre, because of a facet of the experience or a way of expressing an experience which is worth preserving. In that context it is essential that the poetry written by women be given a hearing, be considered as a facet of the Great War which is in danger of disappearing.

The search for a definition of war poetry, the attempt to identify the proper content of war poetry, may yield at best the tautology that war poetry is the poetic expression of a war experience. If all war poetry were about experience at the front, a definition which excluded women from writing it might be justified. However, Rosenberg writes about his feelings on hearing that war is declared, Edward

Thomas considers the English country-side in a new, threatened, context, while Wilfred Owen writes about life in hospital and Sassoon about civilians in London. Bergonzi devotes a full chapter of Heroes' Twilight to "Civilian Response" discussing Kipling's bitter mourning for his son, and Lawrence's and Pound's disillusion and subsequent exile from post-war England as legitimate matter for poetry. The subject matter of war poetry, therefore, draws on more than combat, moments of danger or conditions in the trenches. War poetry also considers the changed world: changed attitudes to life and death, to art and illusion, to order and violence, and to war itself. The attitudes to war vary with each poet and each poet's experiences. The range from anticipation and excitement to acceptance, pity and anger is represented in most anthologies; indeed; the range of attitudes in one poet's work may be very wide. Four chapter headings from Men Who March Away provide a succinct indication of the range of experience as treated by the male poets, and the usual order of progress of their reactions to such experiences: Visions of Glory, The Bitter Truth, The Pity of War, and Aftermath.

Not every poet reached the same stage at the same time, but depending on each one's maturity, and length of time at the front, the development of each followed similar routes. In time this progression influenced non-combatants and criticism. Bergonzi's description of the Georgian poets as decent, worried liberals, deeply in love with the English country-side and past[10] probably applied in a general way to the whole English population and in a mythologizing way to much of the Empire at the declaration of the Great War. The appreciation of England's long history and of English pastoral beauty was genuine and a desire to defend this 'vision of glory' appears a bit vain only from our side of the trenches. The desire to defend all that was British was widely and clearly expressed in the first months of the war. Nonetheless, it was a view quickly shattered. Seeing, in the first months of the war, villages, farms and fields very like the English ones for which

---

[10] B. Bergonzi. Heroes' Twilight. London: Constable, 1965. p. 21

they were fighting blown to bits about them; suffering the lack of equipment, the make-shift arrangements for transport and accomodation; and becoming aware of the alarming ignorance of those in command quickly produced the disillusion heard in poems like Charles Hamilton Sorley's "All the Hills and Vales Along", or Edmund Blunden's "The Ancre at Hamel; Afterwards". The grief caused by the destruction of a way of life and a place is throbbing years later in Blunden's "1916 seen from 1921".

The surprise and horror are followed by the third phase of development, irony. Conscious that they have the 'wrong' attitude to danger, discomfort and death, poets like Ivor Gurney in "The Silent One" or "War Books" and Robert Graves in "To Robert Nichols" make ironic comments on their situation. Sassoon's bitter satire at once speaks of the battered emotions of a participant and the cold, protected stance of an observer. It is the willingness to participate in the pain and guilt which marks the fourth and final development of the war subjects by the male poets and elevates the poetry of Wilfred Owen and Isaac Rosenberg. The violence and inhumanity of a landscape in which machinery blows thousands of men and corpses to the winds speaks of a world far removed from that where "there's some corner of a foreign field/ That is for ever England." At each stage of this development there are valid statements of the war experience.

War poetry, then, is not necessarily heroic, though it may describe heroism. The trenches lack in colour, movement and spirit the shining space for Homeric spears or Light Brigade charges. The conditions of the Great War create a soldier who endures the decomposing of a comrade on the wire or lies for days in the mud of a shell crater. Men's training and education had taught them to view war as necessary, acceptable, exciting, indeed, as a test of manhood. The realities of the Great War challenged these attitudes. The poetry describes pointless suffering and meaningless destruction. Endurance becomes an heroic act. The final stages in the development of men's writing about the war makes room for both dashing and enduring heroism in war poetry. Women's experience of war has always required waiting, suffering and not knowing.Perhaps the predominance of the enduring

heroine in women's poetry about the Great War is another reason for the disappearance of their work. The women's experience, reflected in the poems in the Appendix, follows a different development from the one outlined in the two previous paragraphs. This very difference meant that women wrote about the enduring heroine before enduring became acceptable. The moment war was declared women's suffering had begun and their earliest poetry reflects this. By the end of the war, when men were expressing their anger and pain, women had moved on and the fact that they had said such things was forgotten.

To understand what poetry women wrote about the Great War it is necessary to look at both the popular magazines and the literary magazines in which their poetry was published. For whatever reasons, and some have already been suggested, the poetry written in the popular magazines is the sort with which women have been associated, and that which they published elsewhere, especially in the literary magazines, has been lost. Thus, a brief outline of the attitudes toward women evidenced by the two kinds of publications will provide a useful background for the criticism of the poetry which follows. The Canadian magazine, Saturday Night, and the American, Poetry; A Magazine of Verse, provide the bulk of the material because they printed large numbers of poems by women, published throughout the war, sometimes give other useful information about poets or poetry, and usually clearly identify the writers of material they publish.

CHAPTER 1: Shall we join the ladies?

Commenting upon the variety of women's responses to the war would seem unnecessary if it weren't so widely believed that all women reacted to the opening shots of the Great War, first, by collecting a store of white feathers and, second, by mailing these to all men not in uniform. In fact, in Canada some women, for whatever motives, objected strenuously to their husbands' enlisting. On September 19, 1914, Saturday Night reported:

> The extent to which Canadian militia officers have been held back from serving their country by the action of their wives will be disclosed in a return to be moved in the House. The return, if brought down, will contain the names in all cases, and will constitute a public record of the one unlovely feature of the war preparations in Canada.

Two weeks later the editor's urge to rhyme embellished the continuance of this news story, with apologies to Lovelace, by stating that, "I would not love thee, dear, so much,/ Loved I not honour more" had been supplanted by "I'd risk my life,/ But for my wife."

Women were acutely aware of the suffering which was to come. On September 26, 1914, "Canadienne" wrote in the women's pages of Saturday Night commending men's bravery in fighting but adding that:

> ...woman suffers from war more acutely than man, for the passive part is always more difficult to play...[T]o fall in the charge against the foe is to know little of anguish compared with the lot of the woman who awaits the tidings from the field.

Helen Minturn Seymour expressed the same opinion in The Dial of November, 1914:

> Now it is only fair that that half of the human race which gets the most misery and the least glory out of a war should be heard when war is discussed. A woman is driven from place to place like a sheep. If she dares fight, as some of the Belgian women fought, in defense of her home, she receives none of the honours of a soldier, but is shot without ceremony.... Yet women, "frail bodies and gentle minds" notwithstanding,

have rarely been behindhand in patriotism.

As Seymour pointed out, the role of women was not so passive as "Canadienne" believed. While men would have the comradeship of shared lives, shared tasks and shared dangers, even of shared anguish, the women would have to cope alone with family duties and crises, reduced incomes, increased chores and the daily anxiety about the fate of those they loved. Women would do the men's jobs as well as their own and take on, in addition, the manufacture of everything wars require, from shells to bandages. Indeed, in Britain the leaders of the suffrage movement put aside their demands for the vote and organized a campaign demanding that women be allowed to work for the war. The most draining and exhausting task, that of mending the broken bodies and minds which the war sent back, women took on without question. In the face of this it was, nonetheless, a point of honour to smile as their men left, to feign bravery if they did not feel it.

> There is hardly a tear to be seen until the train has gone, and then the women, gentle and simple, turn away with set faces....Wives and mothers and sisters and sweethearts stand and chat as if they were seeing their man off for his summer holiday instead of seeing him go into the jaws of death. And behind the smiles and the light words there is ever the haunting fear; there is always "something waiting" to be met, when one turns away as the train slips out taking all that one loves best.

Thus the women at Victoria Station were described by Saturday Night's London correspondent on September 18, 1915. The range of women's responses to war was, obviously, as various as the range of human behaviour in any crisis and this is the range we would expect to find reflected in women's poetry.

However, if they expressed themselves in poetry women are imagined to have indulged themselves in saccharine hymns to dedication and jingoistic exhortations to bravery. Indeed, it is true that many poems of this description were written and published, but women had no monopoly on the genre. "War Poems from The Times," a supplement to the August 9, 1915, Times immortalized such lines as:

Troops to our England true
Faring to Flanders,
God be with all of you
And your commanders.

by C.W. Brodribb,

Thou careless, awake!
Thou peacemaker, fight!
Stand England for honour,
And God guard the Right!

by Robert Bridges,

or For all we have and are
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and meet the war.
The Hun is at the gate.

by Rudyard Kipling.

These, gathered during the opening months of the war, are as trite and jingling as anything one could imagine. They are also unquestioning, appealing for some action rather than for thought. The early verse by women was less accepting of the inevitable war, more aware of coming pain. It was not until 1915, when the first waves of volunteers had been slaughtered and the propaganda of John Buchan's staff at Wellington House, combined with the efforts of recruiting officers, had begun, that stories about cads who don't fight or poems about its being preferable to love a dead hero than to have to live with a coward began appearing regularly in the popular press.

Vim

Did you face the trouble that came your way
With a resolute heart, and cheerful?
Or turn your soul from the light of day
With a craven heart and fearful?

...

The harder you're thrown, the higher you bounce.
Be proud of your blackened eye!
It isn't the fact that you're hurt that counts,
But how did you fight - and why?

And tho' you be done to death, what then?
If you did the best you could,
If you played your part in the world of men,
Why the Critic will call it good.

> Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,
> But whether 'tis slow or spry,
> It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,
> But only - how did you die?

The poem "Vim", from which these stanzas are quoted, appeared in The Mail and Empire for March 27, 1915. "Vim" is the sort of poem which women are supposed to have enjoyed writing and reading; that not all women appreciated such verse is clear from the response of the editor of the women's section of Saturday Night, April 10, when she learned that "Vim" was being included in Red Cross packages for sick and wounded soldiers.

> We should like to know if this perpetration of "poetry" is being forwarded with cholera belts, and who chose the imbecile stuff....Of all the brutal bromidism which has been manifested since the first week of August, the sending of this unholy screed is the most impressive. The only consolation is that our soldiers, sick or well, are probably too tired to read a lucubration of this length and so, it may be fed to the Germans. But the man or woman who suggested sending "Vim" with decent and well-behaved socks and cholera belts ought to be led out some fine April morning and kindly but firmly shot, for the good of the Allies. And as the near-soul of the shootee takes flight may it be permitted me to recite:
>
> > It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,
> > But only - how did you die?

A brief battle between Saturday Night and the Red Cross followed this attack on "Vim", lasting long enough to prove only that literary taste and good intentions are not always found in the same persons. The editors of the literary magazines, who were trying to encourage experiments in literature and educate modern tastes in poetry, were familiar with exactly this kind of struggle. In fact their magazines were a response to the quality of verse demanded by the popular press.

Both as expression of popular literary opinion and shapers of that opinion, magazines like Punch, Harpers and Saturday Night had incalculable influence. Consideration, therefore, of two poems appearing in Saturday Night on October 16, 1915, may cast some light on the style and content later attributed to women's poetry about the Great War. These two poems, their relative placement in the magazine and

their attitudes are not isolated examples of the role given to women but are representative of the popular magazines' editorial method, particularly during 1915.

The Watcher

He turned and smiled when he left me, my bright-eyed bonnie lad.
He waved his hand at the cross-road: Ah me, but my heart was sad:
I watched him pass the turnstile at the end of the lovers' lane,
And my tears were dropping softly, like drops on the window pane.

'Twas June when he passed the turnstile, and now the fall is come:
The maples are decked in crimson, I can hear the thresher hum:
So I sit and knit in the doorway, and as the needles play,
I sing the hymns we used to sing before he went away.

How he loved the "Rock of Ages", with its sweet old-fashioned tune;
Here side by side in the gloaming, we used to sit and croon;
And in spite of the shrieking shrapnel, and the bullets' searing flight
I know that the ROCK OF AGES is there in his trench to-night.

I set his place at the table, and pull up his easy chair;
His slippers are in the corner, his pipe and tobacco there;
The cover is turned on his bedstead, and into his room I creep,
As I did when he was a baby, to see if he's fast asleep.

Proud? Aye, I'm proud of my laddie, he's all I had to give;
But he went with his mother's blessing, that right and truth might live;
So I sit and knit in the doorway, from early morn to late,
And listen, Ah, I listen for the click of the garden gate!

J. Sydney Roe
Saturday Night, October 16, 1915.

The Soldier's Bride

She said,"When I shall love in truth
All gifts of mine my Love shall share.
Beauty shall bloom for him and youth
As a red rose to crown his hair!"

He came; but waves of war rose grim
Between him and the gifts she gave.
Their sum and substance yielded him
But a white rose to crown his grave.

Yet bride and nurse! you found a way
To stand beside him at the goal;
Your Red Cross showed, on that red day,
A rose of heaven to crown his soul!

Gertrude Ford
Saturday Night, October 16, 1915.

"The Watcher" appeared on the third page of Saturday Night, which was at that time divided into three sections: the first, a general section commented on events, politics and the arts; the second section was devoted to finances; the third was a women's section. "The Watcher" was printed in the general, as opposed to the women's, section, and was, therefore, intended for the general reader, male or female. It is written, or appears to be written, by a man who adopts a female persona; he is not the soldier's father but his mother. Thus the poet expresses the attitude of the female as the male wishes her to be. The mother in "The Watcher" sings hymn, knits, prepares everything for her son and sits, waiting, thinking only of him. She spends no time on a husband, or other children, or in the grinding duties of a farm wife. Indeed, she appears to be a widow with only one child as he was all she had to give. Thus she is as sentimentalized and "son-centred" as any son could wish. If men wrote, and expected to read, about this kind of woman, it is hardly surprising that many women obliged and wrote about themselves in the same passive vein. However, not all did.

"The Soldier's Bride" appeared on the women's page of the same issue of Saturday Night. It was written by a woman and chosen by the editor of the women's section for women readers. It is not unsentimental but it differs in a couple of important ways from "The Watcher". First, the experience being described is that of someone of the same sex and it describes action and feeling as it is experienced, not as it is idealized. It is reporting rather than dreaming. The poet uses the disarming technique of quoting her subject and this speech, although the girl's words are ideal enough, is placed in juxtaposition to the grim reality of the next stanzas. Second, the girl takes action to change or ameliorate the situation. She nurses; she joins the Red Cross

and reaches out to help her lover. She does not sit and wait; she does something: she does share "all gifts". It is interesting to note that this magazine on several occasions during the opening months of the war used its general news section to quote Milton on the virtue of standing and waiting, while the women's pages were occupied with the creation of Red Cross groups and the setting up of field hospitals and kitchens. Clearly post-war critics did not read the women's pages but were content with the personae created for women on the men's pages.

The division between passive women as men see them and active women as they are is not only evident in what poems appeared on which pages of the papers and what kinds of activities were approved; it determined the way men and women wrote about war poetry. As is clear from the Times " War Poetry Supplement" of August, 1915, each and every recognized poet felt duty bound to greet the opening of hostilities with a series of clichés. This occasioned much humorous handwringing among the critics.

Saturday Night of August 29, 1914, recoiled in horror from the work of professionals, such as Bridges' "The Peacemakers" and decried the host of amateur poets:

> Evidently Canada has as many poets as she has patriots, which is about seven millions and a half. The soldier goes to war and spills blood, but the poet stays at home and spills ink. Each defends the Empire in his own way, the advantage of greater safety lying with the poet. A great deal of the poetry being turned out between Prince Rupert, B.C. and Sydney, C.B. is tremendously explosive stuff that no cultured German would dare to face, and in that way it is a real bulwark...How raw the material is no one knows until he reads some of it.

In a review of war poetry in the same magazine on August 26, 1916, Fred Jacobs begins his complaint, "Pacifists tell us that war brings out all that is worst in man. The pacifists are evidently reading the war poetry in the daily press!"

Poetry and Drama in September, 1914, carps: "Thus few of the poems now appearing in the press can be taken seriously. The majority are in the nature of music hall songs or of rhymed leading articles!"

It was to books of poetry as well as to poems in the daily press that the criticism in the literary magazines addressed itself. In the November 3, 1914, issue of The Egoist John Gould Fletcher suggests that the books of war poetry already in print be sent to the Germans who "will explode with laughter," proving that poetry is of some use. By December 1, 1914, Herbert Blenheim in The Egoist has had time to versify his fears concerning the collections of war poems. He writes "Song: In War-Time" which ends:

> It isn't the horrors of war we fear
> The horrors of war, we've got 'em here,
> When the poets come on like waves and come
> At the sound of the drum, of the drum, drum, drum.

The male attitude to the problem of inferior verse is clearly widespread, appearing in both popular and literary journals, but the editors of the popular journals and of books of verse continued to prefer printing the hackneyed lines and ideas. When the poetry of Pound and his Imagists appeared in The New Poetry, edited by Harriet Monroe and Alice Henderson, Saturday Night[11] pronounced Pound's poetry "banal" and opted for the poems of Brooke, Masefield and De la Mare. It would seem that criticism rather than poetry was at a low ebb and that adventurous poets would find it very difficult to reach an audience.

A similar dissatisfaction with war literature, but one in a more positive, searching mood was to be found on the women's pages of the June 19, 1915, Saturday Night. The regular London correspondent, Mary Macleod Moore wrote:

> How will the war affect literature? people interested in the writing or selling of books are asking....Has the heroic and romantic side of war been killed by scientific warfare, with chemists on opposite sides pumping gas, as someone has said, or will some soldier rise from the ranks, free from the taint of any special school of literature, and write the book of the war telling us in clear vigorous language what war has meant to the soul of British manhood?

---

[11] Saturday Night. (September 1, 1917), p.8.

The question of a new war literature had been raised as early as September of 1914 by the editor of Poetry, Harriet Monroe.

> Poets have made more wars than kings, and war will not cease until they remove its glamour from the imaginations of men. What is the fundamental, the essential and psychological cause of war? The feeling in men's hearts that it is beautiful.... Kings and artists have united to give to war its glamour, to transmute into sounds and colours and forms of beauty its savagery and horror, to give heroic appeal to its unreason, a heroic excuse to its rage and lust....
> There will be a new poetry of war. Now and then one hears, if not the coming Cervantes' authentic message, yet a loud word of two of grim protest against the glamour.

Poetry gave more than a rhetorical call for a "new poetry of War"; Poetry announced a contest and offered prizes for the best war poems. There is a clear contrast between those who complained about the quality of poetry or complained that there was nowhere to publish good poetry and those who provided a place for new verse to be seen and shared.

The importance of the Great War as an influence on twentieth-century poetry is problematic. It is far too early to know who will be deemed, in another century, the great poets of our age. Nonetheless, as noted in the Introduction, the language required adequately to describe war experience, and the changed attitudes to heroism have influenced the way we think about poetry in significant ways. What has not been discussed is the importance of the women's movement in providing support, and a public for new poetry in the second decade of the century. T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Vachel Lindsay, James Joyce and a host of lesser poets were indebted for audiences, interest and often for financial support to women interested in poetry. In particular the poets were indebted to the little magazines, such as The Egoist, Little Review, and Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. Each of these was begun and edited by one or more women. The magazines had in common some relationship to the suffrage movement, a commitment to publish new ideas about literature, and a strong, if temporary, interest in Imagism. Each published a considerable number of women writers. Each also used and was used by Ezra Pound to promote his enthusiasms.

The Egoist was begun by Dora Marsden, in 1911, as The Freewoman. Marsden's ideas were grand and varied but her knowledge of economics was limited and The Freewoman failed financially. It was revived in 1913 as The New Freewoman with Marsden as editor, Rebecca West as an assistant editor and Harriet Weaver as treasurer and chief shareholder. On July 1, 1914, following protests from Pound and because of an increasing literary content there was a rearrangement which placed Harriet Weaver as editor and changed the name of the magazine from The New Freewoman to The Egoist, under which name it published until December, 1919. Marsden lived in the country and contributed editorials. Weaver managed the magazine and provided almost all of the necessary funds. During its first months the magazine published little poetry but in the August, 1913, issue Pound published several Imagist poems, including "In a Station of the Metro". For the next few months Pound was much involved, introducing Richard Aldington, H.D., F.S.Flint, Amy Lowell, and William Carlos Williams among others. In January of 1914 Aldington became an assistant editor. In February, 1914, another of Pound's discoveries, James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, began to appear in each issue. Pound's interests at this time became transatlantic. He became foreign editor of Poetry, publishing his Imagist friends there also, while The Egoist, except for a brief period when H.D. was assistant editor while Aldington was in France, devoted itself more to James Joyce and criticism and less to printing poetry.

Brief though its appearance was, The Egoist performed a vital service in introducing Imagism, Eliot and Joyce to an English public. Women writers, Marianne Moore, H.D., Amy Lowell, Helen Hoyt, were well represented in its pages and a woman, Muriel Ciolkowska, wrote a report on the war from Paris for each issue. The women were considered capable of holding their own in company with Eliot and Pound. The fact that there is in this collection little war poetry from The Egoist is curious in view of the numbers of women contributing to the magazine. However, there were few poems about the war by either sex printed in The Egoist. There were reviews of war poetry and parts of these are quoted elsewhere

in this work,but England in the first years of the war was not the place to publish poetry which used the methods and expressed the controversial ideas which the same poets could publish in non-combatant America.

It is difficult to imagine a magazine less stable then The Egoist with its changing names, changing assistant editors and its dependence on Weaver's private funds. However, Margaret Anderson's Little Review which began in March, 1914, and ran until 1929,exactly matched its creator's chaotic life. It was the only one of the three magazines which attempted to support itself by subscription and was, therefore, in constant financial distress. It was published in Chicago, San Francisco, New York and Paris, wherever Anderson's wandering feet took it. It began in March,1914,by announcing, "Feminism? A clear-thinking magazine can have only one attitude; the degree of ours is ardent!" By October of that year the magazine had offended many of its suffragette supporters and was deeply interested in Emma Goldman and anarchism. From 1914 to 1917 it published poetry and criticism about the poetry of a wide range of poets experimenting with Imagism, or vers libre. This culminated in a Vers Libre Contest judged by Eunice Tietjens, Helen Hoyt and William Carlos Williams in which H.D.'s "Sea Poppies" tied for first place with Maxwell Bodenheim's "Images of Friendship". In May of 1917 Pound became foreign editor of the Little Review, an event which he celebrated by blasting Poetry for hanging on to a lot of "old fools and fogies". For the next year the poetry in the Little Review was by Pound, Eliot and Yeats. Nonetheless, as in The Egoist,it is clear that during the Great War the poetry of women received in both of these magazines both an adequate respect and space.

Jane Heap,who had been Anderson's co-editor for many years,perhaps best sums up the variety and importance of the contribution of the Little Review in her final editorial before the magazine ceased publishing in 1929.

> For years we offered the Little Review as a trial-track for racers. We hoped to find artists who could run with the great artists of the past.... We have given space in the Little

> Review to 23 new systems of art (all now dead), representing 19 countries. In all of this we have not brought forward anything approaching a masterpiece except the "Ulysses" of Mr. Joyce. "Ulysses" will have to be the masterpiece of this time.

In the process the Little Review was a "trial-track" for a number of women poets and four of the poems in this collection originally appeared on its pages. The magazine did not print many poems or articles on the war, its concerns being with ideas rather than events, with anarchism and the social order. "Who Wants Blue Silk Roses?" and "Cheap" are typical of the ideas enlivening the pages of the Little Review. Anderson's own comment on the war was enigmatic. In April, 1917, the month that the United States entered the war, she left one page of the magazine empty except for:

The War

Margaret C. Anderson

at the top of the page and, in brackets at the bottom of the page: "We will probably be suppressed for this". They weren't, though it is interesting to note that the magazine printed only one poem on the war after this date and that was Lowell's "Dreams in War Time". Anderson would have enough difficulty with the censors over "Ulysses".

Harriet Monroe brought out the first issue of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse in October, 1912. It differed from the two previously discussed magazines in that it undertook to pay its contributors. Monroe's frustrations in getting her own poems printed made her realize the conservatism of editors and publishers who were unwilling to take any risks in publishing either books of poems, or in placing poetry in popular publications. Americans were willing to pay for art and music but not poetry. Monroe determined to build an audience for good poetry. By asking fifty businessmen to pledge a contribution for each of the next five years she ensured financial stability until the magazine became

known. She then wrote to a large number of poets whose work interested her asking them to submit their best work. With Ezra Pound as foreign editor to send poems from his protégés and Alice Corbin Henderson as her assistant, Monroe sometimes had what neither of the other magazines had, too much material. She could choose. She decided to exclude no schools of poetry, printing in one volume poets as different as Yeats, Pound, Sandburg and Bliss Carman. Despite this competition approximately a quarter of the poets appearing in any volume of Poetry at the time were women. Poetry not only printed more poetry by women, it printed more poetry about the war than the other literary magazines. In April, 1915, Brooke's sonnets, "Peace", "The Dead", and "The Soldier", appeared despite Monroe's misgivings. In June of that year, writing on the death of Brooke, Monroe said:

> In printing the sonnets I felt some regret that they celebrated the old illusions. War, to this poet-soldier, was glorified by the romantic glamour which,as it has been made mostly by the arts, must be stripped off by the arts if war is to become as archaic and absurd tomorrow as duelling is today....

Poetry had expressed an interest in a new war poetry and poets knew that experiments and opinions which no other publication would care to print might be accepted in Poetry. 19022, Private Frederic Manning, 3rd R.S.L.O., published poems in Poetry in 1916, thirteen years before The Middle Parts of Fortune appeared. Isaac Rosenberg's "Trench Poems" appeared in December 1916. Nineteen of the poems in the collection which follows appeared in Poetry.

After the United States had entered the war, Monroe's July 1917 editorial reflected a slight change in course, a willingness to wait for the future to bring a final statement on war.

> ...it may be that the great modern song of war will be written by one of our soldiers on French soil...as modern war is more terrible and world-engulfing than ever war was before, so the new war song, when it comes, may well express a terror and beauty, and an over-arching infinite love, beyond the... possible reach of the singers of lesser ages:

Nonetheless, Poetry continued to publish a few war poems. Violet Hunt's

"What the Civilian Saw" is from 1918 as is Margaret Postgate's "The Veteran" and Mary Shuey's "Quilts". These later, quietly desperate poems reflect the change in mood from the outrage expressed in the early poems of the war.

Within a month of the beginning of the war Poetry had announced a contest challenging poets to write a "new poetry of war". Seven hundred and thirty-eight entries arrived in response to that challenge and were read and judged without the poet's names being available to the judges. Twelve poems were printed as worthy of mention. Seven of these, including the poem which won first prize, were written by women. Three of those are included in this collection: Karle Wilson Baker's "Unser Gott", Amy Lowell's "Bombardment" which was not entered for the prize, and the winner of the one hundred dollar first prize, Louise Driscoll's "Metal Checks". None of the winners of Poetry's contest wrote sentimental exhortations to battle, which is hardly surprising in view of the magazine's editorial statement. The November, 1914, issue, in which all of the winners of mention were printed, closed with the quotation from "Chief Joseph on War":

> It is cold and we have no blankets;
> The little childfen are freezing to death.
> Hear me my chiefs; my heart is sick and sad;
> From where the sun now stands I will fight no more
> Forever!

Indeed the poem most accepting of war in that issue of the magazine is Richard Aldington's "War Yawp" which ends:

> There is always war and always peace;
> Always the war of the crowds,
> Always the great peace of the arts.

Aldington's attitude and his entering his poem in the contest is a useful illustration of Poetry's importance as a forum for a range of opinion. That Aldington who was, at the time, an assistant editor of The Egoist chose not to publish his poem there but chose instead to publish in an American magazine also illustrates the difficulty of printing certain opinions in England at the time.

This chapter has examined women's responses to the war and the role of popular and literary magazines in the publishing of those responses which were in the form of poetry. We have seen that women poets, in addition to struggling against the idea that war poetry was a male possession had to combat the attitudes formed by the popular press. The literary magazines, on the other hand, took women's poetry seriously, but as we have seen the most accessible magazine was Poetry, an American magazine. The only literary magazine in England publishing many war poems was The English Review and it did not begin doing this until war weariness had set in and substantial numbers of soldiers' poems began arriving in 1917. Unfortunately, as Donald Davie suggests in "In the Pity," an article appearing in The New Statesman, August 28, 1964, British readers have had an "insular and self-regarding" attitude to war poetry, considering it a particulary English possession. Thus, the women's early angry poetry, indeed all of the best of women's poetry with two notable exceptions, was published on the wrong side of the Atlantic.

Finally, the women poets did not conform to the pattern of development which male writers created. That the women wrote of pain and anger when it was proper to write of glory and sacrifice and that they then became contemplative at a time when the anger was beginning to be acceptable publicly becomes clear as the poems are examined.

CHAPTER 2: Fitting the pattern together.

What did the women write about? The poems in this collection are arranged in five groups, by subject area, without regard to date of writing. There are poems about war in a general sense in "All Assyria's Captains Are Dead"; they are occasioned by the Great War but could be about many wars: war's effects, war's recurrence, war's futility. Some of the poems, those in "They Seek Shelter", are about the helplessness of those caught in the path of war. One, in "Numb at Last", is written from the point of view of a soldier in the trenches. The poems in "When War Was Making Patch-Work of Her Soul" express the suffering of non-combatants: parents, lovers, ordinary people far from the guns, if not from the destruction. The last group, "Not Yet Will Those Measureless Fields Be Green Again", consisting of five poems written at the end of the war, illustrates the forward looking nature of the women's poetry. At a time when men were beginning to publish poems about their past experiences women were looking to the aftermath of war.

While reading the more than two thousand poems from which I chose the twenty-nine printed here, I was not searching for poems dealing with certain categories of experience or even for poems reflecting particular attitudes, though undoubtedly my own attitudes influenced my choices. I was hoping to find good poems. I chose poems which I felt tried to deal honestly and plainly with feelings and activities resulting from the fact that there was a war. I looked for poems which experimented with language and form suited to the emotions and content. When I had gathered what seemed at the time to be the best poems, their arrangement in these five sections allowed me to comment on recurring themes and subjects. The dating, where it is possible to discover it, and the significance of the place or time of publication I have included in my comments in this chapter.

I All Assyria's Captains Are Dead

The poems in this section treat of war rather than of specific war experiences. They are occasioned by the Great War but not by an event, either general or personal, of that war. They are unanimous, regardless of date of publication, in describing war as unglamorous and repugnant. In these poems the Assyrian wolf is seen clothed with no gleams of purple or gold, only with mud and blood. The poets' approaches to the subject are as varied as the language and forms they use but they consistently strive for methods adequate to express new attitudes.

In this group of poems only Amy Lowell's "The Allies", written in August, 1914, grants a necessity for war, and it sees no glamour. The allies are not heroic in a conventional sense; it is the enemy who is an "eagle with a sword" ruling the "polished sky". The allies are "weighted down with rifles and knapsacks, and parching with war". The teacher is an uncomfortable hero. "His boots are tight, the sun is hot and he may be shot", but he fights for a better world in which to teach. These troops are not conventional, nor is their dirt and pain glamorous. The poet is only a "dust speck" but he fights for "smooth, white sheets of paper". In this war the poets must fight rather than living in safety and romantically telling of the battle when it is over. Teachers, troubadours, all suffer, all lose their individuality to become part of the human "worm" which fights oppression. The fight is in no way exalted, though the cause may be.

Lowell enjoys manipulating the language. She piles sounds together as in the repetition of "brazen, burnished sky". She accumulates sibilants in "increase of the slow, sure roots of peace, for the release of hidden force". She is particularly successful with vowel sounds as when she echoes the harsh sound from "sky" throughout her first, defiant, stanza or contrasts with these the calm vowels and liquid consonants in the stanza on the poet. Some of the effects are unfortunate such as the search for synonyms for shout which requires the teacher to "shriek". More serious than this vocabulary limitation is the problem Lowell creates for the reader by her choice of eagle and worm as symbols.

So deeply is the worm buried in Western typology as representative of the devil, evil and mortality that a serpent united for "PEACE" is startling. If both armies were worms, using and enlarging the medieval figure of the knight as a worm cased in metal, and the fight for "PEACE" were then seen as an impossible struggle the poem might be more satisfying, but Lowell does not write it that way. Grace Blackburn, in a poem called "The Doom of the Gods" showed "War that is snake and eagle in one" in conflict with a "Death...a butcher in arms!" until "War, too, that was lusty, is dead!"[12] This is the outcome one might expect from such a conflict. The eagle's place in the order of animals is much higher than the worm's and the eagle is associated with the flight of the Gospel, or St. John, and for this reason is often found as part of the lectern for a church Bible. If the reversal of the symbols is intentional Lowell gives no clue. Rather she surprises us in the first line by making her serpent both stupid and eternal as it chases its own tail. The whole might be profoundly ironic if she had used these symbols more carefully, if the sword which is to be broken "to a million dying stars" were clearly the sword of the spirit and Lowell were indicting Christianity, as we shall see that several of the poets do, but this does not seem to be her purpose either. This poem, because it needs to be read only on the surface, is the weakest of Lowell's poems included in the collection; nonetheless, as a first reaction to the war, its attitude and language are worth considering.

Margaret Widdemer's "The Singer at the Gate" is both more calm and more searing than Lowell's "Allies". The poet uses couplets and a long line to express the futility felt by the poet who sings yet another generation to war. The poet avoids using archaic language to evoke the past, relying rather on homely images of dust, or fire, or leaves from the fallen empires: bringing the past alive rather than retreating to it.

---

[12] G. Blackburn. "The Doom of the Gods". Canadian Poems of the Great War. ed. J.W. Garvin. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1918, p. 23.

> Must I always herald the wisdom of Man who is blind, Blind-led
> Of kings who rule for an hour and die when the hour is dead....

These lines illustrate Widdemer's use of internal rhymes and repeated sounds to catch the tranquil, if bitter, view of the artist required to praise heroes who sweep art away. The weariness is increased by the repetition of "always" in the first and third line. She calls up each civilization with a word and then disposes of all the "shadows of visions". The complex relationship of poets to the heroes for whom the immortality of a poem creates both pattern and reward is suggested by showing the poetic dust which remains. The final stanza announces the poet's intention to abandon this activity, both the spinning of dreams for warriors and the lauding of their deeds. If this will not keep men from turning the world to ash it will at least remove the artist from participation in the destruction.

"Prayer","Sacrament", "Unser Gott" and "Where is Jehovah?" use conventional religious images in unusual ways to indict the war. The irony of the prayer for "power and glory" in "Prayer", the futility of "Grant us, O Lord, thy wine. But not this wine." in "Sacrament", and the bitter anger of "And there shall fall a million murdered men!" in "Unser Gott" are shocking in part because of the religious context. The poets at the same time misuse religious forms as a way of shocking the reader and question the religion which sanctions those forms if its theology allows such catastrophes. "Prayer" and "Sacrament" both rely on words and phrases from the liturgy to enrich the meaning by evoking more than one level of meaning.

O'Brien begins her "Prayer" with the cry from the depths of woe and sin, the psalmist's cry, for justice and mercy. Then the blank verse becomes more regular and the internal sounds are used to hold the central petitions which stray from the psalmist's pattern. The repetition of sound in "And beggars pray for bread, or pleasant weather" holds the the last of these normal petitions to a verse quality while the pause at "or" prepares the reader for the almost frivolous petition for "pleasant weather", a petition which marks the change of mood before the bitter prayer for power, which is accentuated both by

repetition and by the ironic use of the words of the Lord's Prayer. The final "nothing more", like the ashes at the end of Widdemer's poem, is capable of several interpretations and ends the poem with a sense of futility.

Margaret Sackville's "Sacrament" creates the petitioner both as participant in the mass and as Christ again crucified. The bread and the wine have in a terrifying way been transubstantiated and nightmarishly the elements spread, "overflowing", "crumbled", "poured forth!" The poet's reminders of a "world in flower", a "wild Spring hour", of "fields" and "earth" are unheeded by a berserk Lord who must be reminded that these are his children. In an article called "Women and War" in the November, 1916, issue of The English Review Sackville wrote:

> To them [women] it seems in the last degree unreasonable that they should bear sons in agony and love in order that these same sons should subsequently destroy themselves over questions which in the last resort can only be settled by reason and not by killing.

"Sacrament", written at about the same time, struggles with the same problem. Sackville begins the first two and the last two stanzas with the earth as altar on which the elements are liberally and only too literally "out-poured". In the central stanza, above earth's altar, the Lord himself treads the grapes. This is not a Christian God so much as a Moloch demanding an "awful sacrifice" from helpless children. This is a sacrament without meaning and the use of the meaningful, the familiar words from scripture and hymns, creates in the end the same sense of futility observed in the previous two poems.

Karle Wilson Baker's "Unser Gott" uses the words of Luther's "Ein Feste Burg" as a springboard for a consideration of racism and religion as causes of war. It is hard to imagine that this meditation was written in 1914 and not in 1945. The poem breaks down conventional religious ideas and the regularities of blank verse at the same time. In this poem "the old seat of gods" is literally threatened by "monoplanes" and Christianity is "dead machinery". The poem is less beautiful than Sackville's; it is more bitter and theologically more satisfying.

The cause of the war is not some incomprehensible god but small-minded humanity.

The first stanza, instead of describing a Belgian or French congregation praying for victory, forces the reader to see the enemy engaged in worship and convinced that he is right. The trochee stressing "said" in the third line gives an ironic twist to the line and the unsettling mood of the poem is hinted at. The rest of the stanza, except for another "said" purports to be unbiased description. It carefully avoids all but the slightest excesses of emotion, the sobbing, the tears and the fainting not being surprising at a mass meeting where the Kaiser appears in person to pray for victory. The conversational tone of "she said" and the uneven caesura give the whole the tone of an informal report. Then with a deft twist in the rhythm the two gods, the strong one and the "light-minded" one are sketched in an aside before the second stanza announces the poet's intention.

The thesis, "I think we all have made our God too small", is announced in regular rhythm, marching into the stanza, with the rhyme of "all" and "small" creating the sense of completeness in the line; it is not a thesis with any question about it. Christ is the tentative concept in this poem. Christ is unnamed, "a young man" and discussed in broken lines which suggest his lack of power when opposed by "these fierce/ Old hating Gods". Opposed to Christ's helplessness is the power of modern war, Zeppelins and monoplanes, mines and bombs, instruments of destruction. The destruction is powerfully and joyfully written.

The poet catches herself enjoying the destruction, "Sad jesting!" Her own sad honesty leads her to develop her thesis by pleading for honesty. "If kings must fight,/ Let them fight for their glory, openly..." Honesty demands that even the mourners be honest; a god who comforts by accepting women's sacrifices is as dangerous as a god who demands the upholding of territorial rights.

The fourth stanza is a startling and prophetic call for an end to racism. Having allowed that Servians "Might well be very interesting to God", Baker, a Texan, points her finger at her own country and her

inability to think of blacks as human. The chain of alienation stretches out, from the Germans who feel that they own Gott and Kultur, to the whites who are unable to see blacks as anything but monkeys. Baker then reminds the reader that "the young man" called all people important and noted the fall of each sparrow. She is clear about where the responsibility for war lies. If we cannot love our neighbours we are doomed to have enemies.

The notes of seriousness and irony alternate,balancing,through the poem until the reader is confronted in the last four lines, not with one sparrow, but with a "million murdered men". This ending with the same angry twist as Owen's last line for "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young" may apply to the Great War or any of the racial conflicts which Baker predicts as long as any race seeks to own "Unser Gott". The strength of pro-German feeling in the United States when this poem was written in the first month of the war may explain Baker's ability to weigh Germany and France, Austria and Serbia evenly but it does not account for her outspoken and courageous attack on American racism. This and "Where is Jehovah?"which follows it in the collection, are remarkable both for their ideas and their technical skill.

"Where is Jehovah?" by Mary Borden-Turner is one of the three poems in this collection which first appeared in an English magazine. The reader who turns the pages of war issues of The English Review finds hundreds of pages of prose, both fiction and non-fiction, devoted to the war: its being the war to end war, its being essential for freedom, its effects on workers, its economic hardship for women, its results for illegitimate children, its proper course and conclusion. Each issue of the magazine began with a poem or two; most of these are not about the war but those which are fail to voice in poetry anything of the concerns expressed in the prose. In October, 1914, "Motherhood" by Mrs. Huth Jackson ends with the lines:

> It is we who lie and listen in the trenches
> When the shell bursts like the thunder overhead;
> It is we who turn the piteous faces over
> In the search for the living and the dead.

This is a clear attempt to show the pain of those who experience all the agonies of their loved ones, but this is the best stanza in the poem and the poet cannot get rhythm to match her feeling. "One Night", published in February, 1915, is an eighteen couplet conversation with the moon. The poet was Millicent Sutherland, a nurse at Dunkirk. She struggles to use the persona of the moon to describe the battlefield but retreats before the immensity of the problem. "Red pools of gore and ghastly shadows lay/ In deep corners, so I sank away". As late as 1918 a soldier-poet, Theo van Beek, is still publishing in The English Review a poem on motherhood; in English publications, particularly, the stereotypes proved very hard to escape. But in August, 1917, while Sassoon and Owen were still writing their angriest poems, and early enough so that the poet could not possibly have seen Sassoon's The Old Huntsman and Other Poems, which appeared in 1917, a startling series of poems by Mary Borden-Turner appeared. The group was titled "At the Somme". "Where Is Jehovah?" was the first and longest of the three poems in the group.

The poem begins in ironic conversational tone. "This place would suit him", "It's all in the style of the God of Israel". If Borden were writing on World War II one would suspect that she'd seen too many Cecil B.DeMille films. The field is spread before us in the fashion of the romance. Then in three lines, each beginning with "Picardy", Borden uses a suggestion of Old Testament cadence to prove that she knows what language is suitable for Jehovah. However, "Jehovah has missed it". If God is like the one popularly publicised in churches and magazines then He has failed to use an opportunity. Then in a long line she uses repetition in two ways to build to the result of this absence of Jehovah. First she creates noise and fear with the repetition of the sounds in "thunder", "flare" and "flash". Then she creates a moment of suspense by holding off the word "dead" and substituting in its place "lead" in "Moses is dead and Joshua, who lead his people into the promised land, is dead". All the powers are dead; the soldiers spread across the plain have peen placed in this poetic setting only to find that they must, prosaically, "look after themselves".

It is not until she has established this sense of being alone that Borden focusses on the individual. This allows her to repeat the fire and noise, this time not as props for a god but in a list of monstrous forces massed against the individual soldier. The war conditions are starkly and surely drawn from "the few bare trees spitting bullets" to "eternity... whispering through the noise of the cannon". Each segment of the poem is organized in the same way, beginning with description and general statement, moving to lists of particulars and concluding by moving from the soldier's physical condition to his emotional state. At last, having created with the long lines and the lists a sense of the noise and confusion, Borden concentrates on the "speck" that is a man. The short, blunt sentences create the individual soldier, the quiet eye of all the activity, who does not know his own power or importance. Jehovah has been replaced by each single "stupid" man.

In a poem called "Unidentified", published in the December, 1917, issue of The English Review, Borden examines more fully the individual ordinary man. She shows him as church, state or merchant view him, as pitiable and contemptible and then reminds the powers of the world how they rely on this person.

> Is that then nothing, just his naked self, inviolate: pinning
> down a shaking world like a single nail that holds;
> A single rivet driven down to hold a universe together -
> ...Leave him in the grandeur of obscurity.

In "Where is Jehovah?" as in Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" the soldier walks "eye-deep in hell/ believing in old men's lies", unaware of his power. If Baker's thesis is that man's view of God is too small, Borden's is that man's view of himself is too small. Between them the two poets raise two vital questions about the causes of war.

Christianity is suspect, the poet's voice is unheeded and man is reduced to a number on the battlefield. "The Metal Checks", written by Louise Driscoll in the first months of the war, is prophetic in its vision of the numbers of slain and the loss of respect for the individual life which this slaughter entails. The World brings in the sacks of metal identity disks and Death counts them. The poem begins

in rhyming quatrains; the rhythm, the rhymes and the ideas are cliché as The Bearer begins. Death's rhythm is mechanical and even less feeling: "Three score - four score -/So many boys went out to war'. Then with the double use of "fallen" as noun and participle in "There's another fallen" and the casual "And a wife and child, perhaps" the poet jarringly calls attention to the attitude which accepts war and death as commonplace. If the cliché opening is then reread, the contrast between the common men who die and the kings who do not is a bitter comment. Driscoll is not the only poet to make the bitter observation that those who make the decisions are not the ones to die. Katharine Bates begins a poem called "When the Millennium Comes" with a condemnation of those who send thousands to death. "When the Millenium comes/ Only the kings will fight".[13] On this point the women and men poets ultimately agree; those who decree the fighting , whether they be kings, or politicians, or generals, are the ones who should be killed.

Driscoll's verse forms become less rigid in the eleven line stanzas with which The World questions the usefulness of so many graves and so much blood. When dealing with lives rather than the numbers of slain the lines and rhymes demand irregularity. The World holds up the sack which carries the souls, the sack of the body, of fleshly mortality and earthly graves and then, as it is empty, burns it. The sea of blood, like that river of blood where those who have committed violence are punished in Canto XII of Dante's Inferno, reminds us of earth's age and the recurrence of wars. At this point Death, oblivious to suffering, regretting only the unborn who will not live to die, intrudes with the count. Driscoll briefly raises Baker's question when The World asks, "Will souls say King or Kaiser?" but Driscoll, like Borden, is really more concerned with the worth of the individual. Reassessing this poem in July, 1917, after the United States'entry into the war, Monroe wrote in Poetry that it "is verse which, at its best may be classed as good journalism". This is to state the case in an unnecessarily negative

---

[13] K. Bates. The Retinue and Other Poems. New York, E.P.Dutton,1918.

way. The poem is imaginative and thoughtful and may at worst be, to use Woolf's phrase again, "the stuff of poetry". The poem has much forced rhythm and some forced rhymes and the voice of The Counter is not always consistent, but the reader is never sure to what extent the rhythm and rhyme are deliberately forced for effect. The tension of the dialogue and the contrast of "warm flesh folded on bone" with trays of metal disks create a powerful statement.

Alice Corbin was assistant editor of Poetry in its early months and maintained an interest in the magazine long after she had to leave Chicago for health reasons. Since before leaving for New Mexico in 1916, Corbin had read all of the war poetry printed in Poetry, and a good deal which was not, it is not surprising that she sums up some of the ideas presented in the other poems. In miniature, however, "The Great Air Birds Go Swiftly By" follows the development in "Where is Jehovah?", which it is very unlikely that she had seen.[14] The battlefield is spread out below the "air birds". Then the eyes focus on one face and the examination of one soul which leads to the conclusion that each man's soul is more important than the whole history of battles. Clearly by this time in 1917 with Europe and America at war some women on both sides of the Atlantic were united about what was the root cause of wars.

"Chalks: Black, Red, White" by Amy Lowell alternates a surrealistic prose account of a little boy directing his lead soldiers over the nursery floor with jingoistic verses sung by the lead soldiers. In an article titled "Miss Lowell's Discovery: Polyphonic Prose" John Gould Fletcher in the April, 1915, issue of Poetry rather fulsomely praised Lowell's poetic invention.

> During the past year something has happened in the sphere of the arts quite as important, in my opinion, as the European War in the sphere of politics.... A new poetic form, equal if not superior in value to vers libre, has made its appearance in English. The discoverer is a woman.

---

[14] Henderson's poem appeared in Poetry in July, 1917, while Borden's poem did not appear in The English Review until August, 1917.

> Had it been a man, we should probably all have heard by now of the richness of the form.

The tension in the poem is created in the contrast between this prosaic poetry and the rhymed, rhythmic verse interruptions, for which Lowell deliberately uses a form which is close to a jingle.

The prose sections describe the nursery, the fire and a toy mandarin holding a rose. A little boy, whose name insures that we realize that he is as much a soldier as his toys are, lies on the floor arranging the band, the infantry, the cavalry and the guns. The nodding mandarin representing the wisdom of the ages, resting on the bookcase, stares and nods; like the two Chinamen in Yeats' "Lapis Lazuli," the mandarin is beyond destruction. Its nodding marks time passing, uninfluenced by events, an effect emphasized by the repetition not only of "nods" but of the mandarin's attributes, a purple umbrella, and blue-green eyes which stare into the air. The only attribute which changes is the rose which the mandarin holds. It represents the arts. As the soldiers are placed on the floor the rose twists; as the soldiers march to battle the rose petals shrivel; as the soldiers become callous the rose petals writhe "like tortured snakes"; and as the tide of blood rises the rose too begins to bleed.

The fire begins and ends the poem. It is responsible for the warmth and cheerfulness of the nursery, and for the melting of the lead soldier. It is the only illumination, making the rose glow and the chimney flame with "fan-bursts of stars". The fire and the nursery are both capable of creating peaceful or warlike products. Here we see Lowell using symbols, perhaps too obviously, but in a complex and meaningful way. The child is the most interesting of the symbols in the poem. He is mature enough to know how to arrange for war, how to set objectives. He is also impressed by the brightness and newness of his toys and innocently unaware of the melting drummer and the dangerous washstand. His combination of knowledge and ignorance is as fatal as that against which Monroe warned when she called for an end to the glamour of war; as fatal as the attitudes of the generals in the first

years of the Great War.

The real romance of war, however, is proclaimed in the three rhymed sections. Here Lowell turns loose her love of consonance and assonance in the service of "prismed patriotism". The appearance of the soldiers with both sabres and buttons glittering is the dominating impression, with the ability to follow commands and the actual killing being lesser considerations. The object of war is to create more warriors, more Tommies. The whole poem is a good deal more sophisticated than its simple nursery tale exterior surface would suggest. The joy in pageantry, glitter and mindless efficiency are starkly at variance with the suffering of the rose and the "rising streams of blood", while both the militarism and the pain are at variance with the innocent in the nursery learning the traditional attitudes to war.

The poems which appear in the section called "All Assyria's Captains Are Dead" were, with the exception of "Sacrament" and "Where Is Jehovah?", published in America. "Where is Jehovah?" was published in August, 1917, and was one of the first poems published in England to express this bitter attitude and use such powerful techniques. Sackville's poem, though it is undeniably a protest, disguised its message somewhat, and was, moreover, published in a magazine of very limited circulation and duration. Questioning the war was not, at least in the early years, an acceptable attitude for poets in England. Lowell, Baker, Driscoll and Widdemer voiced their anger and their search for the causes of war at a time when Owen and Sassoon were writing poems which accepted war as a challenge.

It is the search for the causes of war which is the main theme of women's early reaction. They look to the artist, to education, to God and religion and to the human soul for reason. They value the individual even as part of "a worm", and cry out against even the arts and religion if these devalue the children they bear. The poems in this section question the basic assumptions of societies which encourage war and the institutions which condone war. The poems express

helplessness and bitterness in the face of events which are destructive of the worth of persons.

II They Seek Shelter

The most pitied of war's victims, though often the least aided, are the civilian populations over-run or caught in the cross-fire of advancing armies. The poems dealing with the plight of women and children and old men driven from their homes are the most sentimental of the collection. It is difficult to know whether the familiarity of the situation and the use of stereotyped characters forces the use of familiar phrases, or familiar rhyme and rhythm patterns or the other way about. Mechanized warfare, trench warfare, war on this scale was new and eventually demanded new description, but there have been refugees since Eden.

A child crying appears in "Refugees", "The Bombardment" and "War" and in each case there is also a sacrificing mother. In "Refugees" the child complains of the long road and his hunger and weariness, while his mother prays for the safety of an untraveled road and healing for feet wounded by stones. The woman holds the image of the brave soldier before her son to give him courage while she prays to be delivered from soldiers; she clings to a God who is powerless to help her. In "War" the narrator is a child who watches her mother through childbirth and then, fleeing, can find no aid for her baby brother who starves to death. God in this poem is not simply powerless but dead: "We had no milk for little Christ/ And so he starved to death". The childish point of view, the brave attendance at the mother's labour, and the "long dust-gray roads" are hopelessly sentimental; however, the bitterness evoked by the contrasts between the smiling Virgin Mary who plays "All day with baby Jesus' feet" and the actual birth where "all I could do/ was, stop my ears and pray..." cuts through the saccharine.

"Refugees" and "War" are alike in being cast in rigid rhymed quatrains. For "Refugees" this form is as destructive as the sentiment. The rhythm jangles and every line thuds to a halt on its rhyme; it is the prayers in parenthesis which give the poem what power it possesses,

partly because they break the mindless flow of iambs. "War" makes use of short lines, run-on-lines and caesura which move about in the line to remove the emphasis from the rhyme. In addition, sound and image in phrases such as "whitely sweet", "buzzy bumping flies" and "lips and weak/ wee hands...nuzzling" create moments of sensation rather than sentiment.

Life and emotion abound in the third poem of this group, Lowell's "Bombardment". The impotent church and the frightened child are elements in this poem also, but what a difference the free form and the focus on the destructive "Boom" makel Lowell's control of sound is more sure here than in "The Allies". The rhymes as in "it leaps into the night and hisses against the rain. The Cathedral is a burning stain on the white wet night" work to emphasize the symbols. "Torch" and "scorch" are, perhaps, too close to each other for comfort but in most cases the internal rhymes work to create emphasis without calling attention to themselves. Rain and tears, broken glass and steeple fall; the Bohemian glass representing the past, the art of the poet's dreams, and the scientist's hopes for the future, all are shattered as flame blossoms and consumes. Lowell introduces an image, like rain, focusses on a single drop sliding over Saint John's statue, measures the rush of water against the noise of guns, reminisces about peace-time fountains and sweeps it all into a gutter. Fire and glass, home and church are similarly introduced, interwoven and destroyed by the inexorable "Boom!" Lowell called this form of poetry 'polyphonic prose' but its roots are firmly in the Imagist movement with which she was deeply involved at the outbreak of the war. It is interesting to speculate on the influence of this poem's form and images on Herbert Read who came to the Imagist movement as the Imagists were leaving it. Read's "Cupid's Everlasting Honeymoon" has more than one image in common with Lowell's "Bombardment".

The reactions to "Bombardment" were as violent as the reactions to the "new poetry" with which it appeared; but even among Lowell's friends the reaction was mixed. While D.H. Lawrence wrote to say, "I was quite cross with you for writing about bohemian glass and stalks

of flame, when the thing is so ugly and bitter to the soul",[15] a critic friend writing in the May 1, 1915 issue of The Egoist, pays "Bombardment"the ultimate compliment. John Gould Fletcher writes:

> Let anyone read her "Bombardment", perhaps one of the best poems that this war has called forth.... One would almost say the 'Amy Lowell' was a pseudonym, and that such arraignment of warfare could only have been written by a man.

The greatest irony in this statement is that only women had been writing arraignments of warfare at this time. If only because of the controversy it caused at the time, "Bombardment" should be included in discussions of the poetry of the Great War. It was one of the poems which Lowell chose to read from public platforms in her passionate crusade to convert American audiences to modern poetry. The effect of her large presence declaiming this poem must have been electrifying especially when, on one occasion, a bass drum was used for the "Boom".

Both Aldington and Lawrence later wrote poems called "Bombardment". Aldington's poem, written about two years later,has neither the tension, the noise nor the sense of place that Lowell's poem has. His

> Four days the earth was rent and torn
> By bursting steel,
> The houses fell about us...

has none of the clarity of the fountain which "tosses itself up at blue sky" in the fractured dreams of Lowell's poet. Lawrence's "Bombardment" is more clearly a reaction to Lowell's poem. Here we see a bombardment as the Imagist rules dictate a bombardment should be, as if Lawrence were giving Lowell lessons in Imagism.

> The town has opened to the sun.
> Like a flat red lily with a million petals
> She unfolds, she comes undone.
>
> A sharp sky brushes upon
> The myriad glittering chimney-tops
> As she gently exhales to the sun.

---

[15] S. Foster Damon. Amy Lowell: A Chronicle. Connecticut, Archon Books, 1966, p.278.

Hurrying creatures run
Down the labyrinth of the sinister flower.
What is it they shun?

A dark bird falls from the sun.
It curves in a rush to the heart of the vast
Flower: the day has begun.

The town is transformed at once into a "flat red lily". Whether a red lily is more suitable than the "bohemian glass and stalks of flame" to which Lawrence objected in Lowell's poem is questionable. Lawrence goes on to use a bird as a symbol for a bomb. Without the title the reader would be unable to make the connection between what is said and the event described, thus using a fairly common Imagist technique. Lawrence uses Lowell's "red" and her "glittering" but rejects her use of sympathetic rain and darkness. His horror is set in sunlight though the sharp sky is reminiscent of Lowell's "jutted stars" and "sharp edges of the night" in "The Taxi". Lawrence's "Sharp sky" and "sinister flower" and the need to "shun" something are the only hints of evil or danger. This avoidance of the actual destruction makes of "she comes undone" and "the day has begun" exquisitely suggestive and ironic statements. The flower of civilization, a scarlet madonna "undone," receives at her heart a "dark bird". Lawrence's economy is breathtaking and the poem has all the power of a sexual attack.

In "The Painter on Silk" Lowell in a completely different mood evokes the civilian who is incapable of understanding the situation or of helping himself. The contrast between the imagined roses and the real drums is the same as the contrast between the smiling Virgin and the screaming mother in "War". However, in "The Painter on Silk" there is the suggestion that the old man's impotence is, at least in part, a result of his lack of interest in "the noises of the street". The citizen, the artist, has a responsibility to speak out and not to retreat to the fragile world of silk roses. The artist who ignores events may, indeed, be deprived of a voice. Lowell, like Widdemer, is concerned with the artist's relationship to war both because art is destroyed by war and because the artist is in a position to make a

public statement.

Unlike the refugees in "Bombardment", the women who wrote these poems did not "seek shelter"; they sought causes. All of the poems in this section are representations of imagined experiences; the poets create the personae and places in order to comment on aspects of war. The experience is that of the helpless civilian in a war zone, but the questions are the same as the questions of the poets in the first group of poems. Why do religion and the arts fail? The split between the real and the ideal world is clear in each of these poems. The mother in "Refugees" uses the ideal of the soldier while she prays to be delivered from the reality of soldiers. The idealized Christ stays in the church; the artist stays with his silk roses. There is a frustration in all of these poems about the beginning of the war, a striving to discover the causes of the separation between the real and the ideal world.

III Numb at Last

Few women poets chose the personae of soldiers when they wrote of the war. Few even described the soldier's war experience in the third person. Lowell in "The Allies" has difficulty describing the soldier without over-dramatizing. The problem is the same as the problem male poets had, in poems like "The Watcher", when they used the persona of the mother or wife. The persona's behaviour is too obviously dictated by wishful thinking. Sentiment overcomes sense. Maud Anna Bell begins "From a Trench" with familiar but effective images.

> Out here the dogs of war run loose,
> Their whipper-in is Death;
> Across the spoilt and battered fields
> We hear their sobbing breath.
> The fields where grew the living corn
> Are heavy with our dead;
> Yet still the fields at home are green
> And I have heard it said:
>
> That -

There are crocuses at Nottingham!
Wild crocuses at Nottingham!
Blue crocuses at Nottingham!
Though here the grass is red.[16]

The comparison between the living grain and the dead men is moving and in keeping with the grandeur of the classical image. The refrain which echoes, if it does not parody, Brooke's "Grantchester" might be forgiven as reminding the reader of the poet who most represented English soldier-poets at this time before the poetry of Owen and Sassoon appeared. However, Bell cannot sustain this voice. In the next stanza she becomes familiar.

There are little girls at Nottingham
Who do not dread the Boche,
Young girls at school at Nottingham
(Lord! how I need a wash!) ...

By the time she reaches the final stanza she is juxtaposing phrases to no purpose. The grass and purple slime are a bit grim and the tree for birds to mate in is dragged into the landscape.

But here we trample down the grass
Into a purple slime;
There lives no tree to give the birds
House room in pairing time.

...

Why!
There are crocuses at Nottingham!
Bright crocuses at Nottingham!
Real crocuses at Nottingham!
Because we're here in Hell.

Thus although the final chorus has power to match the opening lines Bell, because she cannot sustain the persona of the man in the trench, because she tells of the things she would fight for, fails to create a unified experience. For that reason "From a Trench" is not included in the poems collected in the Appendix.

---

[16]Maud Bell. London Songs and Others. Bristol, Horshoe Publishing, 1924.

Alice Corbin in "Fallen" which appeared in the November, 1914, issue of Poetry, describes a soldier at the moment of death, thus avoiding the necessity of evoking the trenches or the emotions of battle.

Fallen

He was wounded and he fell in the midst of hoarse shouting.
The tide passed, and the waves came and whispered about his ankles.
For off he heard a cock crow - children laughing,
Rising at dawn to greet the storm of petals
Shaken from apple-boughs; he heard them cry,
And turned to find the breast of her,
And sank confused with a little sigh...
Thereafter water running, and a voice
That seemed to stir and flutter through the trenches
And set dead lips to talking...

Wreckage was mingled with the storm of petals...

He felt her near him, and the weight dropped off - -

Suddenly...

The majority of the description in this poem, printed here in its entirety, is of the soldier's home and family. The unifying image of a storm, of war, of apple blossoms,or at sea, moves the reader from one impression to the next smoothly. However, while Corbin may capture the moment of death she loses the sense of war. Its tide passes and the rest of the poem is concerned with the dying man's memories.

Harriet Monroe's "A Letter of Farewell" is included in the collection because it is the most successful of the poems in which a women struggles to imagine the soldier's life. The poem, printed in January, 1917, is also curious for having been written before the United States entered the war and before the French mutinied in 1917. Monroe clearly tries to imagine her background and experiences personified in a French soldier. The person who had been a scholar, loving poetry, meets the challenge of death "on dancing feet" until he grows numb to suffering. It is only when battered to insensibility that the poet recognizes the enemy as a brother and regains his idealism. This allows him to see his country as it should be.

As an editor Monroe had exhorted poets to write of war without its glamour; her reception of Brooke had been cool because he "celebrated

old illusions". Here she tries to put into practice her theories.

In "A Letter of Farewell" many aspects of war receive a new treatment. The descriptions sometimes have startlingly realistic touches especially in view of the fact that no one but Robert Nichols had published poems about the trenches at this time. The lines:

> The torn flesh bleeding, the horrible bodies long dead,
> The ruined towns sprawling like toothless hags

show the effort to describe the indescribable. The result is a mixture of success and failure. "Torn flesh" creates the sound and image Monroe is struggling for while "horrible bodies long dead" is slack and general. Then the use of "sprawling" and "toothless" is a suggestive as well as a clear image. A cliché, "stuck them like squeaking pigs" is followed by a spectacular sense inpression,

> The soft flesh sputtering,
> The nick of the steel at bones,

which is chilling in its exactness. "A Letter of Farewell" is a valiant attempt to question the value of war by suggesting that the apparent coward may have the qualities of a hero in a situation which is utterly repugnant to romantic heroism. It is unfortunate that the form, a letter to "Mother, little mother", the language, "France needed her sons for war" or "cast off like the plague" and the ideas, "I don't mind dying for it -/ That nation" tritely use the very icons Monroe is trying to smash. Maxwell Bodenheim in Others for April, 1916, said of Monroe "...her moods of sentimental reverence are not part of the new poetic trend. As an appreciator of poetry she is a giant, but as a poet, she is too far behind the van". She allows her vers libre too much liberty. Words, phrases, whole lines, are slack, redundant or silly. The soldier's voice is inconsistent: sometimes jarringly colloquial, sometimes childishly monosyllabic, occasionaly very effective. Perhaps her effort to suggest that "the old epics" are inadequate, and that war in reality is feeling "The soft flesh sputtering ... no more than the crunch of an insect", and that the sin of war must be "cast off" all in one poem is too ambitious. Certainly her

technique is inadequate for her vision.

IV When War Was Making Patch-Work of Her Soul

The poems written to express the pain of women who are left behind raise fewer questions about quality. In this section there is not a hint of archaic language, and mechanical rhyme is almost banished; instead, the sound patterns, images and lines suit the content. The images are images of raising children, using cloth, making quilts, trimming hats or touching plants. The voice, far from being sentimental, is often purposely unemotional, to the point of sarcasm in some poems. "Ducks think wet feet are best" says the destitute hat-maker in Sade Iverson's "Who Wants Blue Silk Roses?"; "You see, the women are the ones that attend to this/ And they work cheap", says Helen Hoyt in "Cheap"; like Josephine Wright in "The Song of the Sock", who calls into question women's usefulness by laughing at it, these voices underplay the importance of women's contribution deliberately. The poems are touching often, but the emotions are not indulged; they are used to make statements about suffering in wartime.

These poems do raise questions about the proper content of war poetry, however, because the suffering is not the suffering of men at the front. These are people hundreds, thousands of miles away from mud and bombs and instant death. If Thomas Hardy's fears of war before it begins and Edward Thomas' pastoral contemplation of war before he reaches the front and Edmund Blunden's remembrance of death when he is at a skating party are all war poems, then these are war poems. If a captain may sympathize with his men and a man may sympathize with a comrade, then mothers and wives and sweethearts, even nannies, may express feeling for their men. The starving hatmaker in "Who Wants Blue Silk Roses?" is "A victim of the war" though she has not seen "the tragic trenches where men die". The present is as hideous to the persons of Catherine Well's "War" or Lowell's "Dreams in War Time" as it is to Aldington; the past is as lost to Great-aunt Elizabeth in "Quilts" as it is to Sassoon. War poetry is a poetic expression of all the ideas, emotions and events of war.

The poems in this section are limited to those expressly mentioning the Great War. Such poems as those by H.D. when her husband was at the front or destroying their marriage while wracked with neurasthenia, or those which Amy Lowell wrote about other wars, such as those in Can Grande's Castle, although they were a direct result of the Great War, have not been included in this exploratory and necessarily limited study. With this exception,and with the proviso that they reflect a poetic level which is adequate and often excellent, the poems chosen reflect as many facets of women's experience in wartime as possible.

Three roles, those of mother, wife and nurse, require special mention. They are, not surprisingly, the most commonly treated. These roles, perhaps because they are so frequently treated, perhaps because they call up a long history of expectations, cause the poets the most difficulty. Cliché ideas, phrases and words mar many of the attempts to express the feelings of the women most intimately touched by war.

As noted earlier Sutherland in "One Night" "sank away" from describing the horrors of battlefields though she was nursing in Dunkirk and saw the casualties while they were still muddy. Esther Kerry in a series of poems on her experience as a V.A.D. creates a clear picture of her duties at "Hurley Place" but cannot quite create compassion, either for the nurses or the men.

"Hurley Place"

Five white aprons
Flitting through the garden,
'Tis the hour of sunset
The day's work is done
Through the leafy pathways,
Underneath the plane trees,
Gleam the five white aprons,
The day's work is done.

Five blue gowns are
Covering girlish figures,
Who walk a little weary
The day's work was hard;
Swaying down the garden,
Resting on the railed gate
Looking towards the sunset,
The day's work was hard.

Five pairs of hands
Have wielded broom and duster,
Washed all the dishes
Scrubbed the pantry floor,
Polished up the silver
Scoured the pots and saucepans,
Opened with anxiety
And closed the oven door.

Five pairs of feet
Crunching on the gravel,
Have run about since morning
Upstairs and down;
In and out the bedrooms,
Waiting on the tables,
From scullery to kitchen,
With cheery pattering sound.

Five white-coifed heads,
With veils demurely tied in,
Fluttering a little
In the scented evening breeze,
Nod and meet together
And wonder why they do this,
Working as they never worked
In former days of ease.

Five red crosses
Shining in the twilight
Tell the reason better
Than any words can say;
Service for the helpless,
Drudgery quite selfless,
Then rest in the garden
At the close of day.[17]

Kerry's poem, one of a series on the work of the V.A.D., has a simple straightforward manner. The homely chores are treated with dignity and the descriptions of the young women try for a plain use of sense impression. The regular use of five as a unit, however, creates an anonymous, general nurse with communal feelings. This group treatment provides,both for reader and poet, protection from any powerful emotion. The fluttering and "demurely tied in" girls are, perhaps, too tired to feel. The poem has a limited number of trite phrases and the daily chores clearly loom large. The exhaustion is almost conveyed but the feeling for the job is not.

Grace Mary Golden in "The Nurse" has more success revealing her motives and her emotions:

Here in the long white ward I stand,
  Pausing a little breathless space,
Touching a restless, fevered hand,
  Murmuring comfort's commonplace -

Long enough pause to feel the cold
  Fingers of fear about my heart:
Just for a moment, uncontrolled,
  All the pent tears of pity start.

While here I strive, as best I may,
  Strangers' long hours of pain to ease

Dumbly I question: Far away
Lies my beloved even as these?[18]

Like the girl in Gertrude Ford's "The Soldier's Bride", quoted in Chapter I, this nurse has taken on her task in order to help a loved one. The controlled tears, just below the surface, are realistic but

---

[17] E. Kerry. He is a Canadian. Montreal, Regal Press, 1919.

[18] G. Golden. Backgrounds. Oxford, B.H. Blackwell, 1917.

spoiled by the need to rhyme and the use of "pent" which is both a little contrived and rather harsh in sound. Golden's nurse also merely touches a "restless, fevered hand". If that is all she does to ease the soldiers' "long hours of pain" she leaves the reader with a stereotyped and sterile picture of her experience.

Both of these poems represent the quality of the majority of the poems published in books of war poetry. The effort creates an adequate but unexciting verse. The popular press, especially magazines like Punch, also created a market for verse like this one by an anonymous V.A.D. The poem is called "Washing Up".

> Sing a song of washing-up, sing of making clean,
> Think how brilliant and how pure these knives and forks have been!
> Underneath this greasy mess the plates are white and blue -
> See what boiling water and a little mop can do![19]

This is not to suggest that washing dishes and climbing the back stairs was not war experience for these women; the hours and the anxiety were valid, gruelling experiences but women did not find it easy to join the emotion to the description. The fact that there were many attempts to write of the nursing experience and only a few successful ones is not surprising.

Indeed, if the effort to express reactions to the conditions in the hospitals was difficult, expressing reactions to separation, anxiety and waste of beloved lives proved almost impossible. "The Watcher" and Monroe's "A Letter of Farewell" illustrate some of the dangers associated with writing of motherhood, the idealizing of the person who expects her son to be brave while she sits and waits. The effort to justify the waste of life can be seen in Mrs. Glasgow's "Dulce et Decorum" from the January 14, 1916, issue of Punch. The poem begins "O young and brave, it is not sweet to die..." Mrs. Glasgow deals with the reasons for this sacrifice in "We Give Our Sons" in the same magazine for May 10, 1916. "We Give Our Sons" ends:

---

[19] E.H.D. Colliton: and Other Verses by a V.A.D. Bournemouth, E. Cooper, 1924.

We did not give you - all unasked you went,
Sons of a greater motherhood than ours;
To our proud hearts your young brief lives were lent,
Then swept beyond us by restless powers.
Only we hear, when we have lost our all,
That far clear call.[20]

Thus most motherhood convinced itself, since it was given little choice in the original decision, that the country and its men required her to make the sacrifice, that their bravery must be matched, not questioned. Mrs. Glasgow, therefore, ends her "Dulce et Decorum" with "So sweet to live? Magnificent to die". This is the attitude expressed by the majority of poems dealing with motherhood, those appearing in books and the popular press. Like the men's early poetry which celebrated glory and sacrifice, women had to prepare for loss or lose their sanity. In addition to this psychological reason there had to be a logical, or stated reason for the pain. There were many reasons given for this acceptance of the men's participation in a deadly game, but a common one is clearly stated in the last stanza of a three stanza poem, "The Prayer of Women", by S. Gertrude Ford.

While nation upon nation broke in strife,
While ancient friends, war maddened, clashed as foes,
While Death's artillery shook the Gates of Life,
The prayer of maid and mother and wife arose;
"Give us" they still prayed on through fire and sword,
"Peace in our time, O Lord!" [20]

This poem, written early in the war does not glorify battle, nor look forward to the sacrifice. However, whether read at face value, as it was undoubtedly intended, or as sarcasm, the poet sees "maid and mother and wife" as having no power beyond the power to pray, an attitude also clearly expressed in a very simple poem by Norah Sheppard, "Killed in Action".

---

[20] S. Gertrude Ford. Poems of War and Peace. London, Erskine M. MacDonald, 1914. (This date was estimated by the University of Alberta or their supplier and cannot be correct.)

He was so young, O God!
The path where Youth and Manhood meet he trod,
And life was full of promise, rich and rare.
This blow which Thou hast dealt I scarce can bear;
O help me, comfort me in my despair.

He was my only son!
I try, O God, to say, "Thy will be done";
But Thou, whose Son upon the Cross didst die,
Thou Who alone dost hear my bitter cry,
Canst know my grief and my heart's agony.[21]

This is a helplessness rejected by the women who published the poems in the first section of this collection. The use of God as comforter is, in fact, one danger against which Baker warns women in "Unser Gott". The sense of frustration in "The Prayer of Women" and the inability to say, "Thy will be done", in "Killed in Action" are proofs that helpless dependence on God's will is not an attitude which works very well, either emotionally or poetically. "Killed in Action" is an excellent illustration of the problem of cliché. The diction is not archaic, or romantic; the syntax is twisted only slightly to provide a rhyme on "scarce can bear"; the statement of hope and despair is clear; yet phrase after phrase is timeworn. Perhaps the situation also is timeworn, but the poet here fails to create either a real soldier or a real mother, though she does create a heartfelt cry.

The younger women mourn missed opportunities. Catherine Kirsopp in "Little Unborn Children" published in The English Review of July, 1918, expresses the anguish of a generation of women who will never marry, or whose young husbands are dead. "She walks with little unborn children clinging to her hands/ Her eyes are blue with misty dreams that no man understands". These unborn children are often more successful, because of the waste implied, than the babes which mothers clasp sentimentally as reminders of dead husbands.

What wonders have I felt and Heard?
Is it the wing-beats of a bird?
Tap tap, tap tap!

---

[21]Lillie A Brooks, ed. The Band of Purple. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1915.

My boy is gone, yet near my heart another boy lies now.
Though he be dumb,
He thumps my heart like soldiers thump, he thumps a tow-row-row,
To say he's come.
A drummer boy all gaily dres't,
Will yet again be at my breast.
Hark! There's his drum!

The last stanza of "The Drum" by Neil Lyons, quoted above, is not the only example of this way of coping with loss. The poem was published on October, 23, 1915, in Saturday Night. Its placement on page three suggests, as did the placement of "The Watcher", the sort of female reaction that male editors of Saturday Night cherished. This may also explain why the emotion is not convincing. Surely it was this sort of replacement of cannon fodder that Lowell was questioning in "Chalks: Black, Red, White" when she showed the nursery as a training ground for soldiers.

The role of women, mourning for men going off to the wars, is ancient and prescribed. The Great War differed from others only in the numbers of men to be mourned. Naturally there are many verses which express grief in common and hackneyed ways. Nevertheless, the excellence of some of the poems is exciting. For the most part the women who best succeed in giving words to their anger and grief do it obliquely, by describing something else, by remembering shared reactions, by concentrating on familiar tasks.

The publication of "The Song of the Sock" was in more than one way the result of the war. The opening of hostilities caused a breakdown in the regular mail from the continent and Weaver, editor of The Egoist, was left with a large empty space when neither the next installment of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist nor an article by a writer caught in Germany arrived. Under the pen name, Josephine Wright, she published her own work, a review of three suffragette papers and a verse. Despite, or perhaps because of, its not being intended for publication this poem has the satiric voice heard in early war poems by women but, with this exception, published only in non-combatant America. Weaver's strong views about equality for women and her struggle against the suffragette

movement as inadequate to provide equality for women slip into the "let's all be useful" and the stress on "always"

The poet appears to have been prescient about the number of knitting poems which would be published. Cicily Fox Smith, who wrote regularly for Punch, contributed "The Knitters" to the February 6, 1915, issue of Saturday Night.

In streets that are humming
With the city's stir,
Or where the leaves fall rustling
Through the quiet air,
There are women knitting
Everywhere.

Knitting and waiting
Through hours like years,
Not with loud grieving,
Nor sighing nor tears;
In their hands the needles
Flash like spears.

Every thread a sorrow,
Every strand a prayer -
("O, where sleeps my dear one?
Or how does he fare?")
There are women knitting
Everywhere.

This suggests the use of knitting to numb the brain, as a sedative for those who do not find God comforting enough. Katherine Hale, in "Grey Knitting" a poem recommended by the Saturday Night literary critic on November 18, 1916, as one of the best poems of the war, explains the urge to knit and the symbol the knitting presents. The central stanza of the poem,

> Whispers of women, tireless and patient,
> 'This is our heart's love', it would seem to say,
> 'Wrought with the ancient tools of our vocation,
> Weave we the web of love from day to day'.[22]

notes the message that each sock or muffler carries with it. The knitters make "our heart's love" into concrete objects to be sent through the mails. This knitting is a consolation both to the knitter and the soldier, but more particularly to the poet. Indeed Milton might have been paraphrased, "They also serve who sit and knit". That knitting is the proper role for women is clear in "The Old Woman's War Work" a

---

[22]John W. Garvin, ed. Canadian Poems of the Great War. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1918.

poem by Mrs. Bosanquet published in Punch of September 16, 1916. It begins, "I'd write a poem if I could/ Would dry your eyes of tears". By the end of her poem the woman realizes that poetry is beyond her and returns to her knitting, saying,

> I'll shape the toe and turn the heel,
> And vary ribs and plains,
> And hope some soldier-man may feel
> The warmer for my pains...
> When I shall take my knitting up and lay my pencil down.

Poetry, as Josephine Wright sarcastically points out, is not so "useful" as knitting. As we have seen, some of the women writing early in the war pointed out the danger of using God as a comforter if such a use made war acceptable. They might have added verses on the knitting as comforter if they had been able to see into the future.

Since "The Song of the Sock" is a parody of Thomas Hood's "The Song of the Shirt", a fact of which Wright takes care to remind the reader, the poem carries with it the pleas for the downtrodden and exploited with which Hood's crusading social poems shocked Britain in the 1840's. In seven humorous lines, the sort which she usually reserved for her private correspondence, Wright/Weaver makes her comment on war, knitting and women's self-exploitation.

Suzette Herter's "To a Flower" is a deft and delicate statement about a different kind of exploitation, the horror of raising children for slaughter. The transience of "youth" is caught in the title; then those fleeting moments are further shortened by sending "youth" to "bleed on battlefields". The short, three beat lines come to a sullen halt on the two beat, "Is but a lie". The "lie", the disillusionment, the contrast between "azure dreams" and death on a battlefield makes a mockery of child-raising.

In poems written by Americans before their country entered the war the waste of lives fed to guns appears more than once. Katherine Lee Bates in "Fodder for Cannon" also uses the apparent simplicity of short lines to voice her anger. The series of clichés ending with the callous command is a different way of doing what Herter does, creating

the contrast between expectation and reality.

Bodies glad, erect,
  Beautiful with youth,
Life's elect,
  Nature's truth,
Marching host on host,
  Those bright, unblemished ones,
Manhood's boast,
  Feed them to the guns.

Hearts and brains that teem
  With blessing for the race
Thought and dream
  Vision, grace,
Oh, love's best and most,
  Bridegrooms, brothers, sons,
Host on host
  Feed them to the guns.[23]

Indeed, in Bates' poem all the wonderful qualities are called into question by the final lines. Does youth really have these wonderful qualities? Why should they bother? If they are to be fed to the guns they may as well be thugs.

Helen Hoyt's disillusionment with the task of raising cannon-fodder as expressed in "Cheap" is more bitter than Herter's and more complex than Bates'. Her choice of ridiculous details for comparison, "cabbages, or currant bushes, or a cow", the pictures she calls up, "You cannot teach a horse to hold a gun" combined with her scathing conclusions create a poem as vicious as anything by Sassoon. The poem was, however, published early in 1916, a year earlier than The Old Huntsman. The prosaic, conversational quality, deliberately suggested by such hesitations as "twenty - thirty years" or "And shelter - and all that" creates the persona who carries on this informal monologue. The persona's willingness to use women to "pour men from their bodies" because it "doesn't cost them much" and the afterthought quality of the "scrap of soul" prepare the reader for a person who is willing to compare men with animals. The conclusions reached in the comparison are rather startling. Men are more clever and easier to train but cheaper to produce and maintain.

The opening statement, "After all, what does a man amount to?" announces Hoyt's search for the worth of the individual. Economically man is easy to produce; according to "statistics" a man is worth "very little". In terms of source of supply a man is "not expensive" because

---

[23] K. Bates. The Retinue and other Poems. New York, Dutton, 1918.

women "work cheap". In terms of materials for his manufacture "flesh and bone/ And blood; and.../ A scrap of soul", these things are free. The logical conclusion is that men are plentiful, "less of a bother" and more useful than horses. Men are also easier to send into battle. They are in every way superior to other animals as fighting creatures. It is the fact that there is an abundant supply of men which makes them cheap.

By choosing a persona with no feeling, indeed with no humanity, Hoyt escapes the traps of sentiment and romance. This estranged point of view allows the distance of a Swift describing the aliens' behaviour so that the reader may see how alien that behaviour is. The poem tries to sound prosaic. Nonetheless, Hoyt manages a condensation of expression, a use of focus on one well described aspect, the ease of charming a man, for example, to represent a whole range of activity. Read aloud the lines have natural rhythms with repeated sounds used to build an expectation which is then disappointed. The list of "cabbages", "currants", and a "cow" comes to a halt unexpectedly on "hog". "Tigers" and "wolves" and "wild-cats" who "wouldn't fight fiercer or longer or more willingly" repeats several vowels and consonants. This kind of random repetition and a parallel use of rhythm illustrate the experiments poets were making to escape from the tyranny of the popular war verse.

"Gramophone Tunes" also chooses an unusual focus and thus avoids most of the clichés of the nursing poems. Eva Dobell uses the soldiers' reactions to the gramophone to describe the ward, managing at the same time to give a clearer indication of both suffering and bravery than the poets who try to describe those qualities. The line from the song, "Where did you get that girl?" and the descriptions of injuries issued as if a doctor were conducting rounds, "He's lame - one leg was blown away" and "Shell-shock - he cannot hear a sound", are realistic creations.The soldiers, each with a separate personality, quickly sketched, concentrate on the machine while the poet describes them. The final stanza strikes the note heard so often in these poems, the song of the power of the individual. Dobell has some difficulty with rhyme and with the limits caused by the line ends, but for the most part she resists sentiment and hand

touching. The reader still has no clear idea of the nurse's duties but does have a clear sense of the soldiers' and the nurse's feelings.

"Quilts" uses a familiar object as a method of telling a story. The story, in this case, is not entirely about the Great War. Like the poems in "All Assyria's Captains Are Dead", "Quilts" is a statement about the history of war. Anxiety for lovers is passed down from generation to generation like quilts. Women piece their lives together around the events which they cannot control.

The poem is twenty lines long. The first ten lines are dominated by the four repetitions of "pink" and by the "tiny careful", "trembling" nervousness of the women waiting. The contrast between the pink for "love and a bride" and the nervous reality is emphasized by the nervous broken rhythm with its many three syllable feet. In the centre of the poem is the spot of red. Then the lines are shortened and use more regular iambs to create the calm of melancholy. Though much of the second half is apparently a repetition of words or ideas from the first half, the word 'war" is repeated three times and "war" with its "splotch of blood" dominates the conclusion. This poem is written late in the war; the anger which greeted the beginning of destruction becomes sadness, pain and endurance. The image of women using the patches of their lives pieced together with "tiny careful stitches" is an image which applies to the rest of the women writers also; in all of these poems one wonders "what is stitched into the quilting". The "spot of red among the pink roses" is caused by untold pain.

Fussell in a chapter called "Arcadian Resources" comments on what he feels is a particularly English use of flowers in Great War poetry. Of roses he says:

> Roses were indispensable to the work of the imagination during and after the Great War not because Belgium and France were full of them but because English poetry was, and because since the Middle Ages they had connoted "England" and "loyalty" and "sacrifice"....A typical use of the rose during the war was to make it virtually equal to the idea of England.[24]

---

[24]P. Fussell. The Great War and Modern Memory. Oxford University Press, 1975. p. 244.

English or American, the women use flowers. Like quilts or songs, the things of nature remind them of occasions, seasons, times with those they love. In the women's poetry flowers are symbolic of people not of countries and the recollections are painful. Grace Golden in "The Cornfield" uses poppies in a late summer field to frighten. The contrast between the golden field of ripe grain at noon and the red bleeding into the earth is used by more than one writer to suggest, as Sackville does in "Sacrament" and Driscoll does in "Metal Checks" that men should be growing grain, not fertilizing it.

> There's something red among the corn; I see it everywhere.
> It makes me shudder, sick and cold, despite the noonday glare.
> If Will were here
> He'd laugh at me, and whisper, "See - it's only poppies, dear!"[25]

This poem, "The Cornfield", begins with laughter at the poppies being construed as frightful but ends at the edge of madness.

However, the use of the bright redness in broad daylight, like the red spot in the quilt, is a symbol that is more than English.The red of sumachs in autumn can call forth the same despair from an American poet, as is demonstrated in the first and last stanzas of a poem called "De Profundis".

> It may be that my sumachs their accustomed splendor show;
> It may be that my barberries with gorgeous color glow.
> I do not know.
> I only know
>
> That from a camp, some miles away,
> Ten thousand soldiers marched today
>
> ...
>
> It may be parting Summer flings her farewell largesse now
> Up the ravines, across the hills, on shrub and vine and bough;
> I do not know.
> I only know
>
> That in the heaven over head
> A god - my God - is dead.[26]

---

[25] G. Golden. Backgrounds. Oxford, B.H. Blackwell, 1917.

[26] E. and F. Roberts. A Wreath for Melpomene. Georgia, Banner Press, 1941. (It is not clear which Miss Roberts wrote this poem. The poem is dated 1918.)

The autumn in England may not be so colourful as autumn in America but other pastoral symbols are available as in Katharine Tynan's "What She Said" of which we need only the first stanza to see the usefulness of bulbs, which can be buried waiting for a time of resurrection.

> She said: Would I might sleep
> With the bulbs I plant so deep,
> Forgetting all the long Winter
> That I must awake and weep. [27]

Length of life becomes a burden for the poet whose reasons for living, whether lover, husband or unborn children, are under ground. Autumn is a harvest and a planting for the future, a sad, and in this case, unfulfilled time of year. The poet wishes, like the bulbs, to be free from pain and merely wait for spring. That the waking may bring weeping is forgotten in the later stanzas and release from pain is the gift that burial brings.

C.A. Renshaw in "Killed in France 10/8/18" recalls "hawthorn boughs" and "bluebell time" with her lover and shares his death with moors and pines. The pastoral is profoundly sympathetic still.

> ...
> So little while ago, in bluebell time
> He came to me, lovely and strong in youth,
> With eyes that dreamed on distant hills, and mouth
> That gave me brave, sweet songs ... Strange that he trod
> In loneliness the quiet road to God,
> And left me lone, who loved him in his prime.[28]
> ...

In tune with the seasons and nature this poet wishes that she had granted her man the love he sought. If she had known how nature would reproach her later, how wind, rain, trees, and flowers would have the power to remind her, she says, "I think I would have loved you as you wanted". Nature's reminders are everywhere. And always there are the roses.

Whether they are in American quilts or on English hedges as in

---

[27] K. Tynan. The Holy War. London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1916.

[28] C.A. Renshaw. Up to the Hills. London, The Merton Press, 1922.

this sonnet by Alys Fane Trotter the roses are the most commonly used flower. Lowell uses the rose to represent the arts. Shuey uses the rose to represent the soft pink and the painful red aspects of love. Iverson uses roses to represent luxury. Trotter gives another reason for the importance of flowers in general and roses in particular.

Summer, 1917

The garden that I love has roses red.
Crimson and pink the border hedge is bent
With blossom. I remember how you went
With your two schoolboy friends (because we said
We must have good grey paven paths instead
Of gravel), on a day like this, intent
On time's dead handiwork in stones; and leant
Them up against the wall, and laughed. Now dead
And passed is all that laughter, though there bloom
Flowers as ever, sunburnt and sunlit.
And borne along the wind a hollow boom
Burdens the scented stillness where we sit,
Cannon that sound afar. And someone's doom
Is registered as we are hearing it. [29]

The memories of "a day like this" are evoked for Trotter, whose son was killed near Béthune in October of 1914, by the "scented stillness". The synesthetic potential of roses is overlooked by Fussell. Here the scent of roses and the sound of cannon fire combine the memory of the past and the pain of the present. Scent is perhaps the most powerful awakener of memory, evoking déja vu and recollections of childhood. Thus in addition to all the symbolic uses of the rose as Lowell or Shuey develop them, there is the sensual rose.

"It's Rose Time Here..." calls up an army of spring flowers all lead by the rose. Tulips, lilies, may, are the "gauds" of spring which contrast with the "tattered garments of despair" worn by the poet's emotions. The fact that this poem with its powerful expression of grief is unknown is remarkable. Perhaps no one ever read beyond its "posy" opening lines. Muriel Stuart deliberately creates a "Spring", "thing", "ring" verse to show how pitiless, how traditional the Spring is. The

---

[29] A.F. Trotter. Nigel and Other Verse . London, Burns and Oates, 1918.

"pomp of May", the "Coloured broideries", "canopies" and "spears" evoke the old romantic kind of war and tournament. The horror for the bereaved is that "The roses are as beautiful this year". The poem describes this horror beautifully. The "posy" lines cease as soon as the "widowed year" is introduced and Stuart takes the next twenty lines, as if picking at a wound, to express how unfeeling is the Spring which "has not grieved - even a little space!" The opening section rhymes with some regularity but the rhyme is never forced or on a silly word and the varied line length and run-on-lines remove stress from the line ends.

In the last section of the poem the rhyme is less regular and some rhymes are only approximate as in "foot-mute" and "guns-once" or "here-there". The choice of words within the line draws attention from the line ends in any case. The second half of the poem deals more directly with grief. In the five most sensuous lines in the collection,

> The blood is not dried upon their hair
> Their eyes have scarcely filmed against the moon.
> The sun has not yet utterly gone out;
> Almost the stained grass still
> Is conscious of their breath -
>
> ...

we feel the rawness of the wound. The roses and the men merge as time blurs. How many do we mourn? How long have they been dead? The clearness of the senses and the fuzziness of memory make the second half of this poem a frightening trip into the poet's emotions. Starting with the conversational "How I shall always hate the Spring", detouring through flowers and children, the poet, with hideous sensuous detail, arrives at last at the horror which she has postponed for forty lines. It has no senses, no face, no mouth, not eyes, not even any blood. It is "shapeless, sodden, mute". This dehumanizing is brutal. Contrasted with the spring flowers are "things". Contrasted to the "sweet semblance of desire" we feel for loved ones is the phrase "things that loved us once". The sound patterns in this section are as skillful in creating faceless destruction as those in the first half were in creating

the out-moded romantic world of the tourney. In the second half of the poem sounds are repeated just until they rub against the nerves. Then a new, often a related sound takes over in the pattern of internal rhyme. Thus "over there-/ Where there're..." slides into "...flowers - All that was ours, and God, how beautiful!/ All, all, that once was ours..."; in this way we proceed from "there" to "flower - our" to "mire - desire". Eventually we reach three repetitions of "things", move to "those", and rhyming, return to the "rose" which inspires and punctuates the poem. In use of rhythm, as of sound, Stuart matches at first her gaudy spring creation and then "the horror of the mud". She uses extra, unaccented, syllables to trip through the early lines and then uses several spondees, stressing usually unimportant words like "things shapeless" or "those things" to stress the inhuman words, the loss of nature when war turns loved ones into "mad men". The rose and by association all flowers and seasons, are inappropriate in a world from which nature, especially human nature, is gone. All that remain are guns. The roses are hollow reminders of their own earlier meaning.

Sade Iverson's "Who Wants Blue Silk Roses" appeared when the Little Review was in its Emma Goldman phase. Iverson wrote several poems using a milliner's persona to comment on social problems. The milliner's personality is carefully and consistently drawn. She is a "woman walking quietly" with a wry sense of humour, "slain in [her] pocket book", and with a taste for reading.The story develops through seven stanzas, each with its own topic and voice. In the first stanza "walking quietly" suggests the timid, proper milliner's personality. The second stanza is a little desperate; "I'm past all succor" is self-mocking because the proper milliner has no normal words to say that she is broke. The pictures of the Uhlans are as unreal to her as the experience of the trenches. The third stanza's unreality is expressed in the general round of self-congratulation which greets the economy involved in "home-made hats" which leave milliners hungry. The next stanza shakes off "propriety" for the myth of vagabond living; it is as unreal to live on wild flowers as on "Blue Silk Roses". The fifth stanza completes the casting off of propriety in favour of honesty. In the sixth stanza the milliner and

her laughter face the realities of hunger, shame and wet-feet. Like the civilians in "They Seek Shelter" the milliner is a "victim of the war" without having any interest in it. The choice of words, the ear for voices, the "mehitabel" spirit are reminders that not all victims bleed, just as not all roses are red. In this poem, as in several others in the collection, the stripping away of illusions is an activity which the contemplation of war seems to foster. Here the milliner's original personality is seen as a face which she shows to her customers, but the vagabond personality is just as out of touch with reality. All that remains at the end of the poem is the "imp" of humour and a desire to seek "for Life". The poem could have been written by Anderson herself.[30]

"What the Civilian Saw" by Violet Hunt was originally published immediately preceding a poem called, "What the Orderly Dog Saw" by Ford Madox Hueffer. Both poems appeared in Poetry magazine, again demonstrating the censorship, imposed, or self-imposed, in England during the war years. Hueffer had founded The English Review and Hunt helped to edit the magazine while he was in France; yet they chose to publish these poems in America. The irony of fearing to publish an attack on the censors, thus, becomes part of "What the Civilian Saw". "What the Civilian Saw" could have been written as an answer to those in the trenches, who by 1917 were feeling estranged

---

[30]The name Sade Iverson does not appear in any of the standard biographical references. The persona which lies beneath the milliner's staid exterior is very like the insouciant Anderson who, unable to pay for accomodation lived one summer on the beach of Lake Michigan. Her autobiography, My Thirty Years War, tells of her begging a grand piano for each apartment or house she took over. On a salary of seventy-five cents for a book review she bought herself a yellow rose each day. Anderson also writes of "life" and "ideas" in the same breathless way as this poem. It is, on the other hand, difficult to imagine that if Anderson had taken the pseudonym of Iverson she would not have boasted of it in her autobiography. Whoever Sade Iverson was she was thoroughly imbued with Anderson's philosophy.

from the civilian population. The soldiers knew from reading the papers that what civilians were being told was untrue; Hunt expresses the point of view of the civilian who knows she is being lied to but can do nothing about it. Her husband was at the front and she writes of the frustration of not knowing what is happening. What the civilian sees "is the English translation/ Of what goes on over there". The irony of the word translation used in its literal sense of "carry across" and its older meaning of "change form" transfers the reader to the poem's bitter ending.

Between the civilian and knowledge of what is really happening is a screen. When Hunt first creates it it is harmless, like her "grandmother's gown". If the civilians act like "very good" children they will be given news. Thus the civilians are treated as if they were irresponsible. Then the screen is night and rain which "drape the world in black" against which faces hang waiting impatiently for news "for once". The faces hang, unreal, and the news is a "translation". The reality is over there where the black hangings, mourning clothes, are in fact red. Hunt moves from image to image rather than from idea to idea, reshaping the image slightly each time and carrying the meanings from each of the shapings as she goes, until it seems the faces peer through iridescent taffeta straining to see "the king of England...lying on the ground". The final line too is enigmatic. Every loved one is a "king"; the principle of freedom "is lying on the ground"; the freedom which comes from knowing is "lying on the ground". The poem makes several statements without pointing a finger. Yet the poem was not published in England.

The poem by Hueffer which was printed with Hunt's is interesting in contrast.

What the Orderly Dog Saw

The seven white peacocks against the castle wall
In the high trees and the dusk are like tapestry;
The sky being orange, the high wall a purple barrier,
And you are far away.

Yet I see infinite miles of mountains,
Little lights shining in rows in the dark of them--
Infinite miles of marshes;
Thin wisps of mist, shimmering like blue webs
Over the dusk of them

Great curves and horns of sea,
And dusk and dusk, and the little village;
And you, sitting in the firelight.

II

Around me are the two hundred and forty men of B Company,
Mud-coloured;
Going about their avocations,
Resting between their practice of the art
Of killing men;
As I too rest between my practice
Of the art of killing men.
Their pipes glow over the mud and their mud-colour, moving
like fireflies beneath the trees--
I too being mud-coloured--
Beneath the trees and the peacocks,
When they come up to me in the dusk
They start, stiffen and salute, almost invisibly.
And the forty-two prisoners from the battalion guard-room
Crouch over the tea-cans in the shadow of the wall,
And the bread hunks glimmer, beneath the peacocks--
And you are far away.

III

Presently I shall go in.
I shall write down the names of the forty-two
Prisoners in the battalion guard-room
On fair white foolscap:
Their names, rank and regimental numbers;
Corps, Companies, Punishments and Offences,
Remarks, and By whom confined.
Yet in spite of all I shall see only
The infinite miles of dark mountains,
The infinite miles of dark marshland,
Great curves and horns of sea,
The little village;
And you,
Sitting in the firelight.

There is no black screen between Hueffer and home. He sees home as clearly as a tapestry. He knows what the peacocks, sunset, mist and fire are doing. His world on both sides of the channel is clear, even if the one side is light and the other mud. There is nothing pleasant

about his surroundings; he practises the art of killing and he does it in the mud. His tasks may be dangerous or dreary but he has a haven in his mind to which he may retreat. His wife is not so fortunate. Together the two poems illustrate the difference between the experience of the soldier and the woman who remained at home. The soldier saw and heard and did hideous things and relived these experiences later. The women could only imagine, but they could imagine the worst and imagine it often. Neither experience is better or worse than the other, more frightening or more difficult to endure. That the experiences were different is obvious. It is also obvious that both experiences need to be examined in order to gain a clearer picture of the event.

Hueffer may find comfort remembering the world from which he came but, as Catherine Wells shows in "War", that world is gone. The curtain, the lies, the effort, all are changing the world he remembers. Wells does not mourn a person or a principle; she mourns a world, a past. The image of past dreams as jewels "slipped into the ocean" of memory and only visible now as strange and unattainable is sweet and sad. Then in the last three lines of the poem Wells introduces an element of horror which removes the dreams forever. The single image and bitter ending are deeply nostalgic and hopeless.

Amy Lowell's "Dreams in War Time" are more frightening. Each stanza develops one or more symbols to create seven separate nightmares. Each image fades or blends into the next visually or in meaning so that the whole is disconcerting. The parts seem connected but the whole does not emerge in the way that a single impression appears at the end of Hunt's poem. The sense of illusion and disappointment is common to each of the segments; in that sense the whole poem is "a house of many rooms" in each segment of which the "thorn of a rose" pricks us to cry aloud. In each of the segments a task is set and in each the result is pain, whether the pain is from death or burning, whether it ends in blood or ashes. A sense of the horror of life in war time, the futility of tasks and yet the need to gamble, to paint, to warn, to dance, to create and even to prepare for our own deaths continues. Like the poems of Herter and Wells, "Dreams in War Time" comments on an impossible

world, a world split between reality and nightmare. But here it is not possible to know which world is which.

The poems in this section illustrate the changes in attitude during the four years of the war. The earlier poems are angry, the later poems reflective, fearful but enduring, willing to keep winding up the string. The American writers tend to reach, or make public their attitudes at each stage sooner than the English writers, but the mourning, the grief is more clearly expressed by the English writers when they allow themselves to put it into words. There were many men to remember, many reminders of the ones who wouldn't return, many symbols of disillusionment, feelings that the world had changed on both sides of the Atlantic.

The poems in this collection, although they include much mourning, do not include any of the reactions to the death of public figures. This kind of poem was not uncommon in either popular or literary publications, though it more often appeared in the former. Rupert Brooke's death occasioned a large number of eulogies, as did Kitchener's. In fact Kitchener's death caused one woman to write a book of sonnets using for each sonnet a different persona mourning the great man. The King, the people, the poet, his mistress if he had one, and even his nanny; each of these and several others including Kitchener himself was allotted fourteen lines. An idea of the quality of these occasional poems may be had by reading "His Old Nurse's Sonnet" from the Kitchener sonnet cycle for it is one of the best of the poems mourning public figures.

I seem to hear them still - those little feet.
So proud of their first steps! O little one!
And I remember when your games were done,
And you were tired, my words you would repeat:
That never, never in the summer heat
You'd sit in draughts or linger in the sun.
And then your wooden sword you'd draw and run
To charge the world for me you said, my Sweet.
And now? Dear God, I wonder why I live,
Poor useless me with nothing anywhere
To love - unless it be this lock of hair,

This little golden curl the Queen would give
A ransom for! And yet it might be worse -
For surely, soon you'll need you poor old nurse...[31]

This is the most simple of the songs for Kitchener and despite its lock of golden curl the least sentimental. The nanny seems to be of the impression that Victoria is still Queen which lends a twist to the use of the curl. The uselessness that many parents felt on hearing of the death of sons is clearly stated here, and both fathers and mothers no doubt had memories such as these. If one can imagine "K of K" being warned to stay out of the sun and not to linger in draughts one has the imagination to apply this poem to every small boy who grew old enough to fight and die. In this sense the poem is typical of the popular poems which express grief.

V Not Yet Will Those Measureless Fields Be Green Again.

Armistice Day changed things for the men. It brought them home or meant that those at home would not have to go to the front. The killing stopped and the remembering began. For many of the men that remembering was the task of a lifetime; for some the war years, despite the hardships, were the best of their lives; for a few, recreating the war in poems and books would become an occupation and a catharsis. For thousands of women, as Marjorie Smyth shows in "Armistice Day", the day was only a little sadder than any other day.

The crowds are dancing in the street below
I hear their happy, dancing feet, I know
That Peace and Victory have come today.
But I - I cannot dance and sing as they,
For all my soul is darkened with despair,
And close beside the hearth I've drawn your chair.

The banners that bedeck my window-sill
Fly out like phantoms in the gas-lamp's flicker,
Strange sounds and voices are about to-night
And eerie shadows make the heart beat quicker.

What if your feet, your eager, running feet,
Were running up my stair!

---

[31] Anita Dudley. Valediction: Sonnets to Kitchener. London, Arthur L. Humphreys, 1916.

What if suddenly I turned my head
And, in the doorway, you were standing there!

*****

God! how the firelight flickers on the empty chair![32]

Wells had voiced the fear that the world would never be the same. Iris Tree in "Afterwards" fears the despair which will follow the rage, fears the guilt and decay which will follow such a frenzy of emotion. This poem, written late in the war, no longer cares about causes, no longer fears pain; it looks on an empty future, almost wishing the war back with its glamour.

"The Veteran" in Margaret Postgate's poem is, in a sense, one of the dead. The poem is anything but sentimental, although the boy's blindness and his age could have been used to raise tears. The poem is bitter. The veteran has been "left". Nonetheless he practises the lie about which so many of the poets have warned and creates the illusion, continues the illusion, blowing away the younger soldiers' nightmares. Thus the next generation proceeds to war. The last line is grim confirmation of Tree's fears for a dead world and Herter's fears for the young.

Hortense Flexner's young veteran is American, and whole, and for the moment, not forgotten. He is part of the glamorous tradition with trumpets and decorations. But he does not remember the past and the future will not remember him.

Many men were forgotten before they ever got home. One recalls:

> We go to an old employer and find that our place has been filled quite efficiently by a bright young man, who during the years of the war has worked his way up and become familiar with changing conditions. Therefore, the employer, though expressing great regret at not having an opening, sees no reason or excuse to let his present man go. He tells the ex-soldier how glad he is to see him back safe and sound. He explains the belief that he will have no trouble in finding an equally good job as good as the one he had before the war.

---

[32]Marjorie Smyth. Poems. London, W. and G. Foyle, 1919.

> Meeting with the same answers everywhere he wonders if he has been wrong all the time....In his wanderings around the city he hears much of the heroes who died, but no mention of the men who lived. He eventually becomes bitter and disillusioned. He knows that he has seen comrades fall beside him and he was taking the same chances as they were, yet the dead are heroes. Monuments are erected to their memory....The living are almost outcasts.[33]

The women who had devoted their years to the war were in similar case. The nurses and V.A.D.'s were obvious war workers but others were unsung women who picked up the jobs which had to be done and at the end of the war found they were no longer needed. They had no children or lovers returning, and a bleak future. Vera Brittain's "The Lament of the Demobilized" is one of her best poems because it had no antecedents. Returned V.A.D.'s had not been the subject of much poetry over the centuries. Brittain spills her despair and disillusionment onto the page. She uses the conversation of two of Job's comforters to begin and end her poem. Between these quotations, which jerk and fling themselves onto the page, Brittain outlines her history using irregular lines driven by a steady rhythm.

The monuments remain. "The Cenotaph" could have been written to sum up, to tie together all the other themes about which women wrote. The monuments are for both "the sweet blood of wonderful youth" and for "watchers by lonely hearths". On the stone, reminders of all the "sweet, twinkling country things" lie as reminders of "other Springs". The live and dead, the lively and the monumental, are juxtaposed in quick twists of words, quick changes of image. We shift from battlefields in France to English country cottages, from winged Victory to winged Peace, from the "gay coverlet" to "such a bed", from the face of God to "some young, piteous, murdered face". Who is the murderer? The word is introduced suddenly just at the end of the poem. Why is the monument in the "market-place"? The whore and the huckster still live to trade beneath the monument. God may not be mocked but

---

[33]Private James Doak. Poor Bloody Murder. Gordon Reid ed. Oakville, Mosaic Press, 1980. p. 236.

nature, both human and pastoral, is bruised, and as Tree says, "the daylight [is] wan".

The poems for the end of the war are no more hopeful than the poems at the beginning were glamorous. The Armistice is only a piece of paper; discharge does not end the misery. There is a return to nature; Mew's cenotaph is spread with a number of country flowers, Postgate's "Veteran" sits in the sun. But there is a dark warning note. "The Veteran", blind at nineteen, lies to younger soldiers to send them to the front. The boy in "Decoration for Valour" is as ignorant of other heroes as future generations will be of him. History is repeated. "The Cenotaph" may remind people of sacrifice but what sort of people are they? Amy Lowell uses ashes to represent the results of war in several of her poems and Iris Tree in "Afterwards" fears that there will be nothing left but "chill ignoble ashes" in a world where the sun shines " as tinsel".

It is possible to conclude that women did write about the Great War in poems that are touching and tragic, homely and striking. I would have been more correct to call the Appendix which follows a selection,rather than a collection,of poems from all that were written. Of the thousands of poems which were written by more than five hundred and thirty-two women[34] I have used only twenty-nine, the ones which I felt were best for various reasons,in the Appendix and another score which are quoted in whole or in part to illustrate various opinions or attitudes. My intention was to show that there is an area of poetry which is open to study and to begin to sketch a map for future exploration. It is clear that not only were thousands of poems written about the Great War but that some of these creations are worth preserving and considering both as a record of the war and as a record of the development of poetry in the twentieth century.

---

[34] C.W. Reilly. Scars Upon My Heart. London, Virago, 1981.p.xxxiii.

From the periodicals [35] it is clear that there was immediate and angry response to the war by women poets. "Unser Gott" and "Metal Checks" appeared in the first months of the war and were followed in the next year and a half by "The Singer at the Gate", "Cheap", "Sacrament" and "Refugees". With the exception of "Sacrament" all of these appeared in America, not England. The early poems were concerned to find the causes of war and discover what failures in society could make war possible. These early poems are also experimenting with form. Lowell is only the most obvious innovator. Baker, Driscoll and Hoyt make sound and form serve them in new ways.

In addition to experimenting with the usual rhymed forms the poems create tension by skillful use of the very ideas or institutions which they question. Traditional attitudes to religion, particularly if these support "holy" war,are probed by using the words, phrases and symbols of religion. Borden not only sets the scene,she uses the cadence of the Old Testament God she condemns. Widdemer and Lowell fondly and carefully create the indifferent artist who is author of his or her own destruction. Stuart uses the traditional rhymes and rhythms and images of spring before showing how inappropriate they have become. Even the nursery toys and rhythms are used to question attitudes taught to children. Use of cliché of all sorts is intended to show how destructive unquestioned attitudes may be.

The contrast between an ideal or expected world and the real world is created in most of the poems. The ideals for which women make homes and bear children, plant gardens and sew quilts are shattered by guns and soldiers. Lovers can become mud, children lose their dreams and lies permeate every level of life. The result is a bitter emptiness.

---

[35] The chronology of publication and attitudes is more clear when following the publication of poems in magazines than when using book publications. A few of the poems are difficult to find in any books and since the work has been so long neglected the dating of poems printed in collected works may be impossible in many cases.

There are lies which comfort in religion, and there are the glamorous lies of the arts, the continuing lies to children and even the callous lies of nature which continues although the individuals who love it are destroyed. Beyond the disillusionment these poems celebrate the worth of the individual. The individual deserves more than illusion and lies. The poets do not suffer without questioning all the accepted rules.

In the poems of the second half of the war there is more grief than anger, more bitterness in the questioning, more memory. The waste which causes anger in "Cheap" causes sorrow in "Quilts" or grief in "It's Rose Time Here". By the end of the war when both America and England are engaged, the poetry reflects fear for the future and the sense of a dead world.

Many of the collections as well as the poems which appeared in magazines were printed well before the war ended. In so far as it is possible to tell, very little of the women's poetry was written after the war ended. In collections which were published some years after the war it is clear, as in the case of Lowell and Mew, that the war poems had been written some time before the publication of the collection. Not all of the poems have yet been found. Many, in private papers, will never be found. More effort will be required to date those we have and to evolve a theory of war poetry which accounts for all of the important poems about the Great War.

The women wrote of their emotions and reactions while, or not long after, experiencing them. The anniversary of an occasion might call forth a memorial poem, but even these, like Brittain's recollection of listening to the singing from Magdalen tower on May 1, were usually written during the war. For the most part the women solemnize the present, looking to the past and future while firmly grasping the here and now. At last the war was over, the women had written their furious interrogations, their enduring despair. "You Bid Me Sing Again" by Ellen Coleman clearly states the point of view of those who move on to write about other things when the war is over.

You bid me sing again -
Ah, life has taught me far too grievous things.
It is not good to speak of pain.

You bid me sing again -

There is so little left for one to say,
When autumn blots out Spring and night the day,
And 'tis not good to speak of pain.

You bid me sing again -

But if all petals of the roses fall,
And so the story closes past recall?
No more! I will not speak of pain! [36]

---

[36] Ellen Coleman. There Are No Dead. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1918.

Appendix The Poems

All Assyria's Captains Are Dead

THE ALLIES
(August 14th, 1914)

Into the brazen, burnished sky the cry hurls itself. The zigzagging cry of hoarse throats, it floats against the hard winds, and binds the head of the serpent to its tail, the long snail-slow serpent of marching men. Men weighted down with rifles and knapsacks, and parching with war. The cry jars and splits against the brazen, burnished sky.

This is the war of wars, and the cause? Has this writhing worm of men a cause?

Crackling against the polished sky is an eagle with a sword. The eagle is red and its head is flame.

In the shoulder of the worm is a teacher.

His tongue laps the war-sucked air in drought, but he yells defiance at the red-eyed eagle, and in his ears are the bells of new philosophies, and their tinkling drowns the sputter of the burning sword. He shrieks, "God damn you! When you are broken the world will strike out new shoots."

His boots are tight, the sun is hot, and he may be shot, but he is in the shoulder of the worm.

A dust speck in the worm's belly is a poet.

He laughs at the flaring eagle and makes a long nose with his fingers. He will fight for smooth, white sheets of paper and uncurdled ink. The sputtering sword cannot make him blink, and his thoughts are wet and rippling. They cool his heart.

He will tear the eagle out of the sky and give the earth tranquility, and loveliness printed on white paper.

The eye of the serpent is an owner of mills.

He looks at the glaring sword which has snapped his machinery and struck away his men.

But it will all come again, when the sword is broken to a million dying stars, and there are no more wars.

Bankers, butchers, shopkeepers, painters, farmers,—men, sway and sweat. They will fight for the earth, for the increase of the slow, sure roots of peace, for the release of hidden forces. They jibe at the eagle and his scorching sword.

One! Two!--One! Two! clump the heavy boots. The cry hurtles against the sky.

Each man pulls his belt a little tighter, and shifts his gun to make it lighter. Each man thinks of a woman, and slaps out a curse at the eagle. The sword jumps in the hot sky, and the worm crawls on to the battle, stubbornly.

This is the war of wars, from eye to tail the serpent has one cause:
PEACE!

Amy Lowell
<u>The Little Review</u> (Jan. 1915),

THE SINGER AT THE GATE

Must I always sing at the gate to hearten the men who fight
For causes changeful as wind and as brief as the summer
night?

Must I always herald the wisdom of Man who is blind,
Blind-led,
Of kings who rule for an hour and die when the hour is dead;

Of right that is wrong tomorrow, of truths that were last
year's lies,
Of little strifes and upbuildings that die when a nation dies?

For all Assyria's captains are dead with the dead they made,
Dust of the gyve and anklet with dust of the casque and
blade;

But wonderful dreams blow still in the swirl of a smoke
new-gone,
As they blew from a fire at dusk for my brother in Ascalon.

And Rome is withered, and Hellas; but leaves in the wind
bow still,
As they bowed for my brother's dreaming who sang by some
dead god's hill:

For all of the mighty walls men have built to sweep down
again
Are shadows of visions spun by some poet far from men.

I am tired of praising the deeds that are brief as a wind may
be,
That change with the mocking turn of a year or a century:

I go to spin dreams in dark, that shall last until men are
hurled
Out into the space of the Timeless with ash of a burning
world!

Margaret Widdemer
Poetry, (Feb. 1915), pp. 214-217.

PRAYER

Many are the cries sent upward to God's throne:
The cry for justice comes out of the depths—
The depths of woe;
The cry for mercy from the depths of sin!
And mothers of slain soldiers cry for courage—
Courage to bear the ills that go with life.
The children pray with souls all innocent
(Yet mindful of each little trespass wrought)
They pray for a pure heart; and soldiers pray
That God may save their dear ones from war's plagues;
And beggars pray for bread, or pleasant weather.
But from the high, high places of the world,
The prayer, when prayer there is, is all for power—
Power and glory, and honor--forever: nothing more.

Jean O'Brien
Poetry (Aug. 1916).

SACRAMENT

BEFORE the Altar of the world in flower,
Upon whose steps thy creatures kneel in line,
We do beseech thee in this wild Spring hour,
Grant us, O! Lord, thy wine. But not this wine.

HELPLESS, we, praying by the shimmering seas,
Beside thy fields whence all the earth is fed,
Thy little children clinging about thy knees,
Cry: "Grant us Lord thy bread." But not this bread.

THIS wine of awful sacrifice out poured;
This bread of life—of human lives. The Press
Is overflowing—the Wine-Press of the Lord!
Yet doth he tread the foaming grapes no less.

THESE stricken lands! the green time of the year
Has found them wasted by a ruddy flood,
Sodden and wasted everywhere—everywhere;
Not all our tears may cleanse them from that blood.

THE earth is all too narrow for these dead
Lord! Lord! and each a child of ours—and Thine.
This flesh (our flesh) crumbled away like bread,
This blood (our blood) poured forth like wine—like wine.

Margaret Sackville

Form (April 1916)

UNSER GOTT

They held a great prayer-service in Berlin,
And augured German triumph from some words
Said to be spoken by the Jewish God
To Gideon, which signified that He
Was staunchly partial to the Israelites.
The aisles were thronged; and in the royal box
(I had it from a tourist who was there,
Clutching her passport, anxious, like the rest,)
There sat the Kaiser, looking "very sad."
And then they sang; she said it shook the heart.
The women sobbed; tears salted bearded lips
Unheeded; and my friend looked back and saw
A young girl crumple in her mother's arms.
They carried out a score of them, she said,
While German hearts, through bursting German throats
Poured out, Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott!

(Yea, "Unser Gott! Our strength is Unser Gott!
Not that light-minded Bon Dieu of France!")

I think we all have made our God too small.
There was a young man, a good while ago
Who taught that doctrine . . . . but they murdered him
Because he wished to share the Jewish God
With other folk.
They are long-lived, these fierce
Old hating Gods of nations; but at last
There surely will be spilled enough of blood
To drown them all! The deeps of sea and air,
Of old the seat of gods, no more are safe,
For mines and monoplanes. The Germans, now,
Can surely find and rout the God of France
With Zeppelins, or some slim mother's son
Of Paris, or of Tours, or Brittany,
Can drop a bomb into the Feste Burg,
And, having crushed the source of German strength,
Die happy in his blazing monoplane.

Sad jesting! If there be no God at all,
Save in the heart of man, why, even so—
Yea, all the more, —since we must make our God,
Oh, let us make Him large enough for all,

Or cease to prate of Him! If kings must fight,
Let them fight for their glory, openly,
And plain men for their lands and for their homes,
And heady youths, who go to see the fun,
Blaspheme not God. True, maybe we might leave
The God of Germany to some poor frau
Who cannot go, who can but wait and mourn,
Except that she will teach Him to her sons—
A God quite scornful of the Slavic soul,
And much concerned to keep Alsace-Lorraine.
They should go godless, too—the poor, benumbed,
Crushed, anguished women, till their hearts can hold
A greater Comforter!

(Yet it is hard
To make Him big enough! For me, I like
The English and the Germans and the French,
The Russians, too; and Servians, I should think,
Might well be very interesting to God.
But, do the best I may, my God is white,
And hardly takes a nigger seriously
This side of Africa. Not those, at least
Who steal my wood, and of a summer night
Keep me awake with shouting, where they sit
With monkey-like fidelity and glee
Grinding through their well-oiled sausage-mill—
The dead machinery of the white man's church—
Raw jungle-fervor, mixed with scraps sucked dry
Of Israel's old sublimities: not those,
And when they threaten us, the Higher Race,
Think you, which side is God's? Oh, let us pray
Lest blood yet spurt to wash that black skin white,
As now it flows because a German hates
A Cossack, and an Austrian a Serb!)

What was it that he said so long ago,
The young man who outgrew the Jewish God—
"Not a sparrow falleth—?" Ah, God, God,
And there shall fall a million murdered men!

Karle Wilson Baker,
Poetry, (Nov. 1914), [illegible]

WHERE IS JEHOVAH?

Where is Jehovah, the God of Israel, with his Ark and his Tabernacle
and his Pillars of Fire?
He ought to be here - This place would suit him.
Here is a people pouring through a wilderness -
Here are armies camping in a desert -
Their little tents are like sheep flocking over the prairie -
It's all in the style of the God of Israel.
Here is a land that was silent and desolate, suddenly covered with
noise and confusion,
The wide, white plains and the shallow grey valleys are smeared
over with the disorder of armies.
Picardy is shaking with a fever,
Picardy's hills are wounded and broken,
Picardy's fields are scarred as with small-pox -
What a chance for His prophets!
What a playground for miracles!
A host of men at the end of their strength, fighting death, fighting
terror, with no one to worship -
He need but lift his finger -
Here are all his pet properties ready to hand, the thunder, the
lightning, the clouds and the fire -
This is His hour, but Jehovah has missed it.
This is not His thunder nor His lightning -
These are not His people -
These are the armies of France and of England -
The thunder is the thunder of their guns, and the lightning that
runs along the horizon is the flare and the flash of the
battle that's raging; Moses is dead - and Joshua, who led His
people into the promised land, is dead, and there are no more
prophets to cry through the wilderness to comfort these people -
They must look after themselves.
All the host of them, each one of them, quite alone, each one of
them, every one of the hundred thousand of them, alone,
must stand up to meet the war.
With the sky cracking -
With creatures of wide metal wings tearing the sky over his head -
With the earth shaking -
With the solid earth under his feet giving way -

With the hills covered with fire and the valleys smoking, and the few bare trees spitting bullets, and the long roads like liquid torrents, rolling up with guns and munitions and men, always men and more men, with these long roads rolling up like a river to drown him and no way of escape.
With the few houses broken, no walls, no enclosure, no protection.
With all of the universe crushing upon him, rain, sun, cold, dark, death, coming full on him.
With the men near him going mad, jibbering, bleeding, twisting,
With his comrade lying dead under his feet,
With the enemy beyond there, unseen, curious,
With eternity waiting, whispering to him through the noise of the cannon,
With the memory of his home haunting him, the face of a woman who is waiting,
With the soft echoes of his children's sweet laughter sounding, and shells bursting with roars near him, but not drowning those voices,
He stands there.
He keeps on standing. He stands solid.
He is so small in the landscape as to be almost invisible.
We see him as a speck there -
He is dirty. He is tired. His stomach is empty -
He is stupid. His life has been stupid -
He has lived a few years without understanding,
He does not understand now - he will never understand -
He is bigger than all the world.
He is more important than all the army.
He is more terrible than all the war.
He stands there -

But where is Jehovah, the God of the great drama, the God of Vengeance, the Lord of Hosts?
Here the scene is set for His acting - a desert, a promised land, a nation in agony waiting -
Jehovah's not here -
There's only a man standing - quite still.

Mary Borden-Turner
The English Review, (Aug. 1917).

The Metal Checks

(The scene is a bare room, with two shaded windows at the back and a fireplace between them with a fire burning low. The room is furnished scantily with a few plain [illegible], chairs, and a rough wooden table on which are piled a great many small wooden trays. The Counter, who is Death, sits at the table. He wears a loose gray robe, and his face is partly concealed by a gray veil. He does not look at The Bearer, but works mechanically and speaks in a monotonous tone. The Bearer is the World, that bears the burden of War. He wears a soiled robe of brown and green and he carries on his back a gunny-bag filled with the little metal disks that have been used for the identification of the slain common soldiers.)

The Bearer

Here is a sack, a gunny sack,
  A heavy sack I bring.
Here is toll of many a soul—
  But not the soul of a king.

This is the toll of common men,
  Who lived in the common way;
Lived upon bread and wine and love,
  In the light of the common day.

This is the toll of working men,
  Blood and brawn and brain.
Who shall render us again
  The worth of all the slain?

(As the Counter speaks, The Bearer pours out the disks on the table. The Bearer obeys The Counter.)

The Counter

Pour them out on the table here.
  Clickety - clickety - clack!
For every button a man went out,
And who shall call him back?
  Clickety - clickety - clack!

One - two - three - four -
 Every disk a soul!
Three score - four score -
So many boys went out to war.

Pick up that one that fell on the floor -
Didn't you see it roll?
That was a man a month ago.
This was a man. How upon row -
Pile them in tens and count them so.

The Bearer

I have an empty sack.
It is not large. Would you have said
That I could carry on my back
So great an army - and all dead?

(As The Counter speaks The Bearer lays the sack over his arm and helps count.)

The Counter

Put a hundred in each tray -
We can tally them best that way.
Careful - do you understand
You have ten men in your hand?
There's another fallen - there -
Under that chair.

(The Bearer finds it and restores it.)
That was a man a month ago;
He could see and feel and know.
Then, into his throat there sped
A bit of lead.
Blood was salt in his mouth; he fell
And lay amid the battle wreck.
Nothing was left but this metal check -
And a wife and child, perhaps.

(The Bearer finds the bag on his arm troublesome. He holds it up, inspecting it.)

The Bearer

What can one do with a thing like this?
Neither of life nor death it is!
For the dead serve not, though it served the dead.
The wounds it carried were wide and red,
Yet they stained it not. Can a man put food,
Potatoes or wheat, or even wood
That is kind and burns with a flame to warm
Living men who are comforted -
In a thing that has served so many dead?
There is no thrift in a graveyard dress,
It's been a shroud for too many men.
I'll burn it and let the dead bless.

(He crosses himself and throws it into the fire. He watches it burn. The Counter continues to pile up the metal checks, and drop them by hundreds into the trays which he piles one upon the other. The Bearer turns from the fire and speaks more slowly than he has before. He indicates the metal checks.)

Would not the blood of these make a great sea
For men to sail their ships on? It may be
No fish would swim in it, and the foul smell
Would make the sailors sick. Perhaps in Hell
There's some such lake for men who rush to war
Prating of glory, and upon the shore
Will stand the wives and children and old men
Bereft, to drive them back again.
When they seek haven. Some such thing
I thought the while I bore it on my back
And heard the metal pieces clattering.

The Counter

Four score - five score -
These and as many more.
Forward - march! - into the tray!
No bugles blow today,
No captains lead the way;
But mothers and wives,
Fathers, sisters, little sons,
Count the cost
Of the lost;
And we count the unlived lives,
The forever unborn ones
Who might have been your sons.

The Bearer

Could not the hands of these rebuild
That which has been destroyed?
Oh, the poor hands! that once were strong and filled
With implements of labor whereby they
Served home and country through the peaceful day.
When those who made the war stand face to face
With these slain soldiers in that unknown place
Whither the dead go, what will be the word
By dead lips spoken and by dead ears heard?
Will souls say King or Kaiser? Will souls prate
Of earthly glory in that new estate?

The Counter

One hundred thousand -
One hundred and fifty thousand -
Two hundred -

The Bearer

Can this check plough?
  Can it sow? can it reap?
Can we arouse it?
  Is it asleep?

Can it hear when a child cries?
  Comfort a wife?
This little metal disk
  Stands for a life.

Can this check build,
  Laying stone upon stone?
Once it was warm flesh
  Folded on bone.

Sinew and muscle firm,
  Look at it - can
This little metal check
  Stand for a man?

The Counter

One - two - three - four -

Louise Driscoll,
Poetry (Nov. 1914).

THE GREAT AIR BIRDS GO SWIFTLY BY

The great air birds go swiftly by,
Pinions of bloom and death;
And armies counter on shell-torn plains
And strive, for a little breath.
Pinnacled rockets in the gloom
Light for a little space
A gasping mouth, and dying face
Blackened with night and doom—
As if in a little room
A sick man laid on his bed
Turned to his nurse and questioned when
Mass for his soul would be said.
Life is no larger than this,
Though thousands are slaked with lime,
Life is no larger than one man's soul,
One man's soul is as great as the whole,
And no times greater than Time.

Alice Corbin
Poetry (July 1917).

CHALKS: BLACK, RED, WHITE

Lead soldiers

The nursery fire burns brightly, crackling in cheerful little explosions and trails of sparks, up the back of the chimney. Miniature rockets peppering the black bricks with golden stars, as though a gala flamed a night of victorious wars.

The nodding mandarin on the bookcase moves his head forward and back, slowly, and looks into the air with his blue-green eyes. He stares into the air and nods—forward and back. The red rose in his hand is a crimson splash on his yellow coat. Forward and back, and his blue-green eyes stare into the air, and he nods--nods.

> Tommy's soldiers march to battle,
> Trumpets flare and snare-drums rattle.
> Bayonets flash, and sabres glance—
> How the horses snort and prance!
> Cannon drawn up in a line
> Glitter in the dizzy shine
> Of the morning sunlight. Flags
> Ripple colors in great jags.
> Red blows out, then blue, then green;
> Then all three—a weaving sheen
> Of prismed patriotism. March
> Tommy's soldiers, stiff and starch,
> Boldly stepping to the rattle
> Of the drums, they go to battle

Tommy lies on his stomach on the floor and directs his columns. He puts his infantry in front, and before them ambles a mounted band. Their instruments make a strand of gold before the scarlet-tunicked soldiers, and they take very long steps on their little green platforms, and from the ranks bursts the song of Tommy's soldiers marching to battle. The song jolts a little, as the green platforms stick on the thick carpet. Tommy wheels his guns round the edge of a box of blocks, and places a squad of cavalry on the commanding eminence of a footstool.

The fire snaps pleasantly, and the old Chinaman nods—nods. The fire makes the red rose in his hand glow and twist. Hist! That is a bold song

Tommy's soldiers sing as they march along to battle.
Crack! Rattle! The sparks fly up the chimney.

Tommy's army's off to war—
Not a soldier knows what for.
But he knows about his rifle,
How to shoot it, and a trifle
Of the proper thing to do
When it's he who is shot through.
Like a cleverly trained flea,
He can follow instantly
Orders, and some quick commands
Really make severe demands
On a mind that's none too rapid—
Leaden brains tend to the vapid.
But how beautifully dressed
Is this army! How impressed
Tommy is when at his heel
All his baggage wagons wheel
About the patterned carpet, and,
Moving up his heavy guns,
He sees them glow with diamond suns
Flashing all along each barrel.
And the gold and blue apparel
Of his gunners is a joy.
Tommy is a lucky boy.
Boom! Boom! Ta-ra!

The old mandarin nods under his purple umbrella. The rose in his hand shoots its petals up in thin quills of crimson. Then they collapse and shrivel like red embers. The fire sizzles.

Tommy is galloping his cavalry, two by two, over the floor. They must pass the open terror of the door and gain the enemy encamped under the wash-stand. The mounted band is very grand, playing allegro and leading the infantry on at the double quick. The tassel of the hearth-rug has flung down the brass drum, and he and his dapple-gray horse lie overtipped, slipped out of line, with the little lead drum-sticks glistening to the fire's shine.

The fire burns and crackles, and tickles the tripped bass drum with its sparkles.

The marching army hitches its little green platforms valiantly, and steadily approaches the door. The overturned bass-drummer, lying on the hearth-rug, melting in the heat, softens and sheds tears. The song jeers at his impotence, and flaunts the glory of the martial and still upstanding, vaunting the deeds it will do. For are not Tommy's soldiers all bright and new?

Tommy's leaden soldiers we,
Glittering with efficiency.
Not a button's out of place,
Tons and tons of golden lace
Wind about our officers.
Every manly bosom stirs
At the thought of killing, killing!--
Tommy's dearest wish fulfilling.
We are gaudy, savage, strong;
And our loins so ripe we long
First to kill, then procreate,
Doubling so the laws of Fate.
On their women we have sworn
To graft our sons. And overborne
They'll rear us younger soldiers, so
Shall our race endure and grow,
Waxing greater in the wombs
Borrowed of them, while damp tombs
Rot their men. O glorious War!
Goad us with your points, Great Star!

The china mandarin on the bookcase nods slowly, forward and back--forward and back--and the red rose writhes and wriggles, thrusting its flaming petals under and over one another like tortured snakes.

The fire strokes them with its dartles, and purrs at them, and the old man nods.

Tommy does not hear the song. He only sees the beautiful, new, gaily-colored lead soldiers. They belong to him, and he is very proud and happy. He shouts his orders aloud, and gallops his cavalry past the door to the washstand. He creeps over the floor on his hands and knees to one battalion and another, but he sees only the bright colors of his soldiers and the beautiful precision of their gestures. He is a lucky boy to have such fine lead soldiers to enjoy.

Tommy catches his toe in the leg of the washstand, and jars the pitcher. He snatches at it with his hands, but it is too late. The pitcher falls, and as it goes he sees the white water flow over its lip. It slips between his fingers and crashes to the floor. But it is not water which oozes to the door. The stain is glutinous and dark, a spark from the firelight heads it to red. In and out, between the fine, new soldiers, licking over the carpet, squirms the stream of blood, lapping at the little green platforms, and flapping itself against the painted uniforms.

The nodding mandarin moves his head slowly, forward and back. The rose is broken, and where it fell is black blood. The old mandarin leers under his purple umbrella, and nods--forward and back, staring into the air with blue-green eyes. Every time his head comes forward a rosebud pushes between his lips, rushes into full bloom, and drips to the ground with a splashing sound. The pool of black blood grows and grows, with each dropped rose, and spreads out to join the stream from the wash-stand. The beautiful army of lead soldiers steps boldly forward, but the little green platforms are covered in the rising stream of blood.

The nursery fire burns brightly and flings fan-bursts of stars up the chimney, as though a gala flamed a night of victorious wars.

Amy Lowell
Poetry, (Sept. 1915).

They Seek Shelter

REFUGEES

Belgium—1914

"Mother, the poplars cross the moon;
  The road runs on, so white and far,
We shall not reach the city soon:
  On, tell me where we are!"

"Have patience, patience, little son,
  And we shall find the way again:
(God show me the untraveled one!
  God give me rest from men!)"

"Mother, you did not tell me why
  You hurried so to come away.
I saw big soldiers riding by;
  I should have liked to stay."

"Hush, little man, and I will sing
  Just like a soldier, if I can—
They have a song for everything.
  Listen, my little man!

"This is the soldiers' marching song:
  We'll play this is the village street—"
"Yes, but this road is very long,
  And stones have hurt my feet."

"Nay, little pilgrim, up with you!
  And yonder field shall be the town.
I'll show you how the soldiers do
  Who travel up and down.

"They march and sing and march again,
  Not minding all the stones and dust:
They go, (God grant me rest from men!)
  Forward, because they must."

"Mother, I want to go to sleep."
  "No, darling! Here is bread to eat!
(O God, if thou couldst let me weep,
  Or heal my broken feet!)"

Grace Hazard Conkling
Poetry (Nov. 1915).

WAR

I laugh to see them pray
And think God still is in the sky.
The little Christ whose name they say
Is dead. I saw him die.

They burned his house and killed his priest,
Just as the Bible saith.
We had no milk for little Christ
And so he starved to death.

II

There was a Virgin Mary made
To sit in church, all whitely sweet,
And hear our prayers. She smiled and played
All day with baby Jesus' feet.

Each day, our faces clean like snow,
Amid the candle-shine and myrrh
We children, standing in a row,
With folded hands would sing to her.

"O Mary, let thy gentle son
Come down with us today,
And be the blessed Holy One
In all our work and play."

I wish that we had prayed to her
To keep him safe instead.
She did not know about the war.
Now little Christ is dead.

III

The sun-waves floated past the sill
And buzzy, bumping flies.
My Mother lay all pale and still,
With eyes like Mary's eyes.

I promised her I would be brave
And help her, and I tried;
And all the things she asked I gave,
And never cried.

But at the end all I could do
Was, stop my ears and pray,
And hide my face. I never knew
The Christ would come that way.

IV

My Mother held me close to her;
I feel her one kiss yet.
How sweet she was, alone and dear,
I never can forget.

Her face was just like Mary's face,
As if a light shone through.
I took the Christ Child from that place
And ran. She told me to.

V

There were long, dust-gray roads to run,
And sticks that hurt my feet,
And dead fields lying in the sun,
And nothing there to eat.

The Baby Jesus never cried,
But with soft little lips and weak
Wee hands kept nuzzling at my side
And tried to suck my cheek.

VI

We slept beneath a bending tree,
The little Christ and I,
And wake up in the light to see
The sun lift up the sky.

And all the birds that ever were
Sang to the Christ Child then,--
Sweet thrush and lark and woodpecker,
Gold warbler and brown wren.

There were no bells for mass
Singing a little tune;
White faces lying in the grass
Were laughing at the moon!

VII

They made a little, lonely bed
Where it was cold and dim.
The baby Christ was dead, quite dead.
There was no milk for him.

Eloise Robinson
Poetry, (May 1917).

THE BOMBARDMENT

Slowly, without force, the rain drops into the city. It stops a moment on the carved head of Saint John, then slides on again, slipping and trickling over his stone cloak. It splashes from the lead conduit of a gargoyle, and falls from it in turmoil on the stones in the Cathedral square. Where are the people, and why does the fretted steeple sweep about in the sky? Boom! The sound swings against the rain. Boom, again! After it, only water rushing in the gutters, and the turmoil from the spout of the gargoyle. Silence. Ripples and mutters. Boom!

The room is damp, but warm. Little flashes swarm about from the firelight. The lustres of the chandelier are bright, and clusters of rubies leap in the Bohemian glasses on the étagère. Her hands are restless, but the white masses of her hair are quite still. Boom! The vibration shatters a glass on the étagère. It lies there formless and glowing, with all its crimson gleams shot out of pattern, spilled, flowing red, blood-red. A thin bell-note pricks through the silence. A door creaks. The old lady speaks: "Victor, clear away that broken glass." "Alas! Madame, the Bohemian glass!" "Yes, Victor, one hundred years ago my father brought it--" Boom! The room shakes, the servitor quakes. Another goblet shivers and breaks. Boom!

It rustles at the window-pane,—the smooth, streaming rain, and he is shut within its clash and murmur. Inside is his candle, his table, his ink, his pen, and his dreams. He is thinking, and the walls are pierced with beams of sun-shine, slipping through young green. A fountain tosses itself up at the blue sky, and through the spattered water in the basin he can see copper carp, lazily floating among cold leaves. A wind-harp in a cedar-tree grieves and whispers, and words blow into his brain, bubbled, iridescent, shooting up like flowers of fire, higher and higher. Boom! The flame-flowers snap on their slender stems. The fountain rears up in long broken spears of dishevelled water and flattens into the earth. Boom! And there is only the room, the table, the candle, and the sliding rain. Again, Boom!—Boom!—Boom!—He stuffs his fingers into his ears. He sees corpses, and cries out in fright. Boom! It is night, and they are shelling the city! Boom! Boom!

A child wakes and is afraid, and weeps in the darkness. What has made the bed shake? "Mother, where are you? I am awake." "Hush, my Darling, I am here." "But, Mother, something so queer happened, the room shook." Boom! "Oh! What is it? What is the matter?" Boom! "Where is father? I am so afraid." Boom! The child sobs and shrieks. The house trembles and creaks. Boom!

Retorts, globes, tubes, and phials lie shattered. All his trials oozing across the floor. The life that was his choosing, lonely, urgent, goaded by a hope, all gone. A weary man in a ruined laboratory, that was his story. Boom! Gloom and ignorance, and the jig of drunken brutes. Diseases like snakes crawling over the earth, leaving trails of slime. Wails from people burying their dead. Through the window he can see the rocking steeple. A ball of fire falls on the lead of the roof, and the sky tears apart on a spike of flame. Up the spire, behind the lacings of stone, zig-zagging in and out of the carved tracings, squirms the fire. It spouts like yellow wheat from the gargoyles, coils round the head of Saint John, and aureoles him in light. It leaps into the night and hisses against the rain. The Cathedral is a burning stain on the white, wet night.

Boom! The Cathedral is a torch, and the houses next to it begin to scorch. Boom! The Bohemian glass on the étagère is no longer there. Boom! A stalk of flame sways against the red damask curtains. The old lady cannot walk. She watches the creeping stalk and counts. Boom!—Boom!—Boom!

The poet rushes into the street, and the rain wraps him in a sheet of silver. But it is threaded with gold and powdered with scarlet beads. The city burns. Quivering, spearing, thrusting, lapping, streaming, run the flames. Over roofs, and walls, and shops, and stalls. Smearing its gold on the sky, the fire dances, lances itself through the doors, and lisps and chuckles along the floors.

The child wakes again and screams at the yellow-petaled flower flickering at the window. The little red lips of flame creep along the ceiling beams.

The old man sits among his broken experiments and looks at the burning Cathedral. Now the streets are swarming with people. They seek shelter, and crowd into the cellars. They shout and call, and over all, slowly and without force, the rain drops into the city. Boom! And the steeple crashes down among the people. Boom! Boom, again! The water rushes along the gutters. The fire roars and mutters. Boom!

Amy Lowell
Poetry, (Nov. 1914),

THE PAINTER ON SILK

There was a man
Who made his living
By painting roses
Upon silk.

He sat in an upper chamber
And painted,
And the noises of the street
Meant nothing to him.

When he heard bugles, and fifes, and drums,
He thought of red, and yellow, and white roses
Bursting in the sunshine,
And smiled as he worked.
He thought only of roses,
And silk.

When he could get no more silk,
He stopped painting
And only thought
Of roses.

The day the conquerors
Entered the city
The old man
Lay dying.
He heard the bugles and drums
And wished he could paint the roses
Bursting into sound.

Amy Lowell
Poetry (Sept. 1915).

Numb At Last

A LETTER OF FAREWELL

Mother, little mother,
They will tell you,
After they have shot me at sunrise,
I died a coward.
It is not true, little mother—
You will believe me.

You know how we marched away--
Banners--bright bayonets--the Marseillaise.
I shut up the old chansons--
Ah, my diplome!--
France needed her sons for war.
We waited, aching for the hour.
At last it came--
I had my turn in the trenches.

I won't tell you all-
What it meant to learn the new trade.
A scholar, was I?--and young?
Youth died in me.
And all the old epics, the beautiful songs long silent--
Ah, that was another life.
At first it sickened me--
The torn flesh bleeding, the horrible bodies long dead,
The ruined town sprawling like toothless hags,
The mud, the lice, the stenches,
The stupefying noise--
A crashing of damned worlds;
And then the command to kill--
At first the loathing was a vomit in my heart.

Then something rose in me
From the abyss.
Life, the great cannibal,
Killing and feeding on death--
I was his workman through ten million years.
I ran to the slaughter singing.
I killed with a shout.
The red rage sucked me up
In its whirlwind,
Dashed me on dancing feet
Against the enemy,

The enemy everlasting.
And my life, tossed on bayonets,
Blown against guns--
Staked, like a last piece of gold, on the hundredth chance--
Always my life came back to me unscathed.

Was it man to man--
The haughty beauty of war?
I grew numb at last,
I felt no more,
I slipped off man's pride like a garment,
A rotten rag--
It was brute to brute in a wallow of blood and filth.

And so, in that last charge on Thiaumont--
Little shattered city
Lost and won, won and lost
Day after day
In the interminable battle--
In that hot rush I killed three Boches,
Stuck them like squeaking pigs.
The soft flesh sputtering,
The nick of the steel at bones--
I felt them no more than the crunch of an insect under my foot
In the old days.
Then I fell, worn out,
Under a wall.
Hungry, thirsty, listless-
My gun dropped from my hand.
I could not rise;
Perhaps my eyes closed. . . . .

When life came back a big Boche was standing over me--
He had my gun, but his face was kind.
"I thought you were dead," he said, and stood looking at me.
Then he unscrewed his canteen--
"Drink," he said, "poor little one--
I won't kill you."

I sprang up, as tall as he, and took his hand,
Babbling, "It's foolish business-why should we?
I'm through with it."
And a great strength rose in me,
And a white light filled me;
Waves of unbearable love washed over me,
And I knew I could fight no more.

The charge had rolled on--
I slipped away,
Crying, "It is over--over forever--men shall kill no more."

I shouted the news,
I summoned the soldiers.
The tongues of fire came down upon me--
"Let the guns rot," I said,
And the cannon rust--
Look in your brother's eyes
And clasp his hand."

So they took me and tried me,
And I must die.
But for telling the truth--
Not for what they say.
It will surely be, little mother.
The sin that was little at first
In the savage forest
When men fought with clubs,
The sin we have gorged and glutted
With gases and bombs,
And machine-guns,
And battle-ships of sea and air--
It has grown heavy and monstrous,
It will be cast off like the plague.
There will be a new nation--
No one shall stop us from loving each other.

So goodby, little mother.
I don't mind dying for it--
That nation.
I see it.

Harriet Monroe,
Poetry (Jan. 1917).

When War Was Making Patch-Work of Her Soul

THE SONG OF THE SOCK.

Stitch, stitch, stitch!
The women are there in a flock,
"You do the leg and I'll do the foot
Let's all be useful though we can't shoot."
And they sang the song of the sock

For when by war their country's hit
English ladies always knit.

(With apologies to THOMAS HOOD and one unknown).

(Josephine Wright pseud.)Harriet Weaver
The Egoist (Sept. 1914),

TO A FLOWER

Child whose fairy eye
Is filled with azure dreams,
Gazing on the sky—
Youth today must bleed
On battlefields and die.
Thy loveliness, it seems,
Is but a lie.

Suzette Herter
Poetry (May 1916).

CHEAP

After all, what does a man amount to?
It only takes some twenty—thirty—years or so
To make a man, with everything complete.
Longer, it is true, than growing cabbages
Or currant bushes, or a cow,—
Or a fair-sized hog;
But not so very long, and there's always time.
When breeding's good we get them fast enough. . . .
Merely a matter of waiting till they grow. . . .
Some food and clothes must be supplied—
And shelter—and all that—
But it's surprising (in fact, without statistics,
A person would scarcely believe it possible)
How very little a man can live upon
From birth until he reaches the enlisting age.

For first he has to be born, of course,
And that takes time,—makes us some trouble too—
But it's a simple matter on the whole,
And not expensive: not at all expensive:
You see, the women are the ones that attend to this
And they work cheap.
They pour men from their bodies.
Always pleased to undertake affairs of this sort,
Women are,--O, most delighted. It's their way.

Willing and lavish: it doesn't cost them much.
They only have to give some flesh and bone
And blood; and perhaps, one might say,
A scrap of soul, to make the creature go;
But these things nature furnishes;
They're free and plenty:
And after a man's once started, he's not long growing;
There's always a generation on the way:
More than we want, sometimes, or there is room for.

Lord, how they swarm! In the cities like flies.
If only horses were so plentiful!
If only horses could be foddered so lightly
And bedded so many to a stall as men!

Certainly, men are less of a bother
And also, think what men do for you that a horse can't.
You cannot teach a horse to hold a gun.

A horse can't shoot or burn or pillage or murder well in the least.
And too, a man has this convenient feature,
That you can make him go without whip or lash.
You only have to charm him the right way.

Other animals you charm by dazzling radiance:
With men it's always colors and bright sounds
(Slogans and bands and banners are the best).
Why, you can play upon them with the beat of drums
Till they are got to an energy and fury fine as a bull's;
How they will fight for you then!
Tigers and wolves and wild-cats
(Considering differences in weight and bulks of meat)
Wouldn't fight fiercer or longer or more willingly.

You never could train a horse to be so clever.
And therefore it's curious, when you think of it,
That horses should come so much more dear than men.
To be sure, there isn't the cheap source of supply
Or the same over-stock as in the case of men:
A horse is harder to raise and more expense—
More trouble; more of a responsibility:
But nevertheless, allowing for all this,
It still is curious, that difference in value. . . .
Now isn't it?
Rather?

Helen Hoyt
The Little Review, (March, 1916).

GRAMOPHONE TUNES

Through the long ward the gramophone
  Grinds out its nasal melodies:
'Where did you get that girl?' it shrills.
  The patients listen at their ease,
Through clouds of strong tobacco-smoke:
  The gramophone can always please.

The Welsh boy has it by his bed,
  (He's lame - one leg was blown away).
He'll lie propped up with pillows there,
  And wind the handle half the day.
His neighbour, with the shattered arm,
  Picks out the records he must play.

Jock with his crutches beats the time;
  The gunner, with his head close-bound,
Listens with puzzled, patient smile:
  (Shell-shock - he cannot hear a sound).
The others join in from their beds,
  And send the chorus rolling round.

Somehow for me these common tunes
  Can never sound the same again:
They've magic now to thrill my heart
  And bring before me, clear and plain,
Man that is master of his flesh,
  And has the laugh of death and pain.

Eva Dobell
A Bunch of Cotswold Grasses
London, Arthur H. Stockwell, 1919.

QUILTS

They gave me the quilt that Great-aunt Elizabeth made—
A quilt of pink roses, and tiny careful stitches.
It goes in my chest, for in October I marry.

Pink roses, with stems of green on a background of white,
And Great-aunt Elizabeth pieced it for her own chest.
She pieced it with trembling hands, for her lover had gone
To fight with the South.
Elizabeth filled in the long days with squares of pink,
Fitting the pattern together with quick, nervous fingers;
Roses of pink, for love and a bride.

But here is a spot of red among the pink roses.

I wonder what is stitched into the quilting.
She finished it long afterwards, when war
Had taken all she had but memories.
She pieced her life into a pink-rose quilt
When war was making patch-work of her soul.

They gave me the quilt that Great-aunt Elizabeth made—
A quilt of pink roses with stems of green, for a bride.
But I see all the time the splotch of blood in the roses.

October is so far when war is near.

Mary Willis Shuey
Poetry (Sept. 1918).

IT'S ROSE TIME HERE...

It's rose time here...
How could the Spring
Be the same merry thing?
How could she sparkle April's posy ring
Upon the finger of this widowed year?
How could she bring her gauds so pitilessly near?
How could she bear
To lead the pomp of May,
The primings and the promises of June
So near, so soon,
In the old happy way?
How could she dare
To prick the eyes of Grief
With mockeries of returning bud and leaf?
How could she wear
Such coloured broideries
Beside the tattered garments of despair?
Tenting the hills with April's canopies,
Setting the tulips' spears...
How could she keep her tourneys through such tears?

She did not care...
The roses are as beautiful this year.
The lily never doffed
One golden plume, nor did the may renounce
One thrilling splendour, nor wear one pearl less.
She has not grieved - even a little space -
For those who loved her once -
For those whom surely she must once have loved.

It's rose time here ...
While over there,
Where all the roses of the world have blown,
The blood is not dried upon their hair.
Their eyes have scarcely filmed against the moon.
The sun has not yet utterly gone out;
Almost the stained grass still
Is conscious of their breath -
Those heavenly roses, torn and tossed about
On the vast plains of Death.

It's rose time here...
(How I shall always hate the Spring
For being such a calm, untroubled thing!)
While over there -
Where there're no children left to pull
The few scared, ragged flowers -
All that was ours, and, God, how beautiful!
All, all, that once was ours
Lies faceless, mouthless, mire in mire,
So lost to all sweet semblance of desire
That we, in those fields seeking desperately
One face long-lost to Love, one face that lies
Only upon the breast of Memory,
Would never know it, even though we stood
Upon its brow, or crushed its dreadful eyes,
Would never find it - even the very blood
Is stamped into the horror of the mud, -
Something that mad men trample under foot
In the narrow trench - for these things are not men -
Things shapeless, sodden mute
Beneath the monstrous limber of the guns;
Those things that loved us once...
Those that were ours but never ours again.

It's rose time here...

Muriel Stuart
The English Review, (Feb.1918),

WHO WANTS BLUE SILK ROSES?

The battlefields are very far away:
No friend of mine fights on them—and no foe.
I have not sickened at the battle stench,
Nor seen the tragic trenches where men die.
I am a woman, walking quietly,
And fond of peace and place and fireside cheer,
Yet here, afar from strife, the grey Uhlans
Have battered down my door, let in the rain,
And put me out, purse-empty, on the street.

Strange, say you?
Chance of war! Samaritans,
I'm past all succor;—slain in my pocket-book.
My little shop for hats—chic hats, oddities--
Is shut as tight as Juliet Capulet's tomb.
"Bad times" has stood me up against the wall:
"Bad times" in Uhlan gear, takes certain aim.
(And firing squads have always stone cold eyes.)

All winter long, I've peeped out on the street,
To watch my little customers go by
In conscious rectitude and home-made hats;
Home-made to noble ends!
Not that they've less
Than once they had. They've more—a bran new creed.
Economists approve: the fashion's set.
"How fine and sensible the women are,"
You hear the men commenting on the train.
"My wife is trimming her own hats." "And mine."
"I like to see the women suit themselves
To present needs." "And I. It's fine, I say.
Some little good comes out of this sad war."
(Ah, yes, but half a sausage and a roll,
Was all the food I'd had in twenty hours!)

Now that would seem a feast. The cupboard's bare.
Well, here's a chance to put my luck to test.
Who goes a-roving when the pot is full?
Say, comrades, comrades, let's set out tonight,
And brew our mulligan behind the ties.
No more I'll sit alone to play propriety;

I sell no more blue roses, hear me swear
But when the snows are gone, I'll scent mayweed
Beside the fences, till some purple noon,
I find the passion flower, in panoply,
Awaiting me, and I shall stoop and pick.

But do not think I am without a friend!
I have my own familiar Imp for company—
The secret, mocking creature of my heart,
Which keeps me laughing when I'm set to cry,
And fleers the cautions I thought principles.
He's captain now. We'll see how he'll provide,
For food and drink and thought, and company.
Let him advise what lens I'd best look through.
Nero, they say, chose green; fools like rose-red.
The Imp and I may stand for sun-bright truth,
And smoke our glasses if we prove too frail.

Come hunger, then, and want, or any shame.
If Chatterton dare starve, why should not we?
We'll travel far—though without carfare, dears,
And with shoe-soles that let in pavement slush.
But now I shall find out if dry-shod feet
Discount the wet ones. Live down the superstitions,
So I say. Ducks think wet feet are best.
Come, come, my Imp. Let's start. Our fat landlord
Has locked the door on us and taken the key.

(When you are passing by the little shop,
Remember one who wanted you for friend;
A victim of the war, without a faith,
But carrying a banner—a white field,
And no word written on it.
Yes, think of one,
Who lacks a watchword, and wears no disguise,
And arm in arm with impish laughter, seeks for Life.)

Sade Iverson
The Little Review, (May 1915),

WHAT THE CIVILIAN SAW

Kensington High Street

It is all shiny and black, like bombazine or taffeta,
Or the satin of my grandmother's gown, that stood alone
It was so thick;
A screen between us and knowledge,
That sometimes, when we are very good, gets on to the
placards.

Past the screen of the dark the rain glissades,
Flowing down the straight damp palisades of the dark.

Faces against the screen,
Lamps of living flesh hung out in the storm
That has draped the world in black....
Here by the station an iridescent sheen,
Dazzling, not gay. And news,
Special; oh, "Special"!
What have they let through to us from over there—
For once?

Faces, news, on the screen,
And the hungry crowds weltering in the dark!
Here is the English translation
Of what goes on over there,
There where hangings are not black but red,
And the king of England is lying on the ground.....

Violet Hunt Hueffer
Poetry, (Feb. 1917).

WAR

There was a time
When there was no war.
Deep I look into that pool of memory
And see the things I thought of then, the dreams I dreamed.
Like strange corals at the bottom of the sea—
Each, for being so far, so lost,
Shining with a beauty past its own.
They lie like jewels that have slipped into the ocean,
Unattainable and gone;
A moment of great sweetness, a day of great beauty, a dream,
a longing, a happy chance.

Never shall I touch them again;
Never, I believe, shall I see their like again
In the dark horror of these days.

Catherine Wells
Poetry (Nov. 1915).

DREAMS IN WAR TIME

I

I wandered through a house of many rooms.
It grew darker and darker,
Until, at last, I could only find my way
By passing my fingers along the wall.
Suddenly my hand shot through an open window,
And the thorn of a rose I could not see
Pricked it so sharply
That I cried aloud.

II

I dug a grave under an oak tree.
With infinite care, I stamped my spade
Into the heavy grass.
The sod sucked it,
And I drew it out with effort,
Watching the steel run liquid in the moonlight
As it came clear.
I stooped, and dug, and never turned,
For behind me,
On the dried leaves,
My own face lay like a white pebble,
Waiting.

III

I gambled with a silver money.
The dried seed-vessels of "honesty"
Were stacked in front of me.
Dry, white years slipping through my fingers
One by one.
One by one, gathered by the Croupier.
"Faites vos jeux, Messieurs."
I staked on the red,
And the black won.
Dry years,
Dead years;
But I had a system,
I always staked on the red.

IV

I painted the leaves of bushes red
And shouted: "Fire! Fire!"
But the neighbors only laughed.
"We cannot warm our hands at them," they said.
Then they cut down my bushes,
And made a bonfire,
And danced about it.
But I covered my face and wept,
For ashes are not beautiful
Even in the dawn.

V

I followed a procession of singing girls
Who danced to the glitter of tambourines.
Where the street turned at a lighted corner,
I caught the purple dress of one of the dancers,
But, as I grasped it, it tore,
And the purple dye ran from it
Like blood
Upon the ground.

VI

I wished to post a letter,
But although I paid much,
Still the letter was overweight.
"What is in this package?" said the clerk,
It is very heavy."
"Yes," I said,
"And yet it is only a dried fruit."

VII

I had made a kite.
On it I had pasted golden stars,
And white torches,
And the tail was spotted scarlet like a tiger-lily,
And very long.
I flew my kite
And my soul was contented
Watching it flash against the concave of the sky.
My friends pointed at the clouds;
They begged me to take in my kite.
But I was happy
Seeing the mirror shock of it
Against the black clouds.
Then the lightning came

And struck the kite.
It puffed—blazed—fell.
But still I walked on,
In the drowning rain,
Slowly winding up the string.

Amy Lowell
The Little Review, (June 1918),

Not Yet Will Those Measureless Fields Be Green Again

AFTERWARDS

Blow upon blow they bruise the daylight wan,
Scar upon scar they rend the quiet shore;
They ride on furious, leaving every man
Crushed like a maggot by the hoofs of war:
Gods that grow tired of paradisial water
And fill their cups with steaming wine of slaughter.

I fear a thing more terrible than death:
The glamour of the battle grips us yet—
As crowds before a fire that hold their breath
Watching the burning houses, and forget
All they will lose, but marvel to behold
Its dazzling strength, the glamour of its gold.

I fear the time when slow the flame expires,
When this kaleidoscope of roaring color
Fades, and rage faints; and of the funeral-fires
That shone with battle, nothing left of valor
Save chill ignoble ashes for despair
To strew with widowed hands upon her hair.

Livid and damp unfolds the winding-sheet,
Hiding the mangled body of the Earth:
The slow grey aftermath, the limping feet
Of days that shall not know the sound of mirth,
But pass in dry-eyed patience, with no trust
Save to end living and be heaped with dust.

That stillness that must follow where Death trod,
The sullen street, the empty drinking-hall,
The tuneless voices cringing praise to God,
Deaf gods, that did not heed the anguished call,
Now to be soothed with humbleness and praise,
With fawning kisses for the hand that slays.

Across the world from out the fevered ground
Decay from every pore exhales its breath;
A cloak of penance winding close around
The bright desire of spring. And unto Death,
As to a conquering king, we yield the keys
Of Beauty's gates upon our bended knees.

The maiden loverless shall go her ways,
And child unfathered feed on crust and husk;
The sun that was the glory of our days
Shining as tinsel till the moody dusk
Into our starving outstretched arms shall lay
Her silent sleep, the only boon we pray.

Iris Tree
Poetry (Nov. 1918).

THE VETERAN

We came upon him sitting in the sun—
  Blinded by war, and left. And past the fence
Wandered young soldiers from the Hand & Flower,
  Asking advice of his experience.

And he said this and that, and told them tales;
  And all the nightmares of each empty head
Blew into air. Then, hearing us beside—
  "Poor kids, how do they know what it's like?" he said.

And we stood there, and watched him as he sat
  Turning his sockets where they went away;
Until it came to one of us to ask
  "And you're—how old?"
                "Nineteen the third of May."

Margaret I. Postgate
Poetry (Aug. 1918).

DECORATION FOR VALOR

This boy, who standsso straight
While the General pins the medal on his coat,
May be thinking of a frame house
On Kelley Avenue in South Bend,
Or of the misery of having everyone look at him
While the trumpets blare.
But if I should ask him if he remembered
Curtius of Rome,
Or Childe Roland,
Or the Stainless Knight,
He would shake his head awkwardly
And say,
"No ma'am."

Hortense Flexner
Poetry (March 1919),

THE LAMENT OF THE DEMOBILISED

"Four years," some say consolingly,
"Oh well,
What's that? You're young. And then
it must have been
A very fine experience for you!"
And they forget
How others stayed behind and just got on -
Got on the better since we were away.
And we came home and found
They had achieved, and men revered their names,
But never mentioned ours;
And no one talked heroics now, and we
Must just go back and start again
once more.
"You threw four years into the
melting-pot-
Did you indeed!" these others cry.
"Oh well,
The more fool you! "
And we're beginning to agree with them.

Vera Mary Brittain Oxford, 1919
Poems of the War and After
London, Victor Gollancz, 1934.

THE CENOTAPH

Not yet will those measureless fields be green again
Where only yesterday the wild sweet blood of wonderful youth was shed;
There is a grave whose earth must hold too long, too deep a stain,
Though for ever over it we may speak as proudly as we may tread.
But here, where the watchers by lonely hearths from the thrust of an inward sword have more slowly bled,
We shall build the Cenotaph: Victory, winged, with Peace, winged too, at the column's head.
And over the stairway, at the foot—oh! here, leave desolate, passionate hands to spread
Violets, roses, and laurel, with the small, sweet, twinkling country things
Speaking so wistfully of other Springs,
From the little gardens of little places where son or sweetheart was born and bred.
In splendid sleep, with a thousand brothers
To lovers--to mothers
Here, too, lies he:
Under the purple, the green, the red,
It is all young life: it must break some women's hearts to see
Such a brave, gay coverlet to such a bed!
Only, when all is done and said,
God is not mocked and neither are the dead.
For this will stand in our Market-place--
Who'll sell, who'll buy
(Will you or I
Lie each to each with the better grace)?
While looking into every busy whore's and huckster's face
As they drive their bargains, is the Face
Of God: and some young, piteous, murdered face.

Charlotte Mew
Collected Poems, (Sept. 1919).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Periodicals

Blast: Review of the Great English Vortex. London, I (June 20, 1914) and II (July, 1915).

The Dial: A Semi-Monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information. Chicago, (Jan.1, 1914 - Jan.1, 1918).

The Egoist. London, (Jan.1 1914 - Sept. 1919).

The English Review. London, Vol. XVII - Vol. XXX (Aug.1914 - June 1920).

Form: A Quarterly of the Arts. London, (Apr. 1916 - Apr. 1917 and Oct. 1921 - Jan. 1922).

The Glebe. New Jersey, Vol. I #1 - Vol. II #4 (Sept. 1913 - 1914).

The Globe and Mail. Toronto, (Aug. 1914 - Aug. 1915).

Little Review. Chicago, (March 1914 - July 1916) and SanFrancisco (August 1916 - June 1918).

New Freewoman. An Individualist Review. London, (June 15, 1913 - Jan.1, 1914, when it became The Egoist).

Others. New Jersey, Vol.1 - Vol.6 (1915 - July 1919).

Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. Chicago, (Apr. 1914 - Apr. 1920).

Poetry and Drama. London, (March 1913 - Dec. 1914).

Punch . London, (July 15, 1914 - Jan. 1919).

Saturday Night. Toronto, (May 30, 1914 - July 27, 1918).

Seven Arts. New York, Vol. I #1 - Vol. II #12 (Nov.1916 - Oct. 1917 when the magazine merged with The Dial.)

The Signature. London, (Oct.4 1915 - Nov.1, 1915).

The Times of London, "War Poems from The Times". Aug. 9, 1915.

Today. London, Vol. 1 - Vol. V.(March 1917 - July 1919).

Wheels. ed. Edith Sitwell. Annual anthology. London, 1916-1920.

Collected Verse.

Almedingen, Edith Martha.Poloniae Testamentum. London: The Bodley Head, 1942.

Ashmore, Lady Dorothy Emily Augusta. Songs of Glenshee and Other Poems. Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1924.

Bates, Katharine Lee. The Retinue and Other Poems.New York: Dutton, 1918.

Bell, Maud. London Songs and Others. Bristol: The Horseshoe Publishing, 1924.

Brittain, Vera Mary. Poems of the War and After. London: Victor Gollancz, 1934.

Brittain, Vera Mary. Verses of a V.A.D.London: Erskine MacDonald, 1918.

Bunston, Anna de Bary. New and Selected Lyrics. London: Danie O'Connor, 1923 (?).

Caldwell, Ella Stewart. Ah Me! When One Loves and Other Poems that Well Up from the Human Heart. London: Arthur Stockwell, 1926.

Close, Evelyne. The Tide at Night.London: Erskine MacDonald, 1918.

Coleman, Ellen. There Are No Dead and Other Poems. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1918.

Converse, Florence. Collected Poems. London: J.M.Dent, 1937.

H.D. Collected Poems. New York: Liveright Publishing, 1925.

E.H.D. Colliton and Other Verses by a V.A.D. Bournemouth: E.Cooper, 1924.

Deane, Mary. A Book of Verse. London: Elkin Mathews, 1921.

Downes, Marion. Wayside Songs.London: Hamilton, Kent, 1927.

Drew, Annie. Poems. Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1928.

Dudley, Anita. Valediction: Sonnets to Kitchener. London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1916.

Elliot, Wilhelmina Sherriff. From Zealandia: A Book of Verse. London: John M. Watkins, 1925.

Ford, S. Gertrude. Poems of War and Peace. London: Erskine MacDonald, 1914 (Date estimated by the University of Alberta collector.)

Fry, Agnes. Winter Sunshine and Other Verses. Leominster: The Orphan's Printing Press, 1929 (?).

Glazebrook, Ethel. Lyrics of Life and Thought. London: MacMillan, 1925.

Golden, Grace Mary. Backgrounds. Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1917.

Gurney, Dorothy Frances. A Little Book of Quiet. London:"Country Life", 1915.

Hardy, Blanche C. The Buried City:Poems 1914 - 1920.London: Heath Cranton, 1920.

Henson, Nellie Parker. Poems. Richmond, Va.:Whittet and Shepperson,192-.

Ingledew, Claire. Poems. London, Arhtur H. Stockwell, 1935.

Kerry, Esther. He Is a Canadian and Other Verse.Montreal: Regal Press, 1919.

Lewis, Dorothy P. Poems. Cardiff, 1919.

Lowell, Amy. The Complete Poetical Works. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955.

McDougald, Annie Bethune. Songs of Our Maple Saplings. Toronto:Munson 1917.

Mew, Charlotte. Collected Poems. London: Berald Duckworth, 1953.

Mitcham, Helen. Limehouse and Other Poems. London: Erskine MacDonald, 1920.

Paget, Georgina B. Song of the Unborn. London: Grant Richards,1916.

Palmer, Mrs. F. Purdy. Dates and Days in Europe. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1915.

Pope, Jessie. Simple Rhymes for Stirring Times.London: C.Arthur Pearson, 1916.

Renshaw, C.A. Up to the Hills. London: The Merton Press, 1922.

Richardson, Emmeline. Whither Goest? London: Elliot Stock, 1918.

Roberts, Elizabeth, and Florence Cecilia. A Wreath for Melpomene and Other Poems. Georgia: Banner Press, 1941.

Seiver, Elizabeth R. Poems of the New Jerusalem. New York: E.R.Seiver, 1918.

Sheard, Virna. Carry On! Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutler, 1917.

Sitwell, Edith. The Wooden Pegasus. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920.

Smalley, Marie. Thoughts of Mine. Blackburn: Geo. Toulmin, 1916.

Smith, Alice Mary. Margaret Smith ed. The Collected Poems of Angela Gordon. London: The Sheldon Press, 1937.

Smith,Cicily Fox. Songs and Chanties.London: Elkin Mathews, 1919.

Smyth, Marjorie Kane. Poems . London: W.and G. Foyle, 1919.

Taylor, Hope Fairfax. Poems. London, Methuen, 1916.

Tillyard, Aelfrida. The Garden and the Fire. Cambridge: W.Heffer, 1916.

Trotter, Alys Fane. Houses and Dreams. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1924.

Trotter Alys Fane. Nigel and Other Verses. London: Burns and Oates,1918.

Tynan, Katharine (Mrs. Hinkson) The Flower of Peace: A Collection of the Devotional Poetry of Katharine Tynan. London: Burns and Oates, 1914.

Tynan, Katharine. The Holy War. London; Sidgwick and Jackson, 1916.

Underdown, Emily. War Songs: 1914. London: Riley, 1914.

Verne, Viviane. A Casket of Thoughts. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent. 1916.

Wedmore, Millicent. In Many Keys. London: Elkin Mathews, 1921.

Wilcox, Ella Wheeler. Hello Boys! London: Gay and Hancock, 1919.

Wilson, Lady Anne Glenny. A Book of Verses. London: Elliot Stock, 1917.

Anthologies

Band of Purple, The : A Collection of Canadian Poems. Lillie A.Brooks (compiler). Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1915.

A Book of Poems for the Blue Cross Fund. London: Jarrolds, 1917.

Canadian Poems of the Great War. John W. Garvin ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1918.

The Lyceum Book of Verse. ed. Mollie Stanley-Wrench. London: Methuen, 1931.

Men Who March Away: Poems of the First World War. ed. I.M. Parson. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965.

1914-18 in Poetry . ed. E.L. Black. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970.

Penguin Book of First World War Poetry. ed. Jon Silkin. Penguin, 1979.

Scars Upon My Heart . Selected by Catherine Reilly. London:Virago, 1981.

Treasury of War Poetry. Geo. H. Clarke. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.

Up the Line to Death. ed. Brian Gardner. Edmund Blunden foreword. London: Methuen, 1964.

Biographical and Autobiographical Material

Anderson, Margaret. My Thirty Years War. New York: Covici, Friedi, 1930.

Cahill, Daniel J. Harriet Monroe. New York : Twayne, 1973.

Damon, S.Foster. Amy Lowell: A Chronicle. Connecticut: Archon Books,1966.

Graves, Robert. Goodbye to All That.London:Penguin Books, 1960.

Lidderdale, Jane and Mary Nicholson. Dear Miss Weaver.London:Faber and Faber, 1970.

Monroe, Harriet. A Poet's Life. New York: MacMillan, 1938.

Reid, Gordon,ed. Poor Bloody Murder. Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1980.

Robinson, Janice S. H.D.: The Life and Work Of an American Poet. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

Sassoon, Siegfried. Memoirs of an Infantry Officer. London:Faber and Faber, 1930.

Tietjens, Eunice. The World at My Shoulder. New York: MacMillan, 1938.

Wood, Clement. Amy Lowell. New York: Harold Vinal, 1926.

Secondary Materials on Poetry

Alvarez, A. The Shaping Spirit . London: Chatto and Windus, 1958.

Bergonzi, Bernard. Heroes' Twilight. London: Constable, 1965.

Fussell, Paul. The Great War and Modern Memory. Oxford University Press, 1975.

Gage, John T. In the Arresting Eye: The Rhetoric of Imagism. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.

Gregson, J.M. Poetry of the First World War. London: Edward Arnold, 1976.

Harmer, J.B. Victory in Limbo: Imagism 1908 - 1917. London: Secker and Warburg, 1975.

Hibberd, Dominic ed. Poetry of the First World War, A Case Book . London: MacMillan, 1981.

Johnston, John H. English Poetry of the First World War. New Jersy: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Leavis, F.R. New Bearings in English Poetry . London: Chatto and Windus, 1932.

Monro, Harold. Some Contemporary Poets. London: Leonard Pearsons, 1926.

Moore, Sturge. Some Soldier Poets. London: Grant Richards, 1919.

Murphy, William S. The Genesis of British War Poetry. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent, 1918.

Silkin, Jon. Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War. Oxford University Press, 1972.

Sisson, C.H. English Poetry 1900 - 1950. London: Rupert Hart and Davis , 1971.

Stead, G.K. The New Poetic. London. Hutchinson University Library, 1964.

Tebbel, John. A History of Book Publishing in the United States. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1975.